

# ALLEGHENY COUNTY 2020 SUNSET REVIEW



Office of the County Manager

June 30, 2021

The Honorable Rich Fitzgerald  
Allegheny County Executive  
Courthouse – Room 101  
436 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Honorable Members of Council  
Allegheny County Council  
Courthouse – Room 119  
436 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear County Executive Fitzgerald and Members of Allegheny County Council:

In accordance with Article VI and Article VII of the Home Rule Charter and Article XII of the Administrative Code of the County of Allegheny, I respectfully submit the 2020 Sunset Review for your consideration.

The departments reviewed in this report include those that provide services to other county departments, and those that steward the physical assets of county government: Administrative Services, Facilities Management, Parks and Public Works. The related agencies that have been reviewed as part of this cycle include the Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review, the Cooperative Extension, and the Parks Foundation.

It is worth noting as a reminder that the reviews contained herein are neither a fiscal nor performance audit of these agencies; the reviews are intended to affirm whether or not each agency should continue as a unit of county government, in its current format, to provide the services it provides.

For each of the departments reviewed, the recommendation is to continue.

I would like to extend deepest gratitude to all members of our government that contributed to this effort.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William D. McKain, CPA  
County Manager

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# Overview of Allegheny County Home Rule and Process of Sunset Review

## Home Rule

Under the Constitution of the Commonwealth, counties have “no inherent right to self-government beyond what the State Constitution and the General Assembly may grant” unless the citizens of the county opt for “home rule”. Because of this, Allegheny County was governed by the Second Class County Code adopted by the Legislature in 1935 and modified in 1955. The functions delegated to the county under this code included: the administration of elections and the registration of voters; assessment of property for tax purposes; administration of justice; care of prisoners; recording of deeds; execution of wills; construction and maintenance of roads and bridges; care of the aged, dependent and indigent ill; planning; civil defense; the administration and direction of airports; sewage disposal; and management of parks, recreation and public health.”

While this form of government provided for the services specifically delineated by Second Class County Code, the citizens of the County opted on May 19, 1998, to enact a Home Rule Charter for the county effective in the year 2000. As specified in Chapter 105 of the Code, the County “shall have and may exercise any and all powers and perform any and all functions not specifically denied by the Constitution of the United States of America, the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Charter”.

To fulfill this charge, the Commissioner form of government was replaced by a new structure composed of an elected Chief Executive, a fifteen-member (15) County Council and an appointed County Manager as specified in the Administrative Code of Allegheny County enacted on June 20, 2000. Under this new structure of government, the general duties of county government were retained despite separating legislative and executive functions. As such, authority for county government is vested with 1,223,348 residents (Census 2010) residing within the 130 municipalities in 731 square miles.

While Article II of the Administrative Code entitled “Organization and Structure of County Government” initially designated ten (10) categories of Independently Elected County Officials of Clerk of Courts, County Controller, County Coroner, District Attorney, Jury Commissioners, Prothonotary, Recorder of Deeds, Register of Wills, Sheriff and Treasurer, the voters opted in May of 2005 to consolidate the offices of Coroner, Jury Commission, Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Register of Wills, and Recorder of Deeds and transfer these entities to the Executive branch of government. Subsequently in 2006, the “elected County Coroner became an appointed Medical Examiner, and the Jury Commission responsibilities were assumed by the County Courts. On January 1, 2008, the Department of Court Records combined the offices of the Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts and Register of Wills.”

## Sunset Review Process

To ensure the appropriate government review of functions under the “Home Rule” form of government, the Administrative Code includes Article XII entitled “Government Review” that establishes a Sunset Review which evaluates the “need for and function of each County Department” every four years on a staggered schedule and a Government Review Commission which studies the “Charter and County Government, including the organization, practices and responsibilities of all County Departments and Agencies every ten (10) years. Although it is recognized that the Charter clearly delineates the distinct functions of these two oversight processes, there are areas of congruence, as presently designed.

While Sunset Reviews were conducted by previous administrations of departments and various authorities, commissions and boards in June 30, 2003 and December 30, 2010, the mandate to implement a staggered process during a four-year cycle was not fulfilled. As such, it was the decision of the administration of County Executive Rich Fitzgerald to adhere to the standard, as established.

To accomplish this, the County Manager conducted a comprehensive Sunset Review of all twenty (20) departments and twenty-nine (29) authorities, commissions and boards by June 2014 . (Refer to: [http://www.alleghenycounty.us/manager/sunset\\_2014.pdf](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/manager/sunset_2014.pdf) ). Since then, the County has adopted a staggered review process, which has been endorsed by the Government Review Commission in its report issued March 29, 2016 (see [https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny\\_Home/Dept-Content/commissions/Government-Review/Government%20Review%20Commission%20%20Final%20Approval%20March%2029%202016.%200Posting.pdf](https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny_Home/Dept-Content/commissions/Government-Review/Government%20Review%20Commission%20%20Final%20Approval%20March%2029%202016.%200Posting.pdf) ). Please see Appendix A for the full staggered schedule of departmental reviews.

The focus of the 2020 Sunset Review is on the departments that were last reviewed in 2016: departments that oversee internal and external structural issues of County government, including the Departments of Administrative Services and Facilities Management, and departments that oversee land and public spaces, including the Departments of Parks and Public Works.

### Elements of the Sunset Review Process

To enhance the understanding of the congruence of departmental functions and related entities, the Sunset Review crafted for each department is followed by the Sunset Review of its related agencies, authorities, commissions or boards that enhances the mission of the department. Additionally, as the Code allows the County Manager to include other issues that would make County government more competitive and performance-oriented, the Sunset Review for departments also includes a vision and mission statement, and lists the major achievements of the department since its last Sunset Review. The review for each department contains the following:

- A. Vision
- B. Mission
- C. Overview
- D. Achievements of department since 2015 (2016 through 2019)
- E. Legal mandate or necessity for the department
- F. Determination of public need for the department's services
- G. Review of the methods used in the implementation of each department's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the department's legal mandates
- H. Evaluation of whether county government is the most effective body to implement the department's programs
- I. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the department or the department's provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety or welfare
- J. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the department
- K. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the department have been processed
- L. Recommendation

For the departments' related agencies, authorities, commissions or boards, the review will include the following elements as required by the Code:

- A. Legal mandate or necessity for the agency
- B. Determination of public need for the continued existence of the agency and its services
- C. Review of the methods used in the implementation of each agency's functions and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the agency's legal mandates
- D. Evaluation of whether the agency is the most effective body to implement the agency's programs
- E. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the agency or the agency's provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare
- F. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the agency
- G. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the agency have been processed
- H. In the case of an agency that has received appropriations from the County's operating budget in any of the five years prior to the sunset review, a financial audit of the agency performed by an entity independent of the County
- I. Recommendation

## Methodology

To fulfill the mandate of the Administrative Code, as well as honor the prerogative of the County Manager to include elements that demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness, the following actions occurred:

1. Applied the instrument created for the 2014 Sunset Review that adheres to the standards for evaluation delineated in Section 1201 of the Code, as well as, the prerogative of the County Manager that included the creation and/or review of the Vision and Mission statements for each department.
2. Conducted an analysis of the department and related agencies, authorities, commissions and/or boards to determine the appropriate changes, if any, from the 2014 report.
3. After a review of the department, a recommendation was provided to:
  - continue the existence of the Department;
  - abolish the Department; or
  - reorganize the Department subject to evaluation and review.
4. With respect to the agencies, authorities, commissions and/or boards, a recommendation was made to:
  - continue the existence of the affected agency, authority, commission or board;
  - abolish the affected entity, if appropriate, or sever the relationship with the entity; or
  - reorganize the entity subject to evaluation and review, if appropriate, or alter the relationship with the entity.

# Department of Administrative Services

## A. Vision

To provide and sustain high levels of performance for our residents.

## B. Mission

To uphold and support all levels of services to the taxpayers of Allegheny County. The department encompasses a vast range of services, with a common mission to enhance Allegheny County operations.

## C. Overview

The Department of Administrative Services manages an array of services to enhance County daily operations, such as call center management, mailing and printing services, purchasing and document storage. The department is also responsible for the marketing and coordination of County-sponsored special events, property assessment, the recording of deeds and mortgages, and verifying measuring device accuracy at service establishments throughout the county. In addition, the department oversees the election process to ensure that all government laws and requirements are upheld, and provides services and support to military veterans.

During the 2016-2019 period, Administrative Services housed nine divisions, encompassing 13 functions, including Administration, Mailing Services, Printing Services, Records Administration, Weights & Measures, Elections, Call Center, Computer Services, Property Assessments, Real Estate, Purchasing & Supplies, Marketing and Special Events, and Veterans Services. In 2019, the department had a \$27 million annual operating budget.

Below is an outline of the responsibilities of each Administrative Services division:

1. Administration: Is responsible for various centralized functions including management and coordination of departmental budgets, collection of miscellaneous revenues, management of vending services and payment processing for the county's travel program. Additional services managed by the Administration Division include mailing, printing, and records administration.
2. Call Center: Handles incoming requests for information and for County services via telephone, email and webform.
3. Computer Services: Supports all county departments, elected officials and related offices in the planning, development, and application of computer technology. Technological support of a Countywide communication network backbone methodology allows access to all computer systems; centralized backup, recovery and disaster planning for all systems; apply support and evaluation of data warehousing for Countywide usage; identifies and develops emerging technologies which help departments achieve County goals while increasing productivity, effectiveness and quality; and maintain centralized contracts for computer hardware and software to ensure the best possible pricing structures; implements the required HIPPA compliance tools and assists various County departments in implementing a Geographic Information System (GIS).
4. Elections: Administers and manages county voting policies, programs, and resources to an extent that satisfies voter and candidate interests and is consistent with state and federal regulations and mandates. The Elections division staff prepare extensively for all elections to ensure every vote is counted correctly, including training poll workers, transporting voting equipment, and preparing

election observers to serve at each precinct and polling place. Shortly after voting closes at each election, Elections computes the returns and reports results to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

5. The Office of Property Assessment and Division of Real Estate: Ensures accuracy and efficiency in assessment and records management for the benefit of county property owners and other constituents. The Offices of Property Assessment and Real Estate strive to best serve the public and taxing authorities of Allegheny County in numerous ways including:
  - Record documents such as deeds, mortgages, plans, military discharges, and others.
  - Curate a repository for all recorded documents and provide access to public.
  - Deliver uniform base year assessments for real property
  - Maintain accurate property description records on the 576,000 parcels in Allegheny County.
  - Maintain ownership and mapping records for all properties in the county.
  - Administer abatements and exemptions for real property.
6. Purchasing & Supplies: Manages the procurement of supplies, equipment, and services in the most efficient, cost effective, and timely manner possible. Additionally, Purchasing & Supplies adds value to the procurement process, by promoting competition, reducing cost, creating efficiency, and providing high quality customer service.
7. Veteran Services: Provides assistance to all county veterans and their families with obtaining Local, State, and Federal benefits. The division helps them discover the benefits to which they are entitled and assists them with the application process. Additionally, the division advocates for new services and programs for veterans and their families that would enhance their quality of life.
8. Marketing and Special Events: Produces and markets all major Allegheny County events, and provides affordable, enriching, and diverse entertainment options to serve the County's broad demographics. The marketing division promotes these events while also assisting other county offices and departments with their marketing and promotional needs.
9. The Bureau of Weights and Measures: Inspects and monitors all weighing and other measuring devices that are utilized for transactions in which a commodity or service is bought or sold. Parking meters must be inspected and tested on a five-year schedule, scales and fuel pumps every 18 months and price verification every 36-months. Consumers can be assured that the seal on each device means it is functioning properly.

#### D. Achievements of department since 2015 (2016 through 2019)

##### Mailing Services

Mailing services has implemented multiple cost-saving measures since 2015, including securing discounts for the Elections Division business reply account and participating in the United States Postal Service's Full-Service Intelligent Mail discount program. Mailing Services also implemented changes its processing of mail for the Jail to effectively reduce the introduction of contraband into the facility.

##### Printing Services

Since October 2015, the Print Shop completed a merger with the Health Department's printing staff. This successful collaboration has allowed for Printing Services to increase its efficiency by way of workforce and additional equipment that provides a greater opportunity for load balancing, quicker turnaround times and better-quality printing jobs.



## Records Administration

The goal of the Allegheny County Records Management Program is to offer professional records management services to all Allegheny County offices and departments, to provide safe and secure storage for inactive and vital records and to make timely accurate information readily available in order to assist management decision-making.

Records Administration has started on the path for a full inventory of the warehouse, the storage location of vital records. The first steps in the process involved developing a map of each floor with a grid showing lighting, storage areas and box number ranges for each shelving unit. This initial effort has aided in the destruction efforts to plan for better organization of the available shelf space in conjunction with shelving incoming file boxes and finding ample space collectively for those boxes already onsite waiting to be shelved. Additional storage space was rented to assist in this effort and will help to serve as a staging area as files are moved around.

## Call Center

A consolidation of the former Information Center and the various decentralized departmental call centers, the Call Center was formally launched in September of 2017. The Call Center handled 87,216 calls through December 31, 2019, generating 88,279 service requests for county departments.

## Computer Services

Some of the accomplishments of the Division of Computer Services during 2016-2019 include:

- Spearheaded the redesign of Allegheny County's website, earning the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania 2016 Excellence in Website Design Award.
- Facilitated the planning for, design and movement of the County's Emergency Service operations - including its 911 Communications operations - to a new, state-of-the-art facility in Moon Township.
- Developed a mobile app that helps users navigate the trail systems in each of Allegheny County's nine parks.
- Upgraded the network facilities at 37 parks and maintenance sites to a fast, reliable ethernet solution, so that they now support all necessary applications for enhanced and efficient public service.
- Migrated all health department users onto a uniform County IT platform and eliminated separate internet access.
- Launched the County's customer relationship management system (CRMS) and helped to coordinate the integration of the County's call centers; upgraded the County's work order management system and integrated it with the CRMS.
- Launched new electronic medical records system at the Jail.
- Implemented an e-signature system for County contracts, now used to process over 2,777 contracts from June 2017 through December 2019, saving approximately 72,357 printed pages.
- Led the technology and security assessment for the selection and implementation for the County's new voting equipment.
- Collaborated with Public Works and Emergency Services to develop the Landslide Portal website that provides information and mapping tools to guide municipal leaders on landslide prevention and corrective measures.

## Elections

The Elections Division conducted primary and general elections each year, plus four special elections between 2016 and 2019. The division trained and deployed 3,500-6,500 poll workers for each election, across approximately 1,320 precincts at approximately 850 polling places. The division also processed voter registrations, including 324,353 applications in 2016, which was double the number processed in 2015.

In 2019, the Elections Division spearheaded a search committee to select the County's new voting equipment. The committee was charged with researching various types of equipment and making a recommendation to the Board of Elections that would fulfill the requirements set forth by the Commonwealth and meet the needs of the County's complex ballots. Based on the committee's work, the Board of Elections was able to select new, paper-based voting equipment to improve the voter experience as well as the integrity and security of elections, starting in 2020.

## Property Assessments and Real Estate

A total of 34,267 assessment appeals were processed by the Office of Property Assessments (OPA) during the 2016-2019 period. Beginning in 2016, OPA enabled residents to appeal property assessments online. In its first year, almost 21% of all filers took advantage of this method, increasing to 61.5% of all filers by 2019.

During the 2016-2019 period, OPA processed:

- Approximately 40,000 homestead exemptions for county residential property owners;
- 125 Clean & Green tax abatements for land in agriculture use, in agricultural reserve, and in forest reserve;
- 20 Residential Visitability Design tax credits for new construction or renovation housing projects that create access for disabled individuals.

The Real Estate division processed the following transactions during 2016-2019:

- 159,103 deeds recorded;
- 361,882 mortgages recorded;
- 2148 plans recorded;
- 199 military discharge papers recorded;
- 8197 power of attorney recordings;
- 7066 financial statement recordings;
- 10,027 Bonds and commission recordings;
- 150,148 realty transfer tax transactions;
- \$634,269,400 realty transfer taxes collected:
  - Commonwealth \$234,858,480
  - Municipalities \$251,680,960
  - School District \$147,729,960

In addition to the above transactional work, the Real Estate division completed a scanning project, converting nearly 100 years of deed records into a digital, electronically searchable database. The division also completed the transfer of lot and block sheets to fully digital format in a Geographic Information System database.

### Purchasing and Supplies

The Purchasing Division between 2016 and 2019:

- Facilitated the procurement of \$10,125,182 in materials, supplies and services via Purchasing card transactions.
- Processed a total of 34,785 purchase order conversions.
- Processed and awarded 514 solicitations (Invitation for Bid, Request for Proposals and Request for Qualifications).

In 2016 the division transitioned the County from the BidNet solicitation management system to Public Purchase. The new system adds significantly more functionality, is utilized by more than 1,200 government agencies, and has over 200,000 registered vendors. This system allows the division to reach a much broader supplier base which will result in an increased level of competition for County contracts. The division also enrolled in the SmartProcure search engine system that provides purchasing intelligence from more than 13,000 local, state, and federal procurement agencies.

Beginning in 2017, the Purchasing Division developed a purchasing consortium with the Allegheny County Housing Authority, Allegheny County Sanitary Authority, Port Authority, Airport Authority, Sports & Exhibition Authority, Community College of Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh, resulting in contract cost savings such as a 38% savings for elevator maintenance.

### Veteran Services

Between 2016 and 2019, Veterans Services distributed approximately 773,000 flags and 18,000 grave markers to funeral homes, cemeteries and civic groups. A total of \$836,000 in monetary burial benefits were obtained on behalf of veterans and their widows.

### Marketing and Special Events

Between 2016 and 2019, the Special Events hosted approximately 117 concerts for the Summer Concert Series, with annual attendance ranging from 156,000 to 207,000. The division produced and coordinated numerous additional special events, some of which are annual occurrences such as Picklesburgh on the Roberto Clemente Bridge, and SnowFest at Boyce Park. Other special events are one-time experiences such as Britsburgh at the Hartwood Acres Mansion and Family Fitness Fest at North Park.

Special Events staff secured \$181,531 in sponsorships and \$351,243 in-kind goods and services from partners such as BNY Mellon and EQT to help offset costs and enhance our events.

Marketing campaigns during the 2016-2019 period included successful efforts to raise awareness about programs, activities and events in the County parks, and about employment opportunities with the County Police, Elections, and other county departments.

The Marketing staff also coordinated movie and television productions that utilized county property assets, including “Mindhunter”, “Outsiders”, “Fences”, “An American Pickle”, “Sweet Girl”, “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom”, “Manhunt” and “Sesame Street”.

Beginning in 2016, the Marketing and Special Events began booking rentals for weddings and other special events at the Courthouse, Family Division Courtyard, and County Office Building lobby, in addition to Hartwood Acres. During the 2016-2019 period, a total of 223 weddings and other events were hosted at these sites.

In 2017, the division hosted the first-ever Courthouse Bridal & Event Showcase, drawing more than 150 visitors and showcasing 29 local vendors.

In 2018, the County added high-quality videos to the Division of Marketing and Special Events, opening the opportunity for new avenues for advertising via television with Comcast, Facebook Live and in movie theaters across the county. The combination of polished, engaging materials and these new targeted marketing opportunities have helped increase awareness and participation in the County’s events, programs, and services, ensuring that residents and visitors alike can take full advantage of the experiences Allegheny County has to offer.

In 2019, Marketing and Special Events introduced Parker the Chipmunk, the official mascot of the Allegheny County Parks. Parker has become a popular and beloved ambassador for the Allegheny County Parks, promoting events such as SnowFest, Hay Days and the Summer Concert Series.

The division completed 245 photo and 101 video assignments in 2019. Marketing campaigns drove Parks Department website traffic inquiries about Boyce season passes up by 562%, for skiing by 469%, for ice skating by 191%, for parks reservations by 57%, and for pools by 57%.

### Weights and Measures

Between 2016 and 2019, the Bureau of Weights and Measures performed 44,678 measuring device inspections, 17,806 weighing device inspections, and 8203 timing device inspections. Compliance rates during 2019 were 99.94% for measuring devices, 99.97% for weighing devices and 99.93% for timing devices. Total complaints received from 2016-2019 is 239.

### E. Legal mandate or necessity for the department

The Department of Administrative Services is authorized to provide both mandated and internal support services to County government under Article XIII, Section 6 – Continuity, of the Home Rule Charter of Allegheny County approved May 19, 1998 (the “Charter”). With respect to the specific functions of the Department, the following mandates are also fulfilled:

- **Records Administration:** The mandate for this service is provided per H.B. 1302 of 1991 which was implemented by Allegheny County Commissioners Board Action 925-93.
- **Computer Services:** This service is empowered by Article VI, Section 2(I) of the Charter that empowers the County Manager to ensure the maintenance of a management information system dealing with County services and operations.
- **Elections:** Election functions are provided for under Article X, Section 6 – Board of Elections and Article XIII, Sections 6 (a) and (d) – Continuity, of the Charter and under Article 211 of the Administrative Code of Allegheny County enacted June 20, 2000, as amended (the

“Administrative Code”). Article XII of the Charter and Article 1101 of the Administrative Code necessitate the maintenance of an election function to carry out the provisions for voter referendums and charter amendments. The Elections Division carries out its responsibilities pursuant to the Pennsylvania Election Code (25 P.S. §2600 et seq.) which sets forth the laws governing voter registration and the conduct of elections. In addition, the Federal Voting Rights Act 42 (U.S.C.S. §1971 et seq.), the National Voter Registration Act, the Federal Motor Voter Act (42 U.S.C.S. §1973(gag)) and the Help America Vote Act (includes PA Motor Voter Law) (P.L. 107-252) also mandate various election procedures.

- **Property Assessment:** The Second-Class County Assessment Law (72 P.S. §§6562.1-5452.20) and where applicable, the General County Assessment Law (72 P.S. §§5020.101-521), mandates property assessments in Allegheny County. An Office of Property Assessment is necessary in order to comply with Article X, Section 5 of the Charter and Articles 207, 209 and 210 of the Administrative Code, which require the County to establish and maintain an assessment system that meets accepted assessment standards, ensures access to public records regarding assessments and provides for the appeal of assessed values.
- **Real Estate:** Pursuant to Allegheny County Ordinance 38-04-OR, a referendum was placed on the May 17, 2005 Primary Election Ballot. As a result of the approval of the referendum and subsequent to 38-04-OR Section 3, the Allegheny County Administrative Code was amended to reduce the number of elected row offices. On January 7, 2008, the Department of Real Estate replaced the formerly elected row office of the Recorder of Deeds. The continuation of this function is authorized by Article XIII, Section 6(d) of the Home Rule Charter of Allegheny County.
- **Purchasing:** The functions of the Division of Purchasing and Supplies are mandated by Article VIII – Competitive Procurement, of the Charter and by Article 901 of the Administrative Code. As such, this entity is responsible for contracting for the purchase or lease of all materials, supplies, furnishings, equipment, insurance and surety and fidelity bonds or other personal property and nonprofessional services.
- **Veterans Services:** The Second-Class County Code, 16 P.S. §5123(F) requires the County to have a Director of Veterans Services. Additionally, the division is mandated and governed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, coordinated with the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania and authorized to provide support and collaboration with the Veterans' Administration, as appropriate.
- **Weights and Measures:** The County performs certain functions under the Consolidated Weights and Measures Act, 3 Pa. C.S.A. 4101 et seq., as provided for in a Memorandum of Understanding under 3 Pa. C.S.A. 4125 and entered into by the County for the term July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019, and renewed for the term July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2024.

#### F. Determination of public need for the department's services

With respect to the core functions related to (1) General Administration (2) Computer Services (3) Elections (4) Property Assessment (5) Purchasing (6) Veterans Services (7) Marketing and Special Events and (8) Real Estate, this Department fulfills the public need for:

1. General Administration
  - Maintenance of historical documents that are preserved in a manner that can be accessed by the public
  - Retrieval of County records and documents, as appropriate,

- Timely and accurate access to information that falls under the “Right to Know” criteria,
  - Assurance that all mailed correspondence for the County, Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) and the City of Pittsburgh is processed in a timely and appropriate manner.
  - Responsible printing, graphic design and photography services to all county departments, and
  - Weights and Measures acts as a third-party monitor to ensure fairness in the marketplace by testing and inspecting devices.
2. Call Center
    - Provides a centralized location for the public to call to request County services, obtain information about County services, and/or file a complaint or commendation. Enables the efficient tracking of service requests and complaints through resolution.
  3. Computer Services
    - Ensures that the general public can access reliable data related to services, and
    - Shapes long-term business strategies which benefits citizens with better public service at a competitive cost through the implementation of an enterprise-wide information technology infrastructure.
  4. Elections
    - Oversees election management practices that guarantee the right to vote for the approximately 850,000 registered voters in the county, and
    - Provides consistent standards necessary to accommodate voters at over 1,300 polling locations.
  5. Property Assessment
    - Conducts Assessments in an accurate and timely manner that meets basic principles related to computation of fair and reliable values; manages a single integrated system to handle assessments, appeals, tax billing and collections for ease of access by the public; and, also maintains the current lot-and block system,
    - Ensures that notices of changes in assessments are sent to all taxing jurisdictions,
    - Serves as the County's contact with the community, individuals, and taxing bodies for information, policies and practices relative to all assessment matters,
    - Establishes and maintains adequate descriptions of properties to assist in the determination of the value of those properties,
    - Determines whether property shall be exempt from real estate taxation,
    - Ensures the information contained in the report received from the Department of Real Estate of every deed or conveyance of land is properly filed,
    - Processes and schedules all assessment appeals,
    - Prepares and maintains guidelines and manuals consistent with nationally recognized standards to establish an inventory of all properties within the County,
    - Ensures access to public records in accordance with Article X, §5 of the Charter, and
    - Administers all abatement programs, including special acts.
  6. Real Estate
    - Functions as the custodian of the records and indexes related to conveyance of land or the transfer of real property in the county including deeds to mortgages and subdivision plans, and

- Acts as the collection agent for realty transfer taxes for the state, municipalities and school districts.
7. Purchasing
    - Ensures responsible contracting that utilizes protocols for the purchase or lease of all materials, insurance and surety and fidelity bonds or other personal property and non-professional services,
    - Engages in a continuous process improvement such as the modernization of purchasing procedures to include web-based bidding for the purchase of commodities, online purchasing and procurement cards which increase efficiencies and effectiveness of county operations, and
    - Maximizes the level of minority, women, disadvantaged and veteran owned business participation in County contracts by collaboration with the Department of M/W/DBE.
  8. Veterans Services
    - Provides access and assists with the acquisition to all benefits entitled to local military residents, and
    - Facilitates outreach and collaboration among the many generations of service men and women.
  9. Marketing and Special Events
    - Serves as the focal point for County events and cultural programming by providing oversight and/or development of regional events such as the Summer Concert Series, and
    - Provides logistical and marketing support in collaboration with the County Parks Foundation for foundation events and fundraising efforts.
  10. Weights and Measures
    - Ensures that the public is charged the correct amount for goods and services that are priced based on a weight (e.g. gasoline, produce and meats, etc.) or timing measure (e.g. parking meters) by testing and certifying that the measurement devices used by retailers and other provider are accurate.

#### G. Review of the methods used in the implementation of the department's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the department's legal mandates

In 2014 the Department of Administrative Services was reconfigured to focus on its key mission of serving the public. As such, the Department of Real Estate was abolished to become a division per Council Ordinance #30-14-OR, under the direction of the Department of Administrative Services in conjunction with the Office of Property Assessments. Additionally, the Office of Marketing and Special Events was transferred from the Parks Department to Administrative Services.

Alternative methods of service delivery that could be employed include:

- **De-centralize the administration of the internal service functions performed by the Department,** by designating that each of the County's other departments manage these functions individually

for their own departmental needs. Such internal service functions could include records management, computer services, printing, mailing, purchasing, marketing and special events. *Rationale for not pursuing this method:* The County would lose the benefit of economies of scale for each of these internal service functions. Providing these services in bulk quantities as can be achieved with the current departmental responsibilities saves the County money on staffing, pricing of goods and services, and enables the County to meet the needs of departments in a timely manner.

- **Break-up the Department into separate, smaller departments.** In 2019 the County determined that the Division of Computer Services should be separated from the Department of Administrative Services and established as its own department. Effective January 1, 2020, the Department of Information Technology was formed to better serve County government departments in recognition of the importance of technology and data security in today's information environment.
- **Contract the non-legally mandated services to outside vendors.** Likely candidates for consideration for privatization would include printing, marketing and special events. *Rationale for not pursuing this method:* If these functions were outsourced, the County departments that rely on their fast, reliable, cost competitive service provision and privacy protections would be negatively impacted.
- **Transfer service to another government agency.** Weights and Measures could be transferred to the Commonwealth's Department of Agriculture that performs this function for 52 counties in the State. Veterans Services could be transferred to the County's Department of Human Services. *Rationale for not pursuing this method:* The public served by Weights and Measures and Veterans Services have benefited from both divisions being part of the Department. The County can more directly ensure the delivery of these services for affected constituencies.

#### H. Evaluation of whether county government is the most effective body to implement the department's programs

Recognizing that general administrative functions (mailing, printing, records management, call center), purchasing, computer services, and marketing and special events are integral to the efficiency and effectiveness of the current organizational design, the County is the most effective entity to provide these services. These divisions provide a number of support functions that enable other county departments to provide essential services to the public.

Given the legislative mandates of the Commonwealth, county government is the designated entity responsible for Elections, Property Assessments, Real Estate and Veterans Services.

#### I. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the department or the department's provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare

While the absence or reduction of the Department would not directly impact the public health, safety or welfare, there would be indirect effects on all departments, including Emergency Services, Police, Public Works, Kane, Jail, Economic Development, Health and Human Services, and thus ultimately on the



general public. Each of these critical, public-facing agencies requires the services provided by the Department to be able to fulfill their mandates. Some specific examples include:

- Computer Services provides the mission-critical data infrastructure for all county departments, such as the computer-aided dispatch system for the county's 9-1-1 center, the offender management system for the jail, and the Kane electronic medical records system. Computer Services also supports all the information system and telecommunication systems hardware needs of all county departments.
- Property Assessment provides accurate valuation of real property that enables county, municipal and school district units of government to levy and collect property taxes to pay for critical services, including police, fire, emergency medical services and public education. In addition, the county property taxes that are able to be levied and collected as a result of the assessment function support the court system, district attorney and sheriff's office, which are also critical components of public health, safety and welfare.
- From an election perspective, voters would be denied their constitutional right to choose their elected representatives in a fair, open and democratic process. The elimination or reduction of this vital service would compromise public welfare and the common good.
- An absence or reduction to the division of Real Estate could affect the public welfare due to the public's inability to access millions of documents compromising the legal determinations of land ownership within the County.
- Veterans' needs would be greatly impacted without the services of the County's program that works to help acclimate them upon returning to civilian life. Assistance with employment, housing, mental and physical health benefits are essential.

#### J. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the department

The costs of compliance for this Department are referenced in the Resolutions (Operating Budget # 31-15- RE, Capital Budget # 32-15-RE and the Special Revenues/Grants Budget # 29-15-RE) signed by the County Executive on December 1, 2015. Additionally, the costs of compliance for the approved budget listed above are delineated within the 2015 Comprehensive Fiscal Plan (CFP) which can be referenced at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/budget-finance/county-budgets.aspx>

#### K. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the department have been processed

Due to the broad array of services, the process of filing public complaints occurs, as follows:

- With respect to the divisions of Administration, Property Assessment, Computer Services, Real Estate, Purchasing and Veterans Services, public complaints are generally received by the County Call Center, and either resolved directly by the Call Center or referred to the division in question.
- Due to the constitutional nature of complaints related to Elections, such calls are referred to the Elections Division, the County Law Department, or the Elections Board.

#### L. Recommendation

Recognizing that the efficiency and effectiveness of county operations are enhanced through the services offered by the Department of Administrative Services, the current organizational design should be retained.

## Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review (BPAAR)

### A. Legal mandate or necessity for the agency

Article X, Section 5 of the Allegheny County Home Rule Charter required the creation of the Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review (“the BPAAR”). The BPAAR was established on September 1, 2000 to replace the Board of Property Assessment Appeals & Review, which was established by the State Legislature effective 1st Monday of January, 1942. The Allegheny County Home Rule Charter provided that the BPAAR “shall exercise all powers and duties that [previous Board of Property Assessment Appeals & Review] had before the effective date of this Charter”. The BPAAR operates pursuant to provisions of the Allegheny County Administrative Code, of the Second-Class County Assessment Law, and of the General County Assessment Law.

The BPAAR is comprised of seven members, each appointed for three-year terms. Three members must have not less than ten years practical experience as a registered real estate broker, or real estate appraiser or assessor; one member must have not less than ten years practical experience as a building construction engineer, civil engineer or general contractor or assessor; and, one member must have not less than ten years’ experience as a practicing attorney at law with residential valuation expertise.

County Council appoints four members and the County Executive appoints three members, with confirmation by County Council. No member may serve more than four consecutive terms. T

### B. Determination of public need for the agency's services

Any person with a direct pecuniary interest in a property has a right to challenge the certified assessed value of the property. If the BPAAR was eliminated, parties would be required to file an appeal directly with the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, Board of Viewers. Filing an appeal directly with the Court of Common Pleas would result in increased costs to the taxpayer. Further, the scheduling of the appeal and the resolution of the appeal would take substantially longer.

### C. Review of the methods used in the implementation of each department's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the department's legal mandates

The role of the BPAAR is to:

- Hear and decide all appeals concerning the valuation of real property within Allegheny County; and
- Hear and decide all appeals of determinations of the tax-exempt status of any real property within Allegheny County.

Value appeal hearings are conducted by hearing officers designated by the BPAAR. Hearing officers are independent contractors and must meet the certain professional requirements provided in the Allegheny County Administrative Code.

If the majority of the BPAAR accepts the hearing officer’s recommendation, then that recommendation shall be the decision of the BPAAR. If the hearing officer’s recommendation is not accepted by a majority of the BPAAR, the BPAAR shall review the audio recording of the hearing—if deemed necessary—and all evidence supplied at the hearing to reach its own determination. After the decision is made at a regularly scheduled public meeting, a disposition notice is mailed to all interested parties.

Exemption and abatement appeal hearings are conducted by the BPAAR Solicitor and/or a BPAAR member. The Solicitor or BPAAR member creates a report and recommendation for review and discussion at a regularly scheduled BPAAR meeting where the BPAAR will vote to either sustain or reverse the determination made by the Office of Property Assessments.

As the BPAAR's functions and methods are delineated and governed by statute and other legislation, including the Allegheny County Code, an analysis of alternative methods is not appropriate.

#### D. Evaluation of whether county government is the most effective body to implement the department's programs

The BPAAR provides a timely, affordable, equitable, and efficient forum for resolving appeals of real estate assessment valuation. The BPAAR is independent from the Office of Property Assessments whose function is to place an assessed value on each property in Allegheny County. BPAAR resolved 29,031 appeals and 92 exemption and abatement requests between 2016 and 2019, 50% of BPAAR cases were decided within 86 days of the appeal.

#### E. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the department or the department's provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety or welfare

If the BPAAR was eliminated interested parties would be forced to file an appeal directly with the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, Board of Viewers. Utilizing the Court system requires costs to the taxpayer. In addition, the scheduling of the appeal and the resolution of the appeal would take substantially longer.

#### F. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the department

BPARR is not a regulatory body and does not charge fees for its services.

#### G. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the department have been processed

All complaints are made directly to the BPAAR. The BPAAR has specific procedures to address complaints.

#### H. In the Case of an Agency that Has Received Appropriations from the County's Operating Budget in Any of the Five (5) Years Prior to the Sunset Review, a Financial Audit of the Agency Performed by an Entity independent of the County.

As this entity received an appropriation from the County's Operating budget, an audit is part of the primary County audit conducted for the Office of the County Controller by Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC.

#### I. Recommendation

Continue.

# Department of Facilities Management

## A. Vision

To present County-owned facilities in a clean, safe, comfortable, well-maintained condition for all residents and employees in support of the mission of service and stewardship for Allegheny County.

## B. Mission

To maintain and improve County facilities for all employees and residents.

## C. Overview

Facilities Management is responsible for maintenance, custodial services, heating and cooling and renovations for more than 3.5 million square feet in 45 buildings owned by the County, as well as well as various other structures in the County parks and other properties, such as ski slopes, wave pools, golf courses and other recreational facilities. The Department promotes the stewardship of County resources by ensuring that County facilities are constructed, renovated, and maintained to provide for energy efficiency, safety, and practicality, promoting a positive atmosphere for all residents and County employees. The department leads the County's sustainability initiatives, including energy, water, and waste conservation, to reduce our carbon footprint and operational costs, to improve environmental and human health, and to increase green job opportunities.

To fulfill this responsibility, the Department consists of following two divisions:

- Administration: Maintains strong internal financial and administrative controls related to personnel, payroll, human resource functions, procurement, and budget. Additionally, it develops strategies to ensure departmental operations are executed efficiently and professionally. Illustrations of this commitment of efficiency and professionalism is embodied in the Office of Sustainability and Office of Safety. Sustainability promotes comprehensive practices within the County government through countywide polices, program and green projects resulting in significant reductions in energy and water use. Safety is tasked with promoting and implementing occupational safety of employees as well as the public at large.
- Operations: Provides capital management and maintenance of all County-owned and certain County leased facilities.

## D. Achievements of department since 2015 (2016 through 2019)

Service Request Response: During 2016 – 2019, Facilities Management responded to approximately 100,000 requests for service for building maintenance issues, including plumbing, painting, carpentry, electrical work, and moving.

Capital Project Design and Implementation: Facilities Management designed and/or managed 145 projects funded from the Capital Budget during 2016-2019, totaling \$42,450,000.

Medical Examiner and Family Courts Maintenance Program: In 2016 Facilities Management took on the responsibility of the maintenance of the Medical Examiner's Office and the Family Court Building. Performing maintenance for these facilities in-house reduced costs by roughly \$500,000 per year. Since the program began in April 2016 for Family Courts and July 2016 for the Medical Examiner, there has been more structure in the workflow and an improvement in the quality and quantity of work performed as well as addressing items not addressed by previous contractors.

Courtroom Remodeling Projects: During 2016 – 2019, Facilities Management remodeled courtrooms 513, 507, and 509 in the County Courthouse.

Courthouse Roof Replacement: Facilities Management oversaw the replacement of the Courthouse roof. The original roof, completed in 1888, was comprised of approximately 454,000 terra-cotta tiles that had become damaged over its 130 years of service. The new roof has been modified to meet current code requirements, while maintaining the historical aesthetics of the original design. In collaboration with Wendell August Forge, many of the original terra-cotta roof tiles have been repurposed into commemorative gift items, with the sale proceeds benefitting the Allegheny County Parks Foundation.

Rebuilding of Fallen Officer Memorial: In November 2019, Facilities Management replaced the Allegheny County Police Fallen Officer Memorial in McCandless Township. This memorial was originally dedicated in 1974 and bears the names of 75 police officers who were lost in the line of duty. The new and completely rebuilt memorial was a project more than five years in the making and showcases the fine work of the Plumbers and Trowel Trades.

Energy Savings: Since 2014, Facilities has been replacing fluorescent and incandescent light fixtures with LEDs throughout Allegheny County, which conserve energy and save money. In 2018, the County switched four new sites over to LEDs, resulting in annual energy savings of \$27,445.

Electric Vehicle Chargers: In late 2019, Facilities installed two dual electric vehicle chargers in preparation for the arrival of four new Chevy Bolts in 2020. By replacing four gasoline powered fleet vehicles, the electric-powered Chevy Bolts reduce tailpipe emissions and are estimated to reduce Carbon Dioxide Equivalents by nearly 31,000 pounds per year.

Waste Diversion: Since 2018, Facilities Management has been working with RoadRunner Recycling Inc. to pick up recyclables from County parks, Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, the Medical Examiner's office and all four Kane facilities. Together these efforts have diverted 174 tons of waste from landfills, reducing 534 metric tons of carbon dioxide – the same as powering 92 homes.

Additional Sustainability Initiatives: Facilities Management's Sustainability Office serves as a resource to all County Departments, providing them with education materials, staff trainings, recycling bins, and technical guidance for their green Initiatives. In 2019, the Sustainability Office provided support to the Parks Department, as they swapped out plastic straws for compostable corn replacements in their concessions – eliminating approximately 225,000 plastic straws previously in use. In addition, the Sustainability Office provided guidance to Kane Community Living Centers about their new pilot to replace all Styrofoam products with compostable materials in the employee cafeteria at the Glen Hazel facility. In 2016 and 2017 the County received the Green Workplace Top Performer Awards in the Large Municipal category and Top Water Saver.

#### E. Legal mandate or necessity for the department

Recognizing the need to retain structural, environmental and physical integrity of the county assets, the County Executive proposed a restructuring of functions historically performed by the Department of Public Works and Administrative Services and created the Department of Facilities Management. By the adoption of the 2013 budget through Resolution 28-12 RE by County Council, the Department was officially sanctioned.

#### F. Determination of public need for the department's services

The Facilities Management Department ensures that County facilities are constructed, renovated and maintained in a manner that protects the structural integrity of County assets, as well as the safety and quality of life of the general public. Through safe, efficient and effective delivery of service, this department guarantees that revenues are used appropriately to maintain facilities so that the other County departments, offices of independently elected officials and offices and courtrooms of the Court of Common Pleas can operate safely while fulfilling their public service missions.

#### G. Review of the methods used in the implementation of each department's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the department's legal mandates

The department delivers its services by utilizing the skills of seven labor groups including painters, electricians, boilermakers, carpenters, masonry, stationary engineers and plumbers. While the delivery of facility maintenance and repair services could be provided through third-party private contractors, contracted services would most likely occur at a higher cost and longer lead times. In most cases where capital projects are small-scale and/or time-sensitive, management requires the flexibility to use in-house design, management and labor to deliver the projects on-time and under budget. The department has also demonstrated that custodial services are provided with in-house staff at lower cost than previously contract services.

#### H. Evaluation of whether county government is the most effective body to implement the department's programs

Allegheny County government is ultimately responsible for the condition of its owned assets. Given this, the County is the most appropriate entity to provide these services.

#### I. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the department or the department's provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety or welfare

The absence or reduction of the Facilities Management would have significant adverse consequences, including but not limited to:

- Increased costs for repairs or facility replacements because appropriate preventive maintenance was not being performed; and
- Facility or system failures such as electrical, mechanical plumbing or building structure that would put the health and welfare of County Employees and the general public at jeopardy.

#### J. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the department

The costs for this Department are referenced in the Operating Budgets, Capital Budgets, Special Revenues/ Grants Budgets and Comprehensive Fiscal Plan which can be referenced at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/budget-finance/county-budgets.aspx>.

#### K. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the department have been processed

At the Department's inception, a process was developed to transition from a manual process of receiving requests for maintenance services to an automated, data-driven process to address internal issues of concern. In 2018 the County implemented GovQA as its customer relationship management system. During 2018 and 2019, a total of 52,467 service requests have been recorded, with an average time to close of 26 days.

#### L. Recommendation

Given that the Department of Facilities Management was created in 2013 to protect the structural integrity of County government's building assets, it is recommended that the Department be maintained.



# Department of Parks

## A. Vision

Act as a mechanism to preserve the integrity of the environment and enhance the region's ability to promote itself as "green" which gives it a strategic and competitive edge in the race to recruit companies, families, individuals, and students to relocate here.

## B. Mission

To enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of Allegheny County residents by providing quality landscapes, facilities, programs, and special events that meet county wide needs for leisure and recreation.

## C. Overview

The Parks Department sustains and enhances the nine County parks comprising 12,044 acres, with 175 miles of trail and 279 facilities available for rental. All parks are open 365 days a year, free of charge. The Parks Department encourages the involvement of people of all ages through park programs, leagues, and volunteer opportunities. Within the parks, residents can enjoy many amenities, including two golf courses, four lifeguarded pools, two skating rinks, a ski slope, and more. The department also offers a wide variety of health and fitness programs, sports clinics, leagues, and lessons, outdoor programs and activities, arts and entertainment events and programs, adaptive programming and a variety of special events.

The Department of Parks fulfills their responsibilities and provides services through three main divisions:

### 1. Parks Administration

Parks Administration provides oversight and development of programming to enhance community life specifically in the following:

- Administers and manages the resources of the nine County Parks
- Seeks funding for park projects
- Provides long-term planning for preservation, conservation, and use of the County Parks resources
- Implements programming to address recreational needs throughout the year

### 2. Park Rangers

Park Rangers serve as unarmed and non-sworn ambassadors of the parks for the education of the public and the protection and preservation of the natural environment, including:

- Monitors the parks, which will lead to parks that are better maintained, safe, and welcoming to visitors

- Offers information, guidance, programming, and assistance to visitors at the parks
- Serves as the educational ambassadors, presenting outreach programs to local schools and work to bring schools to the parks for field trips
- Works with many other organizations like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to create community connections with the parks

### 3. Parks Maintenance

Parks Maintenance maintains the Parks’ facilities and properties, including:

- Two hundred and fifteen (215) rental facilities
- Twenty-eight (28) ball fields
- Two 18-hole golf courses and an additional 9-hole course
- The animals and area at the South Park Game Preserve and the Round Hill working farm
- Two (2) ice skating rinks
- Five (5) off-leash dog areas
- Park roads
- 175 miles of park trails

### D. Achievements of department since 2015 (2016 through 2019)

The Department of Parks made remarkable achievements from the year of 2016 to 2019, including but not limited to achieving the following attendance levels and completing other noteworthy projects:

Season	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Ice Rinks Admission	34,590	37,169	23,928	34,850	130,537
Boyce Park Ski Admission	12,212	11,740	16,421	16,569	56,942
Boyce Park Tubing Admission	8,004	8,980	9,862	11,365	38,211
Number of ski sessions offered	85	105	102	105	397
Number of Tubing sessions offered	224	180	170	178	752

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Golf Courses Admission	85,001	85,810	70,903	86,502	328,216
Swimming/Wave Pools Admission	191,861	156,633	169,566	187,632	705,692
Hartwood Acres Tours Participants	3,371	2,568	1,950	2,101	9,990
Parks Run Programs Participants	6,820	13,749	17,416	21,627	59,612
Learn to Swim Lessons Participants	450	1,036	843	1,007	3,336
Learn to Skate Lessons Participants	1,550	1,712	2,003	1,963	7,228
Ranger Public Programs Participants	1,054	1,416	974	1,628	5,072

Rangers Outreach Program Participants	4,059	4,771	5,536	7,764	22,130
Rangers Contacts and Impact	68,434	59,222	52,353	53,350	233,359
Number of Memberships	2,778	2,695	2,525	3,005	11,003
Number of shelter reservations	8,615	8,815	9,039	8,452	34,921
Number of rounds of golf served	85,001	85,810	70,903	86,502	328,216
Number of trees planted	103	504	2,375	1,654	4,636

**Online Snow Tubing Sales:** For the 2016-2017 ski season Parks began allowing residents to purchase snow tubing tickets online rather than in-person. Because all tickets went on sale at the beginning of the day, weekend sell-outs were a problem, especially for guests that live a little further away. The option of online sales is an improvement for overall customer satisfaction.

**Increased Recreational Programming:** The department made a strategic effort to get more people into the parks by increasing the number, diversity and quality of its program offerings. Due to the success of this effort, the department realized a nearly ten-fold increase in the number of recreational programs offered, from 35 in 2015 to 342 in 2019, and attendance increased by more than 2400%, from 813 participants in 2015 to 20,946 participants in 2019.

In 2019 the Parks Department partnered with YMCA to host their summer day camps in South Park and Settlers Cabin Park. Many of the parks' rental facilities are not typically utilized during the week, so the department was able to add this program without impacting regular park facility rentals.

The department also held the first annual Winefest at Hartwood Acres with all tickets being sold. All participating vendors are interested in returning, and many more new vendors have inquired, so the department is planning to expand to two Winefest events in 2020.

**Adaptive Programming:** Allegheny County Parks took the first steps toward increasing recreational adaptive programming in 2019. Dek and Ice Hockey clinics for Persons with Cognitive/Developmental and Physical/Mobile Disabilities took place in August and December. Paralympic Gold Medalist Dan McCoy joined the Department for the Sled Hockey Clinic on December 30, featuring a clinic and scrimmages for existing and new sled players. This event was also the first time Parks partnered with AbleGamers Charity to bring inclusion and improved quality of life for people with disabilities through the power of video games. The success of these programs will lead to the development of additional adaptive opportunities for Parks and the public in 2020.

The Park Rangers ran two programs for Partners for Quality/Citizen Care, an organization that works with adults with disabilities. The Rangers ran a Skins & Skulls program at the Walden Activity Center and an Intro to Archaeology program, as well as a Birds & Nests program for the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council for their English as a second language refugee families.

**Park Ranger Expansion:** The Park Ranger program, which started in 2015, expanded each year during 2016 - 2019, with 7,419 program participants in 2019, and 39,432 in-park contacts. The number of

programs offered, the number of outreach and community events attended, and the in-park activities offered all increased.

**Ecological Assessments:** In partnership with the Allegheny County Parks Foundation and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, the department completed ecological assessments of Boyce Park, South Park, Settlers Cabin Park and Hartwood Acres. These assessments are being used to help identify and prioritize maintenance and capital projects that will conserve or restore the natural environment within the parks and ensure the ecological sustainability of the parks for future generations.

**Deer Lakes Park Upgrades:** 2016 saw a major upgrade to Deer Lakes Park, including the installation of the largest playground in the County Parks system, a shade shelter, and site work to remove pavement and add new green space and safely connect the playground and spray park areas.

**Hartwood Mansion Wedding Facility:** In collaboration with the Department of Facilities Management, a permanent Grand Pavilion wedding and events structure was installed at the Hartwood Mansion, providing sheltered capacity for a 150-person event.

**New Outdoor Exercise Equipment:** Exercise equipment was installed at eight County Parks (all except Hartwood), including eight sites near playgrounds and two along trails. The equipment is designed to give parents and guardians the opportunity to exercise while still safely watching their children play. The equipment along the trails is designed to complement the runners and walkers exercise routines.

**NEWT Wastewater Treatment Systems:** Two NEWT (Natural Engineered Wastewater Treatment) systems were installed to treat wastewater from all Round Hill Park, and from a new restroom at the Deer Lakes spray park. In addition to conventional settling tanks, the system utilizes the natural filtration properties of wetlands, in the form of plants and mineral media, as well as ultraviolet light disinfection, to treat the facilities' wastewater. No chemical additives are required using this innovative, passive treatment technology. This also results in reduced maintenance costs.

**Deer Lakes Permeable Paver Parking Lot:** Parks completed installation of a permeable paver parking lot in Deer Lakes Park. The pavers allow stormwater to enter between open joints and into a stone recharge bed - ultimately infiltrating naturally into the site's sub soils where it is cooled and cleaned. An estimated 600,000 gallons of parking lot runoff will be prevented from entering Little Deer Creek annually.

**Lawn-to-Meadow Projects:** In 2017, a 5-acre hillside of regularly mowed lawn, commonly referred to as Indian Hill, was converted into a diverse mix of grasses and wildflowers native to the southwestern PA region. There are numerous environmental benefits to the new meadow, such as reduced mowing and associated air pollution, improved water quality, and wildlife habitat. The Meadow also introduces 19 native species to Boyce Park that support thousands of diverse pollinator populations, as well as creating food, nesting and safe breeding areas for several birds and small mammals. In the summer of 2018, the Meadow wowed visitors with its wildflower displays. Building on this success, the Department converted 9.5 acres of lawn to meadows in Hartwood Acres, White Oak, South Park and Boyce Park in 2019.

**South Park Outdoor Classroom:** An outdoor classroom was constructed near the future site of the Cascades area in South Park, neighboring the newly planted Meadow. The outdoor classroom will be a great resource for the Rangers to use while teaching programs and leading hikes. Outdoor education supports a myriad of physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits to children. Studies have shown that teaching a class outdoors helps students become more focused on the subject matter and are often less

disruptive. Students who learn outdoors develop a sense of self, independence, confidence, creativity, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Having facilities that encourage outdoor learning benefits not only Parks Ranger programming but neighboring schools and summer camps who may also utilize the space.

**Solar Energy Utilization:** The Parks Department completed several projects utilizing solar power to improve visitors' experiences in 2019. Solar panels were added to Patrol shelter in Boyce Park so that the shelter could have outlets, allowing renters to plug in music, crockpots, etc. Solar crosswalks and solar lighted pathways were also added at both North Park and South Park, allowing park users to feel safe utilizing the parks even when it gets dark earlier in winter and until park hours of midnight, during the summer months.

**New Forestry Crew:** A new Forestry crew, formed in September 2017, removed 193 dead trees and daylighted 3,050 feet of road. In 2018 the forestry crew removed a total of 682 trees, ground 279 stumps, and daylighted 16,950 feet of roadway. In 2019 another 496 trees were removed, 185 stumps were ground, and 9,015 feet of roadway was daylighted.

**Planting:** Parks staff planted approximately 6,000 plants along the shoreline at the lower lakes in Deer Lakes Park, as well as approximately 1,000 flowers at Hartwood Acres garden when it was renovated in 2017. A total of 2,053 trees were planted in County parks in 2018, and another 1,654 in 2019.

**Park and Trail Stewards:** Allegheny County Park Rangers launched a Park Steward Program in Spring 2019. Park Stewards are volunteers who adopt an area of one of our nine parks, with the goal of restoring and protecting its natural ecosystem by removing invasive and non-native plant species so that native plants and habitats will thrive. Since implementation, Park Rangers trained over 30 volunteers in four different training sessions on topics including invasive species identification, removal techniques, and the safe use and care of equipment. In addition to the invasive species stewardship trainings, the Park Rangers also conducted two Trail Steward trainings to help with the management of our trail system throughout our parks.

**Tighter Cash Control System:** In partnership with an auditing firm, daily cash handling procedures were updated and further defined. Parks staff established auditing procedure/schedule for rinks, pools, and golf courses. The new procedures will help ensure proper cash handling at Park facilities.

## E. Legal mandate or necessity for the department

The legal mandate is authorized by Article XIII, Section 6(d) of the Home Rule Charter of Allegheny County. Additionally, Division 6 of the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances regulates the Department of Parks.

## F. Determination of public need for the department's services

County parks, amenities and recreational programs improve residents' physical and psychological health, strengthen communities, and make Allegheny County an attractive place to live and work. Numerous

studies have shown that the social, environmental, economic, and health benefits of a robust park system. Well-cared for parks attract tourists, serve as community signature cultural amenities, offer a marketing tool for cities to attract businesses and conventions and host festivals, concerts and athletics events. Parks contribute to home values, as homebuyers prefer homes that are close to parks and open space. Green spaces in urban/suburban areas provide substantial ecosystem services, including sequestering carbon, supplying oxygen, reducing air pollution, and controlling flooding.

#### G. Review of the methods used in the implementation of the department's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the department's legal mandates

The Parks Department delivers its services organized as follows:

- Parks Maintenance: utilizing its own team of maintenance staff and laborers, the department maintains the 12,044 acres within the parks, as well as over 400 facilities including rental buildings, shelters, maintenance/support buildings, storage buildings, long term lease facilities, nature centers, restrooms, barns, etc. across all nine parks.
- Park Rangers: County's Park Rangers offer educational and interpretive programming as well as outreach programming to local schools and communities. They also provide park visitors with orientation and information while ensuring park regulations are being followed.
- Recreational Activities and Programming: the department directly employs staff to operate the four park pools, two skating rinks, two golf courses and ski/snow tubing slopes. Additional seasonal and part-time staff are employed to deliver recreational programs such as yoga and youth sports lessons. The department also contracts with organizations such as the YMCA and L.L. Bean to provide even more programming opportunities like day camps and kayaking lesson.
- Capital Improvements: Parks Department often partners with the Facilities Management Department to design and implement capital projects, such as the Hartwood Acres wedding facility. Larger, more complex and/or projects with great time flexibility may be contracted out for design and/or construction.

In addition, the Allegheny County Parks Foundation provides matching funds to improve, conserve and restore park facilities and open spaces by raising funds, designing projects and supporting educational, recreational and cultural activities in the nine parks.

The Parks Department already uses a combination of in-house and contracted services, and internal and external funding sources to provide programming and fulfill its legal obligations to maintain and improve the county parks system.

#### H. Evaluation of whether county government is the most effective body to implement the department's programs

County government can apply for grants, obtain Allegheny Regional Asset District funding, develop partnerships, and obtain sponsorships to continue to offer recreational opportunities and facilities at little or no cost to County residents and visitors. If the County Parks were operated privately, the cost to residents would be higher.

I. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the department or the department's provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety or welfare

The Parks Department helps to ensure public health, safety and welfare by: (1) providing active recreational opportunities for healthy lifestyles; (2) maintaining park acreage as green space, contributing to a healthy environment; and (3) operating facilities such as its swimming pools and ski slopes in compliance with federal, state and local safety regulations. The reduction or elimination of the County Parks Department would reduce or eliminate the recreational amenities and facilities within the county parks, which would reduce the standard of living for residents of the region.

J. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the department

The costs of compliance for this Department are referenced in the Operating Budgets, Capital Budgets, Special Revenues/Grants Budgets, and Comprehensive Fiscal Plan which can be referenced at:

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/budget-finance/county-budgets.aspx>

K. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the department have been processed

The County implemented a new customer relationship management software system in 2018. Since that time, the County Call Center has forwarded a total of 6,771 service requests to the Parks Department (note that these are not necessarily complaints). The Parks Department fulfilled these service requests within three days, on average, and improved response time from three to just two days between 2018 and 2019.

L. Recommendation

Recognizing that the Department of Parks enhances the quality of life of county residents, attracts outside resources to support its mission, and operates effectively and efficiently, this department should be retained as currently configured.



## Cooperative Extension

### A. Legal mandate or necessity for the agency

The Penn State Cooperative Extension was created through a series of acts by the federal government. In 1862 the Morrill Land Grant Act was passed which enabled states to sell federal land, invest the proceeds and use the income to support colleges where the objective will be to teach agriculture and the mechanical arts along with scientific and classical studies. Subsequently, the state legislature designated Penn State University the land grant institution of Pennsylvania.

On January 27, 1907, the College's Board of Trustees took action to officially start an extension education program, offering non-credit courses in agricultural science. In 1914, the federal government passed the Smith–Lever Act of 1914 which mandated the creation of cooperative extensions, specifically connected to the land-grant universities, in order to inform people about current developments in agriculture, home economics, public policy/government, leadership, 4-H, economic development), and many other related subjects. Today, the Penn State Cooperative Extension in Allegheny County is one of 67 extension offices within each county of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### B. Determination of public need for the agency's services

The Cooperative Extension is a function of Pennsylvania State University. The continued existence is wholly dependent upon the University and the College Board of Trustees. As part of the function of a land grant institution, the University is required to offer the services provided by the Extension.

### C. Review of the methods used in the implementation of the agency's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the agency's legal mandates

The focus of Penn State Cooperative Extension has expanded from strictly rural applications, such as 4-H and youth, agriculture, horticulture/gardening and natural resources, to significant programming in metropolitan communities addressing issues of water quality, stormwater, green infrastructure, food policy and research, forestry, planning and community development. Penn State Cooperative Extension in Allegheny County gives local residents, municipalities, community development organizations and civic agencies access to the resources and expertise of the Pennsylvania State University. Through technical assistance, educational programs, publications, and events, the Cooperative Extension delivers unbiased, research-based information to Allegheny County citizens.

### D. Evaluation of whether the agency is the most effective body to implement its programs

As the state's only land-grant university and mandated by federal acts, the core mission of Penn State University Cooperative Extension Office is to provide research-based information and assistance to residents of Allegheny County. This type of outreach is delivered by a combination of private, federal, state and county contractual funding which may not be accessible without this entity.

E. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the agency or its provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety or welfare

Recognizing that this entity's technical assistance, educational programs, publications, and events, provides research-based information to Allegheny County citizens, the absence of this entity would compromise the ability of the community to evaluate issues related to public welfare.

F. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the agency

The Extension is not a regulatory agency.

G. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the agency have been processed

No formal complaints have been filed with this entity.

H. Recommendation

Continue.

## Parks Foundation

### A. Legal mandate or necessity for the agency

The Allegheny County Parks Foundation supports the improvement, preservation and restoration of the county parks. The Foundation is a nonprofit agency that solicits private donations to finance and manage capital improvement projects in the Allegheny County Parks system and works with the parks constituencies in all county parks and coordinates volunteer activity.

### B. Determination of public need for the agency's services

There is a public need for the Allegheny County Parks Foundation. As a nonprofit, the organization is able to solicit tax-deductible private donations for projects in the Allegheny County park system for the public good.

### C. Review of the methods used in the implementation of the agency's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the agency's legal mandates

The Foundation strengthens the health and vibrancy of the community by improving, conserving and restoring the nine Allegheny County parks. Working in partnership with the County, the Parks Foundation brings together ideas, leadership and resources to make the parks more sustainable and enjoyable for all. The Foundation raises public and private funds from foundations, corporations, state and federal grant programs and individuals to design and implement projects in the parks. It commissions and conducts surveys, plans and ecological assessments of individual parks and the park system which guide the strategic development of improvements in all nine county parks. All projects are undertaken in partnership with the County, and the County matches most private and non-county public funds raised by the Foundation.

### D. Evaluation of whether the agency is the most effective body to implement the agency's programs

The Allegheny County Parks Foundation is effective as a private nonprofit agency that is able to fundraise for County parks improvement projects and partner with the County to plan and implement projects.

E. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the agency or its provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety or welfare

To experience and enjoy our parks, the Allegheny County's Park system requires a high level of maintenance and management. The Allegheny County Parks Foundation has the ability to raise private funds from individual, corporations and foundations. The nonprofit provides contributors with tax deductions on contributions and a way to be engaged in our parks. There is no other legal organization that allows for fundraising specifically for the Allegheny County Parks

F. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the agency

The Foundation is not a regulatory agency.

G. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the agency have been processed

As no formal public complaints have been filed with this Foundation, this issue is not applicable.

H. Recommendation

Continue.

# Department of Public Works

## A. Vision

Commitment to our mission enhances the quality of life, promotes economic prosperity, and improves mobility for the citizens of Allegheny County. As a recognized public works leader, we strive to continuously improve our operations to provide for the safety of our employees and the public and to ensure a safe and sustainable infrastructure for current and future generations.

## B. Mission

To provide the citizens and visitors of the county with world-class infrastructure, maintenance and engineering services delivered in a timely, cost-effective and environmentally responsible manner.

## C. Overview

The primary responsibility of the Department of Public Works (DPW) is to ensure safe and accessible roads and bridges, including design, construction and maintenance of major public assets. The department also purchases and maintains the County's fleet of over 700 vehicles and heavy equipment. The department is accredited by the American Public Works Association (APWA) and is the only department in Pennsylvania with this distinction.

To accomplish the responsibilities, the department is structured in three divisions:

### 1. Accounting and Administration

Accounting and Administration Division plans, directs and manages, licenses and certifications, training and development, human resources, safety, procurement services and fiscal affairs for the department. This division is also charged with overseeing reimbursements from federally, state or locally funded projects, agility agreements, the accreditation process and outreach and education where mandated by state regulations.

### 2. Engineering and Construction

Engineering and Construction Division is responsible for all aspects of the management and execution of the department's Capital Improvement Program for roads and bridges as well as projects for other county departments and governmental agencies. This division provides engineering and management services for the construction and rehabilitation of county roads, walls and bridges using the most economical engineering technologies and environmentally sensitive methods and materials. In addition, the division is responsible for inspections, right-of-way management and permitting.

### 3. Maintenance Operations:

The Maintenance Operations Division maintains more than 408 miles of roads and park drives and 533 bridges and culverts. It improves county assets using cost-effective and reliable maintenance and repair solutions. All assets are maintained and repaired to extend their useful lives until funds are available for major rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Traffic Section (traffic signs, banners, line painting and pavement markings), paving crews, heavy equipment operators and iron workers perform a variety of activities while being observed and monitored by the county's Safety Team. The Fleet Management Section maintains and services the county's over 781 vehicle and heavy equipment fleet. It oversees a cost-effective fuel purchasing program for fleet operations and ensures that county vehicles and equipment are safe, reliable, economical, and minimize their carbon footprint.

#### D. Achievements of department since 2015 (2016 through 2019)

The Department of Public Works' achievements from 2016 through 2019, include the following noteworthy projects and programs:

**Road Program:** With 408 miles of road owned by the County, the department strives to pave more than 40 miles per year, maintaining a cycle of repaving each road every ten years. In 2016, the Department of Public Works (DPW) rehabilitated 58 miles of roadway – an 87% increase in miles paved over 2015. This was followed by paving 61 miles, 43 miles and 43 miles in 2017, 2018 and 2019, respectively. These increases resulted from the County's investment in new paving equipment and a milling machine for in-house paving, new revenue sources acquired through vehicle license registration fees, as well as a collaboration with PennDOT to receive 80% federal funding for the Middle Road, Thompson Run Road, and Neville Island bike lane projects.

**Corrigan Drive in South Park:** DPW, in collaboration with Parks Department, worked on a road diet for Corrigan Drive in South Park. This \$1.4 million project reduced the four-lane road to two lanes with a turning lane and installed bike lanes on either side. The previous road cross-section was oversized based on the volume of traffic, and it was determined that the road would operate at the same efficiency with two lanes of traffic and a center turning lane. The project is a benefit to park users as it adds a new attraction and makes traveling through the park safer.

**Road Crack Sealing:** Public Works added workers, purchased new equipment, and instituted a new program to dramatically improve its crack-sealing operations in 2019. That resulted in a record 42.17 miles of roadway being crack sealed. By stopping water from entering the newly sealed cracks, the department greatly increased the life of pavement on 36 of its roads.

**Adopt-a-Roadway Program:** Public Works, along with the Department of Facilities Management, helped launch the County's new Adopt-a-Roadway program in 2019 to address littering issues while also protecting our environment and local wildlife. The program allows organizations, corporations, groups, and individuals an opportunity to "adopt" a county-owned road and assist the County in its efforts to keep our roadways clean. Participants are then recognized with a sign along the adopted section of road.

**In-House Construction:** The department has placed special emphasis on performing more in-house construction work that in the past was done by a contractor. In 2019, that resulted in the completion of 43 in-house projects, including lateral support and landslide repair work, inlet installation and other

drainage work, sidewalk installation, and construction of a new walking path at the Kane Community Living Center in Glen Hazel.

**Homestead-Duquesne Road Betterment:** In 2019, DPW completed a betterment project on Homestead-Duquesne Road in West Mifflin between Homeville Road and Grant Avenue. The \$2 million project included milling and paving, concrete and drainage repairs, and installation of new traffic signals. It also involved safety improvements, especially a much-needed traffic reconfiguration at the road's intersection with Homeville Road and Worton Boulevard.

**Homeville Viaduct Rehabilitation:** DPW completed the \$10.7 million Homeville Viaduct Rehabilitation in 2016. With the assistance of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), this 15-month project of the 781-foot-long structure preserved a vital connection between businesses, residents and schools. The bridge carries two lanes of traffic and pedestrians over Lower Bull Run, Thompson Run Creek, the Union Railroad and Grant Avenue Extension in West Mifflin. Originally constructed by the County in the mid 1950's and rehabilitated in 1981, the bridge serves approximately 10,000 vehicles per day, including emergency vehicles, school buses, and 400 commercial vehicles. The design-bid-build rehabilitation included replacement and widening of the concrete deck from 26 to 29 feet, a 5-foot wide sidewalk, replacement of the existing hand rail with an 8-foot protective fence, new barriers, expansion dams, bearings, highway lighting, structural steel repairs and re-painting of the entire structure. Several expansion dams were also eliminated as part of this project by the installation of a continuity detail. The elimination of these joints decreases the amount of water the concrete piers and steel structure are exposed to and helps extend their life. Although it was necessary to detour vehicular traffic during construction, pedestrian traffic was accommodated by providing a daily shuttle service.

**Sister Bridges:** DPW completed a \$25.4 million rehabilitation of the Andy Warhol (Seventh Street) Bridge in 2017. The project earned several awards, including as the March of Dimes' Transportation Project of the Year for 2019. It was the first of three rehabilitation projects on Pittsburgh's iconic Sister Bridges. The second project – a \$23.3 million rehabilitation of the Rachel Carson (Ninth Street) Bridge – began in 2019. The work on the bridges includes structural steel repairs, construction of a concrete deck, painting of the bridge Aztec Gold, installation of new lighting to resemble its original appearance from the 1920s, and replacement of the bridge's expansion dams, drainage systems, and sidewalks.

**Philip Murray Bridge:** DPW completed a \$21.1 million rehabilitation of the Phillip Murray (South Tenth Street) Bridge in 2019. The project included installation of an innovative bridge cable dehumidification system, which is one of only three in use in the United States. The system is expected to practically stop cable corrosion for the life of the bridge and save an estimated \$4 million in future maintenance costs over the next 40 years. Other major work during the project included structural steel repairs, wrapping of the suspension cables, replacement of the asphalt deck and waterproof membrane, replacement and waterproofing of the reinforced concrete roofs over the four bridge vaults, painting, line striping, and installation of new traffic signals. The project has earned several honors, including a National Recognition Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC).

**Bridge Maintenance:** DPW works diligently to ensure the safety of county bridges. From 2016 to 2019, it completed 734 bridge inspections, including 246 in 2017. Since 2011, it has decreased the number of structurally deficient bridges owned by the county by more than 50%.

**Bridge Preservations:** The David McCullough (Sixteenth Street) Bridge in Pittsburgh, the Homestead Grays Bridge in Pittsburgh and Homestead, the Fleming Park Bridge in Neville and Stowe, and the Brownsville Bridge in Baldwin Borough and Whitehall all received preservation-type repairs during the past few years. That work included some combination of structural steel repairs, pouring of a deck overlay, concrete sealing, expansion dam replacement, downspout and scupper replacement, blast cleaning, painting, paving, and more. The projects were intended to prevent future maintenance expenses and extend the time before the bridges will need to be rehabilitated

**Coulterville Road Slope Stabilization:** After a landslide occurred along Coulterville Road, the only way in and out of the South Versailles community of Coulter, Public Works quickly and effectively stabilized the problematic slope. The \$503,000 project included support wall construction, slope reconstruction, lane and shoulder reconstruction, drainage and guide rail replacement, and new pavement markings. The work is expected to prevent future landslides on a stretch of road that is critical to many residents.

**Landslide Response:** Public Works responded to nineteen landslides in 2018, a result of record-breaking rainfall that year. At the direction of the County Executive, the Department of Public Works and Allegheny County Emergency Services are jointly convening a Landslide Task Force, including County response agencies, PennDOT, the state Department of Environmental Protection, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Pittsburgh, and multiple utilities and local engineering firms. The Task Force developed a tool for local municipalities to provide them with information to identify landslides and on best practices for repairs.

**Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Project:** In compliance with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) MS4 requirements, the Department of Computer Services Geographic Information System Division (DCS-GIS) developed a comprehensive GIS mapping of the County's stormwater system. This mapping includes elements of the system infrastructure and condition updates of system appurtenances. DPW crews use GIS mapping functions to monitor inlet cleaning and repairs as well as track inspection data for inlets and outfall drainage areas. Crews conducted a total of 30,098 storm drain inlet inspections during 2016 – 2019.

**Global Positioning System/Automated Vehicle Location System (GPS/AVL):** DPW installed GPS/AVL to its 52-vehicle snow fleet to improve snow removal and ice control operations. The system allows supervisors to monitor route completion with real-time reporting and GIS integration. Verification of vehicle location can ensure employee safety if an accident occurs or assist in rapid resolution of complaints. The system will decrease costs, improve efficiency and ensure safe winter roads.

**Telecommunication System:** With repurposed radios furnished by the Department of Emergency Services, DPW installed a communication system to integrate communications with the snow fleet, maintenance warehouses and district maintenance supervisors. This new communication system resulted in improved field communications and enhanced equipment at no cost. Further savings are realized through elimination of a \$3,000 monthly fee that was necessary for the use of the old equipment.

**Green Solutions:** The Department began to purchase alternative energy vehicles in 2018, with an initial purchase of three hybrid sedans for the DPW inspection staff. These vehicles get about 42 mpg, with 72% lower CO2 emissions than conventional vehicles.

**APWA Accreditation:** DPW was awarded national accreditation for a third time from the American Public Works Association (APWA) in 2016, and it is the first and only agency in Pennsylvania to have received the



prestigious honor. The APWA accreditation program recognizes public works agencies that meet or exceed the required industry practices established nationally by the Public Works Management Practices Manual. In 2016, APWA completed a rigorous review of DPW's policies and procedures and found them to be in full compliance

**Policies, Procedures and Manuals:** A self-assessment of policies, procedures and best practices is part of a continuous improvement cycle and ensures that levels of service are maintained during times of transition. DPW routinely reviews and revises its manuals, policies and documented procedures to reflect current processes and procedures and to comply with state and federal requirements. Reviews in 2016 included Right-of-Way Permitting, Inventory and Asset Management Procedures, and Street Sweeping and Graffiti Removal Guidelines.

#### E. Legal mandate or necessity for the department

The Department of Public Works is authorized by the continuity provisions of the Home Rule Charter, Article XIII, Section 6(d).

In addition, the Allegheny County Administrative Code at Chapter 913 (section 01-05) entitled Public Works Contracts, assigns supervision over public works contracts to the Department of Public Works. As such, DPW is responsible for the letting and administration of all contracts involving the construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair and improvement of County assets comprising more than 408 lane miles of roads, over 533 bridges and culverts; and other structures.

#### F. Determination of public need for the department's services

The functions of the Department of Public Works – road and bridge maintenance, repair, and replacement, emergency incident support, and related services - are essential public services. Ensuring the delivery of these services in the most efficient and effective manner, at the highest level of quality to ensure public safety, is a core responsibility of County government.

#### G. Review of the methods used in the implementation of each department's programs and an analysis of alternative methods that may be employed to achieve the department's legal mandates

The Department of Public Works contracts with private engineering, geotechnical and other consulting, and construction firms for certain capital projects that are beyond the scope of in-house staff to deliver, due to size, complexity and/or time constraints.

The Department periodically reviews its snowplow routes and adjusts its agreements with municipalities to improve response times and optimize resources.

During 2019, the Department underwent a process improvement project to reduce its vendor payment processing times. As a result of this assessment, processing times were reduced from 40 to 18 days. The Department continues to explore alternative methods of service delivery and administration.

#### H. Evaluation of whether county government is the most effective body to implement the department's programs

County-owned roads, bridges, vehicles and equipment improve mobility, promote economic prosperity, and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Allegheny County. DPW maintains these public assets to ensure the safety of the residents and viability of the community.

Every four years, the American Public Works Association (APWA) performs an onsite evaluation to ensure DPW maintains the standards of excellence that enabled them to become accredited. Accredited in 2008 and re-accredited in 2012 and 2016, DPW is the first and remains the only agency in Pennsylvania to achieve this prestigious honor. This status helps to validate that the County is the most effective entity to implement the activities performed by this Department.

#### I. Evaluation of whether the absence or reduction of the department or the department's provision of services would significantly harm or endanger the public health, safety or welfare

The department is responsible for maintaining and improving a large portion of Allegheny County's transportation infrastructure. Many of these responsibilities are critical functions providing for the safety, mobility and economic prosperity of the public. Eliminating the department or drastically reducing its resources would not only have an adverse impact on the economy, environment and well-being of the citizens of Allegheny County, but would prevent the County government from performing inherently governmental functions and fulfilling its legal mandate.

#### J. Analysis showing the costs of compliance for individuals or other entities regulated by the department

The costs of compliance for this Department are referenced in the Operating Budgets, Capital Budgets, Special Revenues/Grants Budgets, and the Comprehensive Fiscal Plan (CFP), which can be referenced at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/budget-finance/county-budgets.aspx>.

#### K. Efficiency with which formal public complaints filed with the department have been processed

The County implemented a new customer relationship management system in 2018 to track complaints and requests for service. During 2018 and 2019, the Department of Public Works received 4,305 requests for service, and closed those requests within 23 days, on average.

#### L. Recommendation

Given the essential nature of the services provided by the Department of Public Works, the retention of the Department as currently designed is appropriate.

## Appendix A

The table below shows the schedule for Sunset Reviews by department through 2024.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Administrative Services		X				X				X
Budget and Finance				X				X		
Court Records				X				X		
Economic Development	X				X				X	
Emergency Services			X				X			
Equity and Inclusion*	X				X				X	
Facilities Management		X				X				X
Health	X				X				X	
Human Resources				X				X		
Human Services	X				X				X	
Information Technology**		X				X				X
Jail			X				X			
Kane Community Living Centers	X				X				X	
Law				X				X		
Medical Examiner			X				X			
Parks		X				X				X
Police			X				X			
Public Defender				X				X		
Public Works		X				X				X
Shuman Center			X				X			

\* The Department of Minority, Women, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise was renamed the Department of Equity and Inclusion in 2020.

\*\* The Division of Computer Services was separated from the Department of Administrative Services and became the Department of Information Technology in 2020.