



**COGS ROCK!
STORIES FROM
THE FIELD**

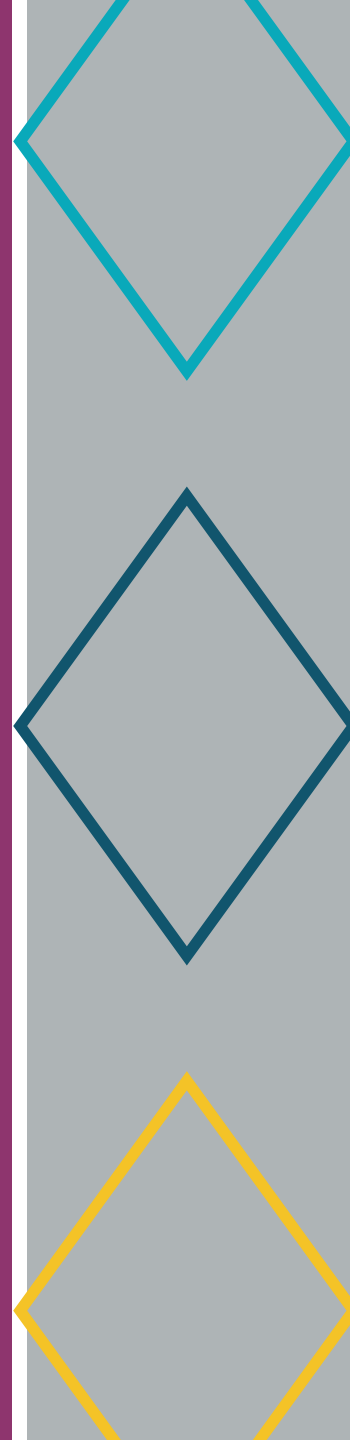
March 13, 2025




BECOME A PACOG MEMBER

Benefits Include:

- Education – Online Webinars
- Networking
- Monthly Newsletter
 - Showcase for Projects-Programs
- Technical Assistance
- Regional Meetings
- Annual Conference
- Website www.pacog.com
 - COG Directory with Links to Other COGs
 - Webinar-Training Information and Videos
- Legislative Updates & Outreach





**NEXT WEBINAR EVENT
MARK THE DATE
APRIL 17, 2025 NOON – 1PM**

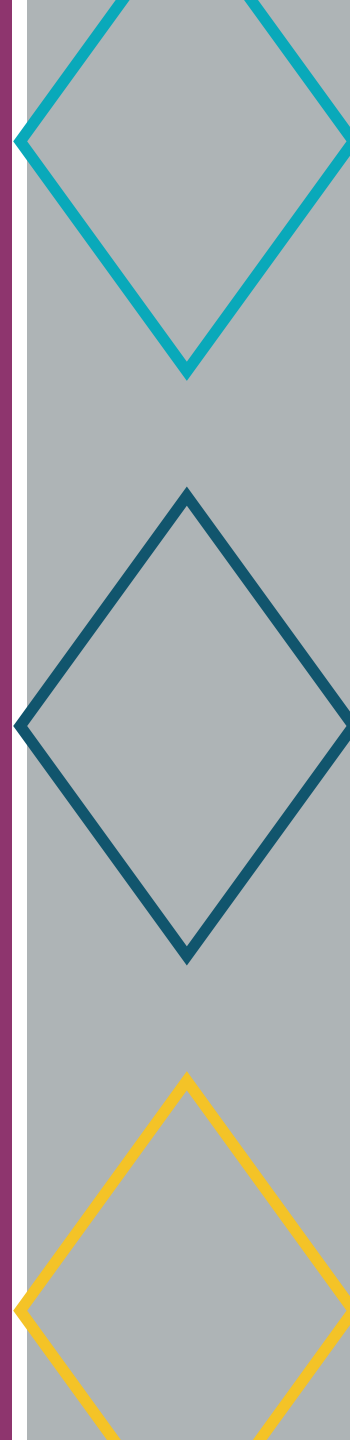
**WHAT'S UP IN HARRISBURG?
A LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Join representatives from the DCED Policy Office and the PA Local Government Commission to hear about:

- Local control vs. preemption
- Regionalization and municipal mergers
- Fire, EMS, and Police services
- Municipal purchasing
- Zoning, SALDO, and codes
- COG's status in legislation and funding opportunities

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Showcase COG programs, projects, and services
- What works and what might not work
- New ideas
- Tips for successful outcomes



OUR PRESENTERS

Paul J. Pascuzzi EA
Board Chairperson
Warren County Intergovernmental Co-Op
Northwest Region

Amanda Settelmaier
Executive Director
Turtle Creek Valley COG
Southwest Region

Lance Prator
Director and Chairperson
Slate Belt COG
Northeast Region



**WARREN COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL
CO-OP
NORTHWEST REGION**

Paul Pascuzzi, Board Chairperson



ABOUT OUR COG

- Warren County Intergovernmental Co-op was informally developed in the mid-1990s to provide a forum for local municipalities to improve communications and work together on infrastructure projects.
- It was initially only the City of Warren and surrounding municipalities.
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- After the pandemic in 2020-2021, we decided to hit the reset button and formalized the Co-op with ordinances, resolutions, and by-laws.
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- There are now 23 of the 27 municipalities in the county as members



OUR STRUCTURE

- Warren County Planning Office provides the administration - preparing minutes, agendas
- Currently not structured to provide municipal services.
- All members voluntarily participate and contribute
- Budget is less than \$5k annually.
- Also host a quarterly Municipal Administrators/Secretaries meeting that have presentations by PENNDOT, DCED, County Conservation District and other County topics of interest to the administrators and secretaries.



ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are three focused committees:

- Blight Review Committee – Municipalities submit properties that are declared blighted and we make sure that the proper paperwork and notifications are complete. The declared “blighted properties” are then forwarded to the Warren County Redevelopment/Landbank Committee.
- Legislative Committee – One representative for Boroughs and one for Townships review the legislation from Harrisburg that impacts local municipalities and give a monthly report. Certain legislation has warranted letters to the lawmakers
- Community Engagement Committee – Hosted a High School Student Government Outreach Day to create conversation between our members and the student council representatives from the four area high schools. The workshop consisted of break-out sessions, Q & A, and some activities to engage in to give the students a taste of local government.



A SUCCESS STORY

- One of the most successful projects that was completed was the formation of a Multi-municipal Emergency Services Commission (MMESC).
- The pandemic took its toll on volunteer fire departments across the county and we needed a new model for the provision of EMS in certain parts of the County.
- EMS is fire department based and 70% of Warren County is covered by volunteers for ambulance response. “During the day/during the week” volunteers are typically at work and not available to respond with ambulances.
- Within a year of formation, the MMESC established an Ambulance response initiative to assure 24/7/365 EMS response for the member municipalities.
- Municipalities enacted LST and EMS tax structures to subsidize the delivery by paid personnel.



**TURTLE CREEK VALLEY
COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS
SOUTHWEST REGION**

**Amanda Settelmaier
Executive Director**

www.tcvcog.com



ABOUT OUR COG

- The Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments (TCVCOG) is a COG, and a nonprofit organization founded in 1971
- Initially, eleven municipalities decided to work cooperatively to implement efficient, cost-effective programs that improve the communities they serve.
- Today, there are 20 member municipalities continuing that mission and expanding shared services and resources.
- Thanks to that growth over nearly fifty years, the COG now serves a total population of approximately 177,286 residents.



OUR STRUCTURE

- Each municipality has an appointed delegate and an alternate
- Each municipality has one vote
- Representatives from each member municipality attend monthly meetings to discuss issues of importance in their communities and work toward solutions with the input and help of other members.
- Guest speakers are often invited on topics of interest.
- There are two Advisory Committees that also meet monthly
 - Managers Advisory Committee
 - Police Chiefs Advisory Committee



OUR SERVICES

- InterCOG Purchasing Alliance
- Grant applications and grant administration
- Municipal Managers Advisory Committee
 - Cable franchise renewals
 - Working groups – on specific issues
- Police Chief Advisory Committee
 - Active shooter training program for police
 - Civil service testing
- Utility billing and real estate tax billing
- Financial accounting and reporting
- Sewer maintenance: vector, sweeper programs
- Code enforcement
- CodeNforce software development
- Property maintenance appeals board
- Uniform Construction Code (UCC) appeals board
- Special Projects
 - Financial Impact of Blight Study
 - Member of the Tri-COG Land Bank
 - Partnering with ACHD on climate resilience planning in several environmental justice towns



A SUCCESS STORY

TCVCOG's Utility Billing

- Program started in the mid 1980's.
- COG invests in quality tools and skilled labor to provide an efficient service - focus on customer service.
- Today, eight towns participate in the program, and there is room to expand.
- Manage billing and account maintenance for refuse, sewage and storm water.
- TCVCOG generates and mails bills, handles customer calls & walk-ins, processes payments, remits payment to towns with reports.
 - Challenges: Keeping data current, returns, water consumption data
 - Benefits: Great shared municipal service, works in conjunction with code enforcement (ie: Act 90, illegal occupancy, etc.), generates operational revenue.



A SUCCESS STORY

CodeNforce Software

- The COG developed code enforcement software over the past decade for its members.
- Currently 10 communities use the software
- This is software designed by code enforcement officers for code enforcement officers.
- Available to all municipalities everywhere
- Features include:
 - Inspections in the field and printable reports
 - Case management and citation tracking
 - Event list and letter templates
 - Mapping component
 - Property & persons records management
 - Complaint submission from website
 - Ability to have multiple users



AND A SUCCESS STORY THAT SOMEHOW FAILED

TCVCOG's 28 year shared public works program ended in 2020. Why Did It Fail?

- Shared services don't always save money
- A properly certified professional manager is a must
- Quality technology is a must – especially where resources are limited
- Grant funds eventually run out – don't count on grant dollars to sustain your program
- There must be a dedicated, continuous source of outside funding for communities with limited capacities

Collaborations required committed, ongoing political buy-in and support



**SLATE BELT COUNCIL
OF GOVERNMENTS
NORTHEAST REGION**

Lance Prator, Executive Director

www.slatebeltcog.org



ABOUT OUR COG

- The Slate Belt COG was formed in 2004
- The COG is also a nonprofit 501(c)(3)
- Made up of 10 municipalities and 2 school districts located in the northeastern tier of Northampton County.
- Our mission is to address local government concerns on a regional basis providing a neutral forum to discuss issues of common concern.
- When appropriate we articulate common positions on major issues
- Municipalities may individually opt-in or opt-out for the provision of programs, services and/or utilization of municipal equipment to spread costs and increase efficiency of service.



OUR STRUCTURE

- Each member municipality and school district has an appointed delegate and an alternate (usually an elected official)
- Each member has one vote
- Members meet monthly
- Discuss issues important to COG members
 - Financial information
 - Cost effective initiatives
 - Information sharing
- The COG is a voting member of the Chamber of Commerce which gives the COG unusual access to the business community



OUR SERVICES

- Equipment Sharing
 - Street sweeper and leaf vacuum
 - Sewer jetter
 - Portable inspection camera system
 - Pavement asphalt crack repair melter
- Major equipment maintenance and repair shop
- Regional police services
- Joint code enforcement

- Engagement Opportunities
 - Round table discussion with all members
 - Open forum for all visitors, guests, the public
 - Guest speakers from state, county, and local governments
- Open Communication with the Director

- COG Directory for each member



SUCCESS STORIES

- Joint Purchase of Equipment has worked well for the municipalities. Sharing the costs or purchase and maintenance of major equipment is a win-win.
- Regional Police Services – 3 densely populated, connecting communities now share police
- Joint Code Enforcement
- Protecting our heritage while embracing modern advances for service delivery

AND ONE NOT SO SUCCESSFUL STORY

- Joint Animal Control – A great program that moved too fast and did not follow the COG blueprint that had been developed
- Major Communication Breakdown!



ON THE HORIZON

- Joint solid waste collection and recycling
- Joint multi-municipal comprehensive plan
- We are always looking for common goals that remove obstacles for communities with limited resources so that we can share in successful outcomes!



QUESTIONS??

THANK YOU

Visit our Website:

www.pacog.com

Or

Email us directly at:

PACOG.manager@outlook.com