



AVALON BOROUGH STREETScape

BOROUGH OF AVALON

**STEPS 1-2-3
FINANCIAL CONDITION**

**STEP 4
MANAGEMENT AND
OPERATIONAL
REVIEW**

**STEPS 5-6
IMPLEMENTATION
AND PROCESS
RENEWAL**

**EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM
5 YEAR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

STEP 5 – MULTI-YEAR PLAN ADOPTION

STEP 6 – IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCESS RENEWAL

PREPARED AND SUBMITTED BY:

**GRASS ROOT SOLUTIONS
AUGUST 2018**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Grass Root Solutions (GRS) team would like to thank the Borough of Avalon officials, management, and staff for their cooperation and assistance. Without their support, this project would not have been possible.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Thomas Lloyd	Mayor
Joshua Klicker	Council President
Patrick Narcisi	Council Vice President
John Crawford	Council Member
Victoria Donnelly	Council Member
J. P. McFeely	Council Member
Shawn McWilliams	Council Member
Ruth Lloyd	Council Member
Lee Nelson	Council Member
William Pascale	Council Member

STAFF

Lorraine Makatura	Borough Manager
Brian O’Malley	Assistant Manager
Thomas Kokoski	Police Chief
David Haslett	Public Works Superintendent

GRS TEAM

Deborah J. Grass	Project Manager
Jennifer Hass	Market Analysis
Ron Leindecker	Police Consultant
Jason Dailey	Operations Consultant
David Soboslay	Technology
John Trant	Community Development Consultant

DCED

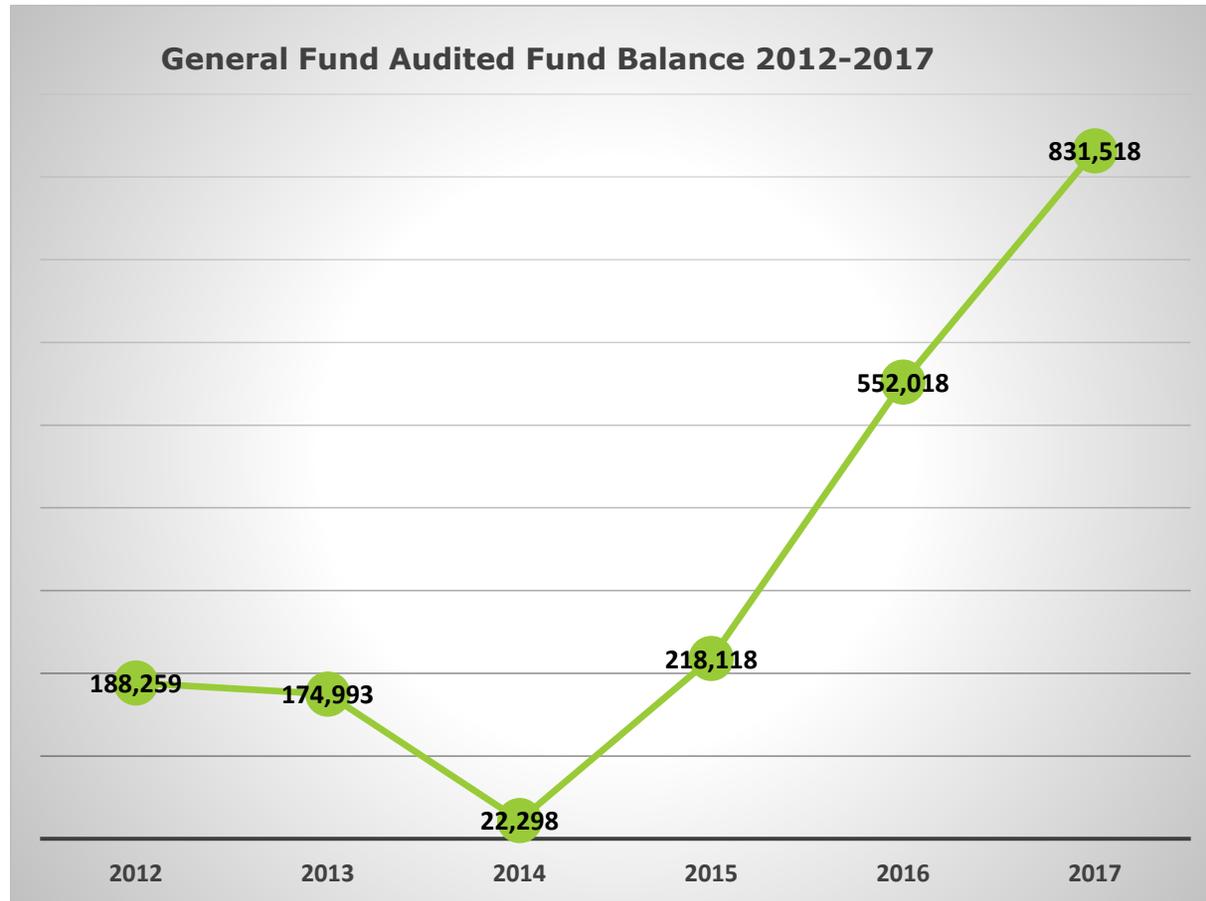
Michael Foreman	Local Government Policy Specialist, Governor’s Center for Local Government Services
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THIS PROJECT WAS PARTIALLY FUNDED THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNOR’S CENTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES UNDER THE EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM.

STEP 5: MULTIYEAR PLAN ADOPTION

In Steps 1, 2, and 3 of the Early Intervention Program (EIP) and Five-Year Plan (Plan), financial issues were reviewed and revenue enhancements and cost containment strategies were identified based on the historical trend analysis and the five-year projections for future revenue and expenditures. The Avalon audited fund balance has steadily improved over the past three (3) years. Factors contributing to this positive trend include:

The Avalon audited fund balance has steadily improved over the past three (3) years.



- Real estate assessed values have remained relatively stable since 2015 at \$186 million and the collection rate is good.
- The Borough raised the millage rate from 7.83 mills to 9.83 mills in 2015 where it has remained for the past three (3) years.
- The median value of a single-family home in the Borough is \$79,500 and rising.
- Act 511 taxes, especially earned income tax, have exhibited steady increases over the past five years.

Negative factors include:

- The median household income, at \$38,464 in 2017, is lower than neighboring communities.
- Borough residents, with an average real estate tax bill of \$3,128 annually (for Borough, county, and school district real estate taxes), have one of the higher tax burdens when compared to their neighbors and comparable communities in Allegheny County.

In Step 4 of the EIP, the management review of the departments identified the structure, staffing, and operational improvements that are recommended for support of a streamlined, more effective organization that will be strong and flexible enough to meet the demands of modern government and the constantly increasing demand for public services. These recommendations focused on setting professional standards, modeling best practices, streamlining staff, and adopting a regional approach for the delivery of services.

The EIP guidelines state that Step 5 of the EIP should be structured to identify the Borough’s top five financial and management priorities. Additional prioritization is to be conducted at the departmental level. Interdepartmental objectives that are Borough-wide or county-wide in nature are to be detailed in the Plan. The EIP guidelines require that each objective is to contain a detailed action plan that describes (1) what is to be achieved, (2) the budgetary impact, (3) the timing and deadlines for each action step, and (4) which employee or agency has the primary responsibility for the objective.

GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS

Based on the information derived from the financial analysis and management reviews and discussions with officials and staff, the consultant team is recommending a Plan that includes action steps and sets deadlines for activities necessary for the Borough’s fiscal and organizational health. The Plan focuses on revenue growth strategies, expenditure reductions from service-delivery efficiencies, adoption of best practices, and intergovernmental cooperation strategies.

The Plan identifies five priorities for the Borough and a set of action steps within each priority. This Step 5 should be read in conjunction with the recommendations that are included in other sections of the Plan. For each priority, Step 5 includes (1) critical success factors, (2) action steps, (3) the person or department responsible for each action step, (4) the timelines for the action steps, and (5) the probable financial impact of achieving each goal.



Considering and implementing these recommendations will take significant effort by Borough officials and staff. Many of the recommendations and goals will challenge the traditional notions and practices that the Borough has adopted over time, but many of the current practices are ineffective and are no longer useful for cultivating and supporting a modern and effective local government organization.

As a result of the review, analysis, and synthesis of material and information from Steps 1 through 4 of the Plan, and after discussions with management staff and Council about the goals of the Plan, the following priority goals for the Borough have been identified.



TABLE 1 – TOP FIVE PRIORITY GOALS FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

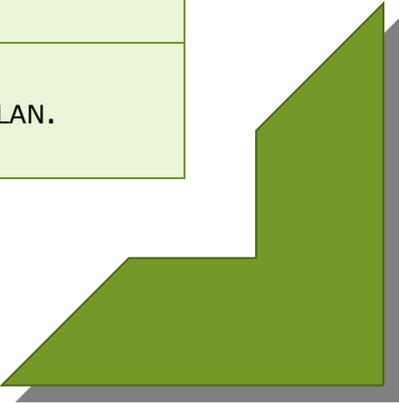
GOAL 1: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE REVENUE BASE AND ADOPT COST CONTAINMENT STRATEGIES.

GOAL 2: THE BOROUGH WILL UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY TO THE MOST CURRENT VERSIONS OF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENCIES, BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY TO RESIDENTS, AND LONG-TERM COST SAVINGS.

GOAL 3: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMUNITY PARK MASTER SITE PLAN BY SEEKING FUNDING FOR EACH PHASE ANNUALLY.

GOAL 4: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON BLIGHT, VACANT PROPERTY, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKING WITH THE BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

GOAL 5: THE BOROUGH WILL DEVELOP A 5-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN.



One way to increase the real estate tax collection is to ensure that the housing values in Avalon continue to steadily increase. This can be done through a focus on code enforcement and blight removal in the Borough that allows the properties to naturally continue to increase in value. Furthermore, the redevelopment of vacant land and the recruitment of commercial establishments for use as taxable property can help to expand the tax base.

ACT 511 TAX REVENUE

Act 511 taxes are the second largest revenue source for the Borough at 19% of the annual budget. The history of the Act 511 tax collection for the Borough is shown in **Table 3**. It is a very stable source of revenue for the Borough.

TABLE 3 – HISTORY OF ACT 511 COLLECTION 2012 – 2017

ACT 511 – LOCAL ENABLING ACT	ACTUAL 2012	ACTUAL 2013	ACTUAL 2014	ACTUAL 2015	ACTUAL 2016	ACTUAL 2017
305.300 – LST Tax	34,569	34,237	33,555	37,378	39,969	36,728
310.100 – Real Estate Transfer	57,181	35,827	40,526	53,699	61,809	55,230
310.210 – Earned Income	444,207	447,276	479,268	504,033	533,844	545,791
Total 310.000 – LOCAL ENABLING TAXES	535,956	517,340	553,349	595,110	595,653	601,021

SOURCE: AVALON BOROUGH FINANCIAL RECORDS AND GRS ANALYSIS

Beginning in 2012, the Borough’s EIT was collected by Keystone Collections who are appointed by the Allegheny North Tax Collection Committee (TCC). LST is also collected by Keystone Collections under a separate contract with the Borough. The collection of EIT for the Borough has been very good with the full implementation of Act 32 and the county-wide collection system.

It should be noted that the Borough does not levy any business taxes under Act 511. Many of the comparable communities reviewed collect business gross receipts taxes. The Borough may want to consider a flat tax on the businesses in the Borough to cover some of the expenditures for services that are provided. A flat tax on the businesses could generate about \$80,000.

FEES AND CHARGES FOR SERVICES

The Borough receives fees for providing services to residents and businesses. These revenues make up only about 3% of the Borough’s overall revenue. This is low and should be examined to determine if fees can be increased or added as part of the mix for revenue generation. In many cases, municipalities are not charging the full amount for providing services to residents. Fees should be analyzed to make sure that the costs of labor, materials, overhead, and delinquent charges are being included in the calculation of the fee. By charging fees appropriately, the Borough could become less reliant on tax revenue and more reliant on charges for services. This practice can help to stabilize the revenue base because the Borough Council can establish and change fees at any time. **Table 4** provides an overview of these revenues.

TABLE 4 – GENERAL GOVERNMENT CHARGES FOR SERVICES

362.000 – FEES FOR SERVICES	ACTUAL 2012	ACTUAL 2013	ACTUAL 2014	ACTUAL 2015	ACTUAL 2016	ACTUAL 2017
362.110 – Sale of Accident Report	845	1,025	1,418	1,105	1,735	1,645
362.115 - Police Reports						140
362.410 – Building & Electrical Permits	3,790	2,514	4,975	5,709	17,409	22,503
362.430 – Occupancy Permits	3,865	6,495	5,590	7,160	9,420	7,925
362.435 – Smoke and Dye Permits	1,565	2,050	1,990	2,400	2,725	2,375
362.460 – Tenant License Fee	0	0	0	21,845	14,795	29,685
362.470 – Fire Safety Inspection Fee	0	0	0	8,745	42,720	13,145
362.480 – Tax Certification	6,675	8,020	6,320	7,445	8,015	6,155
Total 362.000 – FEES AND SERVICES	16,740	20,104	20,294	54,409	96,819	83,573

SOURCE: AVALON BOROUGH FINANCIAL RECORDS AND GRS ANALYSIS

The Borough should also consider implementing and increasing fees in some areas. The Borough should continue to review and update fees in the annual Fee Resolution that is adopted each year during the budget process. Examples of additional fees that should be considered for implementation or increases are:

- Parking meter rates
- Sewer tap-in fees
- Zoning permit fee
- Recreation fees
- Sign permits
- Rental occupancy permit
- Driveway opening permit
- Sidewalk opening permit
- Recreational facilities fees – pavilion, courts, and fields
- Junkyards and junk dealers

SWIMMING POOL FEES

The swimming pool operation has lost money in every year since 2012 – and the losses are growing each year to a high in 2017 of almost \$50,000. The pool fees should be examined and considered for increases in the 2019 budget. A separate **Special Conditions Report** was part of this evaluation and this topic is discussed in great detail in that report. **Table 5** provides a detailed review of the pool revenue and expenditures for the past six (6) years.

TABLE 5 – AVALON POOL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES 2012-2017

367.000 — SWIMMING POOL REVENUE	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
367.200 — Swimming Pool Fees	72,178	58,261	52,503	56,756	61,982	50,071
367.219 - Concessions						14,932
TOTAL SWIMMING POOL FEES	72,178	58,261	52,503	56,756	61,982	65,003
452.000 — SWIMMING POOL EXPENSES	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
452.140 — Pool Salaries	34,193	31,126	25,090	26,672	28,507	28,896
452.141 — Concession Salaries	7,250	6,836	6,516	8,096	10,963	10,703
452.161 — FICA- Boro Share	3,869	3,717	2,961	3,764	4,023	4,139
452.163 — PSAB- Unemployment	2,378	1,356	1,129	1,402	1,499	1,542
452.220 — Materials Supplies	3,979	11,902	7,818	9,013	11,789	19,011
452.229 — Concession Stand Supplies	9,230	6,724	7,264	8,231	9,542	9,932
452.250 — Repair and Maintenance	21,766	1,983	1,300	729	845	848
452.321 — Telephone	303	358	351	359	353	390
452.341 — Advertising	306	446	437	599	638	480
452.361 — Electricity	1,280	965	906	1,764	1,531	1,197
452.362 — Gas	1,999	686	2,748	3,006	1,969	2,435
452.364 — Sewage	2,460	8,002	1,672	9,853	11,320	13,103
452.366 — Water	3,313	5,073	3,753	8,696	7,033	6,657
452.370 — Outside Repairs	0	0	0	799	0	0
452.450 — Pool Managers' Salary	9,500	9,500	6,225	12,763	12,089	13,148
452.500 — Guard Uniforms	1,040	1,424	1,485	2,039	2,521	1,642
452.720 — Improvements to Pool	5,948	-4,676	126	716	2,920	0
TOTAL SWIMMING POOL EXPENSES	108,814	85,423	69,780	98,501	107,542	114,123
TOTAL SWIMMING POOL LOSSES	-36,636	-27,162	-17,277	-41,745	-45,560	-49,120

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT FEES

In June of 2013, the Pennsylvania General Assembly adopted legislation that provides for the establishment of storm water management authorities for the purpose of storm water planning and management in municipalities. Storm water management can now be treated like a utility similar to sanitary sewers, electric, and water. The new law also gave municipalities the ability to assess a fee for this service based on a uniform measurement for the impact from each property. All property owners who generate storm water runoff from hard surfaces would pay the fee.

There is currently additional legislation proposed that would allow cities to levy this fee without creating a municipal authority. If this legislation is enacted, the Borough should move forward with the opportunity to raise additional funds for making MS4 and other storm water management corrections in the system.

The most common measurement is an “equivalent storm water unit” or ESU based on the amount of impervious surface on a given property. Typically, the unit is developed based on the most common residential category and its average impervious area. An ESU is then developed for every residential and commercial category and monthly fees are established based on this calculation. For example, a single-family property with an ESU factor of 1 might pay \$5 per month while a three-unit property would have an ESU factor of 1.5 which would increase the rate to \$7.50 per month. Commercial buildings might have a value of 2 which would increase their rate to \$10 per month. In Avalon, a fee of only



\$5 per month for the 2,400 occupied residential units and 150 commercial units could raise approximately \$174,000 annually for storm water management and flooding projects. This would provide much needed support for these activities.

Pennsylvania Approves Stormwater Utilities

On July 9, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett signed SB 351, legislation that gives municipalities the ability to form storm water utilities. These new authorities will coordinate planning and implementation of storm water programs by region or watershed. The storm water utilities can levy a fee to fund programs that address storm water pollution and flooding. Many Pennsylvania municipalities were hesitant to create such authorities before, due to fear of legal challenges. The ability to create storm water utilities should help Pennsylvania face storm water challenges, including managing flooding throughout the Susquehanna River Basin and curtailing nutrient and sediment pollution reaching Chesapeake Bay. This law may also help municipalities with consent decrees, such as Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. In addition, it will help the state consolidate responsibility for storm water management. According to an American Rivers blog, responsibility for land use — and thus runoff — in Pennsylvania is managed by more than 2500 municipalities. Of all the nation’s small urban municipalities eligible to hold storm water permits, nearly one-sixth are in Pennsylvania.

Water Environment Federation, "Stormwater Management," July 30, 2013
<http://stormwater.wef.org/2013/07/pennsylvania-approves-stormwater-utilities/>

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

The most important tool for cost containment is financial management reporting. It is impossible to control those things that are not measured and reported on a regular basis. The Borough currently produces timely and complete financial reports through the *Bookminders* contracted services and the reports are used for decision-making purposes. The Council, Borough Manager, and department heads should receive monthly reports that include:

- Budget compare reports for all funds
- Balance sheets for all funds (bank account balances)
- Tax collection monthly report
- Interim financial reports including cash flow monitoring

The Borough should encourage the department heads to take a more active role in developing and administering their budgets. They should be given regular budget reports from the accounting system so that they can monitor their budgets in real time. Department heads should be held accountable for budget overruns and should be required to justify expenditures that are not routine or ordinary. Any items requested for the new budget year should have a complete analysis of cost (initial and annual maintenance), support data, and justification for the purchase.

Not every vacant position should automatically be filled. The Council should determine on a case by case basis whether the position is necessary and whether it brings value to the local government operation.



The Manager’s Office should set up a routine procedure that will require a complete analysis of cost prior to any new hire in any department. The Borough’s personnel costs make up about 85% of the overall budget, and it is, therefore, necessary to evaluate every position prior to the Council approval of a new hire. The analysis should include not only starting costs, but also projected benefit and pension costs over the entire employment period with adjustments for estimated inflation rates. This analysis should be presented to the Council prior to a hiring decision. Not every vacant position should automatically be filled. The Council should determine on a case by case basis whether the position is necessary and whether it brings value to the local government operation.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Borough spends 33% of its budget on police services. This is about the same as other comparable communities like Bridgeville, Crafton, and Sharpsburg who use full-time staff supplemented by part-time officers. **Table 5** provides information about expenditures over the past five years.

TABLE 5 – POLICE DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURES 2012 – 2017

410.000 — POLICE	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
410.121 — Chief's Salary	82,742	82,743	88,054	90,360	92,893	95,126
410.124 - Buy Out Sick Leave					0	5,240
410.130 — Patrol Salaries	262,632	284,805	311,981	272,354	247,622	203,082
410.132 — Police Clerk	17,337	12,350	14,520	14,725	15,195	16,077
410.133 — Part-Time Patrolmen	121,798	118,871	119,159	120,940	138,426	180,516
410.145 - Meter Monitor					786	1,749
410.152 — Dental Insurance	5,622	2,595	5,384	6,472	7,989	6,308
410.153 — Retired Officer Dental Ins	1,280	1,280	1,280	1,280	1,386	1,603
410.156 — Hospitalization	90,731	46,152	50,033	51,980	72,279	63,261
410.157 — Retired Officer Hospital	18,218	8,901	9,769	11,577	14,353	16,156
410.158 — Life & Accident Insurance	8,428	8,222	8,458	7,684	9,389	8,538
410.159 — Retired Officer Life/Acc	1,320	1,440	1,440	1,441	1,530	1,819
410.160 — Police Pension	105,578	118,735	150,608	234,626	176,711	158,983
410.161 — FICA - Boro Share	44,222	46,814	48,004	45,090	45,258	45,368
410.163 — PSAB - Unemployment	6,772	3,761	3,554	3,717	4,480	4,459
410.174 — Educational	3,259	3,356	6,301	4,335	5,667	9,000
410.181 — Special Detail Overtime Pay	0	0	7,141	24,017	13,459	18,091
410.182 — Longevity	1,110	1,440	1,560	1,680	1,800	1,320
410.183 — PS Overtime Pay	53,872	65,943	46,160	29,352	35,337	24,555
410.184 — Holiday	14,582	16,354	17,665	16,428	19,366	17,188
410.187 — Court Pay	24,330	21,545	16,966	14,686	21,635	26,569
410.188 — Heart/Lung Pay	0	0	0	0	15,555	13,830
410.191 — Uniform Allowance	3,022	3,600	3,581	3,228	2,991	2,361

410.000 — POLICE	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
410.210 — Office Supplies	681	1,589	744	1,087	3,195	1,189
410.220 — Operating Supplies	1,404	1,327	2,511	2,074	17,252	1,206
410.231 — Vehicle Fuel - Gas	23,313	28,428	22,156	15,553	14,199	15,135
410.242 — Guns and Ammo	1,168	1,169	2,883	3,472	10,637	1,938
410.260 — Minor Equip	860	1,258	1,145	4,341	6,995	0
410.300 — Other Service Charges	7,453	5,302	7,507	5,179	4,782	7,081
410.301 — Court Parking	365	346	198	628	556	459
410.321 — Telephone	4,470	3,243	3,832	3,519	3,418	3,017
410.325 — Postage	0	0	48	321	211	374
410.327 — Radio Equip	10,477	0	58	180	509	1,555
410.354 — Law Enforcement Professional Liability	0	0	0	0	0	29,964
410.370 — Outside Vehicle Repairs	12,397	18,537	9,101	14,335	28,000	14,169
410.384 — Parking Meter Purchases	0	823	0	110	827	3,089
410.420 — Dues, Memberships	470	470	455	540	600	660
410.740 — Purchase Equip.	14,021	22,735	35,141	12,510	26,745	19,859
410.920 — Police Contingency	200	0	0	300	140	660
Total 410.000 — POLICE	944,483	934,132	997,398	1,020,123	1,063,824	1,021,625

SOURCE: BOROUGH OF AVALON FINANCIAL REPORTS AND GRS ANALYSIS

The Borough's expenditures for police have increased by 8.2% from \$944,483 in 2012 to \$1.021 million by 2017 – about 2.2% per year. This is consistent with the CPI increases over the same time period and demonstrates good containment of costs.

Using the IACP calculation to calculate the number of patrol officers required, the correct number of officers appears to be about 6 full-time patrol officers supplemented by 7 or 8 part-time officers which is consistent with the current complement. The crime statistics and department activity are lower than what would be expected for the Avalon population. This could indicate that the police department is not keeping good records of their activity, known criminal offenses, and cleared cases for uniform crime reporting with the state.

The Borough Council has the management right to set the size of the police force and the number and rank of the officers on the force. The Borough should review the size and rank of their officers from time to time to determine what manpower is necessary and whether the use of part-time officers to fill schedules should be expanded. The Borough should continue to evaluate caseloads, call volume, and training demands to determine whether it is necessary to add to the current staffing in the future.

This may require technical assistance from an independent police consultant. For additional guidance, the Borough may wish to contract with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The IACP has over 50 years of experience in allocation and deployment of law enforcement personnel and has conducted similar studies across a broad array of agencies throughout the U.S.

Finally, the Borough should consider consolidating police services with a neighboring community. With increased budgets, use of cost saving measures, and availability of updated technology, it would make sense for Avalon to consolidate with a larger community. The Boroughs of Avalon and Bellevue are very similar in demographics, age of housing stock, education and income levels, public service expenditures, and resources. The boroughs share neighborhoods and business districts and could combine their resources to support a larger, modern, and well financed police department. It would benefit both communities to establish a committee to review the advantages and cost/benefits of a combined department. A combined department could provide additional advancement opportunities for officers, specialization of services, increased training, and resources for both communities. It makes sense to consider combining the departments as an option to assist with modernizing the equipment, facilities, training and techniques.

PUBLIC WORKS, STREETS, AND HIGHWAYS

The Avalon Public Works Department makes up 18% of the Borough’s budget and the department expenditures have remained steady at about \$400,000 since 2012. The Borough expenditures for the Public Works department are about average compared to the 10 comparable communities reviewed. **Table 7** provides an overview of total public works expenditures over the past five years.



TABLE 7 – PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURES 2012-2017

430.000 — PUBLIC WORKS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
430.121 — Foreman's Salary	31,430	43,269	45,000	45,000	48,325	52,586
430.130 — Labor Salaries	118,045	109,031	112,307	128,296	106,376	135,764
430.145 — Part Time Employees	43,136	44,335	22,203	19,235	13,637	36,953
430.152 — Dental Insurance	1,307	1,615	1,707	1,802	1,356	1,847
430.156 — Hospitalization	33,148	25,961	29,963	39,186	34,410	35,359
430.158 — Life and Accident Insurance	2,481	433	998	1,178	1,223	1,417
430.160 — Deferred Comp- Boro Share	3,000	2,520	1,440	1,560	2,220	3,960
430.161 — FICA - Boro share	15,229	16,059	14,299	15,443	13,871	18,944

430.000 — PUBLIC WORKS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
430.163 — PSAB - Unemployment	2,387	1,454	1,308	1,524	1,821	1,937
430.174 - Educational Pay						809
430.183 — Overtime	6,704	12,943	7,936	9,828	8,474	8,135
430.186 — Sick Day Buy Back	0	0	0	0	5,020	3,720
430.191 — Uniform and Shoe Expense	399	1,473	311	1,583	1,433	1,889
430.220 — Operating Supplies	14,191	11,730	20,896	18,217	14,346	13,823
430.231 — Vehicle Fuel - Gas	9,646	7,232	5,620	4,792	4,691	3,862
430.232 — Vehicle Fuel - Diesel	4,091	10,546	11,827	7,895	5,644	7,547
430.245 — Salt Deicers	44,179	49,793	80,930	93,463	52,585	40,196
430.246 — Other Service Supplies	7,426	7,669	2,046	1,118	1,014	1,486
430.260 — Purchase Minor Equip.	4,328	2,486	200	749	869	3,078
430.370 — Outside Vehicle Repair	7,032	3,765	16,470	5,729	5,471	19,295
430.375 — Street Sweeper Repairs	14,712	10,332	1,340	5,846	3,935	3,283
430.380 — Rental Special Equipment	1,083	1,246	925	4,682	1,436	2,575
430.450 — Contracted Services	191	17,827	759	216	3,099	4,092
430.740 — Purchase Major Equip.	28,263	35,893	450	26,197	84	1,400
Total 430.000 — PUBLIC WORKS	392,406	417,612	378,934	433,540	331,340	408,318

SOURCE: BOROUGH OF AVALON FINANCIAL REPORTS AND GRS ANALYSIS

The Borough should install a software system that can track requests for service, work orders, and complaints as they are received and resolved. The system will serve as a valuable management tool that shows the activity in the department and provides a means for accessing historical information and performing valuable analysis about the cost of delivering public works services.

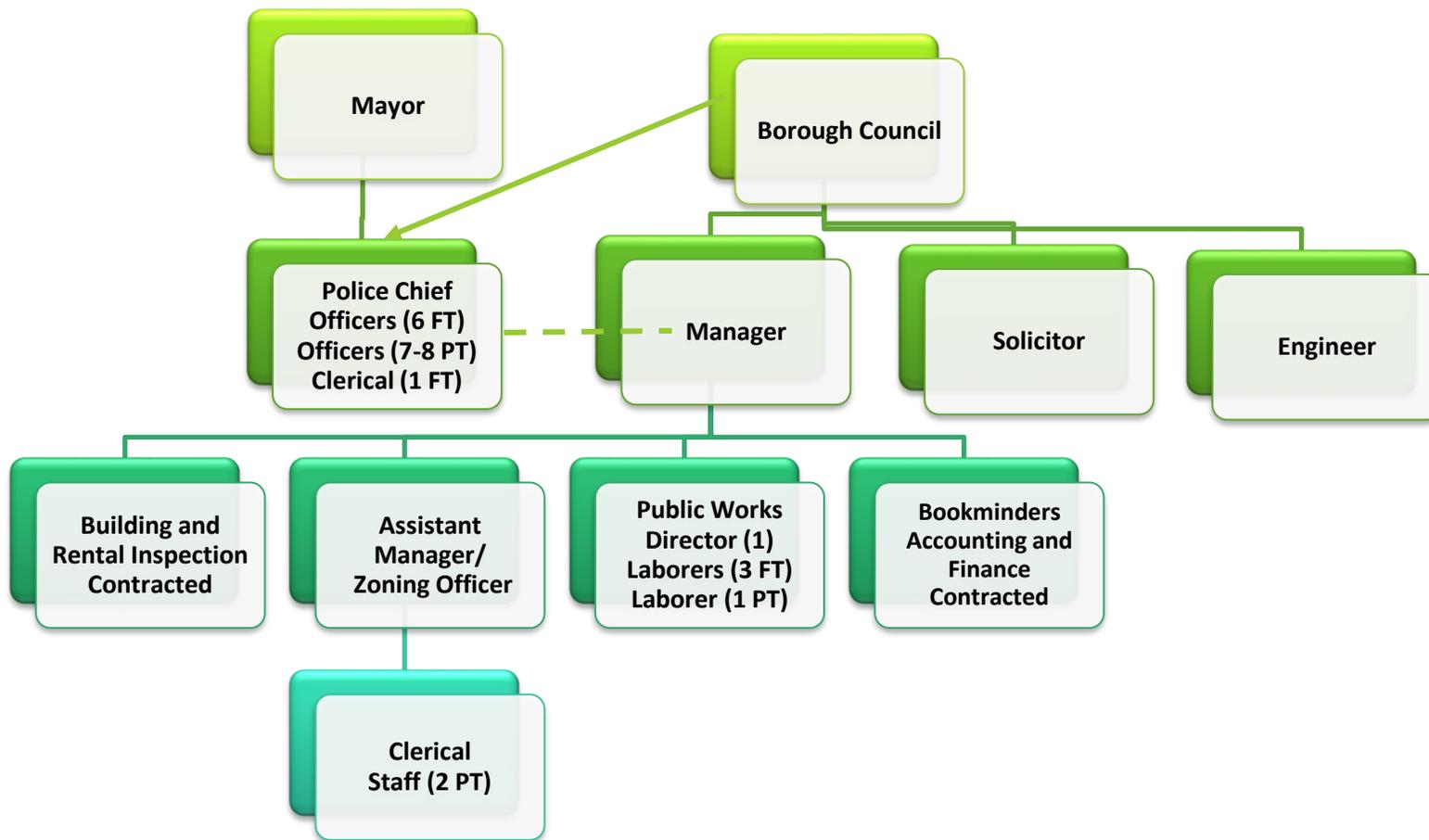
Another cost containment approach is to develop a comprehensive vehicle fleet and equipment maintenance records system that will track maintenance and performance of public works vehicles and assist in making decisions about replacement schedules. The fleet management system should be interfaced with the work order system.

The Borough should continue to implement energy saving techniques for cost containment. LED street, decorative, and parking lot lighting should be installed. There is a relatively short return on investment for lighting. Other energy audits should continue to be performed by professional consultants. There is grant money available to support these activities.

LEVELS OF STAFFING IN DEPARTMENTS

The largest expenditures for any local government, by far, are related to compensation and benefits. For that reason, the Borough must constantly explore the best methods for delivering quality services with the most cost-effective staffing possible. As part of *Step 4 of the EIP*, the consultant team reviewed current staffing, work practices, and collective bargaining agreements for each department. The consultant team then identified best practices that are applicable for each department. As a result of this review, the specific staffing structure as shown in **Figure 2** is recommended for the Borough.

FIGURE 2 – AVALON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE RECOMMENDATION



Although the recommended level of staffing cannot be unilaterally implemented without negotiation with the various collective bargaining units, it is a structure and staffing level that should be the goal for the organization. By adopting the staffing structure and levels shown, the Borough will be able to achieve several important objectives from this study:

- Contain costs by supporting the same level of current positions into the future.
- Examine each position to ensure that the person appointed has the requisite skills and experience to bring value to the organization.
- Expand the use of part-time police officers.
- Expand the use of part-time and seasonal employment in the public works department.
- Continue to work with the County for special services like investigation and crime prevention.
- Provide support for more training and implementation of technology.
- Continue to use contracted services for accounting and finance and building and rental inspections.



AVALON EIP AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN					
GOAL 1: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE REVENUE BASE AND ADOPT COST-CONTAINMENT STRATEGIES.					
To achieve this goal, we must address the following critical success factors:					
We must have...		We must be...			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An aggressive tax collection strategy • More revenue from fees • Expanded financial management reporting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less dependent on tax revenue; recover more fees • A community that provides excellent service • Efficient, effective, and diligent about personnel and resources 			
To meet this goal we will...		Responsibility	Implementation Schedule (Years)		
			1	2-3	4-5
Action 1A	Provide support, technical assistance, memberships and training for the Borough management staff for financial management	- Council	X	X	X
Action 1B	Work with <i>Bookminders</i> to achieve better reporting, record management, cash flow, and cost accounting.	- Borough Manager	X	X	
Action 1C	Create a system to analyze, adjust, and implement appropriate fees; ensure that fees cover the costs of providing services	- Borough Manager	X	X	X
Action 1D	Continue to review, update, and adopt an annual fee resolution setting forth all Borough fees.	- Borough Manager	X	X	X
Action 1E	Consider establishment of a storm water management committee to study the issue of assessing storm water management fees to support MS4 activities	- Council - Borough Manager		X	X
Action 1F	Explore, analyze the feasibility of enacting a business privilege flat tax on businesses in the Borough	- Manager - Asst. Manager	X		
Action 1G	Address the issues identified in Step 4 for collective bargaining sessions to contain personnel costs	- Borough Manager Solicitor		X	X
Action 1H	Expand the use and improve the benefits for part-time police officers; consider incentives to continue their long-term employment with the Borough; standardize the compensation and benefits	- Borough Manager - Police Chief	X	X	X
Action 1I	Continue to explore options for providing health care at reasonable rates with increased employee contributions	- Borough Manager	X	X	X
Action 1J	Create a standard procedure to analyze the costs of new hires	- Asst. Manager	X	X	X
Action 1K	Use part-time and seasonal employee in the PW department to increase capacity during the busiest months	- Borough Manager	X	X	X

GOAL 2: THE BOROUGH WILL UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY TO THE MOST CURRENT VERSIONS OF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENCIES, BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY TO RESIDENTS, AND LONG-TERM COST SAVINGS.

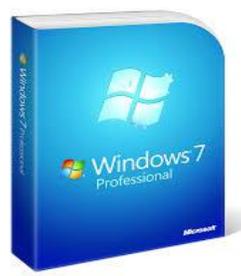
Municipalities are in constant competition with each other to attract residents and businesses. In the Borough of Avalon, the Gen-Xers (30 to 44-year old) and the Millennials (the 30-year-old and under generation) make up over 34% of the population served. They also represent a significant part of the population that Avalon would like to attract as residents and homeowners. These younger residents require access to services on a 24-hour basis and expect to conduct business with the Borough at their convenience. The days of 8am to 4pm operation is a thing of the past.

In this modern age, information technology (IT) and management systems have become the backbone of local government and the basis for providing information and services. Without proper access to the Internet, exchange services, e-government, on-line announcements and current data, a local government can fall far behind in its operations and its ability to provide services to its residents. IT is also a crucial element for supporting economic development by providing critical information to potential investors.

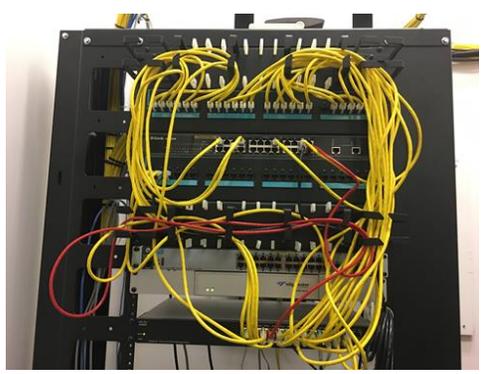
Technology to support the record keeping systems of the Borough operations has become an indispensable tool for the maintenance and sustainability of a local government organization. It is how governments provide information and services to their constituents and how residents interact with their local officials. It also provides additional transparency that contributes to good government practices.

MOVE FROM A MAC ENVIRONMENT TO A WINDOWS ENVIRONMENT

The Borough administrative office has used Apple computers for years. These computers are approaching an age where they should be replaced. While Apple computers have been reliable machines for the staff, the recommendation is to replace them with Windows based computers that will run the same software and be able to become part of a larger network. The Windows computers are less expensive and are easier to manage on a network.



Most if not all of the computers utilized by the Borough are in need of operating system updates. Some computers are two or three versions removed from the most current version of the operating system. An updated operating system will greatly improve the reliability, security, and speed of a computer. In the administrative department the computers are utilizing operating systems released in 2014 and 2015. In the police department the computers are running on Windows 7 Professional, which was released in October 2009. Microsoft ended mainstream support for Windows 7 in January 2015. Extended support will end on January 14, 2020.



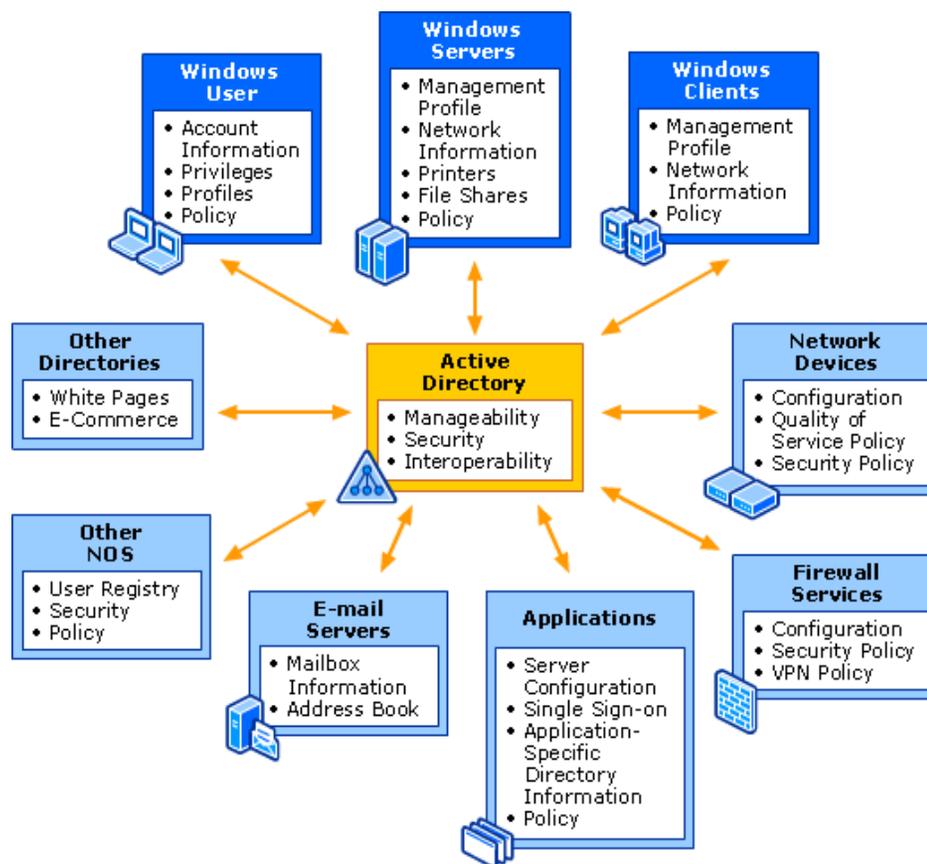
ACTIVE NETWORK DIRECTORY

Active Directory is a centralized database for security principles. This can be anything from a user account, group, group policy, file share, to objects like printers. It is the single place to administer every user account. Benefits of using Active Directory include the following:

- A SINGLE POINT OF ADMINISTRATION FOR ALL USERS AND GROUPS:** Active Directory creates its own Directory Service where all user accounts are kept. When a user logs on to their machine, the Active Directory server authenticates them, and then permits or denies their logon to that machine. Once it authenticates them, it also sets appropriate permissions for their account on the computer they are at.
- GROUP POLICIES FOR USER AND COMPUTER SECURITY AND CONFIGURATION:** Group policies are the way in which Active Directory makes bulk changes to the user environment at either the User or Computer level. Group policies are the best and most simple way to standardize a configuration across all machines in an organization.
- SOFTWARE DEPLOYMENT:** Active Directory can replace the requirement to manually install software on every machine. Active Directory can use Group Policy to automatically push out new software and upgrade packages, to all Borough owned machines. It is a simple process that reduces administration time drastically.

INTEGRATION WITH EXCHANGE SERVER:

This would only apply if the Borough decides to add Exchange Server in-house instead of using Exchange as part of Office 365. In the end, Active Directory will help to administer multiple users across multiple machines.



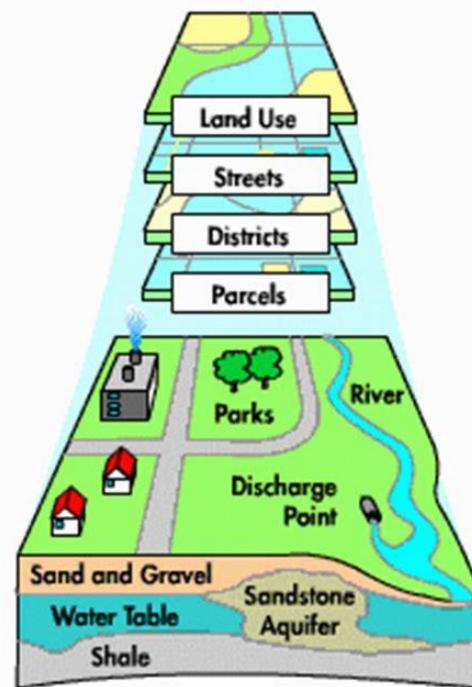
CENTRALIZE GIS PARCEL INFORMATION, ASSET MANAGEMENT, PERMITS, AND INSPECTIONS.

There are two important technology applications that the Borough should investigate and secure: Software user interface (i.e. TRSISR software); and GIS mapping and asset management. These are two distinct and separate types of technology that can and should be interfaced.

SOFTWARE INTERFACE – The software interface is a user-friendly, end user application that allows the users to record and manage each complaint, inspection, violation, registration, communication and action taken. It should be parcel based and should be able to track rental inspections, permits, licenses, zoning permits, and land development applications. The program should be searchable and should be able to generate a variety of on-demand reports that can be generated by staff in the Borough Office or in the field via a mobile device. There are several programs at various price points currently used by municipalities for this purpose that are very good. These programs can be integrated with the Borough’s GIS system or can use publicly available data through Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) or Google. Many of the software interface applications include a public interface that allows residents to make applications on-line and monitor the progress of their application. Most have applications for iPads that allow for accessing and inputting information from the field. In some instances, warnings or violation notices can be printed in the field and left for the homeowner.

The Borough management personnel should carefully review the options and pricing for the land management and GIS asset management technology and determine which solution would best address the Borough’s needs. On-site and web-based demonstrations are available by the vendors and pricing should be clear and straightforward. Both initial start-up costs and ongoing support and maintenance costs should be evaluated. **TRASIR** software that is supported by the Borough Engineer, can interface with GIS and can attach existing or new documentation, permits, plans, work order, photos or videos to assets. A wide range of modules are available including Asset Central, Operations Central, Work Central, Inspection and Permit Central, Land Central, Fleet Central, and Citizen Central. Modules may be purchased as needed.

GIS MAPPING – Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping is a separate but related technology that is typically hosted by the Borough Engineer in small communities. In Avalon, the GIS system is hosted by the Borough’s current engineering firm, Lennon Smith Souleret Engineering (LSSE). GIS provides parcel-based and geographically referenced mapping that includes mapped assets such as: road rights-of-way, property lines, property ownership, structures, utilities (including sanitary and storm sewers) and a variety of other possible layers. GIS mapping can track capital assets of a municipality through development of layers of information for



many municipal purposes such as: street trees; traffic signs and signals; water lines; handicap parking permits; street lights; and parking meters. The possibilities are limitless.

INTEGRATION- Ideally, the software user interface and the GIS mapping would be integrated to the extent that all information from the software database could be mapped through the GIS mapping function and, conversely, all mapped data in the GIS system could be visible through the software. However, both systems can operate independently until funding is available for creating the connection between the two systems. Many of the software interface applications that have been identified can easily integrate the software interface with the GIS mapping or can use ESRI or Google Earth for ease of mapping the data that is contained in the software database.

Since the Borough's GIS is currently held and managed by the Borough Engineer, it is not necessary to maintain the GIS in-house. However, increased functionality can be obtained by moving the Borough's GIS mapping to the cloud. ESRI provides this service and the Borough Engineer can assist with migration of the database to the cloud. Maintaining the Borough's GIS in a cloud-based system will make the data more accessible and updatable in real-time and through mobile applications. If the Borough ultimately decides to pursue a software solution that integrates the permitting and code enforcement processes with the GIS, it is important to make sure the proposed software allows for cloud-based GIS integration.



The Borough management personnel should carefully review the options and pricing for the land management and GIS asset management technology and determine which solution would best address the Borough's needs. On-site and web-based demonstrations are available by the vendors and pricing should be clear and straightforward. Both initial start-up costs and ongoing support and maintenance costs should be evaluated. It is also important that current staff are comfortable with the amount of time, resources, and expertise that will be necessary to maintain the systems. This is a long-term investment that requires careful consideration and knowledgeable and informed decision making.

The Public Works Department will need to access this software from their remote location. They will either need to access the Borough servers via a virtual private network (VPN) or through a login to cloud based software. The public works director should be able to access and update parcel and complaint information on a daily basis.

INSTALL GPS IN ALL VEHICLES

From a management perspective, it is important to be able to track and access information on Borough owned vehicles at all times. Global Positioning System (GPS) information is typically accessed via a tablet or a personal computer, and should help the Borough to:

- Promote Safer Driving Habits - Safe driving is important GPS tracking would allow the Borough options to receive notifications whenever any vehicle is going faster than a set speed, accelerating too quickly, braking hard, or driving aggressively. This allows Supervisors to deal with the behavior of drivers and take appropriate disciplinary action to discourage these types of behaviors behind the wheel of Borough owned vehicles.
- Improve Record Keeping and Documentation - GPS tracking keeps track of miles driven, fueling, and can send alerts when routine maintenance such as oil changes and tire rotation is required. It can even keep a record of when a vehicle leaves the Borough.



INSTALL VIDEO CAMERAS IN POLICE CARS

The Borough should make a budgetary commitment or secure funds for the purchase and installation of video cameras in the police vehicles. The cameras should be able to record forward toward the roadway as well as the rear seat of the vehicle. The cameras should have the capability to connect wirelessly to the police computer network to download video files to the server. The advantage of having cameras in the vehicles include:

- It is a cost-effective method for documenting every interaction an officer has with a suspect.
- Cameras can protect the police department from unwanted lawsuits.
- If an officer is incapacitated in an incident, the in-car camera may help to capture the incident.

Cameras not only show if the citizens are abusing officers, but they can be used to train the officers. Video footage can reviewed by supervisors to show the police officers what they are doing wrong and how to improve their interaction with the public. This creates a more professional environment for the police operation.

COMPUTER EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, AND STANDARDS

A complete record of computers, networking devices, servers, and software on respective workstations should be developed and routinely maintained. A complete inventory is needed to make informed decisions at budget time as well as to keep an equipment replacement schedule up to date. The inventory schedule can also be used when updating the Borough's insurance appraisal list

every year. All departments rely on technology for their day to day operations and a breakdown in any part of the network or technology loop can create a crisis for the Borough’s operation. It is important for the Borough to continuously review and budget for these improvements by developing a replacement schedule.

Computers should be replaced every four to six years to keep IT expenditures at a constant level and avoid a spike in expenditures. The Borough should focus on replacement of existing computers. Both the administrative network and the police network are designed in such a way that users store most, if not all, of their data on the server. Therefore, large hard drives are not needed on the computers. A recommended replacement schedule is shown in **Table 8**.

TABLE 8 – RECOMMENDED COMPUTER REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE (2019-2021)

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
2019	2020	2021
Borough Manager	Police Chief	Police MDT #1
Borough Assistant Manager	Police Squad Room #1	Police MDT #2
Admin Clerk (Payroll)	Police Squad Room #2	Police MDT #3
Admin Clerk (Counter)	Police Squad Room #3	Police Interview Room
Tax Collector (Optional)	Public Works Department	

EMAIL FUNCTION – MOVE TO OFFICE 365

In order to take total control of the email function, as well as make sure that employees are utilizing the most current version of the software, Office 365 should be purchased and implemented. Office 365 will utilize exchange server software, which will:

- Standardize the e-mail addresses for all users that access the system.
- Allow users to browse a company directory to find an individual’s e-mail address.
- Provide system users the ability to share other employees’ schedules and set up meetings.
- Allow the Borough to back-up all e-mail from a central location for archiving purposes. In the event of a lawsuit or even a simple public request for information, the Borough will be able to access all e-mails. In this case the email will be backed up in the cloud.
- Allow the Borough to make instantaneous changes to the system when needed.
- Allow the Borough to back-up all e-mail from a central location for archiving purposes. In the event of a lawsuit or even a simple public request for information, the Borough will be able to access all e-mails.
- Allow the Borough to make instantaneous changes to the system when needed. Allow the Borough to configure smart phones to be able to send and receive emails from the exchange server.



Microsoft Office should also be updated where needed. The installation of email through Microsoft Office® 365 should also be explored if archiving and retrieval capabilities are available for the group administrator.

HARDWARE FOR THE NETWORK

As the Borough's network or networks continues to grow, there are items that must be purchased to maintain the network, keep the network secure, ensure that the Borough's IT policies are enforced, and enable the Borough to provide information when requested by the public. Therefore, as funds permit, the following items should be purchased and implemented:

- A message archiver that is designed to archive e-mail communications sent and received by users throughout the organization should be installed. This piece of equipment would help the Borough to respond to requests for public information, as well as quarantine information that may be needed for litigation purposes.
- A web filter that would help the Borough to enforce any current or future Internet usage policy.



DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

The Borough uses information technology to quickly and effectively process information. Employees use e-mail and VOIP telephone systems to communicate. Servers process information and store large amounts of data. Desktop computers, laptops and wireless devices are used by employees to create, process, manage and communicate information. What will the Borough do when its information technology stops working?

An information technology disaster recovery plan should be developed. Strategies should be developed to restore hardware, applications and data in time to meet the needs of the Borough's recovery.

The Borough creates and manages large volumes of data. Much of that data is important. Some data is vital to the survival and continued operation of the Borough. The impact of data loss or corruption from hardware failure, human error, hacking or malware could be significant. A plan for off-site data backup and restoration of electronic information is essential. Currently some, but not all data is being backed up off-site.

FIREWALL HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

Firewalls perform a simple form of inspection of the packets that flow through them. This inspection is a good thing and is what prevents unrequested data from coming into the Borough's local area network from the Internet (unless the router is configured to allow the data to come in). All properly configured routers protect against port scans and connection or service requests that do not originate from the LAN side of the firewall. The current Sonic Wall (firewall) should be evaluated against other networking products. Due to the increasing size of the networks, the Borough may need to upgrade the firewall to a different product.

UPDATING THE WEBSITE.

While the current website has a lot of useful information, it should be redesigned from time to time. Websites can quickly become stale and look outdated after a year or two. As technology changes new designs and new features such as social media integration should be considered. New technology also allows websites to become more mobile friendly, which is very important as more and more people use their phones as their primary means of accessing information.

The website should include all development ordinances, planning studies, marketing information, and permitting information (including the **Special Condition Reports – Community Development and Blight Strategy, and the Parks, Pool, and Recreation Study**). The following should be included and updated on the Borough’s website for residents, businesses, and developers: development ordinances; Zoning Map; code ordinances, the IPMC and adopting ordinance; signage ordinances; name and contact for permitting and development activity; building inspection; land development process; link to PennDOT contact information; updated Fee Resolution; utility contact names and information; businesses to frequent within the Borough, and available commercial and industrial property. Potential residents, developers and private investors expect to find most of the information that they need on the website.

RESIDENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

NIXLE is a community messaging system that can be used at minimal cost to the Borough. Residents can sign up on-line to receive text messages or emails concerning safety issues, community events, or whatever information the Borough wishes to broadcast to its residents. Examples of information that might be sent out via NIXLE include road closures due to construction or accidents, utility interruptions, a reminder that garbage day has been pushed back due to a holiday, or even that the date for Trick or Treat has been changed due to inclement weather.



AVALON EIP AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN					
<p>GOAL 2: THE BOROUGH WILL UPGRADE TECHNOLOGY TO THE MOST CURRENT VERSIONS OF HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENCIES, BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY TO RESIDENTS, AND LONG-TERM COST SAVINGS.</p>					
<p>To achieve this goal, we must address the following critical success factors:</p>					
<p>We must have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology that supports responsible and professional government and modern practices • A service request and tracking system that makes departments more accountable and provides information for analysis 		<p>We must be...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to implementing modern tools and techniques • Cognizant of necessary upgrades • Committed to transparent operations • Supportive of modern practices that improve service delivery to residents 			
To meet this goal we will...		Responsibility	Implementation Schedule (Years)		
			1	2-3	4-5
Action 2A	Move the administrative offices from a MAC environment to a WINDOWS environment for better interface of local government systems and software	Manager Assistant Manager	X		
Action 2B	Bring all operating systems up to the newest cloud-based versions for more responsible storage and back up	Manager Assistant Manager	X	X	X
Action 2C	Install the TRAIRS system to track complaints, requests for service, inspections, assets, work orders, and fleet management to track and better plan for asset and equipment replacement	Manager Assistant Manager	X		
Action 2D	Continue to work with the Finance Committee and Public Works Committee to regularly plan for upgrades and replacement of technology and equipment	Council Manager		X	X
Action 2E	Produce monthly reports from the TRAIRS system that document all code enforcement, public works activity	Manager Assistant Manager	X	X	X

GOAL 3: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE AVALON COMMUNITY PARK MASTER SITE PLAN BY SEEKING FUNDING FOR EACH PHASE ANNUALLY.

As part of the work done with the Borough Development Committee, a complete master site plan for the Avalon Community Park was developed. The plan assumes at least four (4) phases that would be implemented over time.

PHASE 1 – Includes stormwater and infrastructure repair; connectivity and accessibility improvements to neighborhoods; ballfield and track improvements; and the installation of entry signage.

PHASE 2 – Includes upgrades to existing playground areas; riparian restoration along Spruce Run; additional connectivity and pedestrian network improvements; the addition of fitness stations; and a new splash pad and other improvements to the pool area.

PHASE 3 – Includes additional riparian restorations along Spruce Run; a new picnic shelter; basketball courts; and improvement to circulation, safety and accessibility for parking and driveways.

PHASE 4 – Includes a new playground attraction at the facility ballfield between picnic shelters; additional parking with accessible features; kitchen improvements for existing shelters; and additional riparian restoration.

The overarching elements are to design for long-term sustainability, return much of the park to natural elements, address storm water drainage problems, and install play equipment, fitness stations, and pedestrian connections that will encourage increased use and healthy lifestyles.

IDENTIFY FUNDING AND IMPLEMENT THE MASTER SITE PLAN PHASES

Strong parks make strong neighborhoods and the Borough is rich in park and greenspace. Avalon is .69 square miles and relies on the Community Park for most of its recreation needs. The park is not fully maximized in terms of facilities or programming. Scheduling more programming provides lifestyle enhancement opportunities for all ages. Some action items that should be considered by the Borough include:

- Implement and pursue funding based on the Avalon Park Master Site Plan included in this study. The plan is shown in phases so that the logical staging of improvements can be made as funding becomes available.
- Encourage healthy programs like running, walking, biking events in the park and in the central business district to encourage the use of the park and to create gathering events for residents.
- Consider the creation of a Recreation Board of volunteers to begin to explore possible programming for Borough parks. About 15% of the Borough population is under 18 and there should be programming for this age group. The Recreation Board should act as an advisory board to Council and should provide volunteer labor to help support recreation programming.

- Hire a Recreation Director with an early childhood or recreation background to develop, coordinate, and oversee summer programming, and summer day camp in the parks. Fees can be charged that would partially cover the salary of the Director.
- Work with senior agencies to include additional programming and activities for senior citizens. In surveys and crowd sourcing, seniors have indicated a preference for planned day trips; strength, stretching, fitness and cardio classes; healthy cooking classes; gardening, movies, yoga, and dance classes.

DEVELOP AND ADOPT A PEDESTRIAN BIKE PLAN

The Borough should develop and adopt a pedestrian and bike lane plan that creates a local system to link parks, employment centers, transit facilities, and adjacent municipalities. The “pedestrian oriented” plan would:

- Provide convenient and well illuminated pedestrian walkways throughout California Avenue and within parking lots.
- Provide pedestrian links between the business district and communities adjacent to the Borough.
- Provide pedestrian improvements and connections between California Avenue and adjacent neighborhoods and the community park.

Healthy lifestyles and changes in demographics have created a demand for more pedestrian oriented activities and the need for more walkable communities. Enabling safe access for pedestrians and bikers will help improve the experience and help to make alternatives to car travel more attractive.

Adopting the policy of “complete streets” for the design, development, or redevelopment of Borough roads should be a priority. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition (smartgrowthamerica.org) “Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.” Complete streets can also be important for creating economic activity for smaller business districts such as California Avenue. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition: “Building more sidewalks and striping bike lanes has been shown to create more jobs than traditional car-focused transportation projects.” With the increased demand for bike lanes and pedestrian connections from the public, and with the goal of increasing the attractiveness of Avalon for the millennial and young professional class, the Borough would be well advised to consider exploring pedestrian and bike path options.



AVALON EIP AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN							
GOAL 3: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE AVALON COMMUNITY PARK MASTER SITE PLAN BY SEEKING FUNDING FOR EACH PHASE ANNUALLY.							
To achieve this goal, we must address the following critical success factors:							
We must have... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on improving parks and recreation areas in the Borough with specific attention to the Avalon Community Park • A focus on park facilities, amenities, and healthy lifestyles • Amenities that attract residents and businesses to locate in the Borough 		We must be... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to increasing the use of the parks and recreation areas including the pool • Focused on the development of parks education and information for decision making purposes • Devoted to preserving parks and greenspace for future generations of Avalon residents. 					
To meet this goal we will...			Responsibility		Implementation Schedule (Years)		
					1	2-3	4-5
Action 3A	Continue to focus on the implementation of the Master Site Plan and to revisit the phases for future years	- Borough Manager - Development Committee	X	X	X		
Action 3B	Adopt policies that preserve, protect, and enhance park areas and greenspace in the Borough	- Borough Manager - Development Committee		X	X		
Action 3C	Work with funding agencies (DCNR, DCED, County Planning Department, CFA) to identify and compete for funding	- Borough Manager - Assistant Manager	X				
Action 3D	Engage the public to build support for recreation projects, programs and the Avalon Pool	- Borough Manager	X				
Action 3E	Complete design of future phases in order to be competitive for additional rounds of grant funding.	- Borough Manager - Borough Engineer					
Action 3F	Use the website to market, promote, and engage the public for support of healthy lifestyles, recreation, and the Pool; enhance interface for residents for passes and permits	- Borough Manager - Assistant Manager - Pool Manager	X	X	X		
Action 3G	Develop and implement a pedestrian – bike plan for the Borough	- Borough Manager - Consultant		X	X		

GOAL 4: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON BLIGHT, VACANT PROPERTY, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKING WITH BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

To advance the goals of the special conditions report and the code enforcement section of this EIP study, the Borough should continue to work with the Borough Development Committee (Committee) to study the issue of blight and vacant properties. The Committee should continually identify blighted properties and develop strategies for addressing specific situations. These strategies may include demolition, rehabilitation, and repurposing and/or reuse. The Committee should develop strategies for preventing blight and tools for addressing blight. The long-term goal should be preserving strong neighborhoods so that development and redevelopment can occur.



PREVENTING FUTURE BLIGHT

STEP 1 - PROPERTY CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

The Western PA Regional Data Center collects comprehensive data about the properties in communities in Allegheny County. Most of this data is collected from the County Assessment Office and the County Tax Office. One of the data profiles that is collected and made publicly available is the condition assessment of each property in every community in Allegheny County. Each property is rated as: excellent, very good, good, average, fair, poor, very poor, and unsound. Although the accuracy of this data can be questioned due to its timeliness and completeness, it is a beginning point for identifying problem properties and at-risk properties that may become problems in the future. For purposes of this study, the properties that are rated poor, very poor, and unsound were identified.

STEP 2 - LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Borough should adopt the most current International Property Maintenance Code as its primary enforcement regulation. This Code addresses existing properties relative to exterior conditions. It is comprehensive in nature addressing the most common violations including: garbage and trash, sidewalks, weeds, rodents, junk cars, graffiti, and other exterior property conditions.

The Borough should also consider a "Ticketing" ordinance that allows the Code Enforcement Officer to sweep a neighborhood issuing warnings for property violations that may turn into a ticketing fine, similar to a parking ticket, if the violation is not addressed within a certain amount of time. Typically, ticketing fines are set at \$25 for a first offense. Most residents will respond to and address the violation within the required timeframe.

Another effective code enforcement strategy has been to impose fines for missing windows and doors. This strategy is for vacant properties that are missing operable doors and windows. Typically, these fines are levied at \$300 a day until functional doors and windows are installed. Fines mount quickly so most property owners respond in a timely manner.

STEP 3 - VIGOROUS CODE ENFORCEMENT

Properties that are in poor or very poor condition should be referred to the Borough Office for follow up and issuance of violation notices providing deadlines and penalties for non-conformance. The Borough should use the IPMC to address routine code violations. Unresolved and unaddressed violations should be pursued to the district magistrate level and, if necessary, to Common Pleas Court.

STEP 4 - VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION

Although the Borough currently has a routine rental registration and inspection regulation, there is no requirement for owners to register vacant property information. The goal of vacant property registry is to address problematic vacant properties allowing the Borough to quickly contact an owner via phone or email to report a problem with that property. This program would require a local ordinance that requires the registration, providing a contact and local agent for services purposes after 120 days of vacancy. Model ordinances for this process can be found at <http://www.safeguardproperties.com/Resources/VacantPropertyRegistration>. The ordinance can also require that the vacant property owner provide an escrow payment from which costs for maintaining the property may be deducted by the Borough.

STEP 5 - REHABILITATION

Loans, grants, and tax abatements can be made to assist homeowners and small landlords with the resources that they need to bring their homes and residential rental properties up to code. These programs are typically funded through CDBG grants, HOME grants, and local foundations. Other partners that may be willing to partner with the Borough include *Habitat for Humanity* and *Rebuilding Pittsburgh*. Owners will be required to qualify as low to moderate income residents.

STEP 6 - CONSERVATORSHIP

Conservatorship allows the court to appoint a third-party to enter an owner's property and make repairs to bring it up to code. Some properties may require large scale rehabilitation to bring it back to habitable use. The Borough could consider petitioning the court to obtain site control or "conservatorship" of a property for the purposes of making extensive repairs to bring the property up to code. The Borough may contract with a private developer for this purpose. The owner must reimburse the Borough for the costs associated with the repairs or the Borough may sell the property to recoup losses. The Borough of Dormont has used this strategy effectively for a number of blighted properties that were located in strong neighborhoods.



ADDRESSING EXISTING BLIGHT

STEP 1 - MAPPING TOOLS

Data driven code enforcement allows municipalities to coordinate data and information so that they can measure blight and reduce it. Once a municipality compiles a body of data, it can use the database to:

- Identify owners of more than one problem property
- Identify the most common violations in each area
- Evaluate the number and types of violations in each area
- Enforce registration and permit laws
- Establish the best areas to target proactive enforcement efforts
- Determine more efficient enforcement scenarios based on workload and area covered
- Make a strong case before a judge as to why action is needed to bring a property up to code

In **the Special Conditions Report**, several maps that were developed by the GRS team were included representing a collection of information and data that is available to the Borough but currently spread out across multiple locations and derived from various sources. Aggregating this information on maps creates a powerful tool that will inform the decision-making process when dealing with blight. The maps present a Borough-wide overview of blight factors, which will allow patterns to be identified. It also allows for easy cross-reference of multiple information sources to aid in management and tracking of the Borough's efforts to mitigate blight factors.

Information in the database illustrated on the maps include property assessments, property conditions¹, vacant, condemned and "to be demolished" properties. Other data that could be added to the Blight Map are:

- code enforcement actions;
- Borough liens filed for property maintenance costs;
- and delinquent taxes.

These maps should be updated mid-year, each year, so that the information is available to the Committee and Council when the priority blighted properties for demolition are identified during the budget process for the following year.

¹ Property conditions are derived from the Western PA Data Center as reported by the Allegheny County Assessment Office.

STEP 2 - TABLES AND DATABASES

As part of this study, the GRS team worked with the Committee to begin to develop spreadsheets and databases for tracking blighted and dilapidated properties which resulted in a list of all demolished, “to be demolished,” condemned, and blighted properties as compiled by the Committee.

STEP 3 - PRIORITIZING DEMOLITIONS

A strategic approach to using demolition funds to eliminate blighted properties is important because of the scarcity of these funds for demolition purposes. Beginning in 2017, the Borough budget included an annual allocation of \$50,000 for demolition of blighted properties. Demolition is the backbone of the Borough’s blight strategy and adequate financial resources should be made available annually to allow for consistent elimination of the properties most detrimental to the Borough’s image and property values. The **Special Conditions Report** included a recommended procedure for making decisions about priority demolitions in future years. This procedure is outlined below:

1. Blighted properties from the comprehensive blighted properties spreadsheet will be identified annually by the Borough for demolition funding each year.
2. The annual process will begin with a recommendation from the Property Development Committee.
3. The Property Development Committee’s recommendation will be a point-based evaluation process. Each of the factors listed below will be assigned a point value for each property on the list. Point values assigned will be on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least relevant and 5 being the most relevant.
 - Located along California Avenue or Route 65.
 - Visible from California Avenue or Route 65.
 - Imminent threat to health, safety and welfare.
 - Existence of additional blighted properties within close proximity.
 - Redevelopment potential.
4. Members of the Committee will use the matrix to evaluate each property for consideration of properties to be demolished. Individual scores will be aggregated and a recommendation will be made to the Borough Council based on the aggregated scores that are calculated by using the matrix system for scoring.



STEP 4 – FUNDING AND RESOURCES

In addition to the use of CDBG funds for demolition, there are several programs that should be part of the Borough’s “tool box” in supporting and facilitating property maintenance and community improvements in the Borough. Some of these programs are:

HOME PROGRAM Federally funded program that provides municipalities with grant and loan assistance as well as technical assistance to expand the supply of decent and affordable housing for low- and very low-income Pennsylvanians. The program may include new construction, rehabilitation, financing mechanisms, acquisition of rental or sales housing and rental assistance for low- and moderate-income families. Funding up to \$500,000 is available and requires a 25% match.

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM (NSP) This program provides grants to communities to address the housing foreclosure crisis created by subprime and another problematic mortgage lending. This program is authorized under the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

HOME WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM (WX) Pennsylvania’s Weatherization Assistance Program increases energy efficiency in homes by reducing energy costs and increasing comfort while safeguarding health and safety. On site energy audits are conducted to assess conditions in homes and to identify the most cost-effective energy saving measures to be installed. This program is available to residents through Allegheny County.

MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP) is created to help local governments efficiently and effectively plan and implement a variety of services, improvements, and soundly managed development. The program provides funding for three groups of activities – 1) shared service; 2) community planning; and 3) floodplain management. The program is administered by the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS) in the DCED.

KEYSTONE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM (KCP) assists Pennsylvania’s communities in achieving revitalization. The program designates and funds communities that are implementing Main Street, Elm Street, Enterprise Zone efforts or other community development efforts by supporting physical improvements to designated and/or other communities that are undertaking revitalization activities within the community. Also, provides accessible modifications for the homes of persons with physical disabilities.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (NAP AND NPP) provides tax credits to corporate sponsors who contribute to a local community development corporation (CDC) to undertake projects and programs in blighted and declining Borough neighborhoods. Tax credits up to \$500,000 per year for six (6) years may be approved by the Commonwealth of PA, Department of Community and Economic Development for qualifying CDCs.

THE TRI-COG LAND BANK

The Tri-COG land bank is a governmental entity that works solely to return vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent and foreclosed properties to productive use. Currently the Tri-COG land bank is the only functioning land bank in Allegheny County. The land bank has the authority to design, develop, construct, demolish, reconstruct, rehabilitate, renovate, relocate, and otherwise improve real property. A land bank is able to extinguish property tax liens and claims subject to school district permission. In order to become a member of the Tri-COG land bank the municipality and school district must jointly become members and pledge a portion of their delinquent tax revenue to support the operation of the land bank. New members are admitted to the land bank no later than the 3rd quarter of each calendar year for the next year.



The land bank is a good vehicle for problem properties that have been vacant or abandoned for a long period of time. The land bank is required to maintain the property according to code. It can make it faster, easier, and less expensive for potential developers to obtain blighted and vacant property and return it to productive use. The land bank can clear the title and has first right at tax sales. The land bank holds and sells properties with the best interest of the Borough in mind for long-term productive use.

Ordinances and intergovernmental agreements requesting membership are available through the Tri-COG land bank.

BOROUGH OF AVALON EIP AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN					
GOAL 4: THE BOROUGH WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON BLIGHT, VACANT PROPERTY, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKING WITH THE BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.					
To achieve this goal, we must address the following critical success factors:					
We must have...		We must be...			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on preserving and improving neighborhoods • A plan for protecting valuable community assets and resources • Policies for maintaining a vibrant commercial district 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to aggressive code enforcement • Aware of the impact that blight has on the values of our properties and on a healthy community life • Vigilant in promoting green and sustainable practices for our residents for future healthy lifestyles 			
To meet this goal we will...		Responsibility	Implementation Schedule (Years)		
			1	2-3	4-5
Action 4A	Adopt ordinances that will provide the framework for aggressive code enforcement: 2015 IPMC, Quality-of-Life ticketing, rental and vacant property registration	- Borough Manager - Councils	X		
Action 4B	Allocate resources during the budget process for code enforcement officers, inspectors, and appropriate administrative support for code enforcement	- Borough Manager - Councils		X	X
Action 4C	Conduct a community-wide housing conditions assessment that refines the data from the W.PA Data Center	- Councils - Borough Manager - Asst. Manager	X	X	X
Action 4D	Purchase and implement the TRAIRS software for a land-based module to support the code enforcement, rental registration, and vacant property registration activities	- Borough Manager - Councils	X		
Action 4E	Set fees for registrations, inspections, and tickets to cover the necessary personnel to enforce the ordinances	- Borough Manager - Councils	X	X	X
Action 4F	Engage with county professionals to access additional resources for preserving housing stock for property owners	Community Development Director		X	
Action 4G	Add personnel when possible for property maintenance code enforcement especially during the summer months.	Council Borough Manager		X	X

GOAL 5: THE BOROUGH WILL DEVELOP A LONG-TERM PLAN FOR FINANCING CAPITAL PROJECTS.

In most local governments, it is not possible to pay for large-scale capital projects such as roads, sewers, facilities, and large equipment purchases without the development of a long-term plan. Long term capital planning is an integral part of the overall budget process but it is distinctly separate and unique from the annual operating budget and merits special emphasis and attention.

A capital improvement plan (CIP) is a special budget document that is developed and utilized by the governing body to identify specific capital projects with corresponding funding sources that are scheduled over a multiyear period. The CIP should outline the estimated cost for each project together with supporting documentation. The formal CIP document should identify supporting funds for each project through identified revenue sources such as dedicated fees, debt financing proceeds, and committed and pending grant funds. The CIP should also provide a recommended time frame for carrying out the implementation of specific projects.

The CIP process should include the Council and all relevant staff and should identify specific goals for the Borough, such as the following:

- Providing a logical and effective replacement and upgrade of major infrastructure systems;
- Addressing compliance issues mandated by federal and state agencies such as sanitary and storm sewer regulations;
- Analyzing possible funding sources for upgrades for facilities; and
- Planning for the expansion and/or enhancement of facilities and equipment necessary for the provision of the continued quality of municipal services for residents.



The identified projects should be funded through sources that match the useful life of the projects. This approach is in contrast to general operating budgets that are funded through annual tax levies, fees, and miscellaneous revenue. The following are logical funding sources for capital projects:

- Capital reserve fund (transferred from GL fund excess revenue)
- Dedicated fees (e.g., sewer fees, water fees, transportation impact fees)
- Long-term general obligation bonds and notes
- Short-term notes, loans, credit lines, and lease purchase agreements
- Grants from federal, state, local, and private sources

By utilizing these funding sources, the burden for residents is spread over the useful life of the project rather than assessing a large fee or tax in a single fiscal year. The CIP should be reviewed and analyzed during the annual budget process in order to

determine the appropriate level of funding for each project identified. Ultimately, the Council, through the CIP process, will make important decisions about what projects will be undertaken and what priorities are set in order to meet the goals identified in the CIP. There are several areas where the Borough should begin to develop long-term CIP processes. Most of these areas have been identified in Step 4 of this EIP report. These areas are summarized in the following pages.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS



The Borough does not have a comprehensive long-term pavement management plan in place. According to the last PennDOT revised [Liquid Fuels Map as of June 2007](#), there is a total of 12.97 miles of roadway within the Borough. The Borough maintains 11.45 miles of paved, brick, and concrete constructed local roadways. There are 1.51 miles of state roads within the Borough. The road paving program is developed with assistance of the Borough Engineer and all road paving contracts are bid out to contractors. But there is currently no long term planning done for street maintenance or reconstruction.

In a review of comparable communities, boroughs like Crafton, Etna, and Millvale spend over \$1 million per year for road improvements by dedicating special millage to a Roads Fund. Avalon could consider dedicating millage to road repair and construction each year during the annual budget process – one mill of tax generates about \$162,000 in revenue. This would permit a consistent and stable source of revenue for continuously upgrading streets in the Borough.

STORMWATER SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

The Borough is an MS4 permitted community and is, therefore, responsible for having an active MS4 program following the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulations.

- The storm system consists of hundreds of basins, pipes of various material and sizes, and above ground pipes and swales.
- The system is not currently mapped.
- The Borough does not currently own or maintain any detention facilities.
- Storm grates are inspected regularly as part of routine Borough inspections.

Projects related to storm water management currently have no dedicated funding source. This topic is discussed extensively under Goal No. 1 as part of the revenue enhancements that are available to the Borough. These projects should be identified, priced, scheduled and included in a CIP.



FACILITY MAINTENANCE

The Borough Building is a relatively new structure that houses all Borough operations including the police department, administration, code enforcement, and the revenue collection operation. Public Works personnel are responsible for building upkeep and routine maintenance items such as heavy cleaning, routine electrical, bulb changes, and minor renovations. There is no inventory of assets for maintenance purposes and no schedules established for preventative maintenance.

The Borough also owns and maintains the Public Works garage and the Pool Building in Avalon Community Park. A plan for updating and maintaining these buildings should also be part of the CIP.

VEHICLE FLEET

The police, fire, and public works departments should develop replacement schedules for all vehicles and include these replacements in a five-year CIP. A complete inventory of vehicles and a replacement scheduled based on an adopted replacement policy should be developed.

A review of the current public works fleet indicates that the Borough has a newer truck fleet and suitable equipment for its operations. There is an opportunity to implement proper planning both for operations and for financing purposes. The Borough needs a program whereby it commits to an ongoing program of vehicle lease/purchases that will:

- Ensure that there is a consistent replacement of new equipment into the fleet
- Ensure that the employees are driving and operating equipment that is safe and efficient
- Reduce maintenance costs for the fleet as a whole
- Allow management to have more certainty regarding the costs of vehicles when putting together the annual general fund budget.

In the police department, a new police car is purchased about every other year. The current police fleet is show in **Table 9**.

TABLE 9 – POLICE VEHICLE FLEET

YEAR	MAKE	MODEL	MILEAGE
2018	Ford	Explorer	Purchased New
2016	Ford	Explorer	38,769
2014	Ford	Explorer	66,710
2013	Ford	Future K9 vehicle	114,886

Step 4 of this EIP study provided a model vehicle and equipment replacement program policy. It provided guidelines about the useful life for typical public works department vehicles and equipment. It also provided a rating scale system for age, reliability, maintenance costs, and condition. This program should be discussed with public works personnel and put in place as soon possible in order to prepare information for the final CIP.

PARK FACILITIES

The Borough has historically made very little financial investment in its parks and recreation facilities and operations. As part of the EIP Special Conditions Report, a phased master site plan was created for making significant upgrades to the Avalon Community Park. These planned phases should be incorporated into the CIP. The plan and the probable estimate of costs is provided in the Parks, Pool, and Recreation Report and summarized under Goal 3 of this report.

TECHNOLOGY

As part of this EIP study, Step 4, an inventory of computer technology equipment was prepared and a financing schedule for routine replacement, repair, and upgrades of IT equipment was developed for inclusion in the CIP. All departments rely on technology for their day to day operations and a breakdown in any part of the network or technology loops can create a crisis for the Borough’s operation. It is important for the Borough to continuously review and budget for these improvements by including these expenditures in the CIP process. A proposed replacement schedule is shown below:

TABLE 10 – RECOMMENDED TECHNOLOGY REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
2019	2020	2021
Borough Manager	Police Chief	Police MDT #1
Borough Assistant Manager	Police Squad Room #1	Police MDT #2
Admin Clerk (Payroll)	Police Squad Room #2	Police MDT #3
Admin Clerk (Counter)	Police Squad Room #3	Police Interview Room
Tax Collector (Optional)	Public Works Department	

BOROUGH OF AVALON EIP AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN					
GOAL 5: THE BOROUGH WILL DEVELOP A LONG-TERM PLAN FOR FINANCING CAPITAL PROJECTS.					
To achieve this goal, we must address the following critical success factors:					
We must have...			We must be...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clearly defined, prioritized CIP • A reasonable schedule for projects • A funding strategy • A focus on grant opportunities 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to an annual CIP process • Willing to dedicate revenue funds to projects • Willing to consider borrowing as a strategy for funding 		
To meet this goal we will...		Responsibility	Implementation Schedule (Years)		
			1	2-3	4-5
Action 5A	Each summer, conduct an inventory of facilities, infrastructure, and equipment. Assess conditions, assign estimated costs, and assign replacement schedules.	- Borough Manager - Department Directors - Engineers	X	X	
Action 5B	Prepare a CIP document template with a narrative, schedule, costs, and five-year budget. The CIP should include detailed information regarding the facility upgrades, infrastructure planning, park projects, technology and major equipment purchases in the PW and Police departments	- Borough Manager - Assistant Manager	X	X	X
Action 5C	Develop a funding strategy by identifying specific revenue sources to support projects.	- Borough Manager - Assistant Manager		X	
Action 5D	Incorporate and implement the CIP projects as part of the annual operating budget	- Borough Manager - Borough Council		X	X
Action 5E	Update the plan on an annual basis.	- Borough Manager - Department Directors - Assistant Manager			X
Action 5F	Utilize county, state, and federal funding sources, and schedule meetings with legislators and funders to provide support and influence to fund projects.	- Borough Council - Borough Manager - Assistant Manager		X	X

STEP 6: FIVE-YEAR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCESS RENEWAL

The EIP assumes a dynamic renewal process, and should be reviewed, evaluated, adjusted, and adopted each year. Any successful implementation of a plan requires the involvement of the strategy formulators and key staff who will be charged with the implementation. It is essential, then, that officials, department directors, and key staff members are involved in the implementation process and stay engaged as the implementation progresses. The following management issues are central to a successful implementation process:

STEP 1. IDENTIFY HIGH-PRIORITY GOALS – In Step 5, the top-five priority goals were identified. These goals were based on the most important critical factors for the success and sustainability of the Borough organization. The prioritization of the goals for the Borough focus on sustainability and community resilience and the best strategies for advancing:

- Economic health
- Livability
- Environmental quality
- Social equity

STEP 2. DEVELOP ACTION ITEMS – In Step 5, the action items associated with each goal and a schedule for completing each action item were identified.

STEP 3. ESTABLISH ANNUAL GOALS – Establishing annual objectives will assist the Borough with the implementation process. The purpose of establishing annual objectives is to provide the following:

- Guidelines for actions and efforts
- Justification to stakeholders for activities
- Standards of performance
- Source of employee motivation
- Basis for organizational design

STEP 4. ASSESS STRUCTURE – Changes in strategy sometimes require changes in organizational structure, because structure often dictates how policies will be established and how resources will be allocated. It is therefore important to determine if organizational structure changes are necessary in order to pursue new strategies. There are times when an attractive strategy must be abandoned because it becomes cost prohibitive if it would require a massive change in the organizational structure.



STEP 5. IDENTIFY RESOURCES – Many organizations spend time, money, and effort in developing a plan, but little thought or commitment of resources to the implementation of the plan. The Council Committees should work with the staff to identify the resources that are necessary to implement the Plan and to develop a funding strategy that identifies and accesses those resources.

STEP 6. DEVELOP AN EVALUATION FRAMEWORK – The person assigned as an Implementation Manager should work with Borough management and staff to develop a strategy-evaluation assessment matrix that identifies, for each strategy, whether major changes have occurred in the Borough’s internal and external position and whether the Borough’s organization has made progress in satisfactorily meeting stated objectives. Strategy evaluation should be designed to provide a true picture of what is happening in the organization. For this reason, qualitative evaluations should also be built into the process. This will inform the Borough Council and management as to what corrective action, if any, must be taken.

STEP 7. MEASURE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE – The Implementation Manager should work with Council Committees to develop appropriate performance measures based on stated objectives for the priority strategies. Quantitative criteria that are commonly used are (1) comparing the selected factors over time, (2) comparing the Borough’s operations to its competitors or benchmark communities, and (3) comparing the department’s performance to statewide or national standards. Qualitative factors that should also be considered are turnover and absentee rates, quality of the services, and employee satisfaction.

STEP 8. TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION – This activity is targeted toward making the changes that can reposition the Borough organization to achieve sustainability and resilience for the future. During this phase, the Implementation Manager should assist the Borough in analyzing organizational structure, reviewing organizational performance, or revising the organization’s mission. Corrective actions should be designed to capitalize on strengths, take advantage of key external opportunities, avoid or mitigate threats, and improve internal weaknesses.

GOAL 6: THE BOROUGH HAS THE STRUCTURE AND CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Implementation of the EIP will require significant effort and implementation experience and will need to be the primary focus of a single individual – especially during the early stages of implementation.

For this reason, it is recommended that the Borough appoint the Borough Manager and/or Assistant Manager as the Implementation Manager and assign that person the responsibility for implementing the Plan’s action items and achieving the priority goals. Working and reporting to the Borough Council, the Borough Manager will have a thorough understanding of the implementation processes and resources and can guide the effort to ensure that key action strategies are accomplished as scheduled.

The Implementation Manager will work closely with the Borough Committees to provide staff support, updates, and progress reports. The Implementation Manager would be responsible for the following items:

- Implementing action items
- Establishing annual goals
- Assessing structure
- Identifying resources
- Developing an evaluation framework
- Measuring organizational performance
- Recommending corrective action

The primary responsibility of the Implementation Manager would be to make sure that the action items from the priority plans in Step 5 are advanced and completed within targeted deadlines. As part of this process, the Implementation Manager will also be responsible for identifying the resources, manpower, and process for accomplishing the goals outlined in the EIP plan document.



"The greatest strategy is doomed if it is implemented badly."
- Bernard Reimann

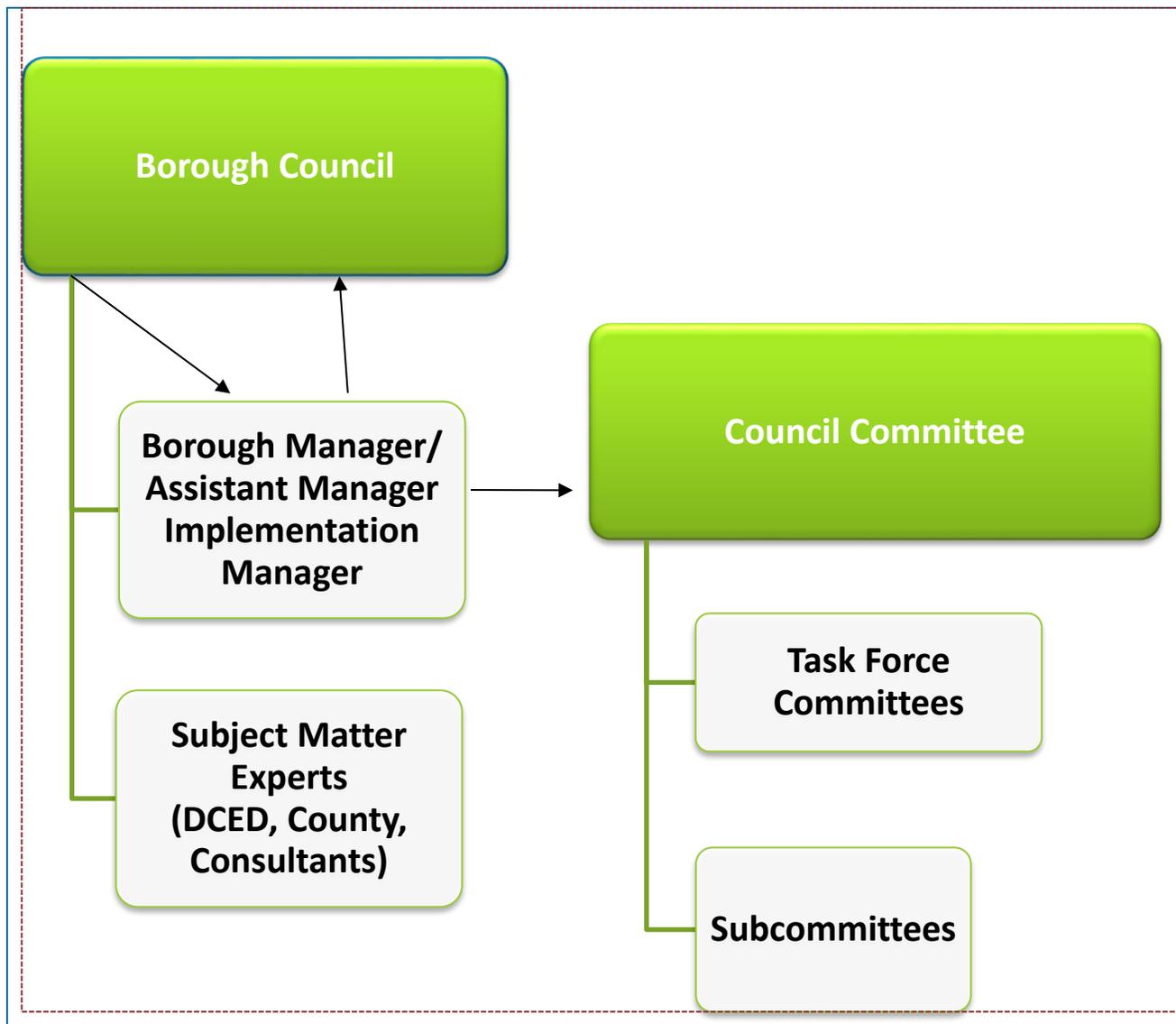
IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER AND COMMITTEE

It is critical to the implementation of the Plan for the Implementation Manager to work with the Council Committees who have significant authority and resources with which to work to undertake the implementation of the action items. The Implementation Manager should work with the Council Committees to ensure that sufficient progress is made relative to implementation of the action items. The Implementation Manager would be responsible for providing quarterly updates on the progress of the implementation of the recommended items. By setting up such a structure, the EIP will be a living document that provides the basis for a re-energized focus and direction for the community leaders.

The Council Committees may consider a task force approach, whereby committee members with specific skill-sets are charged with organizing task forces as needed that may be made up of volunteer subject matter experts with the expertise and experience necessary to carry out specific actions associated with the implementation strategy. Task forces should encompass a broad stakeholder emphasis that is competency-based in appropriate areas of community and economic development. Specific action items are as follows:

- STEP 1** – Identify high priority action items from the Steps 5-6 and assign them to the proper Committee.
- STEP 2** – Identify additional stakeholders for the Committee members to work with on specific items.
- STEP 3** – Conduct an organizational/launch meeting for action items within the Committee.
- STEP 4** – Identify action items from the priority goals that should be implemented in the first year.
- STEP 5** – Organize task forces to assist the Implementation Manager with the identified action items.
- STEP 6** – Build capacity through additional volunteer recruitment.
- STEP 7** – Conduct a regular evaluation of progress on key action items relative to the implementation success.
- STEP 8** – Take corrective action as necessary to address deficiencies, in order to meet target goals.

FIGURE 3 – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: PROPOSED PROCESS AND STRUCTURE



AVALON EIP AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN					
GOAL 6: THE BOROUGH HAS THE CAPACITY AND STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN.					
To achieve this goal, we must address the following critical success factors:					
We must have... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific action items that are prioritized • A specific person or persons designated with the responsibility for implementation • Resources to support the implementation process 			We must be... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to realizing positive change through the implementation process • Aware and educated about possible opportunities • Forward looking and supportive of identified action items 		
To meet this goal we will...					
		Responsibility	Implementation Schedule (Years)		
			1	2-3	4-5
Action 6A	Appoint the Borough Manager and/or Assistant Manager as Implementation Manager to implement the recommendations from the EIP.	- Council - Borough Manager	X		
Action 6B	Assign responsibilities and prepare work assignments as necessary for implementation.	- Borough Manager	X		
Action 6C	Assign specific action items to the respective Council Committees (i.e. park planning to Development Committee, development of a CIP to Finance Committee, etc.).	- Council - Borough Manager	X		
Action 6D	Prepare progress reports and corrective action recommendations based on evaluations.	- Borough Manager - Committee Chairs	X	X	X
Action 6E	Update, adjust, and re-adopt the annual plan with specific goals, objectives, and action items for the next year.	- Borough Manager - Key Staff	X	X	X
Action 6F	Continue updates and process renewal at regular intervals; review progress quarterly in order to make adjustments.	- Borough Manager - Committee	X	X	X

GOAL 7: THE BOROUGH HAS DEVELOPED A FUNDING STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN.

Resource allocation is a central management activity that supports strategy implementation. Without a planned approach to resource allocation, decisions are often made based on political preferences or personal beliefs. In a strategically planned environment, resources will be allocated based on priority goals and established annual objectives. The success of implementation will be directly related to the consistency of the resource allocation with the priorities that are identified in the approved annual objectives.

Organizations have at least four types of resources that can be used to achieve desired objectives:



Resources in organizations are often not allocated effectively because of the reasons below:

LEADERS ARE OVERPROTECTIVE OF RESOURCES. Many elected officials, in principle, are adamantly opposed to any investment of additional resources in the development of organizational capacity, especially in the areas of training and professional development. This leads to short-term savings and long-term bankruptcy.

THE FOCUS IS ON SHORT-TERM LIQUIDITY INSTEAD OF LONG-TERM FINANCIAL HEALTH. Often, in order to achieve long-term sustainability, it is necessary to invest in professional staff, subject matter experts, and strategic vision planning processes. In many local government organizations, these activities are not accorded the value they deserve.

DECISIONS ARE MADE BASED ON POLITICAL ORIENTATION. When the resource allocation is based on the political support in the community, the proper attention is diverted from high-priority goals and projects to addressing the immediate “hot issue” items in the community.

TARGETS AND OBJECTIVES ARE TOO VAGUE. Planning and annual objectives should be very specific, with performance measurements identified.

LEADERS ARE RELUCTANT TO MAKE CHANGES OR TAKE RISKS. Most organizations are resistant to change. Any change in structure, technology, personnel, or practices raises anxiety levels in an organization. Change should be viewed as a continuous process and an opportunity to improve the quality of the organization and the services it provides.

LEADERS LACK SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE. Because the nature of local government leadership is naturally transient, leaders are sometimes unsure or uninformed about how resources should be allocated to advance organizational priorities. Likewise, the priorities are often not adequately communicated to key staff in the organization who are responsible for the organization and utilization of resources.

Effective resource allocation does not guarantee success, because other factors such as personnel, commitment, and effective programming must drive the implementation. However, no implementation can be successful without prudent resource allocation.

In order to identify, organize, and capture the resources necessary for a successful implementation, the Implementation Manager should prepare a preliminary funding strategy that will position the Borough to capitalize on the best opportunities for securing public funds and for identifying project revenue generation. The strategy should identify short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives and funding sources that can be leveraged to achieve the redevelopment vision for the project area. The Implementation Manager will identify public-private opportunities, grants, innovative fund-raising opportunities, sponsorships, and other revenue-generating strategies.

DEVELOPING FUNDING STRATEGIES

The Implementation Manager should identify and analyze potential funding sources available for eligible costs associated with the Borough's projects. A detailed matrix outlining resources available for the projects should be prepared and used to develop a comprehensive funding strategy. Utilizing the action plans in Step 5 the Implementation Manager should prepare detailed briefing books and message statements for each of the priority projects. As part of the process for identifying viable public funding opportunities, the projects should be discussed with key staff in county, state, and federal funding agencies. Only the most relevant funding opportunities should be targeted, based on the unique needs of the projects. Programs that should be evaluated include, but should not be limited to, the following:

- **FY 2016 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES (COPS) APPROPRIATIONS** – The annual DOJ development appropriations legislation provides funding for costs related to public safety improvements. This opportunity involves direct contact with congressional staff and allows for the potential to address public safety for projects.
- **REDEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE CAPITAL PROGRAM (RACP)** – Pennsylvania's RACP supports larger development projects that have a total project cost in excess of \$1 million. The governor typically announces competitive application opportunities each year. These grants are 50-50 matches.
- **BUSINESS IN OUR SITES (BOS)** – Pennsylvania's BOS grants and loans focus on infrastructure and site preparation costs that transition undeveloped sites to "shovel-ready" sites. Although funding for this program is very limited, funds become available from time to time and there have been discussions in the General Assembly about recapitalizing the program as part of the next state budget.
- **PENNSYLVANIA INFRASTRUCTURE BANK (PIB)** – PIB is a program developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) that offers low-interest loans (one-half of prime) for transportation improvements. The loans can be repaid with



- federal funds. PIB is especially helpful in accelerating phases of transportation projects that must move at a pace that may not coincide with the timeline for delivering federal funds.
- **FOUNDATION PROGRAMS/FUNDING** – A review of potential foundation resources should be undertaken to determine support for components of the projects that are candidates for funding. Resources such as senior centers and other public services may increase the opportunity for foundational support.
 - **PENNSYLVANIA STATE ENERGY FUNDING** – Energy independence programs offered through multiple agencies, including the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), DCED, and the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA), may provide potential sources of funding.
 - **PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DCNR) COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (C2P2)** – This program funds both planning and development parks and recreation grants that would support several of the recommendations in the EIP. The annual application is due in April of each year.
 - **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM** – Projects that could be undertaken with CDBG funds include water, sewer, and road projects; demolition of vacant and/or unsafe structures; acquisition of blighted property; handicap ramps at intersections; and handicap-accessible pedestrian walkways at parks or restrooms. The Borough has used these funds in the past for projects.
 - **MARCELLUS SHALE ACT 13 FUNDS** – The Act 13 funds can be used for projects such as the acquisition of key properties (land and buildings); rehabilitation of buildings; site preparation for public uses; parks and recreation projects; and other economic development projects. Applications are accepted by agencies at various times of the year.
 - **PENNDOT ENHANCEMENT OR PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE (PCTI)** – Enhancement funds and PCTI funds are made available through PennDOT for projects that address the quality of life in a community, such as safer pedestrian-oriented linkages, traffic calming, re-signalization, and reconfiguration of intersections.
 - **GREENWAYS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION PROGRAM (GTPR)** – These funds, up to \$250,000, are available through the Commonwealth Financing Authority for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation, and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks, and beautification projects.

In addition, the PA DCED Governor's Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS) is a one-stop shop for local government officials and provides a wealth of knowledge and expertise on all matters affecting local government operations throughout Pennsylvania. The services and publications provided can be viewed and downloaded at www.dced.pa.gov.

The Implementation Manager should provide advice and recommendations related to the following: (1) eligibility requirements related to each program; (2) assumptions regarding the proposed use of funds and consistency with program eligibility and compliance requirements; (3) structuring of funding uses and match requirements to promote efficiency while meeting program requirements; and (4) potential to supplement funding sources.

The Implementation Manager should review, prepare, and utilize economic data contained in this Plan for the completion of funding applications. Once funding applications have been submitted for the project, the Implementation Manager should assist in securing disbursement of funds for specific project uses. It will be important to manage communication with appointed and elected officials at the local and state levels and with various agency personnel for the purpose of securing the disbursement of public funding for the project. A comprehensive master project funding schedule should be prepared, illustrating the timing of funding availability in relation to the projects' development schedules and phasing plans. Additional activities might include the following:

- Meetings with members of the Pennsylvania legislature and congressional delegation in support of funding requests;
- Meetings with program managers to build support for the project; and
- Identification of local and private matching resources required to leverage public funds as needed.

POST-AWARD MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Once funding has been secured, the Implementation Manager should assist with disbursements and compliance for federal and state funding awards. The disbursement process will vary in complexity and duration with the funding source employed. These post-award tasks will include the following:

- Manage the post-award process to meet the project schedules.
- Complete the post-award documentation to secure the release of public funding.
- Communicate with local and/or state agencies for the purpose of project orientation.
- Manage the project schedule.
- Facilitate the close out process.

AVALON EIP AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN							
GOAL 7: A DETAILED FUNDING STRATEGY FOR FUNDING IMPLEMENTATION HAS BEEN DEVELOPED.							
To achieve this goal, we must address the following critical success factors:							
We must have...		We must be...					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resource allocation strategy that is planned and matches priorities • A targeted funding strategy that is project-specific 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive, focused, and targeted • Organized and prepared for all funding opportunities that match our priorities 					
To meet this goal we will...			Responsibility		Implementation Schedule (Years)		
					1	2-3	4-5
Action 7A	Identify, on an annual basis, resources necessary for each action item to be implemented.		- Implementation Manager		X	X	X
Action 7B	Develop a funding matrix that identifies the specific project priorities and budgets, with possible funding sources.		- Implementation Manager		X	X	X
Action 7C	Prepare briefing books, one-pagers, and message statements for each priority project, including narrative, budgets, matching funds, and schedule for completion.		- Implementation Manager		X	X	X
Action 7D	Prepare grant applications as funding opportunities become available.		- Implementation Manager		X	X	X
Action 7E	Build political support with legislative delegations, funding agencies, and private investors.		- Council - Implementation Manager		X	X	X

CONCLUSION

The Borough of Avalon has a long and proud heritage as an important community in the Ohio River Corridor. It is home to 4,702 residents and provides walkable neighborhoods with access to Borough amenities. Overlooking the Ohio River, with stable and close-knit neighborhoods and easy commutes to employment, dining, entertainment, education, and cultural nodes, there are significant opportunities for the future of the Borough.

The Borough has had challenges maintaining a stable financial condition due to stagnant assessed values, rising costs of personnel, and past deficiencies in its budgeting process. Through reliance on professional management support, comprehensive financial reporting, and creative problem solving, the Borough is committed to providing quality services and operational and financial transparency for its residents.



Compensation, benefits, and rising insurance costs will continue to drive overall costs. Benefit costs will continue to rise by at least 8% per year over the next several years and the Borough will continue to pay off debt obligations. However, by containing the personnel costs, the Borough should find itself in a favorable cash position over the next five years. In fact, in 2016 and 2017, the Borough was able to build comfortable reserves that help to minimize financial risk in the future. This will require regular monitoring and a comprehensive financial management system with accuracy and timely reporting.

The Borough has taken positive steps to enhance its revenue collection, pursue delinquencies, seek alternative revenue sources, reduce staff where possible, and to limit its costs for healthcare and benefits. If the Borough officials continue to address the revenue problems and to engage in serious cost containment, the Borough should be able to continue to stabilize its financial position and to begin to plan for long-term capital and infrastructure improvements.

Implementation of the EIP Plan recommendations for revenue enhancement, cost containment, financial management improvements, community park upgrades, technology initiatives, blight and vacant property strategies, and CIP development must become a priority. With responsible oversight by the decision makers, continued support of professional management, and constant attention to the Borough's financial condition, the Borough's organizational resilience should advance and thrive.

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

RECOMMENDATION No. 1 – CONSIDER A REDUCTION TO THE NUMBER OF COUNCIL MEMBERS BEFORE THE 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS.

Currently, the Borough has nine (9) Council members elected from three wards, a Mayor, and a Tax Collector for a total of 11 elected positions. There have been times in the recent past where it has been a challenge to fill so many elected positions with one of the approximately 3,500 adults in the Borough. After the completion of the 2020 census, it will be the Council's responsibility to make sure that the wards within the Borough comply with the Borough Code which provides that the Borough Council must redistrict its wards "within the year following the official and final reporting of the Federal census, decennial, or special." It will be incumbent on the Council to reapportion the Borough into wards that meet the Borough Code requirements and to comply with the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other statutory authority. The wards composing a borough must be composed of "compact and contiguous territory as nearly equal in population as practicable" and cannot have less than 300 registered voters.

Where boroughs are not divided into wards, the law is straightforward - seven (7) Council members are elected at large. The Borough Code contains detailed provisions for altering the number of Council members and for transitioning to a different size council. There has been a tendency in recent years for the size of councils to be reduced and "at large" voting systems to replace ward systems.² In fact, over 863 boroughs now have 7 or fewer Council members and less than 100 have more than 7 members.

RECOMMENDATION No. 2 – CONTINUE TO BUDGET AND APPROVE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BOROUGH MANAGER FOR PROFICIENCY IN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND BENEFIT MANAGEMENT.

The Borough employees are the most valuable assets in the Borough organization. Like most communities, the largest expenditure in the Borough's budget is personnel and personnel-related items. The most expensive complaints and lawsuits paid by municipalities, by far, are employee-related, usually because of the municipality's employment practices and personnel policies or lack thereof. The personnel environment is complex and rapidly changing especially in the context of the internet and social media. Handling these issues requires a high degree of training and experience so that matters can be addressed effectively and in accordance with public-sector employment law. Situations such as workers' compensation claims, disabilities, and long-term absences can be expensive if they are not addressed in an effective and expedient manner.

The Borough Manager should have access to the training and support necessary for managing personnel. One such opportunity is the annual public employee training session, sponsored by the Public Employee Labor Relations Advisory Service (PELRAS) and supported by the PA League of Municipalities (PLM) and the Association for PA Municipal Managers (APMM), held in State College each year to provide updates of all personnel related and collective bargaining matters. There are also other opportunities for training each year through the Local Government Academy, the Association of PA Municipal Managers (APMM), and the PA-Government Finance Officers Association (PA-GFOA).

² Borough Council Handbook, PA DCED, Governor's Center for Local Government Services, Chapter I, page 1.

RECOMMENDATION No. 3 – DEVELOP AN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE THAT IDENTIFIES ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES.

The Borough currently has no formal administrative code that sets up its structure, positions, or administrative processes. An administrative code should be developed and adopted by ordinance, identifying the administrative structure, the positions, the relationship of positions and departments to each other, and the authority and responsibilities that are vested in each position. The development of an administrative code would address two deficiencies that have been previously noted:

- Positions should be formalized so that, even in transition periods, the position with identified duties, responsibilities, and place in the organizational chart will be preserved.
- Professional staff will be assigned duties and tasks that are currently undertaken by elected officials, thereby moving the work to trained and experienced staff and freeing the Council to work on policy initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION No. 4 – BUDGET FOR AND BEGIN THE PROCESS TO DIGITIZE RECORDS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE ORGANIZATION AND RETRIEVAL OF INFORMATION.

Records management challenges continue to rise for most municipalities. The Borough must be more efficient in the storage of both electronic and paper files and the integration of each with regulatory standards and the PA record retention schedule. Records must also be available for retrieval for “right to know” requests.

Building a fully integrated process can be accomplished partly through the conversion of existing records to searchable microfiche and partly by moving to a paperless business environment that includes searchable document technology, mobile applications, and public portals that provide additional

transparency. This move to a paperless environment should be a priority for the Borough.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATION No. 5 – CONTINUE TO USE AND ENHANCE THE BOOKMINDERS SERVICE AND REPORTING FOR 2018 AND FUTURE YEARS.

Bookminders provides complete, accurate, and timely financial accounting records and reports. Expansions and enhancements to the financial management system should include:

- Fixed Assets
- HR and Personnel Management
- Purchase Order Encumbrance System
- Rental Registrations
- Licenses and Permitting
- Interface with Mobile Devices



RECOMMENDATION No. 6 - PROVIDE FUNDING AND APPROVAL FOR THE MANAGER AND ASSISTANT MANAGER TO ATTEND REGULAR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING THROUGH THE GFOA AND LGA.

The Borough operation is currently supported by a \$4.5 million annual operating budget. In order to protect the assets and resources of the Borough (both human and capital), it is important that the Borough have a financial management system that meets Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and that it is vested with employees who have the authority and training to act accordingly. In order to further enhance and protect the Borough assets, the Borough should continue to sponsor memberships in GFOA and provide training funds to attend

the annual conference and to participate in training opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION No. 7 – CONTINUE TO PRODUCE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR THE COUNCIL.

Monthly financial reporting should be a routine and required function of the finance operation as soon as bank reconciliation is completed but no later than the 10th of each month. Currently, *Bookminders* is providing complete, accurate, and timely reports for review by the Finance Committee. Monthly reports should include but not be limited to the following information:

- BUDGET COMPARISON REPORT – Report that compares budgeted revenues and expenditures to actual revenues and expenditures for each and every category line item for each of the funds.
- SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET REPORT – Report that shows the assets, liabilities, and fund balance for each and every municipal fund.
- CASH FLOW ANALYSIS – Report that compares cash flow in the current fiscal year to previous year(s) and identifies what the actual availability of cash is estimated to be by month and at year’s end.

RECOMMENDATION No. 8 – DEVELOP STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR ALL BOROUGH FINANCIAL PROCESSES.

There are currently no written operating procedures for finance. Because of the limited staff and recent turnover in key positions, the lack of written procedures can lead to confusion and errors. These procedures should cover the following:

- A financial code of conduct
- Accounting for revenues, expenditures, assets, and liabilities
- Procedures for the following:
- Accounts payable, including payroll

- Purchasing and inventory management
- Accounts receivable, including grants, taxes, fees, fines, departmental charges, and intergovernmental revenues
- Monthly and annual reporting for all funds
- Handling cash deposits and parking meter revenues
- Administrative procedures, including recordkeeping, filing, and forms
- Internal controls
- Cash management
- Separation of duties
- Risk management
- Investing
- Auditing
- Pension Administration

RECOMMENDATION No. 9 – MAKE ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENTS TO THE BUDGETING PROCESS THAT WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED DURING THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET.

The development of the annual budget sets the tone for the entire organization for the fiscal year. It is a policy statement about what programs and services will be provided as well as a decision about how resources will be allocated. The Manager and Assistant Manager should consider the following enhancements to the budget development process:

- Distribute **BUDGET WORKSHEETS** that include at least three years of prior data to department directors. A historical analysis of revenues and expenditures will improve the ability for making accurate budget projections.
- Use a **BUDGET CALENDAR** that is published and distributed within and outside of the Borough organization. The calendar enables the persons who are involved in the budget process (the Council, the department directors, and committees) to plan accordingly for workshops, public presentations, and

adoption of the final budget. It also provides the public with the ability to participate in the process and to provide public comments in a timely manner. Finally, it keeps the process focused and on target to meet the legal requirements of advertisement, publication, public inspection, and adoption.

- Include a complete **ANALYSIS OF COST** prior to any new planned hire in any department. The Borough's personnel costs make up about 80% of the overall budget. For this reason, it is critical to evaluate every position prior to the Council's approval of a new hire. The analysis should include not only starting costs but projected benefit and pension costs over the entire employment period, with adjustments for estimated inflation rates. This analysis should be presented to the Council prior to a planned staffing decision during the budget process.
- Prepare and include a **BUDGET MESSAGE** that accompanies the initial presentation of the budget to the Council and the public for preliminary review. The budget message should include areas of financial concern such as a reduction in revenues, the need for a tax rate increase, or changes to staffing or service levels. The budget message should also report accomplishments for the prior year and projects and plans for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget document itself should be presented in a format that is clearly understandable to officials, the public, and the media.

Once the budget has been adopted, it should be used to control activities. The Borough should monitor, measure, and evaluate the following:

- **PROGRAM PERFORMANCE** – How well is the Borough doing in reaching its program goals and objectives?

- **BUDGETARY PERFORMANCE** – How well are actual revenues, expenditures, cash flows, and fund balances staying within budget?
- **FINANCIAL CONDITION** – What is the long-term health of the Borough, including the community's general social, demographic, and economic conditions?
- **EXTERNAL FACTORS** – What changes have occurred that can have an impact on performance?

RECOMMENDATION No. 10 – INVOLVE DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUDGET AND HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE FOR ADMINISTERING THEIR DEPARTMENT BUDGET.

Historically, the police chief and street supervisor are involved in the development of the budget and are held responsible for working within the confines of the budget limits. The departments should continue to be held accountable for budget overruns and should be required to justify expenditures that are not routine or ordinary. Any items requested for the new budget year should have a complete analysis of cost (initial and maintenance), a statement of need, supporting data, the volume and nature of the work performed, benefits to be achieved, and justification for the purchase. Any proposed new revenue items or revenue enhancements should be encouraged and fully explored by the department directors and relevant staff.

RECOMMENDATION No. 11 – PREPARE A FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BOROUGH ENGINEER, COUNCIL COMMITTEES, AND DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS.

The CIP should be undertaken separately from the annual budget process and should include all projects with descriptions, estimated costs, estimated schedules, and identified revenue sources to support the projects and equipment. The plan should also identify the impact that

each capital project will have on the operating budget for specific fiscal years. The annual capital budget should be based on the multiyear CIP.

RECOMMENDATION No. 12 – BUILD IN ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT OF THE DAILY FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.

With limited staff, it is very difficult to have any true segregation of duties in the financial operation. Unfortunately, this creates the perception that there could be mismanagement of resources and potential fraud. But it is possible to have some limited oversight of the daily financial transactions by adding some reviews and sign-offs for the financial transactions. The following new procedures are recommended:

- The Manager should review the payroll register and sign it before checks are issued.
- The Manager should review the quarterly payroll withholding tax payments to ensure that they are being made by ADP appropriately.
- The Finance Committee should review the bill list and sign it after it is approved by the Council each month.
- Receipts should be pre-numbered and not be taken by the same person who records the information into the accounting system.
- Deposits should not be made by the same person who writes and records receipts.
- Checks should be prepared by *Bookminders* for approved invoices and signed (live signatures) by the Council President, the Secretary, and Treasurer.
- The real estate tax account fund should be examined and audited regularly. As the largest revenue source, this fund provides the highest potential for theft.

RECOMMENDATION No. 13 – IMPLEMENT A FORMAL PURCHASE ORDER PROCEDURE POLICY.

A purchase order system should be designed and implemented that allows for the Manager to approve

purchases up to a certain threshold limit and to require other purchases to have oversight by the Finance Committee in advance of the purchase. This policy should ensure the cost, quality, and delivery of products and services used by the Borough for delivering services to residents. A sample policy was included in **Step 4, Appendix A.**

POLICE DEPARTMENT

RECOMMENDATION No. 14 – CONSIDER MERGING, CONTRACTING, OR CONSOLIDATING THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

The Borough should consider consolidating police services with a neighboring community. With increased budgets, use of cost saving measures, and availability of updated technology, it would make sense for Avalon to consolidate with a larger surrounding community. The Boroughs of Avalon and Bellevue are very similar in demographics, age of housing stock, education and income levels, public service expenditures, and resources. The boroughs share neighborhoods and business districts and could combine their resources to support a larger, modern, and well financed police department. It would benefit both communities to establish a committee to review the advantages and cost/benefits of a combined department. A combined department could provide additional advancement opportunities for officers, specialization of services, increased training, and resources for both communities. It makes sense to consider combining the departments as an option to assist with modernizing the equipment, facilities, training and techniques.

RECOMMENDATION No. 15 – IMPROVE THE POLICE VEHICLE FLEET.

There are currently three vehicles in the police fleet. The Borough should consider the purchase of a fourth vehicle to have in case of emergency, breakdown, or repair. At certain times, all three cars are being used with no extra vehicle to

use as a backup. There should also be some concern about the vehicle slated to be used as a K9 vehicle considering the high amount of miles on the vehicle. From experience, it will be very expensive to outfit this vehicle for the K9 unit. If this vehicle has a serious mechanical failure, it will be unavailable for use as the K9 unit and the money expended for its repair will have been wasted.

RECOMMENDATION No. 16 – UNDERTAKE AN UPDATE OF THE POLICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL.

The existing police department manual has not been updated for at least a decade and is seriously out of date and incomplete. A complete rewrite of the manual should be completed as soon as possible. The PCPA can supply a sample policy manual for a nominal fee that can be modified for the Department. A completely updated policy manual will offer much needed direction for the officers, protection from lawsuits for the City, and the ability to hold police officers accountable fairly and consistently.

RECOMMENDATION No. 17 – BUDGET FOR CHIEF OF POLICE EXECUTIVE TRAINING.

It is recommended that the chief of police attend police executive training such as the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA, or POLEX police executive development training in State College. Because the Chief was promoted through the ranks, he has not had the advantage of specialized supervisory police training. These courses are designed to enhance the leadership and management skills of executive-level law enforcement practitioners. Key topics and concepts include: developing leadership skills, understanding the role and impact of organizational culture, liability issues and minimizing the department's risk, critical policy development and implementation, developing decision making and planning skills, issues for measuring police productivity and quality, how to more effectively handle problem employees and enhancing communication skills.

RECOMMENDATION No. 18 - IDENTIFY THE AREAS OF TRAINING THAT ARE MOST NEEDED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND DEVELOP A REALISTIC TRAINING BUDGET TO ACHIEVE THE NECESSARY TRAINING.

Identify and schedule officers for free or low-cost training. Find ways to allow officers to attend the training sessions identified and build additional training into the budget. Send one officer to a training to be certified to conduct training for other officers. Apply for MPOTEC training grant funds. **Step 4, Appendix E** provides a schedule of on-line training through the PCPA.

RECOMMENDATION No. 19 – CONSIDER THE PURCHASE OF VIDEO TECHNOLOGY FOR POLICE VEHICLES.

The police vehicles currently have no video cameras. The police officers do not have body cameras. This technology should be embraced and supported by the police department for the safety of the officers and the community. It also creates transparency in the police department and can be used as a defense for complaints against police officers.

RECOMMENDATION No. 20 – ENCOURAGE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF THE OFFICERS.

Educational guidelines for the officers should be created with increased pay incentives for achieving special accreditations and college education.

RECOMMENDATION No. 21 – FORMALIZE PART-TIME EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS.

The part-time employee compensation and benefits should be reviewed, standardized, and formalized because it varies from employee to employee and is not covered by any collective bargaining agreement. All positions in the police department, both full-time and part-time, should be included in the collective bargaining agreement so that there is no

confusion about what compensation has been authorized by Council and what benefits are associated with the position. When there is inconsistency, inequity, and lack of formal action, the environment is ripe for discrimination claims, unfair labor practices, and civil complaints.

RECOMMENDATION No. 22 – STANDARDIZE EQUIPMENT.

All officers should have the same hand gun. All squad cars should be equipped with the same rifle and shotgun. Full time officers should be assigned their own portable radio so in the instance of a major incident, all officers will be able to contact dispatch.

RECOMMENDATION No. 23 - CONSIDER ACCREDITATION TO ENSURE THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS FOLLOWING BEST PRACTICES IN ITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

In 2001, Pennsylvania implemented a process through which police departments of all sizes can assess their policies and procedures and determine if they are compliant with professional police standards. The PCPA developed an accreditation program that addresses the elements, policies, procedures, and standard operations that should be in existence in a contemporary Pennsylvania police department. Currently, there are over 100 accredited agencies in Pennsylvania and more than 200 are enrolled in the process.

In preparation for accreditation, members of the police department scrutinize every element of the department's operations to make certain they are consistent with contemporary standards. This includes everything from operating procedures and policies, training, facilities and equipment, to citizen complaint-filing procedures. The complete Accreditation Standards Manual developed by the PCPA is available at www.pachiefs.org. At the very least, compare Avalon's policies to make sure they are accreditation compliant.

STREETS DEPARTMENT

RECOMMENDATION No. 24 – PROVIDE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES.

The Borough currently provides no regular training for the employees in the Public Works Department. There are free programs offered by the LGA, the DCED, the PA Municipal League, the Boroughs Association, and PSATS. Training provided to employees can greatly affect their productivity and efficiency. Advantages of training include improvements in morale, motivation, productivity, and quality of services. Training must be identified as a priority and recognized as such in the general fund budget.

As a starting point, the Public Works Superintendent should contact the insurance company's risk management agent to obtain material on basic safety training. In addition to the L&I Paths training that has been done recently, monthly "tool box talks" or construction pre-season kickoff training would be a good way to get the employees together and start a program of scheduled safety training.

RECOMMENDATION No. 25 – INSTALL AN AUTOMATED SYSTEM TO TRACK COMPLAINTS, WORK ORDERS, AND REQUESTS FOR SERVICE.

A system, once in place, will allow any staff person to enter requests for service, enter new information as the complaint is addressed, and close out the complaint once the issue is resolved. The system will serve as a valuable management tool, as reports will be able to be printed on a regular basis, showing all activity within the department. The system will also serve as a valuable tool for accessing historical information that someday may need to be used by management. There is currently no work order system being used across the Borough. This item is discussed extensively in the Blight Strategy section of the report.

RECOMMENDATION No. 26 – INCLUDE PUBLIC WORKS APPLICATIONS WITH THE PURCHASE OF SOFTWARE THAT INTERFACES WITH EXISTING GIS MAPPING.

Avalon Borough has an extensive GIS mapping system that is now maintained by LSSE. Public Works management should be intimately familiar with the various layers that are available to the Department. The Borough software interface discussed extensively in the Community Development Special Conditions report that allows for both desktop and mobile field access for employees should be purchased and implemented. This software should include a work order system for the Public Works department. Access to the GIS mapped data is a key to the success of the Public Works operation and for even the most routine projects.

RECOMMENDATION No. 27 – DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE RECORDS SYSTEM.

Maintenance records should be kept for each of the vehicle whether the work is completed in-house or shipped elsewhere. These records play a big part in the replacement of vehicles. The work order system recommended could have an integrated fleet management component included which could also be used by the police department to assist in their management as well.

RECOMMENDATION No. 28 – IMPLEMENT A CAPITAL REPLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT PURCHASES.

A review of the current fleet indicates that the Borough has a relatively newer truck fleet and suitable equipment for it operations. While this fleet was not replaced all at once there is an opportunity to implement proper planning both for operations and for financing purposes. The Borough needs a program whereby it commits to an ongoing program of vehicle lease/purchases that will:

- Ensure that there is a consistent replacement of new equipment into the fleet
- Ensure that the employees are driving and operating equipment that is safe and efficient
- Reduce maintenance costs for the fleet as a whole
- Allow management to have more certainty regarding the costs of vehicles when putting together the annual general fund budget.

RECOMMENDATION No. 29 – DEVELOP A LONG-RANGE PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR STREET PAVING.

A long-range plan for street paving will ensure that community goals and needs are met, inform the public of the prioritization of upcoming projects, encourage efficient administration, and allow the Borough to be proactive in working with existing utilities to inform them of upcoming work for mutual benefit. Streets should be set up in a pavement management environment where conditions are recorded and maintenance routinely scheduled. The work order management system may have an integrated or additional module that can be used to help in the annual rating and long range planning of the resurfacing program. Funding such a program can be achieved through a special real estate tax levy dedicated to road improvements.

RECOMMENDATION No. 30 – CONSIDER CRACK SEALING AND MICRO SURFACING STREETS.

Unprotected asphalt surfaces are sufficiently porous to allow water to seep into the base courses. The water softens the aggregate and reduces the overall load carrying capacity of the pavement. More severe damage is caused by the expansion of the trapped water in the pavement during winter months. The freeze-thaw cycles create large cracks and the problem is steadily worsened.

The Borough should consider sealcoating streets that have been constructed in the last 5 to 10 years that are in fairly good condition. The sealcoat will create an impervious barrier that will no longer allow the water to seep into the pavement. The sealcoat will also protect the roadway from ultraviolet rays and deicing materials.

The Borough may also want to try sealcoating streets that have just been paved. Tests conducted by various municipalities indicate that sealcoating newer streets will provide even longer asphalt life.

RECOMMENDATION No. 31 – EVALUATE THE BOROUGH GARAGE FOR IMPROVEMENTS.

The Public Works Director should be charged with general maintenance and upkeep of the Borough Garage. The garage is generally organized but requires a lighting upgrade. At the time of this evaluation, more than half of the garage lights were not in working order and were not an efficient style. The storage units and cabinets are a mixed variety and are not labeled with what is inside, making for extra work when parts and equipment are needed from them. The employee break room and office at the garage are both in need of similar updates with lighting and paint.

RECOMMENDATION No. 32 – IMPLEMENT LINE PAINTING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS.

The Borough performs its own line painting with standard paint and glass beads. Two improvements should be considered:

- There is not a map of the markings installed and there is no record kept on when these were last updated. The Borough's GIS system could be utilized to capture the location of these markings and the recommended work order system could be used to track the updates.

- The type of paint used by the Borough will typically last one and maybe two seasons depending on traffic. Stop bars in particular often require more regular attention. The Borough should consider contracting thermoplastic markings for those areas (i.e. stop bars) that tend to get worn down more quickly.

RECOMMENDATION No. 33 – PLAN FOR STREET LIGHTING LED UPGRADES.

Duquesne Light was in the process of converting the current High Pressure Sodium (HPS) street lights to high efficient Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting. While the Borough pays a negotiated flat rate for each street light, the rate is much lower for LED lights than HPS and would serve to lower the overall street light bill the Borough pays. In addition, LED street lights have a life expectancy of three times that of the HPS bulb. The Borough should reach out to Duquesne Light and work towards an overall Borough changeout. Furthermore, all decorative street lighting owned by the Borough or installed by the Borough in the future as part of the recommended streetscape corridor upgrades should be LEDs to conserve energy.

RECOMMENDATION No. 34 – CONDUCT A STREET SIGN INVENTORY AND UPDATE.

Street name signs are an essential requirement for any municipality to install and maintain. Signs provide direction for those traveling through the Borough as well as providing emergency responders with proper street identification. The Borough is mostly signed but there are streets and alleys that are not signed or have signs missing. The Public Works Director should make it a high priority to conduct a street sign inventory. The GIS system is an excellent tool to record and maintain installations, upgrades, and replacements of traffic signs and signals. The recommended work order system should be used when a sign is missing or replaced to confirm the work was done and to track the age of this asset.

RECOMMENDATION No. 35 – BUDGET FOR AND REPLACE THE STREET SWEEPER.

The Borough owns a valuable piece of machinery that is scheduled regularly April through November. The Borough's street sweeping machine is managed and operated well by staff. The use of this machine in the commercial and residential corridors is a major component that contributes to the look of the Borough as well as providing positive public relations. It also provides a way to obtain credits towards MS4 compliance. But this is a "high use" piece of equipment that has a typical life of 5-7 years because of the heavy "wear and tear" before maintenance costs begin to skyrocket and its trade value diminishes. An alternative to replacing this equipment is to work with the QVCOG or the adjacent communities to undertake a joint purchase and joint operation of the street sweeper so that costs for purchase, operation, and maintenance can be shared by more than one community. A schedule can be implemented that allows for use by several communities.

RECOMMENDATION No. 36 – MAINTAIN AND UPGRADE MUNICIPAL FACILITIES.

Routine inspections with documented check lists of what was inspected is essential to an effective maintenance plan for facilities. Regular documented inspections help to preserve assets and to reduce injury and liability claims. Municipally owned facilities such as the Borough Building, the Police Department, the Mayernik Library, and the Street Department Garage require regular attention. A detailed and facility specific check list for weekly inspections should be developed for each location. The check list should include checks on the grounds, sidewalks, ceiling tile, lighting inside and outside, flooring, plumbing, HVAC, windows and doors.

RECOMMENDATION No. 37 – HIRE SEASONAL AND PART-TIME SUMMER EMPLOYEES.

The Department has many tasks that are better suited for unskilled laborers. Summer employees could be used to hand paint lines and curbs as well as help the department to be more proactive and clean catch basins and ditches, as well as perform inside building maintenance like painting and upkeep at the Borough's facilities and parks.

RECOMMENDATION No. 38 – IMPROVE WINTER MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS.

There are several practices that could be implemented to help improve winter operations and reduce overall costs. The first thing that should be considered is to train staff annually on winter operations. One key element of training involves learning to calibrate the tailgate spreaders. Uncalibrated equipment wastes material. The second item to consider is the use of liquids to prewet the rock salt at the spinner with liquid brine. Prewet systems are relatively inexpensive and have been proven to reduce rock salt needed per lane mile by 20% as it reduces the bounce effect, keeping the material in the drive lane. The third item to be considered is formalizing a route map. This can be accomplished with the GIS system and will allow the Superintendent to further discuss route efficiencies with the operators.

RECOMMENDATION No. 39 – EVALUATE THE WINTER SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH BEN AVON HEIGHTS.

The Ben Avon Heights Winter Service Agreement rates appear to be low. Private contractors cost out winter services a few different ways. One way is time and material, another is a flat hourly rate that is around \$400 per hour. Typically when communities perform this type of work for another community, they utilize the PEMA rates for equipment, determine how many tons are used per round and keep very tight records on the amount of trips performed for monthly

billing. The agreement with Ben Avon Heights should be reviewed using a standard method to ensure the Borough is not subsidizing this service.

RECOMMENDATION No. 40 – RENEGOTIATE THE PNC PARKING LOT LEASE AGREEMENT.

The Borough currently has a long-term lease with the property owner for this parking lot. There are 10 spaces that were originally thought to lease at \$75 per space which would have generated \$9000 annually. They are only leased at \$40 per space and only generate \$4600 annually. The Borough owes around \$6500 annually on this lease and loses money in this arrangement. The Borough comes up short in this lease arrangement by almost \$2000 and should reconsider the terms or cancel the lease agreement.

RECOMMENDATION No. 41 – REVISE THE LEASE TERMS AND RATES FOR THE MAYERNIK LIBRARY BUSINESS TENANT.

There is no current lease for the Library or for the tenant downstairs, BIU. They are both operating under the prior terms and conditions of the prior leases including the rate being paid. It is not difficult to determine the cost per square foot of office space being leased in the Borough in the private sector and these rates should be sought to determine a revised lease rate. The location is very desirable, has a lot of amenities like having its own parking lot and private access which makes it very desirable. New leases for both BIU and the library should be considered.

TECHNOLOGY

RECOMMENDATION No. 42 - MOVE FROM A MAC ENVIRONMENT TO A WINDOWS ENVIRONMENT

The Borough administrative office has used Apple computers for years. These computers are approaching an age where they should be replaced. While Apple computers

have been reliable machines for the staff, the recommendation is to replace them with Windows based computers that will run the same software and be able to become part of a larger network. The Windows computers are less expensive and are easier to manage on a network.

RECOMMENDATION No. 43 – DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN INVENTORIES THAT CLEARLY IDENTIFY COMPUTER EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE, AND STANDARDS DOCUMENTATION ON THE NETWORK.

A complete record of computers, networking devices, servers, and software on respective workstations should be developed and routinely maintained. A complete inventory is needed to make informed decisions at budget time as well as to help to keep an equipment replacement schedule up to date. The inventory schedule can also be used when updating the Borough's insurance appraisal list every year. It is important for the Borough to continuously review and budget for these improvements by developing a replacement schedule. Computers should be replaced every four to six years in order to keep IT expenditures at a constant level and avoid a spike in expenditures.

RECOMMENDATION No. 44 -CONSIDER UPGRADING TO MICROSOFT OFFICE 365.

In order to take total control of the email function, as well as make sure that employees are utilizing the most current version of the software, Office 365 should be purchased and implemented. Office 365 will utilize exchange server software, which will:

- Standardize the e-mail addresses for all users that access the system.
- Allow users to browse a company directory to find an individual's e-mail address.
- Provide system users the ability to share other employees' schedules and set up meetings.

- Allow the Borough to back-up all e-mail from a central location for archiving purposes. In the event of a lawsuit or even a simple public request for information, the Borough will be able to access all e-mails. In this case the email will be backed up in the cloud.
- Allow the Borough to make instantaneous changes to the system when needed.

RECOMMENDATION No. 45 – DOCUMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT.

A user-friendly manual should be developed as a reference tool. The manual will need to be periodically updated to reflect the current operating procedures; passwords of the various servers; how the servers and desktops are being backed up, and how to track the various software licenses that are in use across the network. This is important as the Borough currently utilizes two very different networks.



RECOMMENDATION No. 46 – DEVELOP AND ADOPT A DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN.

The Borough uses information technology to quickly and effectively process information. Servers process information and store large amounts of data. Desktop computers, laptops and wireless devices are used by employees to create, process, manage and communicate information. What will the Borough do when its information technology stops working?



An information technology disaster recovery plan should be developed. Technology recovery strategies should be developed to restore hardware, applications and data in time to meet the needs of the Borough’s recovery.

The Borough creates and manages large volumes of data. Much of that data is important. Some data is vital to the survival and continued operation of the Borough. The impact of data loss or corruption from hardware failure, human error, hacking or malware could be significant. Data backup and restoration of electronic information is essential.

RECOMMENDATION No. 47 –UTILIZE SOLID STATE HARD DRIVES.

As computers are replaced, the Borough should consider using solid state drives (SSD) instead of traditional spinning hard disk drives (HDD). SSD’s have no moving parts, boot faster than traditional drives, and access files a lot faster. Other benefits of using SSD’s include no fragmentation, there are no read / write heads, and they are more energy efficient than hard disk drives.

RECOMMENDATION No. 48 – EVERY EMPLOYEE SHOULD AGREE TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS WHEN LOGGING ONTO A COMPUTER.

When users log onto either of the computer networks a screen should appear with the following language that re-affirms the fact the computers are for use for Borough related work and that the Borough owns the information:

By Continuing You Agree to the Following: The use of this computer is intended solely for the purpose of work on behalf of Avalon Borough. Any information, software, data or files contained on this computer or the Avalon Borough domain is the property of Avalon Borough and may be viewed, modified and/or retained by the Borough. Internet usage on this computer may be monitored and is intended solely for the purpose of work on behalf of Avalon Borough. Access of or to inappropriate internet sites will be documented and repeated access will lead to

disciplinary action. E-mail usage of the boroughofavalon.org domain is the property of Avalon Borough. Any emails sent or received using this domain may be viewed and/or retained by the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION No. 49 – USE ACTIVE NETWORKS DIRECTORY.

Active Directory is a centralized database for security principles. This can be anything from a user account, group, group policy, file share, to objects like printers. It is the single place to administer every user account. Benefits of using Active Directory include the following:

- **A Single Point of Administration for all Users and Groups:** Active Directory creates its own Directory Service where all user accounts are kept. When a user logs on to their machine, the Active Directory server authenticates them, and then permits or denies their logon to that machine. Once it authenticates them, it also sets appropriate permissions for their account on the computer they are at.
- **Group Policies for User and Computer Security and Configuration:** Group policies are the way in which Active Directory makes bulk changes to the user environment at either the User or Computer level. Group policies are the best and most simple way to standardize a configuration across all machines in an organization.
- **Software Deployment:** Active Directory can replace the requirement to manually install software on every machine. Active Directory can use Group Policy to automatically push out new software and upgrade packages, to all Borough

owned machines. It is a simple process that reduces administration time drastically.

- **Integration with Exchange Server:** This would only apply if the Borough decides to add Exchange Server in-house instead of using Exchange as part of Office 365.

In the end, Active Directory will help to administer multiple users across multiple machines.

RECOMMENDATION No. 50 - KEEP COMPUTER OPERATING SYSTEMS UP TO DATE.

Most if not all of the computers utilized by the Borough are in need of operating system updates. Some computers are two or three versions removed from the most current version of the operating system. An updated operating system will greatly improve the reliability, security, and speed of a computer.

In the administrative department the computers are utilizing operating systems released in 2014 and 2015. In the police department the computers are running on Windows 7 Professional, which was released in October 2009. Microsoft ended mainstream support for Windows 7 in January 2015. Extended support will end on January 14, 2020.



RECOMMENDATION No. 51 - COMMIT TO A REDESIGN OF THE WEBSITE.

While the current website has a lot of useful information, it should be redesigned from time to time. Websites can quickly become stale and look outdated after a year or two. As technology changes new designs and new features such as social media integration should be considered. New technology also allows websites to become more mobile

friendly, which is very important as more and more people use their phones as their primary means of accessing information.

The website should include all development ordinances, planning studies, marketing information (including this *Market Analysis*), and permitting information (including this *Economic Development Study*). The following should be included and updated on the Borough’s website for residents, businesses, and developers: development ordinances; up to date Zoning Map; code ordinances, the IPMC and adopting ordinance; signage ordinances; name and contact for permitting and development activity; building inspection; land development process; link to PennDOT contact information; updated Fee Resolution; utility contact names and information; businesses to frequent within the Borough, and available commercial and industrial property. Potential residents, developers and private investors expect to find most of the information that they need on the website.

RECOMMENDATION No. 52 - PURCHASE A SOFTWARE PROGRAM THAT CENTRALIZES PARCEL INFORMATION, PERMIT INFORMATION, AND COMPLAINT INFORMATION.

The Borough management personnel should carefully review the options and pricing for the land management and GIS asset management technology and determine which solution would best address the Borough’s needs. On-site and web-based demonstrations are available by the vendors and pricing should be clear and straightforward. Both initial start-up costs and ongoing support and maintenance costs should be evaluated.

The Borough would be best served by installing and maintaining a fully integrated system that will support a variety of functions and needs. The Borough has a robust permitting process and the recommendations that support economic development include adding a number of zoning and code enforcement activities. The Borough also has

substantial GIS related needs such as MS4 permitting, street, sidewalk, and pavement management, street lights, traffic signal and sign maintenance, street trees, and sanitary sewer infrastructure. This type and level of activity requires a good permitting software interface and a robust and dynamic GIS system.

RECOMMENDATION No. 53- UPDATE THE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY.

The Borough adopted a comprehensive social media policy in June of 2016. With new social media platforms cropping up all the time, the Borough should consider reviewing this policy on an annual basis in order to reflect industry changes. A sample technology policy is provided in **Step 4, Appendix G.**

RECOMMENDATION No. 54 - INSTALL REMOTE ACCESS TO PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY.

The Public Works Department needs to be able to access information from their remote location. They will either need to access Borough servers via a virtual private network (VPN) or through a login to cloud based software. The public works director should be able to access and update parcel and complaint information on a daily basis.

RECOMMENDATION No. 55 - INSTALL CAMERAS IN ALL POLICE VEHICLES.

The Borough should make a budgetary commitment or secure funds for the purchase and installation of video cameras in the police vehicles. The cameras should be able to record forward toward the roadway as well as the rear seat of the vehicle. The cameras should have the capability to connect wirelessly to the police computer network to dump video files to the server.

The advantage of having cameras in the vehicles include:

- It is a cost-effective step to document every interaction an officer has with a suspect.

- Cameras can protect the police department from unwanted lawsuits.
- If an officer is incapacitated in an incident, the in-car camera may help to capture the incident.

Cameras not only show if the citizens are abusing officers, but they can be used to train the officers. Video footage can be reviewed by supervisors to show the police officers what they are doing wrong. This creates a more professional environment for the police operation.

RECOMMENDATION No. 56 - INSTALL GPS UNITS IN ALL BOROUGH VEHICLES.

It is important that the Borough be able to track and access information on Borough owned vehicles at all times. GPS information is typically accessed via a tablet or a personal computer, and should help the Borough to:

- Promote Safer Driving Habits - Safe driving is important GPS tracking would allow the Borough options to receive notifications whenever any vehicle is going faster than a set speed, accelerating too quickly, braking hard, or driving aggressively. This allows Supervisors to deal with the behavior of drivers and take appropriate disciplinary action to discourage these types of behaviors behind the wheel of Borough owned vehicles.
- Improve Record Keeping and Documentation - GPS tracking keeps track of miles driven, fueling, and can send alerts when routine maintenance such as oil changes and tire rotation is required. It can even keep a record of when a vehicle leaves the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION No. 57 - INSTALL A RESIDENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SUCH AS NIXLE OR SWIFT911.

A community messaging system can be used at minimal cost to the Borough. Residents can sign up on-line to receive text

messages or emails concerning safety issues, community events, or whatever information the Borough wishes to broadcast to its residents. Examples of information that might be sent out include road closures due to construction or accidents, utility interruptions, a reminder that garbage day has been pushed back due to a holiday, or even that the date for Trick or Treat has been changed due to inclement weather.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BLIGHT STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION No. ED1 – CONTINUE TO USE THE BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND A STRATEGIC PROCESS TO PROMOTE THE BOROUGH’S PUBLIC POSTURE TOWARD FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

Continue to use the Borough Development Committee as a vehicle for ongoing discussions with the Council and the public about future development opportunities. This is a good place for discussing enhancements to the business corridors, neighborhood improvement strategies, and the installation of public amenities that support development.

The Committee should continue to discuss, implement, and monitor:

- The blight elimination and demolition strategy outlined in this study
- A focused and specific strategy for each developable site
- A redevelopment plan for the California Avenue business district based on the corridor map
- A redevelopment strategy for Ohio River Boulevard based on the corridor map
- An infrastructure development plan for maintaining roads throughout the Borough
- Specific recommendations for future land use that support the desired development and can be used to

develop the subdivision and land development ordinance.

Funding assistance could be available through the EIP implementation phase process or in combination with the Municipal Assistance Program (MAP). www.newpa.com

RECOMMENDATION No. ED2 – UPDATE LAND USE REGULATIONS TO INCLUDE A LOCAL SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (SALDO).

The land use regulations should support the goals outlined in this strategic plan and provide reasonable and practical guidelines that will encourage and support development that is desired by the Borough residents. The Borough should adopt the concept of “livable” communities that address the lifestyle features that are desired by residents of all ages. These include: walkable neighborhoods, public transportation options, affordable housing, safe streets, easy access to shopping, dining, and entertainment, green spaces, and indoor and outdoor places for all ages to gather and stay connected. The SALDO should implement the “livable” communities concepts and include provisions for landscaping, street trees, stormwater management, residential rain gardens, and bio-swales. The SALDO can be the Borough’s most important tool for requiring desired elements in the development and redevelopment of residential and commercial areas.

RECOMMENDATION No. ED3 – ADOPT THE LATEST INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE (IPMC) FOR PURPOSES OF UNIFORMITY AND CONSISTENCY.

The Borough adopted the 2009 International Property Maintenance Code but there have been several updates since that time. There are substantial updates made to this code about every three years. Updates are typically made to reflect improvements to the code, new materials, new methods, and recent court decisions. The Borough should

use the IPMC to conduct fire inspections and should be proactive and aggressively enforce the IPMC for all structures in the Borough. The IPMC should be the basis for all existing property code enforcement in the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION No. ED4 - CLARIFY THE PERSONNEL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, LAND USE, CODE ENFORCEMENT, AND UCC ENFORCEMENT.

Currently it is unclear who in the Borough operation is responsible for the various functions related to land and property regulations. The following roles should be formalized with specific responsibilities assigned:

- Enforcement of the UCC for new construction in the Borough should be assigned to BIU.
- Routine fire inspections of rental property should be assigned to BIU
- Code enforcement complaints related to the IPMC (grass, high weeds, rubbish accumulation, unsafe structures, junk cars, etc.) should be assigned to the Public Works Director for investigation.
- Proactive IPMC code enforcement should be assigned to the Public Works Director for investigation.
- Enforcement notices for IPMC code enforcement and prosecution (if necessary) should be assigned to the Assistant Manager.
- The Assistant Manager should be appointed as the Zoning Officer and training should be proscribed and certification should be obtained through the American Planning Association.
- Zoning ordinance and land use regulations under the SALDO should be assigned to the Assistant Manager/Zoning Officer.
 1. Enforcement notices, zoning reviews, and land development reviews should be completed by the Assistant Manager/Zoning Officer.
 2. The Zoning Officer should attend all meetings and present information when

necessary to the Joint Planning Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS ED5 - SUPPORT AN INFORMED AND COHESIVE COMMUNITY THROUGH THE CREATION OF "REAL PLACES."

In today's world, there are more ways than ever to obtain information and thousands of bits of information are available. Yet people are more likely than ever to be un-informed about their local government operations and services. This is due to competing demands for attention from many different sources and an infinite number of distractions. It is important, therefore, to create social opportunities for residents where there is a central meeting place with a theme related to the local culture.

- Consider identifying locations in the business district corridors for the installation of public plazas with lighting, seating, water features, landscaping, and local art. Feature entertainment, festivals, and local activities on a regular basis. By creating gathering places for residents, people are more likely to come together for social interaction and leave with a better understanding of their neighbors and the community as a social construct. "Real" places include a social experience.
- Consider scheduling Borough "news updates" at a local coffee shop or diner or at least creating the "coffeehouse" experience. Most people are more interested in buying a coffee and sitting around with friends for conversation than coming to a public meeting or event.
- Use a service like "Swiftreach," NIXEL, or "Reverse 911" to communicate with residents about possible emergencies or interruption of services that may affect specific areas of the Borough. These services can also be used to make announcements about upcoming events or other specific information that may be useful to residents.

- Consider the use of an electronic newsletter that can be sent out via an email blast to residents. Continue to make improvements to the Borough's website that invite interaction and allow for conducting business on-line. Whether it's paying taxes, applying for a permit, reading the latest news, or registering a request for service, residents want to do it on their own time at their convenience.

RECOMMENDATION No. ED6 – UPDATE THE BOROUGH WEBSITE TO INCLUDE MATERIAL REGARDING DEVELOPMENT, ZONING, AND BUILDING INSPECTION.

The website should include all development ordinances, planning studies, marketing information (including this *Market Analysis*), and permitting information (including this *Economic Development Study*). The following should be included and updated on the Borough's website for residents, businesses, and developers: development ordinances; up to date Zoning Map; code ordinances, the IPMC and adopting ordinance; signage ordinances; name and contact for permitting and development activity; building inspection; land development process; link to PennDOT contact information; updated Fee Resolution; utility contact names and information; businesses to frequent within the Borough, and available commercial and industrial property. Potential residents, developers and private investors expect to find most of the information that they need on the website.



The Borough should develop a checklist of items for developers of what is required for zoning permits, special exceptions, subdivision and land development applications and associated fees. Residents, business owners, and potential developers view this favorably and appreciate the ease in understanding expectations. Much of the routine information and permit applications should be available on

the Borough’s website so that seekers can save time and resources by downloading and completing applications in advance of an inspection or permit request.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS REPORT – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BLIGHT STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATION No. BD1 – OFFICIALLY ADOPT THE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR CALIFORNIA AVENUE AND OHIO RIVER BOULEVARD AS SHOWN IN MAPS.

The Corridor Redevelopment Plans are set forth in maps in the **Special Conditions Report**. The maps are based on the Borough Development Committee meetings and additional discussions with Borough officials and development experts working in the corridor. Several conceptual perspectives were also developed based on the redevelopment plan. Implementation and support for the redevelopment plan will require additional action by Borough officials. These actions are outlined in the recommendations in this section. The outcomes and goals include:

- Redevelopment, support, and investment in the neighborhood commercial district along California Avenue.
- Establishing California Avenue as a mixed use, high density transition and buffer to residential neighborhoods
- Branding an identity and theme for the neighborhood business district
- Streetscape improvements and gateway signage along Ohio River Boulevard and California Avenue
- Focus on redevelopment sites that are blighted and underutilized on Ohio River Boulevard

RECOMMENDATION No. BD2 – CREATE ADDITIONAL CONVENIENT, ATTRACTIVE, WELL-SIGNED AND WELL-LIT PARKING AREAS FOR THE CALIFORNIA AVENUE BUSINESS DISTRICT.

One of the primary transportation issues in the business district is the location and availability of parking for customers and visitors. Although parking studies at various times of the day have confirmed that there is sufficient parking during peak and off-peak hours, it also revealed that the parallel parking is difficult and not conveniently located. The Property Development Committee suggested identifying potential lots along California Avenue for the installation of parking that is easily accessible and conveniently located. The location of convenient, well lighted, and well signed parking is a topic that should be addressed by the Borough when the opportunity is presented. Conceptual drawings have been provided for typical parking areas on California Avenue.

RECOMMENDATION No. BD3 – COMMISSION AN ARCHITECTURAL FIRM TO BRAND AND DESIGN GATEWAY ENTRANCE MONUMENTS AND “WAYFINDING” SIGNAGE FOR THE CALIFORNIA AVENUE AND OHIO RIVER BOULEVARD BUSINESS CORRIDORS.

The boundaries of Avalon are not easily discernable on the major roads entering and leaving the Borough – a traveler could easily cross the border into the Borough and never realize that they are within the Borough limits. “Gateways” to a community are important because they create an identity for the community and provide an opportunity to make a positive first impression. Residents often take pride in their community when they identify with a theme, branding, or a specific identity. The Borough should:

- Develop attractive signage, “wayfinding”, and landscaping at Elizabeth Avenue and Ohio Avenue entrances to Avalon from Ohio River Boulevard and at California Avenue. Hire an architect to design a coherent and consistent theme that residents can

embrace and leaders can point to for inspiration and pride.

- Include signage, landscaping, wayfinding and other elements in the streetscape design that can be partially funded by county and state funds.
- Install public art and decorative lighting at highly visible intersections or in Borough rights-of-ways that clearly define the Borough’s image and theme.
- Install public murals and public art where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION No. BD4 – WORK WITH ADJACENT COMMUNITIES ALONG OHIO RIVER BOULEVARD TO DEVELOP AND ADOPT A STREETScape OVERLAY DISTRICT.

The Borough should convene a stakeholder group to guide and support a highway corridor revitalization effort including the development of a full-blown streetscape overlay district for the Corridor. This can be done most efficiently through the Quaker Valley Council of Governments (QVCOG). The stakeholder group should include representatives from the communities involved and should oversee the development, implementation, and review of the plan. The stakeholder group can also identify and pursue funding for the streetscape construction and help to develop a capital improvement plan for long-term projects. The CIP program should identify funds for street improvements, building stabilization, property acquisition, and demolitions along the corridor. The stakeholder group should meet regularly with the state, county, and foundation representatives to review the status and opportunities for funding programs and projects.

RECOMMENDATION No. BD5 – IDENTIFY, ADVANCE, AND PROMOTE BUSINESS DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

The Borough has several commercial properties within its borders that may be attractive to area businesses looking to relocate, expand, or start a new business. The Borough should make commercial property identification and

development potential a priority. Once development sites have been evaluated, consensus is reached, land use regulations have been updated, and a Plan adopted, the Borough should prioritize its sites to begin to identify funding and implement the redevelopment plan. State funding may be available to support identified projects including:

Business in Our Sites (BOS) - This program empowers communities to attract growing and expanding businesses by helping them build an inventory of ready sites. It provides funds for site development activities that are required in order for a site to be attractive to a developer. There is no repayment of these funds until a development is completed. <http://community.newpa.com/programs/business-in-our-sites-grants-and-loans-bos/>

Industrial Sites Reuse (ISR) – This program provides grants and low-interest loans for environmental assessments and remediation of “brownfield” sites. The program is designed to foster the cleanup of environmental contamination at industrial sites, thereby bringing blighted land into productive reuse.

Transportation Alternative Programs (TAP) - SPC sponsors the TAP round annually for the PA Department of Transportation. Examples of eligible TAP projects include bicycle or pedestrian facilities, conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails, overlooks and viewing areas, historic preservation and rehab of historic transportation facilities, vegetation management, and wildlife mortality mitigation projects, among other types. Local governments, regional transportation authorities, transit agencies, natural resource or public land agencies, school districts, local education agencies, or schools, and tribal governments are eligible to apply for the competitive TAP funds. http://spcregion.org/trans_tap.shtml

Multi-Modal Transportation Funding - The Multimodal Transportation Fund provides grants to encourage economic

development and ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to the residents of the Commonwealth. Funds may be used for the development, rehabilitation and enhancement of transportation assets to existing communities, streetscape, lighting, sidewalk enhancement, pedestrian safety, connectivity of transportation assets and transit-oriented development. <http://community.newpa.com/programs/multimodal-transportation-fund/>

Growing Greener II Grant Program - This program provides redevelopment grants to municipalities and nonprofits to help a community's redevelopment effort, focusing on the improvement of downtown sites and buildings. The eligible projects may include approaches that assist in business development and/or public improvements in core communities.

Keystone Communities Program (KCP) - This program assists Pennsylvania's communities in achieving revitalization of older commercial areas and those neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the commercial districts. The program designates and funds communities that are implementing Main Street, Elm Street, or Enterprise Zone efforts or other community development efforts by supporting physical improvements to communities that are undertaking revitalization activities.

RECOMMENDATION No. BD6 – EXPLORE AND CONSIDER OTHER FUNDING MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT.

There are other funding mechanisms other than grant funding that could be used for infrastructure development and financing support for desired development.

Tax Increment Financing Guarantee Program – This program is designed to promote and stimulate the general economic welfare of various regions and communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and assist in the

development, redevelopment and revitalization of brownfield and greenfield sites through the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in accordance with the Tax Increment Financing Act. The program is part of an effort by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) and the DCED to provide credit enhancement for TIF projects to improve market access and lower capital costs through the use of guarantees to issuers of bonds or other indebtedness ("TIF Debt Obligations").

Transportation Impact Fees – This is a locally operated program that is authorized under the Municipalities Planning Code that allows municipalities to collect fees from developers that can be used to address transportation improvements that will address the impacts on local and state roads caused by the new development.

Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Act - This is a mechanism to implement strategic financial opportunities for communities in order to spark revitalization. Many Pennsylvania municipalities have developed a LERTA program to initiate reinvestment in the community. Municipalities that have LERTA in place provide a temporary abatement of the local, school, and county property taxes as an incentive for development. New Brighton has successfully implemented LERTA <http://www.newbrightonpa.org/LERTA.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION No. N1 – MAINTAIN AND CONTINUALLY UPDATE THE CONDITION MAP AND INVENTORY OF BLIGHTED, CONDEMNED, AND "TO BE DEMOLISHED" PROPERTIES THAT HAVE BEEN CREATED AS PART OF THIS STUDY BASED ON THE ADVICE OF THE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

As part of this study, the EIP team developed tables and maps for easy access of information about assessed values, the condition of property, and the properties that are targeted for condemnation and demolition. The Borough Development Committee should regularly review this

inventory for accuracy and updates, utilizing the matrix scoring system to rank properties that should be addressed. Other information should be added as it is available: municipal liens; tax delinquent properties; and sheriff sales. The map is a terrific planning tool for addressing blighted, vacant, and condemned properties in the Borough in a focused and measured way. This information should be reviewed and properties prioritized during every budget season.

RECOMMENDATION NO. N2 – AGGRESSIVELY TRACK AND MAINTAIN LIENS AND PROPERTIES THAT ARE MAINTAINED BY THE BOROUGH.

An inventory of vacant properties that have been maintained by the Borough during fiscal year 2017 is included in **Appendix F**. This list should be continually updated and maintained. It is important that the Borough record the costs associated with the maintenance of these properties and that the costs be liened against the properties on an annual basis. By continually attaching these liens, the Borough will be able to recoup the costs when the property is sold.

RECOMMENDATION N3 – CONTINUE TO USE THE BOROUGH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TO REINFORCE THE FOCUS AND STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING BLIGHT IN THE COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

The Committee should continue to be staffed by Borough personnel and should use the publication “From Blight to Bright”³ as a guiding source for action in the community. The strategies identified in this publication for Preventing and Eliminating Blight include:

- Adopting the Legal Framework to Hold Properties to Clear Standards

³ From Blight to Bright: A Comprehensive Toolkit for Pennsylvania, July 2014, The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

- Registration of Rental, Vacant, and Foreclosed Properties
- Requiring Buyers to Bring Properties up to Code
- Offering Grants and Loans to Homeowners
- Prioritizing Severely Blighted Properties – Health and Safety Issues

The strategies identified in this publication for Addressing Long-Term Vacant and Abandoned properties include:

- Demolition of Unsafe Properties
- Establishing a Blight Fund
- Opening Estates of Deceased Property Owners
- Appointing Conservators
- Condemning Properties Using a Blight Review Committee
- Creating or Using a Land Bank

RECOMMENDATION N4 – INSTALL THE PROPER TECHNOLOGY – BOTH HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE – TO SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE LAND MANAGEMENT AND CODE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM.

As stated earlier in this study, code enforcement should be data driven – not complaint driven. High quality data collection allows code enforcement officials and contracted services to target their limited resources toward the most effective use. The goal is to create a property history for every parcel in the Borough that provides a view of everything that is happening or has ever happened on any property in the past.

There are two important technology applications that the Borough should investigate and secure: 1) software user interface and 2) GIS mapping and asset management. These

are two distinct and separate types of technology that can and should be interfaced.

RECOMMENDATION N5 – BECOME A MEMBER OF THE TRI-COG LAND BANK

The Tri-COG land bank is a governmental entity that works solely to return vacant, abandoned, tax-delinquent and foreclosed properties to productive use. Currently the Tri-COG land bank is the only functioning land bank in Allegheny County. The land bank has the authority to design, develop, construct, demolish, reconstruct, rehabilitate, renovate, relocate, and otherwise improve real property. A land bank is able to extinguish property tax liens and claims subject to school district permission. In order to become a member of the Tri-COG land bank the municipality and school district must jointly become members and pledge a portion of their delinquent tax revenue to support the operation of the land bank. New members are admitted to the land bank no later than the 3rd quarter of each calendar year for the next year.

The land bank is a good vehicle for problem properties that have been vacant or abandoned for a long period of time. The land bank is required to maintain the property according to code. It can make it faster, easier, and less expensive for potential developers to obtain blighted and vacant property and return it to productive use. The land bank can clear the title and has first right at tax sales. The land bank holds and sells properties with the best interest of the Borough in mind for long-term productive use.

Ordinances and intergovernmental agreements requesting membership are available through the Tri-COG land bank.

SPECIAL CONDITION REPORT – PARKS, POOL AND RECREATION

RECOMMENDATION NO. P1 – MAXIMIZE THE USE OF THE AVALON COMMUNITY PARK BY ADOPTING THE MASTER SITE PLAN.

Strong parks make strong neighborhoods and the Borough is rich in park and greenspace. Avalon is .69 square miles and relies on the Community Park for most of its recreation needs. The park is not fully maximized in terms of facilities or programming. Scheduling more programming provides lifestyle enhancement opportunities for all ages. Some action items that should be considered by the Borough include:

- Implement and pursue funding based on the Avalon Park Master Site Plan included in this study. The plan is shown in phases so that the logical staging of improvements can be made as funding becomes available.
- Encourage healthy programs like running, walking, biking events in the park and in the central business district to encourage the use of the park and to create gathering events for residents.
- Consider the creation of a Recreation Board of volunteers to begin to explore possible programming for Borough parks. About 15% of the Borough population is under 18 and there should be programming for this age group. The Recreation Board should act as an advisory board to Council and should provide volunteer labor to help support recreation programming.
- Hire a Recreation Director with an early childhood or recreation background to develop, coordinate, and oversee summer programming, especially summer day camp in the parks. Fees can be charged that would partially cover the salary of the Director.
- Work with senior agencies to include additional programming and activities for senior citizens. In surveys and crowd sourcing, seniors have indicated a preference for planned day trips; strength, stretching,

fitness and cardio classes; healthy cooking classes; gardening, movies, yoga, and dance classes.

RECOMMENDATION No. P2 – DEVELOP AND ADOPT A PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE TRAIL PLAN.

The Borough should develop and adopt a pedestrian and bike lane plan that creates a local system to link parks, employment centers, transit facilities, and adjacent municipalities. The “pedestrian oriented” plan would:

- Provide convenient and well illuminated pedestrian walkways throughout California Avenue and within parking lots.
- Provide pedestrian links between the business district and communities adjacent to the Borough.
- Provide pedestrian improvements and connections between California Avenue and adjacent neighborhoods and the community park.

RECOMMENDATION No. P3 – CONSIDER USING SUMMER INTERNS OR SEASONAL EMPLOYEES TO DEVELOP RECREATION PROGRAMMING.

The Borough has a lot to offer in its parks. California Avenue with its fenced Dek Hockey area is a prime location for a summer dek hockey league to play. The ballfields at Avalon Park, while used for the early part of the season are not used during the later part of the season or in the fall. Fall league adult softball is still popular and is always looking for centrally located fields to play through November. The two smaller parks on Semple and South Birmingham may serve as good craft and or activity play areas that could serve those neighborhoods with an organized program. All of these ideas require time to develop and manage and may be a good opportunity for an intern to research/survey the community and help develop and manage the activities. Programs are typically sustainable when a small fee is established based on the program involvement from staff, this should also be researched. The Local Government Academy offers a municipal internship program that pays 50% of the intern’s

wages for the year. This may be a good option for Avalon in future years.

RECOMMENDATION. P4 – REVIEW FEES FOR PROGRAMMING AND FACILITIES ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

The Borough should annually review all fees charged for rentals and facility usage to ensure that the fees partially cover the recreation expenses. Reviewing the fees on an annual basis during the regular budget adoption process will ensure that adequate charges are imposed to recoup some of the Borough’s cost of providing programming.

RECOMMENDATION No. P5 – DEVELOP AND USE WORK CODES ON TIME SHEETS TO TRACK WORK DONE AT THE PARKS.

A more detailed timesheet and work order system would allow for employees to code work performed at the parks against codes that would then allow management to evaluate the time spent working in the parks. A true cost of the operation and maintenance of the parks is essential to see how much of the Borough’s labor is related to park and recreation activities. This would serve as as a basis for evaluating fees for programs and facility use.

RECOMMENDATION No. P6 – CONDUCT A PARK SIGN INVENTORY AND ADDRESS FADED AND UNNECESSARY SIGNS.

It is important for the public when entering a park to know not only the identity of the park that they are visiting but also to understand the rules of the park. There are many signs that have been installed at the Avalon parks over the years that should be reviewed for their use and overall appearance. Avoid sign pollution - a sign inventory should be conducted and evaluated for sign reduction and replacement. Attractive identification, directional, and rules signs should be installed at every park.

RECOMMENDATION No. P7- TRAIN AT LEAST ONE CERTIFIED PESTICIDE APPLICATOR THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

The Borough has a need for the spraying of herbicides and pesticides in and around its public facilities to control

vegetation. Public entities are required to have at least one certified applicator, licensed through the Commonwealth, in order to utilize even the smallest amount of products like “Roundup.” There are special requirements for public entities that must be observed in order to perform this activity. Additional information on the full requirements of certification may be found through the Penn State Agriculture Extension at this link <http://extension.psu.edu/publications/agrs-118>

RECOMMENDATION No. P8 – ESTABLISH ROUTINE MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION SCHEDULES TO INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY AND REDUCE LIABILITY.

The amount of maintenance needed at the Borough’s parks can be overwhelming for the public works employees. The busiest time for park maintenance can be demanding because it is also the peak vacation time for workers. For this reason, it is important to have written check inspection and safety checklists and to have seasonal employees hired and trained before these peak periods. If the public works Superintendent were to establish a routine maintenance and inspection schedule with sign-off checklists, employees would understand the duties required and the parks appearance and functionality would rise. Public spaces must be safe and accessible to all members of the public at all times. Unsafe play equipment, walkways, and debris are not only unsightly and devalue a community asset but lead to liability issues for the Borough. A full-time employee should be required to complete the CPSI training and obtain the certification through the PA Recreation and Park Society. This will provide the Borough with the necessary skills for establishing a sound risk reduction program, a system repair system, and removal of hazardous equipment. It will also help the CPSI to set up a routine inspection system for the City-owned and leased recreation and park facilities.

RECOMMENDATION No. P9 – PERFORM REGULAR AND COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPETITIVE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE LOCAL, STATE, COUNTY, AND FEDERAL LEVELS.

County, state, and federal funding programs are available to help in funding recreation programs and projects. The PA DCNR offers grant programs to aid in rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities, land acquisition to support active or passive recreation, and planning studies to assess project feasibility and/or plan comprehensively for the recreation needs. Most competitive grant programs carry local match requirements, which require applicants to document cash and/or in-kind contributions (e.g. staff time) proportionate to the requested grant amount. Securing the required match for a competitive grant is a challenge that requires creative solutions. In some cases, match can be comprised of several funding sources, from CDBG funds to direct cash contributions to donated services. The Commonwealth’s programs recognize the appraised value of land as an eligible match when the land will be incorporated as part of the recreation project. Grant funds represent a one-time cash infusion and should not be utilized to balance an operating budget. But grant funds can represent a viable source of funding to offset the costs associated with major capital projects. Some opportunities are provided under the following programs.

PA GREENWAYS, TRAILS, AND RECREATION – There are regional trails not far from Avalon. Trails are desirable to promote healthy, active lifestyles. Trails also promote economic activities in and around their locations. Act 13 of 2012 establishes the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds to the Commonwealth Financing Authority (the “Authority”) through DCED for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks and beautification projects. Connecting neighborhoods and parks within the Borough is also desirable and would be looked at positively for funding in many cases. Visit the website at:

<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/greenways-trails-and-recreation-program-gtrp>

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DCNR) – COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (C2P2) – Parks and Recreation Planning, Development, Land Acquisition, and Partnership Projects. Phase 1 of the Avalon Park Master Site Plan was submitted to this program for funding on April 18, 2018. Avalon should prepare and submit future applications for a pool feasibility planning study and Phase 2 of the Avalon Park Master Site Plan. Both are eligible projects for this funding source. These applications are due in mid-April of each calendar year. Visit the website at: <http://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/Pages/default.aspx>

GAMING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM FUND (GEDF) – The GEDF fund was created for community and economic development projects in Allegheny County and is funded through gaming revenue. Eligible projects include projects that promote local economic activity, improve infrastructure, public safety projects, and projects that improve or create civic, cultural, or recreational activities or facilities. Single applications are submitted through the DCED Single Application program and are reviewed and approved by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) State representatives and senators must be supportive of the project in order for it to advance. These applications are due before October 1 of each calendar year. Visit the website at: <https://dced.pa.gov/download/gaming-economic-development-tourism-fund-guidelines>

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOURISM FUND (CITF) – The CITF is an annual allocation of \$6.6 million from gaming revenue for use in Allegheny County for construction, development, improvement and maintenance of infrastructure projects. CITF provides grants and loans to municipalities to carry out important project for development of key sites for future use. Stormwater infrastructure and recreation amenities are eligible projects under the CITF. Applications are typically accepted between January and

February of each calendar year. Visit the website at: <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/economic-development/authorities/citf-grant.aspx>

FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION – BOAT LAUNCH INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS – The Commission has a number of grant programs that provide funding in support of fishing, boating and aquatic resource conservation. A list of the major grant programs are available at the website at: <http://www.fishandboat.com/Transact/Grants/Pages/default.aspx>

RECOMMENDATION No. P10 – CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN STRATEGIC PLANNING THAT TAKES A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF THE BOROUGH’S PARKS AND RECREATION, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, AND PROJECTS.

The Borough Development Committee has taken a proactive approach to parks and recreation planning. Continued strategic planning for the Borough should include ongoing discussions about:

- Where are we going (Mission)
- How do we get there (Strategies)
- What is our blueprint for action? (Budget, Goals, and Objectives)
- How do we know if we are on track? (Control)
- Issues for discussion should include:
- Are there any programs or services that we currently provide that we should stop providing? If yes, which programs?
- Are there any new programs that the Borough should start offering?
- What opportunities should the Borough pursue over the next five years?
- What challenges is the Borough likely to face over the next five years?
- What are the emerging trends?

It may be helpful to continue to work with an independent consultant who has training in recreation planning to facilitate discussions between the Borough and the residents.