

# Final Reports

# VISIONTEAMS

*Imagining Allegheny County's Tomorrow*

*Presented to  
the County  
Executive  
January 2013*

# Steering Committee

In December of 2011, Allegheny County Executive (then-Elect) Rich Fitzgerald announced a six-member steering committee for his transition, as well as the creation of twelve vision teams that were charged with laying out a future vision for the county. The steering committee and vision teams were formed to provide a fresh perspective on how government operates, and should operate, and began a process that has resulted in recommendations on operations, efficiencies and policy for Allegheny County moving forward.

In making his selections, the Executive noted that with twelve years of experience on Allegheny County Council, he had already learned a great deal about the county and its operations, and was very comfortable setting priorities and making decisions about directors and administrators. The vision teams, he noted, are about our future and how we can continue to improve, promote and move Allegheny County forward.

To lead this process, the Executive selected six people who are well respected in the community, represent a sector of the county that plays an important role in our present and future, and could help he and his administration review and evaluate the recommendations that were receive in the process. Each of the six members took responsibility for the direct oversight of two of the vision teams, providing a constant contact for questions, concerns, advice and direction throughout the process. The members also had an opportunity to review the draft reports, attend any of the vision team meetings that they wished to, and have reviewed the final documents for presentation to the Executive.

The Steering Committee Members are:

Philip Ameris

*Laborers' District Council of Western Pennsylvania*

Esther Bush

*Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh*

Mike Dunleavy

*International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union No. 5*

Barbara McNees

*Greater Pittsburgh Chamber*

Mark Nordenberg

*University of Pittsburgh*

Audrey Russo

*Pittsburgh Technology Council*

# Introduction

Embracing the charge of Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald to create a vision that continues to “improve, promote and move Allegheny County forward”, community representatives, from both the public and private sector in twelve areas, under the leadership of a six member steering committee used a fresh set of eyes to focus on the intricacies of government operations. Particular emphasis was given to variables that the county government should employ to promote efficiencies that contribute to the vitality of our county and enhance the quality of lives of our residents.

Fusing their energies with the broad knowledge and expertise, the community representatives crafted a vision team report utilizing a variety of methodologies involving extensive research of best practices, analysis of operations, exploration of innovative approaches, community input through listening sessions and website, to address their respective charge.

After a significant analysis of all aspects of operations and the identification of creative strategies and specific recommendations in their respective area of expertise, the following 12 themes emerged for consideration by the County Executive:

1. Enter an era of increased accountability to increase efficiencies and effectiveness by delineating specific and measurable outcomes for departments.
2. Redefine visions for government functions that reflect greater both inter- and intra-governmental practices especially related to the economy, workforce development, human services, etc.
3. Evaluate staffing needs, facility design and spatial needs to achieve defined outcomes identified by all departments, as well as, guaranteeing that facilities are perceived and managed as valuable assets.
4. Use technological advances to manage data and facilitate the ability for the community to be actively and efficiently engaged in all aspects of government operations.
5. Explore various tax revenue models and entrepreneurial strategies to sustain financial integrity, address infrastructure needs, and contribute to economic growth.
6. Expand the diversity of the workforce to achieve social equity, economic vitality and increase international competitiveness.
7. Implement new strategies to achieve the highest level of public health with respect to the environment, physical and psychosocial needs of all our residents.
8. Embrace the belief that smart growth, environmentally responsible land development and preservation of green space contributes to the economic condition of the county.
9. Capitalize on the significant economic opportunity that is available in the energy and environmental sectors.
10. Implement strategies that ensure that modes of transportation address the current and future social and economic needs of the county.

11. Recognize that a strong correlation exists between corporate decision-making for relocation or expansion and available real estate and therefore a primary focus on commercial and real estate is warranted.
12. Espouse a culture that believes that innovation and entrepreneurship drive future economic growth and is inherently connected to the county's economic vitality; job growth, classic economic development, improved efficiencies and collaboration in the community, improved business process and infrastructure, talent, investment and entrepreneurship.

Using these fundamental beliefs as a point of departure, the respective vision teams (Note Appendix A) submitted comprehensive analyses to the Steering Committee, which in turn reviewed those reports with the County Executive and presented them to him for his internal review and consideration.

# Executive Summary: Courts Administration

With a commitment to address sustainability, intergovernmental relations and diversity/inclusion for the Office of the Public Defender, the Department of Court Records and the Allegheny County Sheriff's Office, the Courts Administration Vision Team focused on the interaction and relationship between the courts and the county and how it can be improved systemically, and by the use of technology.

Additionally, from a philosophical perspective, the Courts Administration Vision Team espoused that a successful workplace recognizes the vital importance of creating and maintaining an inclusive and diverse working environment. Most importantly, they concluded that it is imperative that the County Executive recognize the significant contribution diversity and inclusion can make culturally, socially and economically.

To that end, the recommendations put forth can be summarized under the following categories:

- **Guarantee Civil Liberties Within the Office of Public Defender (OPD)**
  - Guarantee that competent, diverse and effective legal counsel is provided to indigent defendants by increasing the financial, operational (adequate space to provide ethical counsel to clients, supervision, written and oral communication, sufficient and appropriate office resources, computers and basic office supplies, etc.) and human resources (adequate staffing levels, continuing education.)
  - Convert the OPD to a nonprofit organization [501(c) (3)] with an independent governing Board of Trustees; in conjunction with the creation of the OPD non-profit agency, mandate funding from the Commonwealth and the County under contracts for services.
  - Sustain fiscal integrity by lobbying the State to provide funding for public defender services, empower the OPD to control and authorize its own budget expenditures, and fund the OPD at the same level as the Office of District Attorney.
  - Create an Indigent Defense Advisory Board (IDAB) with outside advocates, including members of the private bar, to provide independent oversight and review of legal services and limit political / judicial influence over the OPD, OCC, and assignment of court-appointed counsel.
  - Authorize the IDAB to establish standardized policy and procedures for assignment of court-appointed counsel, compensation, and review of legal services.
  - Establish a standardized policy and written disclosure requirement for OPD ad related entities of personal, political, and familial associations with the judiciary, administration, and Great Lakes Behavioral Health Services.
- **Increase Efficiency and Accessibility Within the Department of Court Records**
  - Increase efficiency of operations by increasing data sharing and electronic filing; establish the same physical tracking system used in the Criminal Division in the Civil / Family and Register of Wills Divisions.
  - Increase public accessibility by relocation of public access computers, increases signage and installation of an elevator.

- With respect to storage, advocate to the State to allow electronic storage of files; Review the current storage system including reviewing the possibility of scanning older documents for easy accessibility and retrieval from storage.
- Consult with university experts to address issues related to structural integrity and the consolidation and computerization in document management issues in the Civil / Family Division and the Register of Wills.
- **Review and Recommend On Processes Used for Transport Within the Sheriff's Office**
  - Conduct an independent study to determine if the timely transport of prisoners from the Allegheny County Jail to court or rehabilitation facilities by the Allegheny County Sheriff's Office is a present concern that must be addressed.
  - Guarantee that all inmate paperwork is provided with the transport of the inmate.

# Executive Summary: Economic Development

Given that economic development is a critical component of crafting a vision for the future of Allegheny County, the Economic Development Vision Team concluded that the vitality of our region is best accomplished by encouraging and sustaining progressive land use policies and protocols related to commercial and real estate development, encouraging innovation and creating a marketing and tourism plan that highlights these priorities as a means to be both nationally and internationally competitive.

To that end, the recommendations put forth can be summarized under the following categories:

- **Encourage and Sustain Progressive Commercial and Real Estate Development**
  - After extrapolating the specific real estate requirements not being met by the region, identify the specific types of properties desired and the missing attributes needed to attract more companies; specifically facilitate increasing the supply of desired real estate via a redesign of the county's Economic Development's Comprehensive Plan to be a "working document".
  - Develop a priority list of all commercially zoned, 20(+) acres sites currently available within the county; Review priority list of properties with economic development agencies; validate/update the list of priority properties.
  - Allocate County resources to supplement any missing property information and prepare Site Investigation Reports for all priority sites. Finance the creation of standardized Predevelopment Due Diligence ;Establish an objective, standardized economic impact tool and allocate resources based upon job creation and/or job retention; Gain formal commitment from property owners (preferably, via an option agreement) to redevelop or sell property before committing funds.
  - Develop a comprehensive matrix of federal, state, county, and local economic development programs with criteria and determine which programs could be utilized to move priority properties to "shovel-ready" status; Aggressively pursue all potential public funding sources to help make properties developable within (1) year.
  - Form a County Executive Action Team (CEAT) that reports directly to the County Executive.
  - Establish a single point of contact within Allegheny County Economic Development to help facilitate all commercial real estate development in Allegheny County; conduct an internal analysis of their resources and capacities to integrate the following recommendations into practice.
- **Advocate for Aggressive Marketing and Tourism**
  - Lead the advocacy efforts to create and implement an aggressive marketing effort to promote our region (including municipalities in SW PA and the bordering counties of Maryland, Ohio and West Virginia.) as a diverse and inclusive region.
  - Raise the national visibility of public and private programs that support and facilitate the integration of immigrant and international residents and students.

- **Create a Culture of Innovation**

- Embrace and demonstrate a culture of innovation by the creation of a mission statement, demonstrate that commitment in business practices, as well as, develop an Innovation award recognizing innovation in the public and private sectors which will be highlighted on the ACED website.
- Identify a position within the county charged with focusing on innovation and partnerships with the City of Pittsburgh and oversight of a new resource matrix for all public, private, and nonprofit groups which is monitored by the county.
- Institute a voluntary rotating committee of thought leaders on innovation that assists the County with implementing these and additional recommendations into action.

# Executive Summary: Energy & Environment

The Energy and Environment Vision Team found that County government can improve its operations while encouraging economic development and energy conservation by implementing certain changes in its management structure, and modifying its focus to acknowledge the development opportunities arising from shale gas development. At the same time, the county must continue to wield its power to maintain and improve environmental protection and public health, safety and welfare.

Additionally, the County should seize the opportunity to be at the forefront of energy efficiency and sustainability by reducing energy use, reusing and repurposing public buildings, reducing maintenance costs by centralizing management of facilities and systematically incentivizing sustainability and energy conservation.

Most importantly, by simultaneously serving as a leader in energy conservation and renewable energy technology, financial savings can be realized for County taxpayers.

With this, the following recommendations are submitted:

- **Encourage Environmentally and Fiscally Responsible Shale Gas Development and Practices**
  - Support and encourage environmentally responsible shale gas development and production and, where economical, support new gas-powered electricity generation initiatives, encouraging the development and ongoing refinement of ‘best practices’ and minimizing negative impacts on the public and the community.
  - Work closely with other government entities, and private or public organizations to coordinate and encourage economic development relating to shale gas and its derivatives, while protecting the safety of county environment and County residents.
  - Evaluate, develop, and encourage uses for natural gas for example, in vehicles and factories, because of the increase in demand will encourage more production, and thus more employment and opportunity in our region.
  - Encourage the use of natural gas powered vehicles, and the installation of CNG fueling stations. To that end, the county should consider entering into public-private partnerships with companies that are already performing vehicle retrofits and developing CNG fueling stations.
  - Engage in an ongoing dialogue with industry and work to make companies more inclined to move development and operations to Allegheny County.
  - Identify and evaluate developable sites in the County, including those that are currently underutilized or undervalued, as attractive for use as industrial sites, particularly for industries that will find the affordability and abundance of natural gas an advantage or will easily be able to use the byproducts of natural gas.
  - Highlight the availability of natural gas and its potential to help keep gas and electricity services affordable and to act as a draw attract new business to Allegheny County.
- **Promote Comprehensive Planning and Multi-government Cooperation**
  - Evaluate Allegheny Places, Allegheny County’s comprehensive plan, to determine whether any amendment is appropriate in light of the desirability for alternative energy development, including shale gas development.

- Endeavor to work with local municipalities to do the following: ensure the proper planning for alternative energy production/development such as natural gas pipelines and other high-impact and/or large-scale issues; encourage coordinated and multi-municipal planning where appropriate; provide assistance in updating and coordinating municipal ordinances in light of applicable law, and in consideration of the comprehensive plan, Allegheny Places; support efforts for Fleet Vehicle grants and provide grant writing support for local municipalities, authorities and non-profits with fleets so that they can apply for these grants; coordinate regulatory review to aid pipeline installers with permitting and planning; and advocate for and support changes to local permitting requirements for all renewable energy projects to standardize and streamline those requirements across municipalities.
- **Ensure Health and Public Safety**
  - Monitor all reports on public safety and health and specifically track the development of data from the new Washington County air monitoring system established by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Utilizing the first responder approach and recommendations in Act 13, train EMS, fire, and police to respond to potential health issues and supplement funding so that first responders will be able to appropriately respond to emergency conditions that arise at Marcellus Shale gas drilling sites.
  - Designate some portion of Act 13 revenue derived from drilling for natural gas to support health, safety review and training
- **Support Environmentally Appropriate Development on County Property**
  - Identify all county owned property, and property owned by county related entities, and explores development opportunities with respect to the County's natural resources.
  - Endeavor to refrain from allowing surface disturbance of County parks.
- **Encourage Production and Efficient Use of Electricity**
  - Encourage practices that minimize electricity use and cost for its own facilities and for the residents and businesses of the County, and should encourage the production of electricity via alternative resources including natural gas, solar and wind power.
  - Create incentives for County employees to proactively engage in and support appropriate energy conservation practices.
  - Designate and empower one County employee as responsible for decisions on a variety of energy-related issues to increase efficiencies.
  - Encourage wider participation among municipalities in the bulk purchases of energy programs.
- **Manage Facilities and Operations as Valuable Assets**
  - Manage all County properties and facilities in a standard, comprehensive, cost-effective manner, as these properties and facilities are valuable and substantial tangible asset.
  - Create a director-level position responsible for management of all County properties and facilities and empower them to make and enforce decisions regarding standards and increased energy efficiency; the Green Action Team should serve in an advisory role.

- **Ensure Safety and Exploit the Availability of Cleaner, Low-Cost Natural Gas for Vehicles**
  - Acquire, maintain and utilize all vehicles that it owns or operates in a safe and cost-effective manner.
  - Use natural gas vehicles.
  
- **Create a Culture that Promotes the Highest Standards of Health and Safety**
  - Adopt a “Safety at All Times” culture for County facilities and employees, and develop and implement a Safety Plan to improve safety metrics and the overall safety culture within the County workforce.
  - Advocate that portions of public funds be allocated to the Pennsylvania Department of Health to allow it to work with appropriate local resources to conduct research and develop background databases on the public health impacts of local issues.
  
- **Promote Sustainability in Private/Municipal Energy Programs**
  - Advocate for a region of energy conservation.
  - Encourage municipalities to use Energy Star portfolio management to track and assess energy and water consumption.
  - Maintain a clearinghouse for information on cost-savings opportunities and energy efficiency programs for municipal governments and authorities.
  - Assist municipalities in updating municipal ordinances to include requiring green infrastructure.
  - Provide assistance to help municipalities update their ordinances or implement projects consistent with a municipalities adopted green infrastructure ordinance.
  - Develop or encourage the development of a model storm water ordinance that integrates the use of green infrastructure to the maximum extent practical and/or provide example language and have it available online.
  - Develop or encourage the development of a model municipal ordinance relating to zoning and permitting for renewable energy products.
  - Coordinate programs offering subsidized home energy audits/weatherization programs for county residents to ensure widespread access to a program.
  - Create and implement an Allegheny Sunshine Program to help county businesses and households to install solar technology, to advance solar businesses, and stimulate the local solar market.
  - Coordinate programs offering energy conservation programs and resources for Commercial and Industrial properties and publicize to encourage non-residential county citizen participation.

- **Prepare Students to Meet the Demands of Industry Jobs**

- Encourage the use of local training programs and unions to prepare students for careers that can be used in the shale gas industry and connect the students to industry contractors.
- Evaluate all energy-related jobs in the County and determine if there is training available in the County, either through a formal institution or through an organization such as a union, for residents who want to be employed by those jobs. If no training is available for a particular job, explore options for making the training available, such as creating a certificate program at Allegheny County Community College. Then confirm that employees on job sites owned by Allegheny County meet applicable training requirements.
- Establish a program to direct displaced workers to energy-related job training programs offered by formal institutions and organizations, including the Allegheny County Community College Marcellus Shale Initiative; and
- Consider methods to encourage local employment on energy-related projects, including the feasibility of including such requirements in County contracts, or in contracts with any County financial support.
- Explore the potential for incentivizing local employment.

# Executive Summary: Financial Sustainability

Charged with reviewing and making recommendations on the financial sustainability of the County, the Financial Sustainability Vision Team crafted strategies the County might embrace to reduce reliance on property taxes as well as, delineating other options the County should consider to ensure financial integrity. Additionally, the team focused on identifying factors that may jeopardize that financial stability and identifying strategies that could be employed to move forward.

Recognizing the depth and breadth of these issues, the committee issued findings and recommendations related to: (1) Increasing operational efficiencies; (2) Options for long-term sustainability and tax fairness; and, (3) Generation of supplemental revenue. Given the complexity and interrelationships of these issues, recommendations were categorized for consideration as Immediate, Short-Term, Medium-Term, or Long-Term, as follows:

## 1. Increasing Operational Efficiencies

**SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION:** Consider engaging an independent third party to develop, conduct, and analyze a survey of all employees to generate their ideas on achieving greater efficiency

**SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION:** Consider conducting a general review of information collection, management, and dissemination among the departments to ensure that up-to-date data are organized to ensure maximum usefulness for analysis and decision-making

## 2. Options for Long-Term Sustainability and Tax Fairness

### Advocate for state legislative action

**SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION:** Consider urging the General Assembly to establish a statewide commission to address property taxes across the Commonwealth and recommend either a uniform methodology of levying property tax, or a plan by which to eliminate or greatly reduce the property tax burden on the citizens.

**SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION:** Consider urging the General Assembly to pass legislation allowing the County to shift to alternative funding sources.

### Consider the Viability of Alternatives to the Property Tax System such as Sales Tax Changes or Income Tax

**LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION:** Consider reducing its reliance on or eliminate the property tax and replace it with an alternative funding source.

#### OPTION ONE: SALES TAX

**SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION:** Consider expanding the state sales tax to a number of currently exempted goods and services. Exempted items such as groceries, clothing, prescription drugs, tuition, and legal and medical services should remain exempt, but other goods and services should be considered for inclusion in the sales tax. For example, Pennsylvania is the only state that does not have a tax on non-cigarette tobacco products. The County should also consider whether business-to-business transactions should be exempt from the sales tax.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider increasing the sales tax by an additional 1%. The expected additional revenue generated would be around \$176 million annually.

#### **OPTION TWO: INCOME TAX**

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider instituting a personal income tax.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider negotiating with contiguous counties to establish a regional personal income tax.

### **Achieve Property Tax Fairness**

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to legislate a statewide assessment system so that Allegheny County is not unfairly singled out.

In the event that a statewide solution doesn't materialize, there are still several steps the County could take to ameliorate the existing problem:

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: County Council should consider adopting legislation that would define a consistent system and process by which property values are adjusted so as to minimize subjectivity and confusion through a more objective "mathematical" calculation. We suggest that a system be based on two factors:

- Square footage: Calculate based on square footage of the property, including building and lot; and
- Location: Factor in the municipality or township of residence/ownership so that there is both fairness based on current neighborhood "value" and that residents/owners are encouraged to locate in "undervalued" areas to increase population and market property values.

**Or:**

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: County Council should consider adopting legislation that would use the 2013 reassessment numbers as a base year.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: County Council should consider adopting legislation that provides a schedule for future reassessments so that they occur in predictable, reliable intervals.

### **3. Generation of Supplemental Revenue**

#### **Departmental Revenue Generation**

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATION: Where appropriate, consider increasing user fees to keep pace with the rise in the Consumer Price Index.

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATION: The County Executive and Manager should work with department directors to devise an overall strategy and process, and then empower the directors, within the parameters of that process, to develop department-specific incentives for the purpose of generating additional revenues.

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATION: If not already available internally, each department should produce an up-to-date fee schedule.

**Support Adoption of the 2011-2012 Official Policy Statement by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, calling for the following:**

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to use haste in complying with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision in *Allegheny v. Commonwealth*, without commensurate reduction in other county programs, and oppose any legislation that purports to negate the funding decision.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to reinstate the district justice reimbursement or equivalent funding for the general purposes of the County, regardless of the manner of resolution of court funding generally.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to provide for appropriate budgeting, accounting, and auditing of drug forfeiture receipts, including the ability of the commissioners or their home rule counterparts to allocate the funds for general county purposes.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to pass legislation requiring the state to pay the costs of arbitrators impaneled on behalf of the Court of Common Pleas.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to pass legislation to pay the costs of the Public Defender's Office.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to pass legislation providing full and permanent funding for the establishment of drug courts and other treatment courts in Pennsylvania where such courts might be effective.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to pass legislation to permit additional mechanisms to collect fines, costs, and judgments, including such strategies as wage attachments, freezing bank accounts through credit bureau reporting systems, garnishment of federal and state income tax refunds, denial of driver's licenses except where wage attachments have been agreed to, garnishment of lottery winnings, attachment of workers' compensation or other insurance payments, and publishing the offender's name and fiscal delinquency data in a statewide databank for ease of tracking.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to transfer juror costs to the state.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to increase funding from the state to each county for reimbursement of costs associated with each judge in the various judicial districts from the current \$70,000 per year to \$150,000 per year, with corresponding adjustment annually by the same percentage as the cost of living increases in judicial pay.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider urging the General Assembly to pass legislation requiring plaintiffs to reimburse counties their actual costs to have them excused from cases in which the counties were wrongfully sued.

### **Market-Based Opportunities for Revenue Generation:**

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Allegheny County should consider taking advantage of market-based revenue opportunities by selling advertising rights to county property and naming rights to roads, bridges, and other assets.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Allegheny County should consider providing certain services, for a fee, to local governments that cannot adequately or cost-effectively provide the services on their own.

### **Public/Private Partnerships or Outright Sale of Assets**

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider investigating the costs and benefits of selling and/or leasing appropriate assets to for-profit entities.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider investigating the sale or lease of the Nova and Yeshiva work release houses to non-profits that specialize in work-release services, such as The Program for Offenders, Inc., only with the assurance as well that such non-profit continuously maintain compliance standards.

### **Adoption of New Fees, Licenses, and Permitting Requirements**

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider exploring, identifying, and possibly instituting license requirements for businesses and professions that are not already governed by state, county, or city licensing requirements.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider the costs and benefits of a general business license requirement for all businesses in the County.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider generating additional revenue by instituting entertainment license requirements.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider generating additional revenue by instituting an alcoholic beverage license requirement

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider empowering County officers to issue citations to property owners both to generate revenue as well as encourage property owners to maintain the integrity of their communities.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider instituting a County realty transfer fee or increase related administrative fees.

### **Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreements (PILOTs)**

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Rather than challenging an organization's non-profit tax liability status in court, Allegheny County should consider the implementation of Payment in Lieu of Taxes agreements with non-profits within a defined, collaborative, and consensual process; it is strongly within the County's interest to pursue such a program. The County should be the leader in convening and

facilitating such a collaborative process with key non-profits (serving both the City and the County) to reach agreement on a comprehensive PILOT policy as it is in its interest to do so, and the County Executive has the broader leadership platform.

Additionally, consider establishing a task force with an independent facilitator to take this charge and pull together non-profit, City, and state leaders in an intentional conversation that will result in meaningful commitments.

### **Miscellaneous (Other) Tax Considerations**

IMMEDIATE RECOMMENDATION: Consider raising the Allegheny County Alcoholic Beverage Tax back to the original rate of 10%.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider increasing the administrative fee to be recouped by the County related to the Hotel Occupancy tax.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider levying an additional cigarette tax in Allegheny County with provisions directing the revenue to the County.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider levying taxes on insurance, meals, fuel, and motor vehicles.

### **Creation of an “Infrastructure Trust”**

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider establishing an Infrastructure Trust, along the lines of that implemented by the City of Chicago, to relieve the full burden of financing infrastructure projects aside from dependence on property tax supported General Obligation Bonds issued by the County. Consider the creation of a similar government-related entity that would look to regional and national sources of long-term investment funding such as foundations, pension funds, private equity funds and mutual funds.

### **County Equity Ownership**

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider engaging regional universities on the topic of equity ownership for Allegheny County.

### **Consolidation and Asset Management Changes**

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider exploring the potential merger of duplicative functions of Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh, such as the Pittsburgh and Allegheny County homicide divisions or the Urban Redevelopment Authority and the Allegheny County Redevelopment Authority.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider reviewing the process the Allegheny County Redevelopment Authority uses to convey property to interested sellers, and ensure that this process is expeditious, efficient, and that the County does not hold land for too long due to a tedious process. Further ensure that the County receives a fair value for property conveyed.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider conducting a building audit to learn if the county is leasing or renting property and consolidate county functions into fewer buildings, providing for the opportunity to rent out or sell newly vacant buildings.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATION: Consider conducting an audit to learn if there are operations being rendered downtown that could be moved to other, lower-cost areas.

**Vision Team**

FINAL RECOMMENDATION: Consider preserving the Financial Sustainability Vision Team as a working advisory committee to the County Executive.

# Executive Summary: Human Services

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has distinguished itself as a national model of innovation and has been recognized widely for service integration. The Human Services Vision Team provides the following recommendations which are designed to respect the leadership and history of DHS while better positioning the Department to thrive in light of significant budget cuts and policy shifts. Additionally, enhancing and broadening the Kane Regional Centers by adding services in behavioral health will clearly serve the changing needs of the community.

With this, the team put forth the following recommendations:

- **Develop a New and Updated Vision**

- Give specific emphasis to the integration of services, enhancing prevention and in-home services, and cost efficiencies.
- Convene a series of meetings with key stakeholders to determine the best strategies to structure DHS for long-term cost effective services.
- In light of this new vision, the Department should seek foundation funding partnerships for new models of service and experimentation.
- Undertake a program assessment process that identifies key areas for program integration within DHS and across County Departments.
- Disseminate new vision with estimated implementation timeline to stakeholders.
- Institute regular meetings between County Department Directors and the County Manager to identify opportunities for integration, coordination and avoidance of service duplication.
- Complete demographic and geographic analysis of County-funded programs in order to prioritize opportunities for inter-Departmental program integration.
- Develop an integration committee and train County staff in change management in preparation for program integration.
- Develop a coordinated system for inter-Departmental communication and referrals.

- **Enter an Era of Enhanced Accountability**

- Consider an enhanced accountability model that establishes high expectations for client outcomes.
- Develop expected program outcome guidelines based on yearly achievement of high-performing organizations and use to guide contracting decisions.
- Carry out proposed funding and accountability structure in a pilot format and rigorously assess outcomes prior to large-scale implementation.

- Enter into discussion with The Forbes Funds about services, geographies, and organizational cultures that may benefit from exploration of models of strategic restructuring.
- Provide or contract for a training series dedicated to strengthening human service providers' understanding and use of outcome indicators.
- **Consider Case Rate Funding and Fidelity Management**
  - Create "Lead Agencies" with increased flexibility and responsibility for how clients are served.
  - Streamline the number of County-funded service providers to the highest performing.
  - Reduce redundancy and consider mergers among agencies whose services are repetitive.
- **Conduct a Process Audit to create efficiencies in information technology, purchasing, and contract requirements.**
  - After securing approval from State and/or Federal governments, consolidate audits into one audit/agency within a specific timeframe that addresses fiscal, programmatic, organization issues, etc.
  - Accept publically certified audits for agencies rather than duplicating the current system of having publically certified paid audits in addition to financial audits by the County.
  - Implement a joint purchasing program of supplies, energy, etc. with providers of same program services.
- **Bring Quality Improvement Techniques to Human Services**
  - Train human service organizations in quality improvement techniques so that they can make the best use of available funding and continually improve their services.
  - Support quality improvement trainings for DHS-funded organizations to improve service delivery and strengthen programming during the integration process.
  - Commit to a level of ongoing quality improvement support for interested DHS-funded organizations to ensure appropriate implementation and improvement of outcomes.
- **Institute Regular Meetings Between DHS and Area Councils of Governments (COGs)**
  - Incorporate feedback from COGs on quarterly basis to ensure that DHS is apprised of changes in community needs and challenges.
  - Include information from COG briefs in DHS strategic planning and funding decisions.
- **Emphasize Cost Effective Care for the Aging Population including the expansion of in-home services**
  - Implement an expedited Medical Assistance eligibility and care planning process for people not on Medicaid.
  - Conduct assessment of short-term and long-term cost-effectiveness of expanding in-home services for the elderly; Implement all appropriate strategies identified.

- Draft and implement an expedited eligibility and care planning processes for the Medical Assistance program for individuals not on Medicaid.
- Strengthen the Kane Regional Centers through their participation in quality improvement training and application.
- Consider opening new behavioral units at the Kane Regional Centers.
- Provide quality improvement training and support improvement projects at Kane Regional Centers and monitor progress on key quality indicators.

## Demographic and Funding Context

Allegheny County, under a new administration, aspires to adapt to a changing environment and offer the best human services system possible. After decades of losing population, the County is projected to steadily increase in size over the coming years. The University of Pittsburgh's University Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR) projects that the population of Allegheny County will gain nearly 200,000 residents over the next two decades—in stark contrast to having lost 410,000 individuals over the previous five decades.<sup>1</sup> Contributing to this growth is an aging population that is living longer, as well as an increasing number of Latino residents. The number of individuals aged 65-79 is expected to climb rapidly in the next 20 years, and UCSUR projects the County's population age 90 and older will increase 43% between 2010 and 2015.<sup>2</sup> Drawing on Census data, UCSUR also reports that the Hispanic/Latino population in Allegheny County increased by 70.8% between 2000 and 2010 and, as a share of the County's total population, increased from .9% to 1.6%.<sup>3</sup> These changes could pressure County government to provide new and additional services while experiencing reductions in government revenue.

Along with shifting demographics, Allegheny County faces current and historical disparities related to, among other things, race and socio-economic status. For instance, according to an analysis by DHS, the risk of homicide among young, black men in the City of Pittsburgh is 60 times higher than the city-wide average.<sup>4</sup> In the same vein, an UCSUR analysis found that African-American women age 55 to 64 were in poverty at a rate nearly four times higher than White women (26.1% compared to 7.3%).<sup>5</sup> These disparities, which are intimately linked to further disparities in behavioral and physical health, offer a glimpse into the depth and breadth of the issues DHS must address with limited resources.

At present, the County is faced with a more immediate challenge: how to effect efficiencies in order to provide necessary, high-quality human services in the most cost-effective manner. This circumstance is the result of a recession, as well as a number of public and private factors, and may ultimately alter the fundamental funding relationship between the County and the Commonwealth. With the modest economic growth projections from the Governor's Office, County human services received a 10% cut in Pennsylvania's 2012-2013 budget, on top of a series of cuts in

<sup>1</sup> Cited in: Rotstein, G. (July 3, 2012). Pittsburgh's Population Expected to Grow in a Few Years. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

<sup>2</sup> University Center for Social and Urban Research. (November 17, 2011). Allegheny County's Older Old Population. <http://www.ucsur.pitt.edu/thepub.php?pl=000349>

<sup>3</sup> University Center for Social and Urban Research. (March 24, 2011). Hispanic and Latino Population in Allegheny County. <http://www.ucsur.pitt.edu/thepub.php?pl=283>

<sup>4</sup> Dalton, E., Yonas, M., Warren, L., and Sturman, E. (nd.). *Violence in Allegheny County and Pittsburgh*. Pittsburgh: Allegheny County Department of Human Services.

<sup>5</sup> Schulz, R. and Briem, C. (September 25, 2007). *Pittsburgh and Allegheny County: Portrait of an aging society*. Presentation at *Convening the Next Generation in Pittsburgh – Boomers and All*, sponsored by the National Press Foundation.

recent years. The human services block grant approach being piloted represents another possible change in funding and human services provision facing DHS in the near future. Moreover, health reforms at the national level, especially the ongoing implementation of the Affordable Care Act, will also affect the ways in which the County provides services.

The Human Services Vision Team suggests that these uncertain and demanding times also offer a unique opportunity to conduct a thorough self-evaluation and institute innovative strategies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of County-funded service providers and, possibly, internal operations as well. Rather than passing along budget cuts to service providers evenly across the board, DHS notably has undertaken an effort to prioritize high-impact services and continue to identify opportunities to introduce innovations designed to further increase efficiency, accountability, and services integration. In response to a series of human services budget cuts at the state level, as well as anticipated cuts in 2013 and beyond, the Human Services Vision Team encourages DHS not to ignore an opportunity to improve the impact of its investments by cutting waste, increasing efficiency, and rewarding high performing organizations.

## Executive Summary: Infrastructure

Recognizing that sound infrastructure is essential to the economic and public health and vitality of a community, it is imperative that strategies be developed and implemented that ensure the stability and integrity of all aspects of this critical element of our county. The Infrastructure Vision Team crafted the following recommendations to ensure that the highest standards are attained and maintained for our transportation system involving Roads, Bridges and Rail, Site Development and Water, Sewer, Locks and Dams including public drinking systems and adequate waste water management:

- **Recognize Criticality and Maximize Efficiency of Roads, Bridges and Rail**
  - Promote intergovernmental cooperation which will result in efficiencies through enhanced and expanded shared snow removal agreements and the exploration of Ownership Transfers between the county and the state involving the exchange of responsibilities high-functional classified/high-volume roadways and bridges from the county to Penn DOT, while transferring some appropriate lower functional classified /lower volume roadways and bridges to the county.
  - Increase predictability and certainty by improvements in the delivery process by expanding the role of the county's two design managers to advance projects without securing Penn DOT approval, or by greater coordination and synthesis between the county and Penn DOT.
  - Coordinate with the State to allow for Right-of Way Acquisition for road and bridge projects and approval for the county to develop the equivalent of ECMS to expedite project letting and record keeping.
  - Evaluate the development of an electronic permitting system to expedite permit approval.
  - Eliminate duplicative inspection/monitoring projects by designating one agency for these functions and sharing evaluations with other entities.
  - Encourage the Commonwealth to revisit the allocation formula for liquid fuel tax revenue to the counties. A system based upon miles of roadway, lane miles of roadway, bridge deck area and/or Average Daily Traffic would provide a more equitable allocation system.
  - Optimize the county's position on securing available funds by identifying an individual or retain outside support to monitor state and federal programs for funding transportation improvements.
  - Raise the alcoholic beverage tax from 7 percent to 10 percent. Dedicate the additional funds towards sustainable transit funding.
  - Consider a portion of the gaming revenue dedicated to infrastructure improvements.
  - Consider leasing large tract of land owned by the county (i.e. Airport, Parks) for Marcellus Shale exploration and a portion of the revenue dedicated to infrastructure improvement. Advocate for the enabling legislation that would allow local government to pass funding initiatives for local transportation needs, in accordance with the Governor's Transportation Funding Advisory Commission's (TFAC) recommendations.

- Exercise options in Public-Private Partnership (P3) Legislation for infrastructure improvements and/or asset management; utilize a broad-based committee (technical, financial, legal) to evaluate P3 proposals.
  - Advocate for passage of the Governor's Transportation Funding Advisory Commission (TFAC) recommendation, including legislation to allow local governments to initiate a funding initiatives to fund regional transportation improvements.
  - Prepare a transportation improvement program so that impact fees can then be imposed for transportation capital improvements; base fees on (1) the total costs of the road improvements; (2) included in the capital improvement plan; and (3) be located within a given transportation service area affected by new development.
  - Consider using the concept of Value Capture or Tax Increment Financing to finance public infrastructure projects.
  - Investigate Community Facility Districts and municipal authorities further for possible use as funding mechanisms for regional infrastructure maintenance.
- **Strategically Plan and Implement Protocols to Enhance the Marketability and Preserve High Quality Site Development**
    - Invest in a Site Development fund with regional matches, develop and market sites cooperatively and leverage regional expertise to address site development challenges. Use of this fund (patterned after the Strategic Investment Fund and Pennsylvania's Business in Our Sites program) will have long-term amortization.
    - Invest in sites that have demonstrated marketability, offer attractive interest rates, leverage private investment and help developers/land owners carry projects until absorption begins.
    - Advocate for re-capitalizing of Business In Our Sites and RACP funding from the state for site development. The County should assist private developers in securing these grants and loans.
    - Dedicate some portion of the revenues generated by natural gas drilling on Allegheny County Airport Authority land be used to help capitalize the site development fund.
    - Re-institute a planning function to plan for future development and for preserving a sustainable, high-quality environment.
    - Coordinate permitting procedures related to site development by a single office; coordinate with the Allegheny County Economic Development and its counterpart at the City of Pittsburgh is maintained and expedited.
    - To increase pad-ready site development, focus on Brownfield's and Greyfields and locations that can be developed as mixed-use communities
-

- **Further Strengthen and Enhance the Management of Water, Sewer, Locks and Dams**

- Guide and coordinate the multiple parties involved with the ALCOSAN and Municipal Wet Weather Planning Process to provide the focus and vision needed to assure a cost effective and sustainable wet weather plan.
- Create a water advocacy coordinator in the County Executive's office to develop and coordinate an integrated watershed management plan for Allegheny County watersheds.
- Initiate an implementation team of stakeholders with the charge to carry out the leading regionalization recommendation(s) of the study including legislative (state and local) solutions to incentivize system consolidation and sustainability.
- When using County funding programs such as CDBG or CITF, require demonstration that the community sewer rates are adequate to provide the real cost of service including comprehensive operation and maintenance (O&M) programs or at least at an affordability level of 2 percent of Median Household Income (MHI) before providing grant funding. Funding decisions should leverage management changes to assure continued sustainability of the system or promote regionalization.
- Revise the Allegheny County Health Department Regulation, Article XIV, and Sewage Disposal, to require full funding of approved wet weather plans and adequate operation and maintenance programs and to require communities that cannot meet these requirements to look for consolidation opportunities.
- Review and encourage the use of innovative billing rate structures for customer communities to be implemented by ALCOSAN and other centralized wastewater treatment systems.
- Consider revising the rate structure to pro-rate sewer billings based upon the amount of flow being delivered for treatment in separate sewer areas.
- Provide the County Health Department with the staffing and resources needed to continue to implement the Safe Drinking Water Program and take full responsibility for the implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Charge the Allegheny County Health Department with evaluating the capabilities of each of the public drinking water treatment and conveyance systems to provide safe and reliable water supply for the next 25 years.
- Provide Regional leadership to encourage and incentivize local water distribution systems to proactively perform periodic maintenance (such as pipe lining) and replace service lines that are beyond their useful life before they fail.
- Encourage municipal water systems to adopt an asset-management approach to prolong the system life and aid in rehabilitation, repair and replacement decisions through efficient and focused operations and maintenance.

- Charge the County Economic Development and Health Departments with developing countywide codes and regulations to assure appropriate and consistent requirements. Indicate that county funding such as CDBG and AIM should be contingent on municipalities' adoption and enforcement of these ordinances.
- Consider Storm water fee programs as an option to provide additional capital as they can provide equity in the distribution of wet weather compliance costs to the largest contributors of wet weather flows based on impermeable surfaces.
- Identify or create an appropriate institution(s)/entity(ies) capable of addressing storm water management on a comprehensive, equitable, hydrology (watershed) basis, which would also consider regulatory compliance, costs and incentives to promote effective and efficient storm water management best practices.
- Implement institutional changes at the Allegheny County Conservation District so that they will take a more active role in sustainable storm water management and education.
- Develop a county-wide model storm water ordinance that integrates the use of green infrastructure to the maximum extent practical (a requirement of the storm water Management Act 167).
- Commit to use or require low impact development practices and green infrastructure in all county-funded projects.
- Continue to provide for the development and management of Act 167 Storm water Management Plans for all watersheds in county.
- Advocate for federal appropriations to maintain and recapitalize these assets in order to protect pool levels for commerce as well as for drinking water.
- Initiate contingency planning to understand the impacts of pool loss on drinking water and other critical environmental, commercial and recreational assets.
- Provide technical assistance to companies interested in siting and permitting for new natural gas related facilities along the river.
- Work with the Port of Pittsburgh Commission and Carnegie Mellon University to develop applications utilizing the new broadband wireless network including the monitoring of bridges, dams, air and water quality, and sewage outflows.
- Initiate a working committee of the engaged organizations to develop the implementation plan for the recommendations of the ALCOSAN Regionalization Committee.

## *Executive Summary: Intergovernmental Cooperation*

Recognizing that intergovernmental cooperation facilitates efficiency and effectiveness, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Vision Team concluded that such outcomes would be best realized with the active engagement and leadership of the county. Although historically the County has served in this capacity, the Vision Team determined that a redesign of its interactions with municipal governments would enhance the economic vitality and sustainability for all.

In light of this, the County should:

### **Serve as a Communications Center**

- Develop and implement a comprehensive communications package, including educational and informational forums
- Replicate the County Pension summit for other issues of concern
- Conduct municipal tours in collaboration with the Council of Governments, (COG) including officials from the Federal, State and local governments; assign a priority level to projects reviewed

### **Function as the Coordinated County Data Center**

- Inform local governments on a continuous basis about the data resources available to them
- Provide best practices and consultation services
- Consider partnering with the Governor's Center for Local government Services for assistance and support in initiatives
- Develop an integrated comprehensive and compatible data information system between the county and local governments
- Spearhead community engagement via a branding campaign that promotes intergovernmental cooperation
- Designate a staff member in the Executive office to serve as a liaison or ombudsman to work specifically on intergovernmental cooperation issues.

### **Act as a Resource for Local Governments**

- Offer a defined, voluntary service cooperation package to local governments by which municipalities would obtain services at a reduced rate, while the County would gain much needed revenue. Emphasis should be given to the consolidation of "back office" functions such as information technology, joint purchasing, tax collection, health insurance, pensions, road maintenance, County police, etc.
- Examine how COGs could work on a contractual basis with the County to perform service delivery functions.

### **Study Financing Options Related to Intergovernmental Cooperation**

- Explore securing funds for such initiatives from the private sector (foundations and corporations) along with state and federal funding

- Investigate the possibility to leverage recently signed public-private partnership (P3) legislation as a potential means for financing local government projects, specifically related to transportation and infrastructure.

#### **Explore Ways to Enable Voluntary Municipal Disincorporation for Municipalities**

- Play a major role in assisting some of the most severely disadvantaged communities that lack internal and external capacity to be sustained.
- Work collaboratively with state officials to craft enabling legislation for voluntary municipal disincorporation.

# Executive Summary: Parks Recreation & Trails

The Parks, Recreation & Trails Vision Team espoused the belief that the county's abundance of parks, trails and riverfronts is an important component of the region's economic development while simultaneously acting as a mechanism to preserve the integrity of the environment. Furthermore, the team recognized that the County's park system is a major component of the regional value proposition will enhance the region's ability to promote itself as "green" which gives it a strategic and competitive edge in the race to recruit companies, families, individuals, and students to move here.

Using these fundamental beliefs as a point of departure, the team recommends the following:

- **Adopt a Comprehensive Vision of a world-class system of interconnected parks and trails, including a Countywide Riverfront Park, serving residents and visitors throughout Allegheny County**
  - Define our park system not just our traditional county parks, but also our significant trail system and our efforts to develop lengths of linear park along our riverfronts.
  - Include Development of a Countywide Riverfront Park, as contemplated by County Ordinance (No. 52-07-OR) enacted into law in 2006 in the comprehensive vision.
  - Define the system as uninterrupted trails and linear parks running, to the greatest extent possible, with bridge connections and amenities along the way.
  - Endorse the vision of a comprehensive network of trails that, to the greatest extent possible, connect to existing trails, communities, traditional county parks and the riverfronts.
  - View the park system as a substantial competitive advantage for the Pittsburgh region in attracting new business and new residents and boosting recreational tourism.
- **Develop a Unified and Accountable Management Structure, Including Moving Parks Maintenance Crews from the Department of Public Works to a newly-reconstituted Department of Parks and Recreation**
  - Embrace "best practices" in park management which contains all functions directly related to parks management and maintenance.
  - Provide accountability and permit strategic deployment of resources via a unified management structure.
- **Immediately Establish a Woodland Management Program**
  - Commit resources and acquire professional assistance to manage the 9,000 acres of woodlands.
  - Recognize park trees reap environmental and economic benefits.
- **Maximize Revenue from Park Operations and Protect the Dedicated Allegheny Regional Asset District (ARAD) Funding Designated for the County Parks**
  - Establish a county park cost accounting and budgeting system.
  - Revise and modernize policies regulating annual fees and charges for park facilities, programs and services.

- Develop and administer a year-round marketing and public relations plan.
- Review current operations to determine additional sources of revenue.
- Preserve and increase dedicated ARAD funding.
- **Promote a Focus on the “User Experience” including a Coordinated Universal Navigation/Information System**
  - Give primary focus to developing a coordinated universal signage and online/mobile guidance system.
  - Convene a stakeholder group to develop and implement a coordinated system with universal appeal.
- **Implement Development of Countywide Riverfront Park and Connectors**
  - Create a “Trail Ombudsman” within the Unified Park Structure.
  - Develop a List of Priorities and Opportunities for Property Acquisition for the Enhancement of Existing Parks and for Development of Linear Parks, Trails and Related Amenities.
  - Negotiate with Railroads and other Riverfront Property Owners to Acquire Property Interests consistent with Development of a Comprehensive Network of Trails and a Countywide Riverfront Park.
  - Develop Trails and Linear Parks, and Prioritize Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements, as Part of Transportation Initiatives.
  - Encourage Municipalities with Riverfronts to Adopt Local Zoning Regulations to Protect and Restore Riverfronts and to Facilitate Development of Riverfront Linear Parks, Trails and Amenities.
- **Propose a Referendum to Add to Dedicated Funding for Parks and Trails**

# Executive Summary: Public Health

Currently, the Health Department has a bifurcated responsibility of both general public health and oversight of ensuring the highest standards for the environment. Due to this charge, the Public Health Vision Team opted to develop recommendations with respect to the two different missions.

With respect to public health, emphasis was given to elimination of health disparities. From an environmental perspective, the team crafted recommendations that focused on air quality, water pollution control and engineering, public drinking water, plumbing protocols, and food safety.

By the following recommendations, the team concluded that the highest standards for public health and the environment can be achieved and sustained:

- **Promote the General Public Health through realignment with community entities, a reconfiguration of prevention programs, and redesign of strategies for community engagement.**

## Health Department Operations:

- Partner with other health-related organizations in the region (e.g., health care organizations, health science education organizations, foundations with health priorities) to identify areas of importance and prioritize and distribute health-related efforts among these interested organizations.
- Target and focus particular ACHD efforts and market these services to the public (e.g., surveillance and reporting of high risk conditions, health advocacy, etc.).
- Monitor data collected through the community health needs assessments implemented by local hospitals and facilitate and coordinate plans for remediating identified needs.
- Emphasize the importance of prioritizing and resourcing the ACHD for data acquisition, analysis, public reporting, and advocacy of County health status indicators.

## Health promotion

- Establish a Pittsburgh Promise-like fundraising program to help support County health initiatives based in neighborhoods and communities.
- Assess and develop a plan to address structural racism and its impact on community health (e.g., lack of clinical providers in neighborhoods such as dentists, uneven availability of pharmacy services, disparities in availability of primary care).
- Increase the availability of community exercise and recreational programs through partnerships with private organizations such as the YMCA, YWCA, and local educational institutions and expansion of services through County-owned/managed resources (e.g., pools, parks, etc.).
- Establish a community health advisory committee that meets every 2-3 months (similar to the Air Advisory Committee) to provide regular interchange between the community and the County Executive regarding important health-related issues.

- Identify resources and implement opportunities for improving oral health, nutrition (e.g., breastfeeding, obesity), and tobacco cessation.

### Prevention

- Establish and promote partnerships between community health workers and health care organizations to promote prevention and encourage primary health care assessments in community settings (already deployed in several community organizations).
  - Link mental health services with primary care services in communities – co-locating both types of services to promote broad utilization without stigma.
  - Enhance focus on injury monitoring and prevention through public service announcements and incentives for involvement by local health organizations, businesses, and community organizations.
  - Increase awareness of bullying and interpersonal violence through public awareness campaigns and enlistment of partnerships with schools, law enforcement, health providers, and community organizations.
  - Develop a multi-sectarian commission (community organizations, faith based community, legislative and county leadership) to focus on community violence prevention that assembles community recommendations, develops capacity-building strategies, and coordinates policy, advocacy, and implementation of interventions to combat violence in the County.
- **Manage Environmental Programs that Preserve Public Health Ensures Accountability, Accessibility, and Financial Sustainability**

### Organizational

- Conduct an assessment of the renovations and upgrades needed for each building be developed, together with a schedule for implementing the suggested changes that prioritize deficiencies that compromise the daily function of the individual programs.
- Develop a Strategic Staffing Plan be developed to identify each program's needs and the steps required to attract and maintain the professional staff needed to perform program responsibilities; Consider hiring a professional with grant writing experience to aid the Environmental Programs within the ACHD.
- Perform a Technology Assessment s to identify technology needs within the individual Programs.
- Promote needed accountability by transferring full responsibility for fiscal management from the administrative branch of the ACHD to the Program Director.

### Air Quality/Pollution Control Program

- Fully populate the Air Advisory Committee to form a qualified, balanced committee.
- Fully comply with the recommendations set forth in the 2009 Air Task Force Report, including formally adopting DEP permitting procedures, Annually assessing the permitting function, Completing a full revision of the appeals process, revising Article XXI to adopt State regulations by reference, and adopting a separate Article to contain local provisions that are more stringent than State law.

- Respond fully to all comments submitted on the draft Air Toxics Policy (ATP).
- Where appropriate, update or modify the draft ATP to reflect the Air Program’s legal authority to impose risk-based standards and to improve clarity, certainty for the regulated community, and to ensure adequate protection of public health.
- Pursue legal action that would force upwind sources of air pollution outside of Allegheny County and Pennsylvania to make more significant reductions than they have.
- Pursue opportunities that incentivize reductions from mobile sources.
- Maintain a public outreach program to discuss air quality in an objective and balanced manner.

#### Water Pollution Control and Engineering

Given that municipal feasibility studies will be submitted to the Health Department on or before July 31, 2013 in connection with the development of ALCOSAN’s Wet Weather Plan, it is recognized that significant analysis and planning must occur within the Department to enhance its ability to respond efficiently and effectively to this process. As such, it is recommended that the Department:

- Assess the resources that will be needed to review and comment on each Feasibility Study on or before December 31, 2012.
- Develop a written plan to address all perceived deficiencies identified on or before January 31, 2013.
- Evaluate and promote cost effective, green infrastructure alternatives for ALCOSAN municipal customers.
- Work with the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to coordinate an approach for evaluating green infrastructure alternatives.

#### Public Drinking Water

- Develop a mechanism to ensure adequacy of water supply system interconnects.
- Develop a disciplined, equitable, achievable and comprehensive capital reinvestment policy.
- Develop objective metrics that will lead to merging older underperforming systems with more financially stable, professionally operated systems.

#### Plumbing

- Update the current plan/permit application and evaluate online options to increase efficiencies.

## Food Safety

- Complete evaluation of alternative ranking systems for restaurants.
- Periodically review the manner in which restaurant inspection reports are available to the public to ensure that it is being presented in an understandable form.
- Revise current County Regulations to incorporate the new FDA Model Food Code and update inspection procedures to reflect the new regulations.
- Immediately begin to train replacement trainers for the certificate programs to ensure that this revenue stream is preserved.
- Review the current fee structure for the certificate programs, the licensing fee structure, and other services for which fees might be assessed to determine if more revenue could fairly be generated.

# Executive Summary: Public Safety

Recognizing that public safety is the most critical function of any government, the County has long served its citizens with dedicated public safety personnel, innovative programs, and strong partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies. However, the County faces the same obstacles that governments across the nation are struggling with - decreases in funding, increases in incarceration and a lack of diversity.

While technological advances have allowed for increased intergovernmental cooperation cost-saving, and consolidation opportunities, the age-old problems of crime prevention and rehabilitation still dominate discussions.

Because of this, the Public Safety Vision Team concluded that recommendations with respect to sustainability, intergovernmental relations and diversity should be crafted to address the three essential elements of the public safety infrastructure: the Allegheny County Police, the Allegheny County Jail, and the Department of Emergency Services.

- **Ensure a Diverse, Transparent, Accountable and Cost Efficient Police Force**

- Create a Diversity Taskforce composed of various departmental heads to focus on data gathering, transparency and accountability; facilitate an increase in diversity through internship programs, classes and workshops, interface with organizations representing constituencies.
- Conduct a financial analysis to measure the feasibility of restructuring and consolidating all Allegheny County municipal police departments under the Allegheny County Police.
- Explore the feasibility of forming a Citizen Law Enforcement Review Board for Allegheny County.

- **Expand Strategies to Address Drug Addiction**

- Acknowledging that drug addiction is of epidemic proportions, implement and/or expand various strategies such as a supplementary prescription drug drop-off program, “Turn your gun in” programs and use the leadership of the County Executive to raise awareness, and educate family members of addicts about existing treatment options.

- **Ensure Appropriate, Efficient and Cost Effective Practices are Used at the Jail**

- Build on the nationally recognized Allegheny County Jail Collaborative and Identify a sustainable funding source to maintain, and increase the scope of existing re-entry programs.
- Enhance the role of community corrections as cost-effective treatment options and safe alternatives to incarceration in the Jail.
- Analyze the organizational design and the variables that contribute to significant turnover in leadership of the Warden; identify and implement policies and best practices that anchor the Jail during times of transition until stability is achieved.
- Evaluate the relationship between the Allegheny County Health Department and the Jail including a review of all procedures and protocols to determine whether there is sufficient accountability, adequate regard for public safety, and whether services provided are cost-effective yet in the best interests of Jail inmates.

- **Assess Opportunities for Shared Emergency Services**

- Recognizing that multiple agencies (Port Authority, Emergency Services, and Airport Authority) have emergency services components, assess the public safety responsibilities of each entity to determine duplication; opportunities to share functions and determine where funding sources can be leveraged to complement other funding sources and public safety service requirements.

# Executive Summary: Transportation

The Transportation Vision Team formulated the following set of recommendations to address the broad scope and breadth of transportation within the context of Regional Issues, Land Use Planning, Transit, and Airport. The Transit and Airport Committees were further divided into recommendations for their respective subcommittees to address (1) Fiscal Status; (2) Systems Improvement; and (3) Marketing and Outreach:

- **Encourage Transit Planning and Regional Coordination**

- Create a position to be a strong transportation advocate who can push policy objectives and advocate for smart growth enhancing both land use development and transit usage.
- Pursue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that connects existing economic hubs. The stations for BRT should be tied to current and market-based future development and employment opportunities in places where economic activity is already strong.
- Conduct a comprehensive and strategic evaluation of the current regional transit situation.
- Work with the Port Authority to improve the transit options to and from the airport and the downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland corridor.
- Pursue smart transportation initiatives and the funding that is available to support them. Priority should be given to projects that encourage development and multi-model transit opportunities.
- Establish a local investment fund to undertake mixed-use, smaller scale projects along transit lines and bus corridors within one-half of a mile or so of transit stops, in order to encourage further economic activity around pre-existing hubs.
- Create a new, county-level program, called the “Allegheny County Community Transportation Program,” from existing resources to leverage planning and construction opportunities, development oriented towards transit, bike and pedestrian improvements and commercial corridor reinvestment.
- Explore the creation of an infrastructure bank or trust fund with financial support from local governments, corporations, and foundations in southwestern Pennsylvania.
- Work with its surrounding counties to create a regional transit authority.

- **Implement Land Development Protocols Associated with the Airport**

- Together with the Airport Authority, adopt development principles for the airport area that emphasize aviation-related and aviation-dependent uses, develop according to a master plan, not ad hoc, develop a multi-jurisdictional strategy, concentrate development, encourage mixed-use development, encourage infill development, preserve natural areas, develop sustainably, provide connectivity within the airport environs, and improve connectivity to downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland.
- Determine whether a Phase II Aerotropolis Plan should be pursued which would include a detailed market study, an urban design master plan, and a governance plan.
- Energize Tri-County Airport Partnership (TCAP) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Encourage local municipalities to get involved in, support, and benefit from aviation-related and aviation-dependent development by signing the MOU.

- Consider establishing tri-state development collaboration between Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.
- Address and improve transportation with roads, public transportation and trails to and from the airport.
- Focus Allegheny County TIF requests to link transportation investment with aviation-related and aviation-dependent land use.
- **Strategically Use Ports and Passenger Rail**
  - Remain strong advocates for continued and increased Federal funding for our region's lock and dams.
  - Strategically plan for using our navigable waterways to take full advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) Industry and should serve as an advocate for companies wishing to create new LNG facilities along our rivers.
  - Be a leader in pairing our region's leadership in river transportation with our region's leadership in technology.
  - Explore smart growth and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) funding options that could be used to restore a passenger rail line to the Allegheny River Valley.
  - Plan on the integration of BRT routes with commuter rail options.
- **Address Transit Fiscal Status**
  - Focus on developing a dedicated source of transit funding that reduces Port Authority's reliance on the State.
  - Advocate for state sources to provide a portion of the dedicated funding required for transit needs.
  - Address Labor contract issues and legacy costs.
  - Reassess the infrastructure associated with the Port Authority, and remove such facilities (primarily bridges) from the Port Authority's responsibility if such facilities are no longer associated with Port Authority use.
- **Implement Transit System Improvements**
  - Take full advantage of smart card technology.
  - Develop new fare structures that can increase the convenience of public transit and overcome existing barriers that deter potential riders.
  - Make County transit more bike-friendly.
  - Incorporate available technology to allow riders to better access information quickly.
  - Improve system integration by focusing on connections at transit stops and nodes.
  - Initiate more special events planning and implementation services.
  - Support movement to an off-board fare collection system, which will speed the boarding process.
  - Further study the possibility of implementing signal prioritization in bus bottleneck areas to further increase speed of service.

- Integrate Alternate Transportation Systems into the public transit system to allow users to move seamlessly from one to the other, and support programs that attempt to fill gaps in the overall transit system.
- Explore sponsorships in remote or “extended” areas to encourage increased ridership.
- Explore the cost effectiveness and feasibility of converting buses and other Port Authority of Allegheny County (PAAC) vehicles converting to Natural Gas fuel.
- Consider contracting with inter-city carriers such as Mega Bus or Bolt to use bus ways to reduce travel time, particularly during rush hour.
- **Enhance Transit Marketing and Outreach**
  - Tackle both traditional marketing and operational marketing to increase effectiveness.
  - Undertake an aggressive advertising campaign based on the behavioral economics with outcomes of increasing use of public transit.
  - Increase the visibility of fixed guide ways (bus way and T) through signage and regional promotional and produce more user- and reader-friendly marketing materials.
  - Collaborate with local business communities to demonstrate the available amenities of stations.
  - Improve the overall image of transit by improving the cleanliness and comfort of transit vehicles and stops, cleaner and brighter BRT stops. Public art and murals can be encouraged.
- **Re-conceive Airport Business Strategies**
  - Work to capture air cargo opportunities through incentives for cargo forwarders, making available subordinated debt to build speculative buildings, marketing of the Foreign Trade Zone, and revisiting/considering implementation of the 2009 Webber Air Cargo Inc. cargo study recommendations.
  - Expand non-airline revenue; consider creating a position for the specific purpose of increasing flights, attracting more regional and international airlines, aggressively pursuing cargo operations, and working with the airport’s CEO to establish key venture partnerships.
  - Create a Business Development Committee or Task Force reporting to the board and County Executive to assist in generating new ideas and solutions, as well as, executing a marketing and implementation strategy.
  - Develop a cargo city which is an area near a runway to cluster cargo buildings, logistics companies, free trade zone areas, and a host of other infrastructure to grow the industry.
  - Remain vigilant in preparing for opportunities to take advantage of airline industry growth.
  - When the airline industry restructures, use proceeds from Marcellus Shale development on County property to further reduce airport costs and prepare Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) to compete regionally, nationally and internationally.
  - Continue to grow its regional passengers by promoting its relatively cheaper flights compared to Cleveland and other airports.
  - Increase flexibility with stopping at security areas and expanded use of second security zone.

- Advocate at the federal level for maintaining the local Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard military bases.
- Support passage of Senate Bill 1552, which would exempt fixed-wing aircraft and aircraft repair parts and installation from state sales tax.
- Aggressively pursue travelers within the region in a radius of 150 miles; promote the use of current airline services, such as direct flights and low-cost air carriers.
- Continue improving its signage program and its customer service program.
- Make public transit facilities, including the 28X stop, more visible.
- Expand efforts to showcase the region.

# Executive Summary: Workforce Development

Clearly, Allegheny County has distinguished itself in the national economy with an unemployment rate 1.8% below the national average which can be attributed to its robust and diverse finance, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, education and energy sectors. Augmenting this status is a much-heralded community college system and public and private universities that are nationally and internationally recognized for research and technological advances.

Despite this strong foundation, the Workforce Development Vision Team concluded that increasing coordination and collaboration especially with human services, expanding our diverse training programs, redesigning our methodologies to match supply and demands of our workforce, and increasing our focus on middle-skill workers would enhance our economic profile. In fact, the team concluded that an enthusiastic embrace of the following recommendations would allow the County to achieve the distinction of being a model for workforce development:

- **Align Quality Resources for Job Seekers Countywide**
  - Promote intergovernmental cooperation as a theme to facilitate this endeavor.
  - Define a long-term focus and strategies for job seekers to secure employment.
  - Assemble a quality network of community-based organizations that provide services.
  - Develop a mechanism to connect job seekers to available jobs.
- **Create Employer-Driven Partnerships that Meet Labor Market Needs to Create a Sustainable Employment Dynamic**
  - Engage employers in curriculum development and training.
  - Utilize federal funding received by The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board to assist employers in new industries and unions to collaborate to train workers in high-tech manufacturing.
  - Replicate the Megatronics program developed by the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) in other industries which demonstrated that effective collaboration can lead to programs that meet employers' changing talent needs.
- **Promote education and training tailored to the range of high-priority occupations (HPO) that lead to family supporting jobs.**
  - Identify well-paid, middle skill high priority occupations (HPOs) that can be attained with an Associate's degree or less than four years of training.
  - Communicate that college is not a required path for every individual to secure competitive employment.
  - Develop strategies to educate residents that the local economy needs a diverse workforce requiring different kinds of credentials: two-year degrees, industry-recognized certificates, on-the-job training opportunities, and advanced degrees.
  - Promote training that will decrease the under-supply of middle level skilled jobs with the regional over-supply of workers with advanced degrees.

- **Develop and expand the pipeline through career pathways.**
  - Provide early exposure to career pathways and work experience to ensure higher employment rates in the future.
  - Systematically invest in high school internship programs that connect to community college and/or jobs.
  - Allocate resources to mid-career and aging workers to best utilize their skills in the workforce and advance in their chosen field.
  - Recognize that with employer-driven programming already in place, the Community College of Allegheny County is poised to become the hub of innovative training for the region.
  - Ensure that trainer provider models are employer-driven, evidence-based, defined by outcomes, and accountable to the needs of different constituents.
- **Maximize Career and Technical Center (CTC) programs**
  - Promote the Career and Technical Centers as an excellent place for young people to begin their professional journey.
  - Guarantee that the community understands that five CTCs in Allegheny County have articulation agreements with CCAC for students to acquire industry-recognized credentials and learn how the workplace functions, making them more likely to enter the workforce.
- **Coordinate workforce systems and human support services to serve job seekers and preserve diversity in our community**
  - Determine how to most efficiently use intersecting systems (counseling, public transit, training, etc) so that our residents achieve prosperity and independence.
  - Define the intersection between workforce development and human support services.
  - Develop criteria to stratify and serve job seekers throughout the entire community.