

# Local Technology/Innovation Panel Local Government Symposium

## Improving Effectiveness and Efficiency in PA Local Government in a Post-COVID World



University of  
Pittsburgh

Graduate School of Public  
and International Affairs

Sabina Deitrick, PhD and Capstone Seminar

Aysha Muhammad, Therese Pitman, Georgia Verrastro,  
Aoxiang Wang, and Haozhe Zhang

Graduate School of Public and International Affairs

University of Pittsburgh

October 21, 2021



## Partners:

- CONNECT – Congress of Neighboring Communities

<https://www.connect.pitt.edu/>

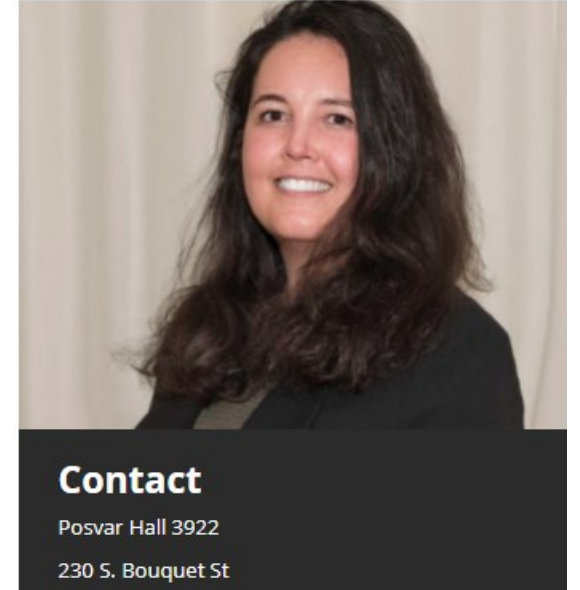
Lydia Morin, Executive Director, CONNECT

- Alan Kugler, PA Futures, 814-881-4155

[alankugler@paftures.org](mailto:alankugler@paftures.org) (presentation this afternoon)



- Aysha Muhammad
- Therese Pitman
- Georgia Verrastro
- Aoxiang Wang
- Haozhe Zhang



# CONNECT – Communications and Technology Committee

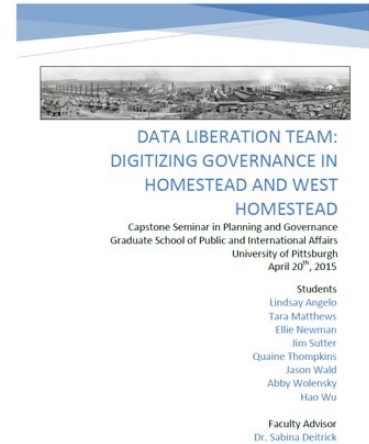


- Amanda Settelmaier, Executive Director, Turtle Creek Valley Council of Government (TCVCOG)
- George Zboyovsky, Brentwood Borough Manager
- Krista Koller, Finance Office, Treasures, Churchill Borough
- Tim McLaughlin, Aspinwall City Council
- Susan Hockenberry, former Executive Director, Quaker Valley COG and Local Government Academy, <https://www.qvcog.org/>  
<https://localgovernmentacademy.org/> [susan@sghock.com](mailto:susan@sghock.com)



# GSPIA Capstone Class – Public Service Practicum with CONNECT

- Develop for new means of shared digital governance through CONNECT and partner Turtle Creek Valley Council of Government
- Create intergovernmental cross-municipal cooperation and collaboration program for data development, design, dissemination of local government records retention and preservation.
- Propose outlets for hosting, aggregation, preservation, retention and public access of comprehensive and legacy municipal data and records based on PA Historic and Museum Commission's *Municipal Records Manual*
- Pilot test first round through CONNECT Communications and Technology Committee
- Propose funding alternatives and role of PA



## Expediting the Expansion of Digital Governance and Planning by Pennsylvania Municipalities

April 2017 Report

Emily Hammers, Max Harleman, Brett Morgan, Kara Olson,  
Michael Roth, Anna Salvador, Taylor Stessney, Liu Zhang

Faculty Advisor: Professor Sabina Deitrick

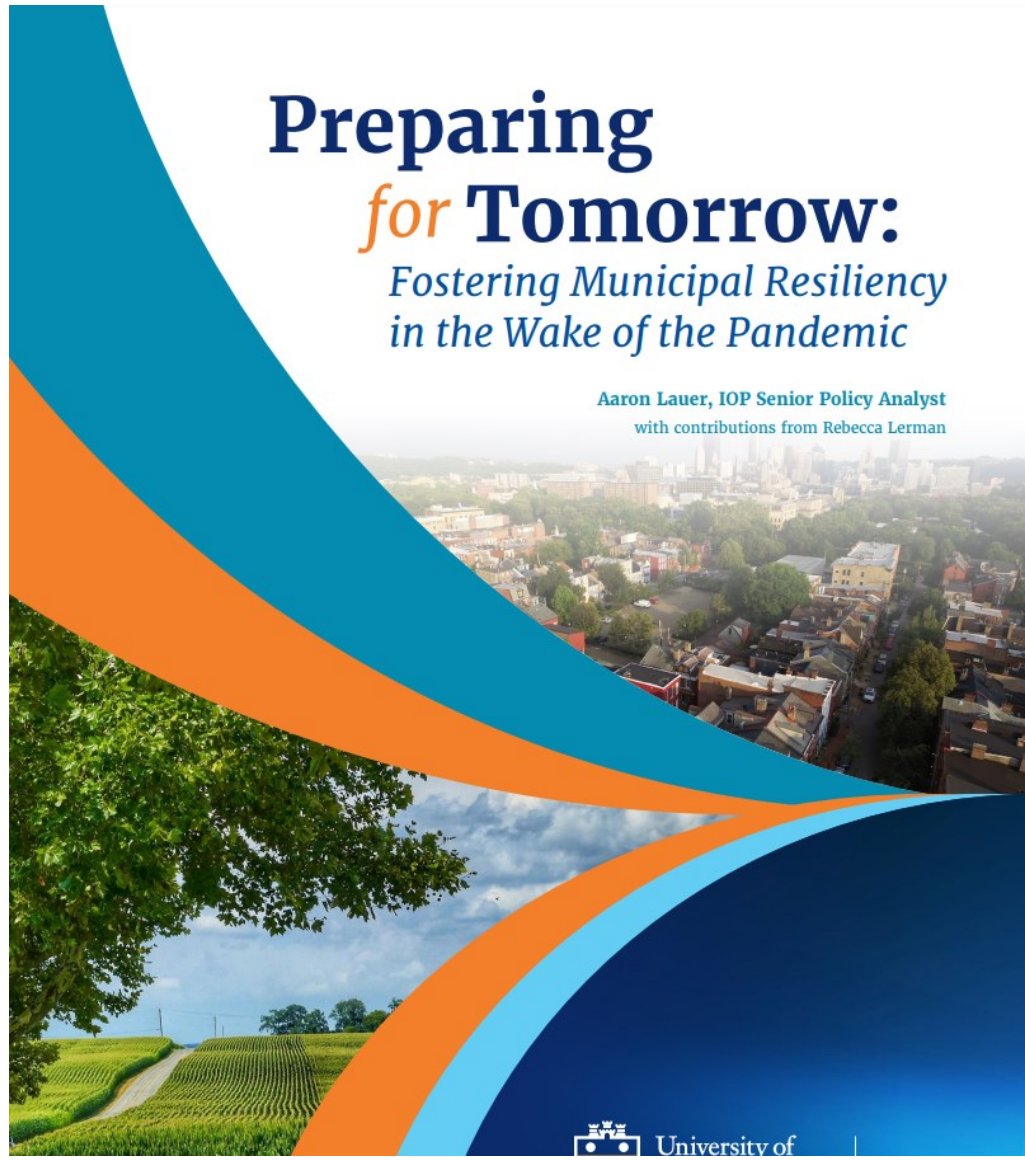
University of Pittsburgh



# Councils of Governments (COGs) in Pennsylvania: The State and Opportunities

Natalia Goodnow and Zhexuan Yu

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# Preparing *for* Tomorrow: *Fostering Municipal Resiliency in the Wake of the Pandemic*

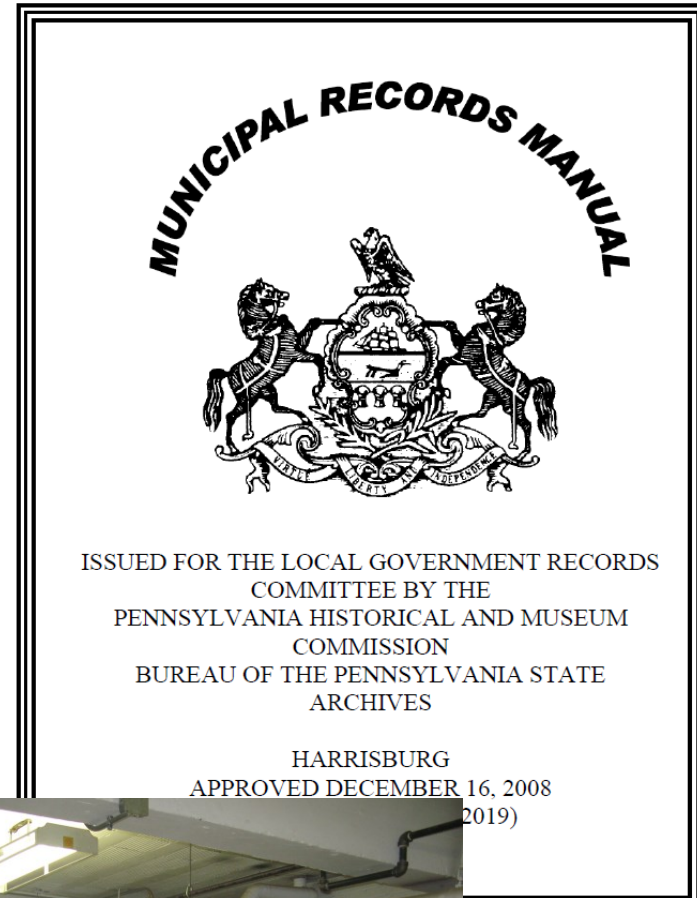
Aaron Lauer, IOP Senior Policy Analyst  
with contributions from Rebecca Lerman

# Tyler Stump, Pennsylvania State Archives

- Records management
- Document

## Municipal Records Manual

- |                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| 1. Record Number | → | FN-6 <u>Audit Reports-Official</u>  |
| 2. Title         | → | Record of examination of municipal finances prepared by internal or external auditors. Usually includes financial statements showing the status of all funds and accounts.    |
| 3. Description   | → | Retain Permanently.   |
| 4. Retention     | → | FN-7 <u>Audit Workpapers</u><br>Consists of accounting notes and papers used in preparation of official audit reports.<br>Retain current plus 3 prior audit cycles.           |
|                  |   | FN-8 <u>Balance Sheet</u><br>Lists assets and liabilities, and shows the financial condition of the municipality on the last day of the accounting period.<br>Retain 7 years. |



# Digital Governance: Why do we need it?

## 11 benefits of digital transformation

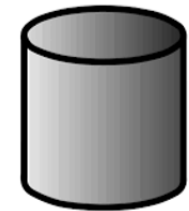
- Constituent Experience
  - Improves convenience
  - Promotes transparency
- Efficiency & Productivity
  - Saves employees' time
  - Automates tasks
  - Makes data accessible
  - Unifies departments
- Business Continuity
  - Improves cyber security
  - Enables remote work & business continuity
- Revenue & Budget Friendly
  - Cuts costs
  - Generates unrealized revenue
  - Saves space
- The Digital Transformation Process
  - Digital transformation journey
  - New technology

The purpose of the system:

Transfer paper work to a database



Like a small library!



Database

1 or 2 GB

**Table 2: Characteristics of Digital Maturity Stages**

	Early	Developing	Maturing
<b>Strategy</b>	Lack of Strategy—7% agree their local government has a strategy to use digital technologies.	Developing—50% agree or strongly agree their local government has a strategy to use digital technologies.	Completed—98% say their government provides resources to obtain digital technologies.
<b>Leadership</b>	Tepid interest—Only 11% say their elected officials encourage use of digital technologies.	Digitally aware—68% say their elected officials encourage use of digital technologies.	Digitally sophisticated—98% say their elected officials encourage use of digital technologies.
<b>Workforce Development</b>	Lack of resources—12% say their local government provides staff with the resources to take advantage of digital technology.	Investing—62% say their local governments provide staff with the resources to take advantage of digital technology.	Sufficient—96% say their local governments provide staff with the resources to take advantage of digital technology.
<b>User-focus</b>	Almost absent—9% say their technology strategy is driven by residents' expectation.	Gaining traction—68% view their technology strategy is driven by residents' expectation.	Primary factor—98% view their technology strategy is driven by residents' expectation.
<b>Digital Culture</b>	No difference—5% say their local government's use of digital technology has transformed the way their staff works.	Accommodating—56% say their local government's use of digital technology has transformed the way their staff works.	Transformed—100% agree or strongly agree their local government's use of digital technology has transformed the way their staff works.
<b>Engagement</b>	Traditional—Almost half have no digital communications with residents. 49% only interact with residents through traditional ways (walk-in, phone, fax, and postal mail); 30% use e-mails as most digital method; 16% use Web and texting; 5% use social media and mobile apps.	Digitalizing—35% use social media and mobile app; 45% use web and texting as most digital method; 12% use e-mails. 9% only use traditional methods.	Highly Digital—91% use social media and mobile apps; the remainder (9%) use Web and texting.

The State of Digital Governance in Pennsylvania



Max Cercone  
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Patrick Connors  
Susan Gilbert  
Lucy Gillespie

Joshua Thomas  
Tracy Xu  
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Capstone Seminar in Planning and Governance  
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University of Pittsburgh

April 25, 2016



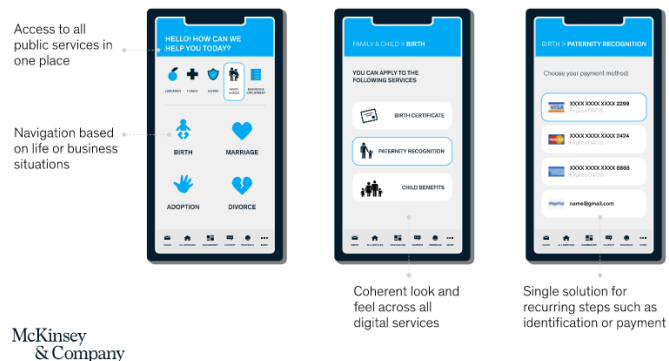
*American Planning Association –  
PA Chapter 2017 Student Project  
Award*



# Digital governance: *Transformational initiatives*

- Residents will demand digital services as they are the norm in the rest of their lives.
- Governments have more information, and these are the means to make it available.
- CONNECT and COGs can act as intermediaries in sharing digital services and “digitalizing” municipal information and services.

Accessing public services could be as easy as online shopping.



# What are the needs?

- Scan and archive municipal paper records
- Scan historic microfilm and microfiche to archive
- Create systems for online information retrieval by user, e.g., Web forms
- Eliminate/reduce in person records search for residents through online databases and portals
- Records kept in the cloud; records real estate drastically reduced
  - No servers
  - Common platform – how to conceive?
  - Impacts of COVID and working from home? Works with Cloud IT Platforms, not with local servers (or worse, filing cabinets!)
- Electronic signatures

# How to do it?

## Go it alone?



### Middleburg to Spend \$78K to Digitize Town Records

2019-07-03 Patrick Scabo 4 Comments

## State grants?

# Good Case Studies?

## Poor Man's Solution: How a Small Town Created Transparency and Efficiencies Through the Smart Use of Technology

Shaun Mulholland

In 2013, the Town of Allenstown (4,322 population) began a system-wide effort to achieve better transparency and efficiency by exploring and implementing technological solutions. The focus was not so much on technology as it was on attaining the objective of streamlining the town's administrative processes with the goal of making more information available to the public faster. Before 2013, the town's paperwork

July/August, 2017

National League of Cities Research on Technology & Mobility

PEOPLE & PLACES

### Grants to digitize land records can help town clerks, records seekers

Justin Trombly  
Aug 27, 2020



Danville is one of 18 municipalities that as of Tuesday had applied for grants to digitize land records. The CARES Act-funded program is being administered by the Department of Taxes and could ease the burden on clerks and record seekers. Justin Trombly/VTDigger

<https://www.nhmunicipal.org/town-city-article/poor-man%E2%80%99s-solution-how-small-town-created-transparency-and-efficiencies-through>

# Digital solutions defy geography

- Germany:
  - Create a common vision and keep it alive over time with continued involvement of stakeholders.
  - Shareable solutions across governments – and efficient division of labor.
  - Finding source that prioritizes shared solutions.
  - Training and digital talent.
  - Transparency, transparency – outcomes known, communicated, and used
- Denmark's theme: “No more printed forms or letters.”

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/digital-public-services-how-to-achieve-fast-transformation-at-scale>



# OECD Digital Government Tool Kit

**12 Principles** (national governments) <https://www.oecd.org/governance/digital-government/toolkit/12principles/>

- Openness, transparency and inclusiveness.
- Engagement and participation in policymaking and service delivery.
- Creation of a data-driven culture in the public sector.
- Protecting privacy and ensuring security.
- Leadership and political commitment.
- Coherent use of digital technology across policy areas.
- Effective organization and governance frameworks to coordinate. Intergovernmental (!)
- Strengthen ~~international~~ cooperation with governments.
- Development of clear business cases.
- Reinforce ICT (information & communication technology) project management capabilities.
- Procurement of digital technologies.
- Legal and regulatory framework.

# Methodology, Findings and Recommendations

- Case studies from Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio – what efforts are successful with different funding models?
- Survey of digital governance of CONNECT communities – finding the digital governance “gaps,” not just “needs.” Developing the Leadership needed to bridge the digital divide.
- Recommending for shared solutions through Intergovernmental Cooperation and role of intermediaries – CONNECT, Councils of Government, Allegheny County
- Pilot developed through Turtle Creek Valley Council of Government and member communities for a shared solution to records retention.
- And probably more –