



Reynoldsville Borough

Steps 5 & 6 Multi Year Plan and Implementation Plan

Final Report - September 2025



Pennsylvania
**Department of Community
& Economic Development**

No Time to Lose: An Urgent Path to Restore Stability

Facing hard truths, committing to real change, and building the foundation for a functional Borough.

Reynoldsville Borough has undertaken the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Strategic Management Planning Program (STMP) at a pivotal and precarious moment in its history. The findings from the financial condition review and management audit make one thing clear; without immediate, coordinated, and sustained action, the Borough's ability to function effectively - and to serve its residents - will continue to erode.

The assessment revealed deep structural and cultural problems within Borough operations. Basic financial controls and procedures are absent, creating opportunities for error, mismanagement, and, in some cases, the loss of funds. Compliance with transparency and open government requirements, including Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, is inconsistent at best. Staffing instability is high, with frequent turnover among both employees and elected officials, eroding institutional knowledge and disrupting service continuity. Professionalism in day-to-day operations is lacking, and employee morale is critically low. These conditions not only undermine public trust but also hinder the Borough's ability to plan, budget, and deliver even core services effectively.

Financially, the Borough operates without a clear system of checks and balances, formal policies, or long-term planning. Recordkeeping is inconsistent, reporting is minimal, and decision-making is often reactive rather than strategic. Without reforms, Reynoldsville risks further instability, diminished service quality, and the potential for deeper fiscal distress.

This implementation plan is not simply a roadmap for improvement - it is a lifeline. Over the next several years, the Borough must commit to rebuilding from the ground up; establishing modern financial and operational procedures, instilling professional standards, improving governance, and restoring both morale and public confidence. The work ahead will be difficult, but it is necessary. By confronting the current reality head-on and committing to disciplined, transparent, and accountable practices, Reynoldsville can begin to reverse course and set the stage for a stable and functional local government.

Step 5 - Multi-Year Plan Strategy

From diagnosis to decisive action - turning urgent challenges into a multi-year recovery plan.

Having completed the financial condition assessment, trend analysis, and detailed operational review in prior STMP phases, Reynoldsville Borough now enters Step 5: Development of the Multi-Year Plan. This is the point where hard truths meet decisive action - where the deep problems identified in earlier steps are addressed through a focused, forward-looking strategy. Step 5 translates the Borough's current challenges into a practical roadmap for recovery, outlining specific goals and actions to stabilize operations, restore trust, and lay the groundwork for sustainable governance.

For Reynoldsville, the stakes could not be higher. Years of instability, financial mismanagement, and operational breakdowns have eroded public confidence and hampered the Borough's ability to serve its residents. This plan is not incremental improvement - it is an operational rebuild. It sets bold, measurable priorities to confront dysfunction head-on, replace outdated systems and harmful practices, and create a culture of accountability and professionalism at every level of Borough government.

The Borough's Multi-Year Plan is anchored by **Five Bold Goals to Rebuild Operations** - a strategic framework that will guide resource allocation, leadership focus, and day-to-day decision-making over the next several years. Together, these goals create a clear and coordinated pathway from crisis to stability, ensuring that improvements are not only implemented but sustained. With disciplined execution, consistent oversight, and a shared commitment from elected officials, staff, and the community, Reynoldsville can reverse its decline and set a new standard for effective local government.

Reset and Rise - Five Bold Goals to Rebuild Operations

1 Stabilize and Strengthen - Building a Culture of Accountability

This goal focuses on restoring clarity, structure, and responsibility across Borough operations. It emphasizes the importance of planning, professional development, and supportive leadership to shift internal culture from reactive to proactive. Investing in training, clear expectations, and consistent follow-through will reduce dysfunction, build staff confidence, and create a more resilient local government.

2 Fix the Foundation - Modernize Fiscal Management and Build Capacity

To achieve long-term sustainability, the Borough must overhaul its financial systems, policies, and oversight practices. This goal prioritizes skill-building, fiscal transparency, and the elimination of outdated or harmful processes that undermine accountability. Success will require a commitment to training, system optimization, and openness to outside support to rebuild trust and functionality in Borough financial management.

3 Open for Opportunity - Advancing Service, Growth, and Community Confidence

This goal reflects a renewed focus on customer service, economic development, and community engagement. By improving responsiveness, streamlining Borough services, and enhancing communication, the Borough can become a more welcoming and supportive environment for residents, businesses, and visitors. "Open for opportunity" means more than growth - it means creating a culture of accessibility, efficiency, and optimism.

4 Bridging the Gaps - Collaborating for Better Government

This goal acknowledges that small communities face big challenges - and that shared solutions can create stronger outcomes. By actively pursuing shared services, intergovernmental agreements, and regional partnerships, the Borough can increase capacity, reduce duplication, and expand access to professional expertise. These collaborations will help ensure high-quality service delivery and sustainable operations without overburdening limited local resources.

5 Protect What Matters - Managing Assets for the Long Term

From the Municipal Building and equipment to IT systems and public records, this goal focuses on stewardship and modernization of physical and digital assets. By investing in preventative maintenance, upgrading internal systems, and improving records management, the Borough can improve efficiency, reduce risk, and ensure long-term viability. Thoughtful asset management protects public investments and strengthens daily operations.

Recommendations

Steps Toward a Stronger Future

The full STMP assessment includes 115 actionable recommendations - each grounded in local needs and achievable within the Borough's capacity. While many are small and cost-effective, the more resource-intensive items are eligible for STMP implementation funding. To jump-start progress, the top 37 high-impact actions have been prioritized here for immediate focus, ensuring early wins and long-term momentum.

The following sections organize these 37 priority actions into Reynoldsville's Five Bold Goals to Rebuild Operations, providing a clear, goal-driven roadmap to guide implementation, align resources, and track results. Where applicable, actions are noted with icons symbolizing the following:

➡ A forward arrow indicated that implementation of this action item is already in progress.

🔄 An arrowed circle indicates ongoing action items following full implementation.

115

actionable recommendations

37

high-impact actions

1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen: Building a Culture of Accountability

Findings -

- **Population Decline and Economic Erosion** - Since 1940, Reynoldsville has lost over 1,000 residents; the shrinking tax base and aging population are straining services and infrastructure investment.
- **Lack of Home Rule Charter** - The Borough operates under the standard Borough Code, limiting flexibility in addressing structural challenges and pursuing tailored governance solutions.
- **No Borough Manager in Place** - The absence of a professional administrator has led to fragmented leadership, low staff morale, poor communication, and a politicized work environment.
- **Toxic Workplace Culture** - Employees report internal conflict, nepotism, and a lack of trust, exacerbated by the absence of formal policies, clear roles, and competent managerial oversight.
- **Lack of Job Descriptions and HR Infrastructure** - There are no written job descriptions or standardized personnel policies, creating confusion around duties, expectations, and accountability.
- **No Merit-Based Hiring Practices** - Hiring decisions are informal and perceived as politically influenced, fueling concerns over fairness and eroding public trust.
- **No Formal Records Management Policy** - Records are disorganized, largely paper-based, and lack a consistent retention system; staff also rely on personal email accounts.

Findings -

- **No Zoning Ordinance in Place** - The absence of zoning disqualifies the Borough from grant programs, impedes land use planning and development opportunities, and limits protection for neighborhoods.
- **No Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)** - Without a SALDO, the Borough lacks tools to manage development standards, enforce infrastructure improvements, or guide future growth.
- **No Comprehensive Plan** - Reynoldsville lacks a strategic, long-term planning document to guide land use, infrastructure investment, housing, and economic development.
- **No Redevelopment Plan** - The Borough has not adopted a plan to revitalize blighted properties or attract reinvestment, limiting access to tools like RACP or CDBG funding.
- **No Vacant Property Inventory** - There is no database tracking vacant, abandoned, or blighted properties, hindering code enforcement, land banking, and redevelopment targeting.
- **Poor Public Transparency** - Meeting agendas are not consistently posted in advance or made easily accessible, and minutes are not regularly updated on the website, violating transparency norms.
- **Outdated and Inaccessible Website** - The Borough's website lacks ADA compliance, basic municipal information, and any structured update process, severely limiting civic engagement.

The Borough is functionally **leaderless** and flying blind - without a manager, plans, HR policies, or even a working website - leaving a shrinking community to face serious decline with **no structure, strategy, or accountability.**



1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

 To achieve the goal, the following action steps should be taken...

1A - Explore Home Rule Charter to Restructure Governance and Reclaim Local Control

Initiate the Home Rule Charter process to give Reynoldsville the flexibility it needs to address long-term challenges through locally tailored governance.

Under the constraints of the Pennsylvania Borough Code, the Borough lacks the structural flexibility and fiscal tools needed to reverse population decline, revitalize its economy, or modernize municipal operations. Home Rule offers an opportunity to break free from outdated frameworks and design a form of government that reflects today's realities - enabling innovations in executive structure, taxation, budgeting, and citizen engagement.

If adopted, a Home Rule Charter would allow Reynoldsville to streamline its operations, increase accountability, and gain more control over how services are delivered and funded. This process must be deliberate, legally sound, and community-driven, with professional support from a solicitor and consultant experienced in Pennsylvania's Home Rule Law.

Critical Next Steps:

- Establish a Home Rule Study Commission under the Pennsylvania Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law (Act 62 of 1972).
- Conduct public outreach and education to build community understanding and support.
- Develop and present a draft charter for public review and a future voter referendum.

1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

➔ 1B - Hire or Contract a Full-Time Borough Manager to Provide Professional Leadership

Establish a full-time Borough Manager position - either through direct hire or by contracting with a qualified third party as allowed under Pennsylvania law - to restore professional, centralized leadership to municipal operations.

Reynoldsville currently operates without a Borough Manager or equivalent administrative professional, resulting in fragmented oversight, blurred reporting lines, and the absence of coordinated leadership. This has weakened day-to-day operations and hindered long-term planning.

Pennsylvania law permits boroughs to contract with external firms or individuals to fulfill the duties of a Borough Manager, providing flexibility for smaller municipalities facing resource constraints. As recommended by PSAB and the SPC, a professional manager brings expertise in budgeting, personnel administration, grant management, and strategic planning. Additionally, Council may appoint the Borough Manager to also serve as the Borough Secretary and/or Treasurer, which would satisfy statutory requirements under the Pennsylvania Borough Code - filling the current void in these key administrative roles.

This structural change would immediately increase capacity, provide accountability, and establish a clear point of contact for residents, staff, and partner agencies. Whether through direct employment or contract, appointing a Borough Manager is essential to implement best practices, strengthen internal controls, and support informed policymaking - allowing Council to focus on governance rather than daily operations.

1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

➔ 1C - Modernize Records Management and Public Access with a Digital Document System

Implement a cloud-based records and agenda management platform to improve transparency, streamline operations, and ensure legal compliance.

The Borough should adopt a digital document management system - such as CiviDocs or a similar product - to centralize recordkeeping, streamline agenda preparation, and track Right-to-Know (RTK) requests in compliance with Pennsylvania law. Currently, the Borough lacks even basic systems for organizing and retrieving municipal records, resulting in disorganized files, missing agendas and minutes, and no tracking of public document requests. These deficiencies not only hinder internal efficiency but also risk non-compliance with the Right-to-Know Law and Sunshine Act.

Implementing a secure, cloud-based platform will allow the Borough to store and organize digital files, automate agenda creation and posting, and maintain a searchable archive of official actions and public documents. Additionally, assigning RTK responsibilities to a designated Open Records Officer and adopting a formal tracking process will ensure timely, accountable responses to public inquiries. These reforms are foundational to improving public trust, building institutional memory, and bringing the Borough's administrative practices into the 21st century.

1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

1D - Adopt a Full Suite of Foundational Community Plans to Guide Revitalization and Growth

Develop and adopt a coordinated set of planning documents - including a Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), Housing and Blight Study, Recreation Master Plan, and Stormwater Strategy - to create a strategic framework for long-term investment, redevelopment, and quality of life improvements.

Reynoldsville Borough lacks nearly every foundational planning tool needed to effectively guide land use, attract investment, manage infrastructure, or revitalize declining neighborhoods. Without a Comprehensive Plan, modern zoning code, or Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO), the Borough is unable to shape development, enforce standards, or access funding programs that require these plans. Similarly, the absence of a Housing and Blight Study, Recreation Master Plan, and Stormwater Management Strategy leaves key community assets - like housing, parks, and infrastructure - without direction or support.

To correct these critical deficiencies and position the Borough for recovery and reinvestment, the following sub-recommendations should be pursued in tandem or through phased implementation:

1) Adopt a (Regional or Joint) Comprehensive Plan

Develop a long-range, community-informed plan - ideally in partnership with neighboring municipalities - to guide land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development.

A comprehensive plan provides the legal and strategic basis for zoning, grant eligibility, and intergovernmental coordination. For small, capacity-limited municipalities like Reynoldsville, a regional plan is especially beneficial, as it allows for cost-sharing, stronger collaboration, and better alignment with county and state priorities. The plan must comply with the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and emphasize actionable strategies tied to community revitalization.

2) Adopt a Zoning Ordinance and a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)

Establish clear land use categories, promote compatible development, and support revitalization through a modern, user-friendly zoning code.

The Borough's lack of zoning severely limits its ability to regulate development, attract business investment, and enforce property standards. A new ordinance should encourage infill and downtown reinvestment, protect residential character, and integrate stormwater, design, and accessibility standards. The code should be developed in consultation with a professional planner and made accessible online for transparency and ease of uses.

Regulate how land is divided and developed to ensure safe, functional, and sustainable growth.

Without a SALDO, Reynoldsville cannot require developers to build roads, sidewalks, stormwater infrastructure, or utility connections. A SALDO provides essential tools to protect community character and public infrastructure. It should be coordinated with the zoning ordinance and reflect modern design standards, stormwater best practices, and accessibility principles.

3) Conduct a Housing and Blight Study

Establish a data-driven understanding of property conditions, vacancies, and reinvestment needs to guide code enforcement and redevelopment efforts.

A parcel-level housing and blight inventory will help the Borough identify distressed properties, track vacancy trends, and prioritize interventions. This foundational data will inform land banking, demolition, rehabilitation, and grant targeting. It is also essential for applying to programs such as PHARE and CDBG. The study should be conducted in partnership with planning professionals or county agencies and include recommendations for policy, enforcement, and funding alignment.

4) Implement a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Strategy

Assess, upgrade, and manage Borough stormwater systems to improve infrastructure resilience and environmental compliance.

The Borough should complete a full evaluation of existing infrastructure, identify problem areas, and develop a plan that incorporates both gray and green infrastructure solutions. Adopting a stormwater ordinance and exploring the feasibility of a stormwater utility fee or grant support will ensure long-term sustainability. This effort is critical not only to infrastructure integrity, but to broader public health, safety, and revitalization.

5) Develop a Comprehensive Recreation Plan

Create a master plan for Borough parks, playgrounds, trails, and the community pool to guide future investment and programming.

A Recreation Plan will help assess current assets, identify unmet needs, and prioritize improvements for parks and recreational spaces. The planning process should involve significant public input and produce a capital investment roadmap tied to grants through DCNR and other funders. Even if facilities are not fully Borough-owned, planning for their use and improvement is essential to enhancing quality of life.

Collectively, these planning initiatives will provide the Borough with the legal, technical, and strategic foundation to address population decline, housing distress, deteriorating infrastructure, and limited tax capacity. Strong local planning is a prerequisite for funding, resilience, and responsible governance - and Reynoldsville must act swiftly to put these core systems in place.

Several of these efforts can and should be undertaken concurrently - for example, the Comprehensive Plan can be developed alongside a Blight Study or Recreation Plan and the development of zoning and SALDO regulations can be completed simultaneously - to maximize efficiency, promote coordination across priorities, and reduce planning fatigue for staff and residents alike.



1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

1E - Develop and Adopt Formal Job Descriptions for All Staff

Develop and adopt formal, written job descriptions for all staff positions to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships.

The absence of job descriptions has resulted in confusion over duties, overlap and redundancy in tasks, and ongoing tension among staff regarding who is responsible for what. Clearly defined job descriptions will establish an organizational chain of command, support accountability, reduce conflict, and ensure that critical tasks do not fall through the cracks. Job descriptions should be reviewed and approved by Borough Council and updated periodically to reflect operational needs.

1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

1F - Adopt Foundational Personnel and Operational Policies

Develop a comprehensive employee handbook and department-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to establish consistent personnel practices, improve operations, and ensure legal compliance.

The Borough currently operates without a formal employee handbook or departmental policy manuals, leaving staff and elected officials without written guidance on workplace expectations, benefits, disciplinary procedures, compliance responsibilities, or basic workflows. This lack of structure creates legal and operational risk, undermines accountability, and contributes to inconsistent service delivery and a deteriorating workplace culture. To address these issues, the Borough should prioritize the creation and adoption of a comprehensive employee handbook that aligns with applicable labor laws, Borough Code provisions, and organizational needs. The handbook should include policies on conduct, leave, benefits, discipline, grievance procedures, and workplace safety, and be reviewed annually to remain current.

In tandem, each department should develop a policy and procedure manual that outlines core responsibilities, workflows, service standards, and regulatory requirements. These manuals are essential for ensuring operational continuity, especially during staffing transitions, and will serve as key onboarding tools. Taken together, a robust handbook and SOPs will clarify roles, promote equity, strengthen internal communication, and support more stable, professional, and efficient municipal operations.

1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

➔ 1G - Strengthen Borough Council Structure, Ethics, and Governance Capacity

Complete Council downsizing, adopt a formal Code of Ethics, and implement regular training to improve leadership stability, decision-making, and public trust.

Reynoldsville Borough Council struggles with persistent vacancies, high turnover, and an overall lack of continuity that hampers effective governance. Completing the ongoing effort to **reduce Council from seven to five members** will help streamline deliberations, support consistent policy direction, and reflect the practical limitations of civic engagement in a small community. At the same time, Borough Council should formally adopt a comprehensive Code of Ethics that outlines enforceable standards for ethical behavior - including provisions on conflicts of interest, nepotism, use of influence, and financial disclosure - consistent with PSAB and SPC best practices. This policy should apply to all elected and appointed officials and staff, and be accompanied by a public-facing implementation plan.

To further reinforce accountability and improve governance capacity, Council members should receive regular training on their legal responsibilities, ethical obligations, and the fundamentals of municipal government. Targeted programs - such as PSAB's Ethics Act training or the Local Government Academy's Newly Elected Officials Course - can clarify the boundaries of authority, strengthen collaboration, and prevent individual agendas from undermining public trust. Establishing these reforms as standard policy will help build a more professional, transparent, and effective governing body.

Goal 2 - Fix the Foundation: Modernize Fiscal Management

Findings -

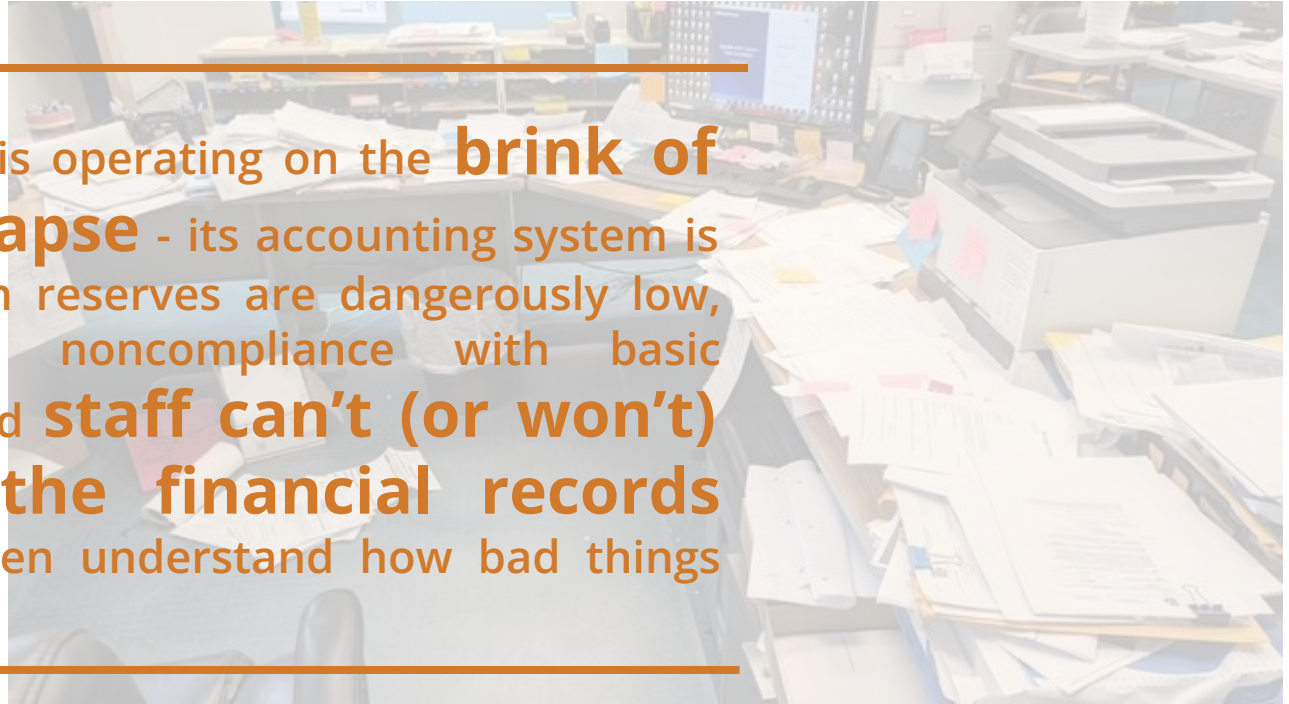
- **Limited Analyticals in Audits** - Audit reports contain minimal interpretation or actionable management insights, hindering their use in strategic financial decision-making.
- **QuickBooks Desktop Limitations** - The Borough relies on an outdated version of QuickBooks Desktop, which lacks fund accounting functionality and impairs accurate grant, capital, and restricted fund tracking.
- **Manual and Fragmented Reporting** - Due to software limitations, financial reporting often requires manual workarounds and supplemental spreadsheets to ensure accuracy, but even these are often not generated or distributed.
- **Weak Cash Position** - The Borough has a history of low or negative cash balances, including an internal report indicating a nearly -\$180,000 year-end cash position.
- **Dependence on TANs** - Reliance on Tax Anticipation Notes is routine, highlighting liquidity challenges and inadequate financial forecasting.
- **Nonfunctional Chart of Accounts** - The Borough's chart of accounts uses an arbitrary numbering system, preventing departmental or functional reporting aligned with best practices.
- **Inadequate Budgeting Process** - Annual budgeting is informal, incremental, and based on historical data, with no use of cash flow forecasting or alignment with strategic priorities.
- **Lack of Capital Planning** - No Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) or capital reserves are in place, despite significant infrastructure and equipment needs.



Findings -

- **Absent Internal Controls** - There is no formal internal control framework, reconciliation process, or structured financial reporting to Council beyond budget-to-actual figures.
- **Unverified Financial Data** - Repeated failure to provide basic financial documentation (ex. bank statements) impairs transparency and accountability.
- **Improper Financial Staffing** - Key financial roles are performed by an Administrative Assistant rather than a formally appointed Secretary/Treasurer per Borough ordinance.
- **Noncompliance with Basic Governance Standards** - The Borough lacks policies for procurement, HR, grant tracking, or expenditure control.
- **Administrative Weakness and Lack of Skill Sets** - Staff lack the technical competencies required for municipal financial management and are frequently evasive with financial information.
- **Resistance to Transparency** - Staff behavior reflects a concerning lack of openness, undermining trust and obstructing recovery planning.
- **Risk of Fiscal Distress Designation** - Without significant reforms, Reynoldsville may meet Act 47 criteria for financially distressed municipalities.

Reynoldsville is operating on the **brink of fiscal collapse** - its accounting system is obsolete, cash reserves are dangerously low, audits show noncompliance with basic standards, and **staff can't (or won't) produce the financial records** needed to even understand how bad things really are.



2 Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation

 To achieve this goal, the following action steps should be taken...

2A - Outsource Financial Management and Retain Expert Support to Stabilize Fiscal Operations

Engage third-party professionals to fix broken systems, implement urgent reforms, and guide the Borough toward sustainable financial management.

Given the Borough's severe financial dysfunction - marked by unreliable reporting, lack of internal controls, inadequate systems, and unsustainable reliance on Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs) - it is critical to outsource day-to-day financial management to a qualified third-party entity or shared services provider. At the same time, continued engagement with financial consultants through the end of the fiscal year is essential to implement structural reforms and restore basic fiscal discipline.

Immediate priorities include restructuring the chart of accounts to align with DCED standards, implementing departmental segmentation using QuickBooks classes, developing a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), establishing monthly cash flow forecasting, transitioning to a fund accounting system, and training staff and Council in their respective financial roles.

These interventions cannot wait; without professional oversight and hands-on support, the Borough's capacity to meet its financial obligations will remain at serious risk.

2 Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation

2B - Conduct a Forensic Audit to Identify and Address Financial Irregularities

Engage a qualified, independent forensic auditing firm to conduct a comprehensive review of Borough finances over the past several years.

With no established financial practices in place, incomplete records, and significant discrepancies in reported figures, the Borough must undertake a forensic audit to uncover where funds were spent, whether mismanagement or fraud occurred, and how procedural failures contributed to the current uncertainty. This deep investigation will trace transactions, evaluate compliance with laws and policies, and identify missing or misallocated funds.

The results will not only provide a factual account of past financial activity but also inform the development of strong internal controls, ensure accountability, and help restore public trust in Borough governance.

2 Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation



2C - Engage a New Independent Auditor to Improve Accountability and Reporting

Select a new auditor with demonstrated GAAP expertise, responsiveness, and a commitment to transparency and actionable guidance.

The Borough should terminate its engagement with its current auditor and select a new independent auditing firm that is capable of providing clear, comprehensive evaluations and meaningful recommendations. Repeated adverse audit opinions on GAAP compliance, coupled with a lack of management feedback or practical insight, have limited the strategic value of prior audits and undermined the Borough's ability to improve financial practices.

A more qualified auditor - well-versed in both DCED and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements - can help identify and resolve material weaknesses, strengthen public confidence, and enhance the Borough's long-term fiscal integrity.

Establish a policy to solicit competitive proposals for auditing services every two years to promote independence, performance, and cost control.

To further strengthen financial oversight and ensure the Borough receives high-quality, objective audit services, a formal policy should be adopted to rebid the independent auditor contract at least every two years. While continuity can offer benefits, routinely inviting new proposals promotes competition, helps control costs, and brings new insight to the Borough's financial practices. It also reinforces the importance of auditor independence and encourages current providers to maintain high standards of diligence, responsiveness, and professionalism.

Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation

2D - Transition to a Fund Accounting System to Modernize Financial Management

Implement a municipal fund accounting platform to improve compliance, transparency, and operational control.

The Borough should transition from its current general-purpose accounting software to a dedicated fund accounting system - such as VADAR, SafeChoice, or a comparable government-focused platform - to support accurate, transparent, and GAAP-compliant financial reporting. Unlike QuickBooks Desktop, true fund accounting systems are purpose-built for public sector needs and allow for precise tracking of restricted and unrestricted revenues, grants, capital projects, and departmental expenditures.

Implementing this upgrade will enhance internal controls, facilitate better alignment with GASB standards, and reduce the reliance on manual workarounds that currently compromise data integrity. Improved reporting functionality will also strengthen Council oversight, support audit readiness, and promote public confidence in the Borough's fiscal stewardship.

2 Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation

➔ 2E - Establish Dual Signatory Controls to Strengthen Financial Oversight

Implement a dual-signature requirement for all disbursements to reduce risk and ensure accountability.

The Borough must immediately adopt a policy requiring two authorized signatures on all checks, electronic payments, and fund transfers. Relying on a single signatory creates a significant internal control weakness and increases the risk of error, fraud, or misuse of public funds. A dual-signature policy - commonly used in municipal governments - introduces a basic layer of financial oversight, ensures that disbursements are reviewed and approved by at least two individuals, and reinforces a culture of transparency and shared responsibility. This simple procedural safeguard is a critical first step toward restoring fiscal discipline and public trust.

2 Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation

2F - Set Up a Dedicated EMS / Fire Tax Fund to Improve Transparency and Accountability

Separate EMS and Fire tax revenues from the General Fund to ensure clear tracking, proper use, and public trust.

The Borough should create a standalone EMS/Fire Tax Fund to segregate emergency services tax revenues from the General Fund and ensure they are used exclusively for their intended purpose. Currently, the commingling of these funds within the General Fund obscures the true cost of providing fire and EMS services, complicates budgeting, and weakens public confidence in how dedicated tax dollars are managed. Establishing a separate fund will improve transparency, facilitate clearer reporting to elected officials and residents, and support better planning for future service needs and capital investments. This reform aligns with best practices in municipal fund accounting and reinforces the Borough's commitment to responsible financial stewardship.

2 Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation

2G - Enhance Financial Reporting Practices

Transition to full compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) guidelines to better serve long-term financial planning and oversight responsibilities.

While the Borough's current practices may satisfy minimum regulatory requirements, adopting GAAP / GASB-compliant financial statements would provide a more complete and transparent picture of the Borough's financial position. Shifting to a more strategic, rather than purely regulatory, approach to financial reporting will strengthen fiscal accountability, support improved decision-making, and position the Borough for sustainable financial management in the future.

To maximize the value of these improvements, the Borough should also provide training for both staff and Council members on how to interpret financial statements, ask informed questions, and fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities more effectively.

3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity: Advancing Service, Growth, and Community Confidence

Findings -

- Municipal Building is physically inaccessible and **lacks basic customer service infrastructure**, with no dedicated receiving area, poor safety features, and second-floor offices inaccessible to individuals with disabilities.
- The **administrative office is functionally closed** to the public, limiting opportunities for civic engagement and reinforcing perceptions of government inaccessibility.
- Reynoldsville provides only **minimal municipal services** due to **limited staff capacity** and **chronic underinvestment** in administration, planning, and development functions.
- Main Street continues to **decline**, with boarded-up businesses, vacant storefronts, and **worsening blight** driving down property values and public morale.
- There is **no coordinated strategy for community or economic development**, undermining efforts to revitalize Main Street or attract new investment.
- Sidewalk maintenance and **deteriorating infrastructure** contribute to unsafe and uninviting public spaces, further discouraging investment and walkability.



Findings -

- **Code enforcement is limited, paper-based, and under-resourced**, despite being a critical tool to address blight and stabilize neighborhoods; enforcement efforts rely on a part-time officer who reports the need for a full-time position.
- **The Borough's municipal website is outdated**, non-ADA compliant, and lacks essential public information, such as agendas, minutes, ordinances, and service descriptions - limiting transparency and public trust.
- No policies exist for personal device or technology use, and official **Borough business is routinely conducted via personal phones and emails**, risking data breaches and violating the Right-to-Know Law.
- Email journaling, data security, and records archiving systems are not in place, leaving the **Borough out of compliance with Right-to-Know and Sunshine Act requirements**.
- **Code and permitting processes are informal, undocumented, and lack supporting software**, making enforcement slow and difficult, especially for absentee or blighted properties.
- **Staff behavior reflects a concerning lack of openness**, undermining trust and obstructing recovery planning, presenting an overall resistance to transparency
- The overall organizational culture reflects a "small-town mindset", where **informality and personal relationships overshadow professionalism**, process, and public accountability.

Reynoldsville's **local government** is **effectively closed to the public, operating without transparency,** planning, secure technology, or basic infrastructure - leaving a blighted Main Street, inaccessible Borough offices, and **unchecked dysfunction** as the visible symptoms of a **system in collapse.**



3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

 To achieve this goal, the following action steps should be taken...

3A - Open and Modernize Municipal Offices to Improve Public Access and Engagement

Establish regular office hours, create a welcoming public reception area, and ensure ADA-accessible meeting space within the Borough building.

Currently, Reynoldsville's municipal offices lack posted hours, a dedicated public-facing reception area, and accessible meeting facilities - leaving residents uncertain about when and how to engage with local government. This absence of physical and procedural accessibility not only limits transparency and trust, but also reinforces the perception that Borough government is unwelcoming and disorganized. The Borough should immediately implement clearly posted and consistent office hours and designate a secure, staffed reception area where residents can ask questions, pay bills, request services, or access information.

In parallel, the Borough must invest in making the Municipal Building ADA-compliant and establish an on-site public meeting space, eliminating reliance on off-site facilities like the fire hall. These improvements are foundational to rebuilding public confidence and ensuring residents have meaningful access to their local government.

3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

3B - Provide Customer Service Training for All Staff and Elected Officials

Implement regular training to ensure consistent, professional, and respectful interactions with the public across all Borough operations.

In Reynoldsville, frontline interactions with residents - whether in person, by phone, or via email - form the foundation of public trust in local government. However, without formal customer service training, staff and elected officials struggle to communicate effectively, manage conflict, or respond appropriately to difficult situations. The Borough should invest in customer service training that covers communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, responsiveness, and professionalism. This training should be provided to all employees and elected officials who engage with the public, including administrative personnel, code enforcement staff, police officers, and Council members.

Establishing a culture of courteous, consistent, and competent service will help improve resident satisfaction, reduce complaints, and reinforce a more positive and accessible image of Borough government.

3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

➔ 3C - Enhance the Borough Website to Improve Communication and Community Outreach

Redesign and modernize the Borough's website to increase transparency, improve service delivery, and promote Reynoldsville as a vibrant, welcoming community.

The Borough's current website is outdated, difficult to navigate, and fails to provide even the most basic public information - such as meeting agendas, minutes, ordinances, contact details, or emergency alerts - creating significant barriers to transparency and community engagement. To address this, Reynoldsville should undertake a comprehensive website redesign focused on accessibility, content clarity, and user experience. The new site should include ADA-compliant formatting, a clear structure for publishing and archiving public documents, and interactive tools for submitting forms, accessing services, and requesting information. Meeting agendas should be posted at least 24 hours in advance in a consistent, searchable format, and minutes should be routinely published and easy to find.

Beyond functionality, the website should serve as a community marketing platform by showcasing the Borough's assets, such as local businesses, history, recreational opportunities, and events. Visual enhancements, GIS-based maps, and mobile responsiveness will help position Reynoldsville as a forward-looking and engaged municipality. These strategic improvements will strengthen public trust, enhance civic participation, and support broader goals related to economic development and quality of life.

3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

➔ 3D - Strengthen Transparency Through Sunshine Act Compliance and Public Access Improvements

Establish and enforce consistent practices for meeting agendas, minutes, and committee documentation to restore public trust and ensure full compliance with Pennsylvania's Sunshine Act.

Reynoldsville currently fails to meet basic transparency standards, with inconsistent agenda preparation, inadequate public posting of meeting materials, and unreliable archiving of public documents. These practices not only violate the Sunshine Act but erode resident confidence in Borough governance. To address this, the Borough must standardize its process for creating and publishing meeting agendas - ensuring they are finalized in a consistent format, archived properly, and posted on the municipal website at least 24 hours in advance of every public meeting.

In addition, the Borough should formalize its work sessions and committee meetings (ex. Code Enforcement, Budget & Finance) by establishing a clear schedule, ensuring public notice, and requiring that each meeting produce minutes documenting attendance, discussion, and any recommendations. These records should be included in Council meeting packets and posted online to provide residents with full visibility into Borough operations.

Designating a Borough Secretary or staff designee to manage agenda and minute preparation, website posting, and records retention will support compliance, improve internal organization, and demonstrate a renewed commitment to open and accountable governance.

3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

➔ 3E - Implement Official Borough Email System with Journaling and Archival Capabilities

Require the use of Borough-issued email accounts and implement secure journaling to ensure compliance with the Right-to-Know Law and support professional, accountable governance.

Reynoldsville must immediately transition away from the use of personal email accounts for official business and adopt a centralized, secure email system with journaling and archival functionality. The Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law treats emails and digital communications as public records, and without an official system to capture, store, and retrieve these records, the Borough is out of compliance and at heightened risk of legal exposure.

All elected officials, staff, and appointed personnel should be issued Borough-controlled email addresses - ideally under a *.gov domain - and required to use them exclusively for municipal communications. These accounts should be configured to include automatic journaling and retention protocols, ensuring all correspondence is securely archived and accessible for audits or public records requests.

This transition will strengthen internal communication, ensure continuity during personnel transitions, and reinforce public trust by demonstrating a clear commitment to transparency, legal compliance, and professional administration.

3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

3F - Modernize and Standardize Code Enforcement through Policy, Technology, and Public Engagement

Adopt formal procedures, invest in digital tools, and implement public outreach to strengthen the Borough's code enforcement program and improve neighborhood conditions.

Reynoldsville's ability to attract new businesses, promote investment, and revitalize key corridors like Main Street is directly tied to the appearance, safety, and livability of its neighborhoods. A clean, well-maintained community not only enhances quality of life for residents—it also signals to prospective developers, entrepreneurs, and investors that the Borough is a stable and welcoming place to do business. Effective code enforcement is a critical tool in this effort.

However, Reynoldsville's current system relies heavily on verbal complaints, informal follow-up, and paper records - resulting in inconsistent enforcement, poor documentation, and limited public confidence. To better support economic development and community revitalization, the Borough should modernize and strengthen its code enforcement program through the following initiatives:

Transition to a Full-Time Code Enforcement Officer with Dedicated Resources

Establish Formal Code Enforcement SOPs

Implement Code Enforcement Management Software

Require Routine Reporting to Borough Council

Launch a Public Education and Outreach Program

1) Transition to a Full-Time Code Enforcement Officer with Dedicated Resources

Convert the part-time code enforcement role into a full-time position supported by existing revenue and provide a dedicated Borough vehicle.

Expanding the current position into a full-time role - funded through consistent revenue sources such as vacant property registrations, games of skill licenses, and permitting fees - will enable more proactive enforcement, better case follow-through, and increased availability for resident engagement. To support safe and professional field operations, the Borough should also assign a dedicated, clearly marked municipal vehicle. Together, these changes will improve community responsiveness and enhance the visibility and effectiveness of the Borough's enforcement function.

We really need a full-time person to do the position adequately.

2) Establish Formal Code Enforcement SOPs

Develop and adopt standardized procedures for receiving, investigating, and resolving code complaints.

The Borough should formalize its enforcement process through a Council-approved Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that defines acceptable complaint formats, documentation standards, investigation protocols, and enforcement timelines. A written SOP will improve consistency, support transparency, and ensure fair, efficient resolution of property maintenance violations.

3) Implement Code Enforcement Management Software

Adopt a digital case management system to streamline enforcement operations and improve recordkeeping.

Transitioning from a paper-based system to code enforcement software will allow the Borough to track complaints, log inspections, manage correspondence, and report outcomes more efficiently. The system should enable data analysis, simplify reporting to Council, reduce administrative burden, and improve compliance with public records laws. Scalable, affordable platforms tailored for small municipalities are readily available.



4) Require Routine Reporting to Borough Council

Establish a formal reporting process requiring monthly or quarterly enforcement updates to Council.

The Code Enforcement Officer should regularly present data on complaint volume, case status, enforcement actions, and resolutions using a standardized format. Routine reporting promotes oversight, helps Council identify trends and priorities, and strengthens accountability for code enforcement performance.



5) Launch a Public Education and Outreach Program

Implement a proactive communications campaign to inform residents about local codes and encourage compliance.

The Borough should actively engage residents through social media, flyers, its website, and community meetings to explain code requirements, highlight recent enforcement successes, and build support for neighborhood upkeep. Transparent, consistent communication can reduce violations, improve voluntary compliance, and demonstrate the Borough's commitment to improving quality of life.

3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

3G - Establish a Sidewalk Replacement Loan Program to Improve Accessibility and Main Street Appeal

Create a low-interest, short-term loan program to assist property owners with sidewalk replacement and improve walkability and aesthetics in high-priority areas.

To address deteriorating sidewalk conditions and enhance the accessibility and visual appeal of Main Street and other key corridors, Reynoldsville Borough should establish a Sidewalk Replacement Loan Program modeled after successful initiatives like Coudersport's. Under this program, the Borough would offer property owners short-term, low-interest loans - typically with a two-year repayment term - to offset the upfront cost of sidewalk replacement or repair. The program would prioritize areas of high pedestrian traffic, ADA non-compliance, or visible disrepair that detracts from the safety and marketability of the community.

This approach helps balance the responsibility placed on property owners under Pennsylvania law with the Borough's interest in maintaining safe, attractive, and accessible public spaces. By investing in walkability, the Borough can also support local businesses, encourage foot traffic, and promote a more vibrant downtown environment. Start-up capital ("seed money") will be required to launch the program, and the Borough should explore potential sources such as CDBG, PHARE, DCNR, or local ARPA funds. Once established, the loan program can be structured to revolve as repayments are made - creating a sustainable tool for continued reinvestment.

4 Goal 4 - Bridging the Gaps: Collaborating for Better Government

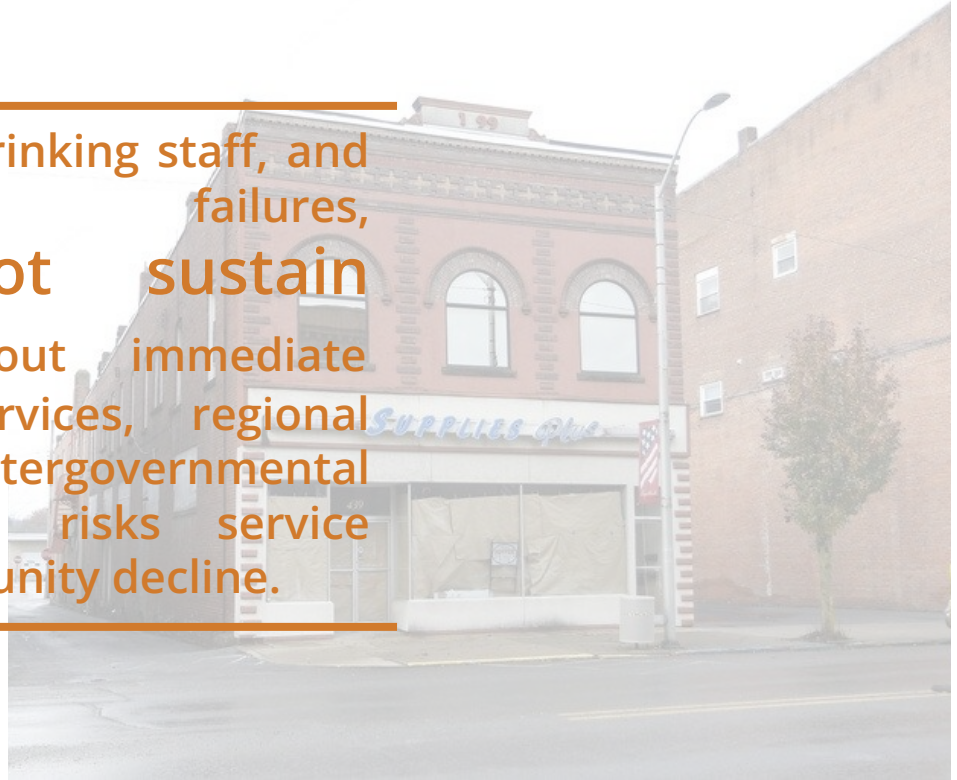
Findings -

- **Reynoldsville delivers only the most basic services** (road maintenance, seasonal pool operation, limited police coverage, and basic admin functions).
- Recreation offerings are minimal, and **the Borough lacks formal planning, economic development, or community programming.**
- **Limited staffing and outdated practices leave core duties delayed or incomplete**, eroding public confidence.
- The Borough **police department is critically understaffed**, offering only limited daytime coverage; PSP DuBois handles overnight calls with a **25-minute response time.**
- The department has **just one full-time officer** and one part-time officer in addition to the Chief; the full-time officer also serves as a school resource officer (SRO) during the academic year.
- The Chief supports **regional policing models** but reports no current progress due to a lack of political support.
- **The Borough has successfully shared equipment and coordinated services with nearby municipalities** like Sykesville and Falls Creek.
- **The Borough lacks a formal system or capacity for applying for, managing, or acknowledging grant efforts.**
- **Reynoldsville lacks the modern systems and capacity necessary to operate an effective or compliant local government.**

Findings -

- The Borough Secretary position is not formally filled as required by ordinance, and **critical functions like HR, grant tracking, procurement, and financial planning are unstaffed or incomplete.**
- **The lack of fiscal planning capacity limits the Borough's ability to pursue grants, leverage resources, or invest in long-term improvements.**
- The Borough is **operating with a significant structural deficit** and relies on borrowing equivalent to 20% of its annual budget.
- There is no redevelopment plan, zoning ordinance, or blight inventory, **disqualifying the Borough from key grant programs and limiting its ability to attract investment.**
- **The absence of a strategic vision for Main Street revitalization or vacant property reuse hinders economic recovery.**
- **The Borough has not conducted a blight study or engaged potential county or regional partners for land banking and redevelopment assistance.**
- **A lack of proactive coordination with county agencies, nonprofits, and planners** limits the Borough's access to funding and program support.
- Although authorized to participate in the Jefferson County COG, **Reynoldsville is not an active member and has missed opportunities for cost-sharing and regional collaboration.**
- Reengagement with the COG and revival of PAYCOG could **expand access to technical assistance, grants, and shared services.**

With dwindling resources, shrinking staff, and mounting operational failures, **Reynoldsville cannot sustain itself alone** - without immediate investment in shared services, regional cooperation, and intergovernmental coordination, the Borough risks service collapse and long-term community decline.



4 Goal 4 - Bridging the Gaps

 To achieve this goal, the following action steps should be taken...

4A - Pursue Police Regionalization and Shared Service Models to Improve Coverage and Reduce Costs

Initiate formal efforts to explore regional policing and intermunicipal cooperation to enhance service delivery, reduce costs, and improve public safety.

Reynoldsville's police department currently lacks the staffing and resources necessary to provide full coverage, particularly during overnight hours when calls default to PSP DuBois - whose 25-minute response time leaves the community vulnerable. While the Chief has expressed strong support for regionalization and intermunicipal partnerships, leadership has not taken concrete steps to advance these conversations.

The Borough should initiate formal discussions with nearby municipalities - including DuBois / Sandy Township, Brockway, Brookville, and Sykesville - to explore models for shared policing or consolidated services. These early-stage conversations should be paired with a feasibility study, pursued with support from DCED's Regional Shared Services or PCCD's law enforcement grant programs, and structured to preserve a role for current leadership within a regional framework. A coordinated approach will reduce duplication, increase officer safety, and help small communities stretch limited resources - making regionalization one of Reynoldsville's most viable long-term strategies for sustainable public safety.

4 Goal 4 - Bridging the Gaps

4B - Establish a Shared Fiscal Director Position to Stabilize Borough Finances and Strengthen Regional Capacity

Partner with neighboring municipalities or Jefferson County to jointly hire a qualified Fiscal Director who can provide professional financial oversight, long-term planning, and compliance support.

The Borough is facing a severe structural deficit, with an anticipated year-end cash shortfall and no capital improvement plan or financial infrastructure to support asset replacement or long-term investments. The Borough currently lacks the internal capacity to develop strategic budgets, ensure compliance with accounting standards, or position itself competitively for grants. These challenges are compounded by the absence of professional financial leadership - leaving essential duties such as forecasting, financial reporting, and fund balance management unaddressed.

To remedy this, Borough leadership should pursue an intergovernmental agreement with other municipalities or Jefferson County to establish a shared Fiscal Director position. This role would provide much-needed financial expertise at a sustainable cost by pooling resources and responsibilities across local partners. A shared Fiscal Director would enable more accurate budgeting, improved grant management, consistent financial practices, and better long-range planning - all of which are essential to restoring the Borough's fiscal health. This collaborative model has been successfully implemented in other Pennsylvania communities and offers a practical, cost-effective solution to the Borough's growing financial crisis.

4 Goal 4 - Bridging the Gaps

4C - Launch a Regional Grant Writer Partnership Through Intergovernmental Agreement

Collaborate with neighboring municipalities or Jefferson County to jointly secure a professional grant writer focused on identifying, applying for, and managing external funding opportunities.

Reynoldsville currently lacks the internal capacity to pursue grants, resulting in missed opportunities to fund critical needs such as blight remediation, infrastructure upgrades, and public safety enhancements. Grant writing responsibilities have defaulted to the Police Chief - pulling focus from law enforcement and illustrating a larger gap in administrative support. Despite the availability of programs like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the Borough has not formalized any effort to secure them, and budget cuts have further constrained revitalization strategies.

To strengthen its position, Reynoldsville should coordinate with nearby municipalities - such as Sykesville or Bell Township - or work through Jefferson County to hire or contract a shared grant writer. This position would serve multiple jurisdictions, improving grant competitiveness, ensuring compliance, and aligning funding applications with regional priorities. A shared approach reduces cost burdens while greatly expanding access to critical financial resources that can enhance community development and government operations.

4 Goal 4 - Bridging the Gaps

4D - Advance Local Revitalization Through a Redevelopment Authority and Business Improvement District

Lay the foundation for long-term economic recovery by creating a Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and/or a Business Improvement District (BID) to drive reinvestment, improve property conditions, and support downtown revitalization.

Reynoldsville lacks the tools and administrative capacity to effectively address blight, revitalize Main Street, or leverage critical state and federal funding. Without a redevelopment plan, zoning ordinance, or property inventory, the Borough is missing key components needed to guide reinvestment and compete for programs like RACP or CDBG.

Establishing a local Redevelopment Authority would provide the legal framework to acquire, manage, and repurpose vacant or deteriorated properties, while a Business Improvement District would allow downtown stakeholders to collaboratively invest in services like marketing, maintenance, and streetscape improvements. Together, these entities can jumpstart visible, community-led revitalization efforts.

The Borough should engage local stakeholders, county partners, and DCED to assess feasibility, align with planning best practices, and begin implementation of these critical economic development tools.

4 Goal 4 - Bridging the Gaps

4E - (Re)engage with the Jefferson County Council of Governments (COG) to Expand Regional Collaboration

Reactivate Reynoldsville's membership in the Jefferson County COG to strengthen shared service delivery, reduce costs, and increase access to state and federal funding.

Reynoldsville Borough is authorized under Ordinance #464 (1991) to participate in the Jefferson County Council of Governments, which enables cooperative service delivery and joint grant applications. While currently inactive in the COG, the Borough stands to benefit from rejoining this regional structure - especially as it faces mounting fiscal and operational constraints.

Re-engaging with the COG would open opportunities to formalize shared services, including police coverage, planning and zoning support, and equipment-sharing agreements. These collaborative models can improve service quality, reduce duplication of effort, and position the Borough to leverage targeted funding available for intermunicipal initiatives.

To initiate this process, Borough officials should review existing authorizations, engage with neighboring municipalities, and coordinate with the COG to identify high-impact areas for cooperation. Active COG participation will improve access to technical assistance, enhance intergovernmental coordination, and support the Borough's long-term sustainability.

5 Goal 5 - Protect What Matters: Managing Assets for the Long Term

Findings -

- **The Borough has not adopted a formal Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)** to guide infrastructure, facility, or fleet investments.
- **No schedule of debt service obligations** is included in the annual budget, limiting transparency.
- **Replacement and maintenance of assets are not planned** systematically or reflected in the budget process.
- The Borough **fleet includes aging and inoperable vehicles** critical to public works and policing, with several high-priority replacements needed (Ex. 2003 F-550, 1995 street sweeper, 2006 tractor).
- **Fleet replacement is reactive**; no formal maintenance or lifecycle plan exists.
- The **Code Enforcement Officer uses a personal vehicle**, raising liability and professionalism concerns.
- **Police rely on two vehicles**, one recently replaced via donation, with no lifecycle plan in place.
- Facilities suffer from **years of deferred maintenance and lack ADA accessibility**, energy efficiency, and modern security features.

Findings -

- The **Municipal Building is in poor condition**, with boarded windows, outdated HVAC, and no elevator to access the second floor.
- The **Police Department space is undersized, insecure, and poorly configured**, with storage and evidence rooms in vulnerable areas.
- The **Police garage is structurally compromised**, mold-prone, and houses nonfunctional equipment.
- The **Public Works Garage requires HVAC upgrades and lighting improvements**.
- The **Community Pool has ongoing water leaks and infrastructure needs**; a new heater has been purchased but not installed.
- **No master site plan or facility feasibility studies** have been developed for long-term investment.
- **The Borough lacks a centralized IT system, server, or secure network infrastructure**.
- **Police Department likely lacks a secure PSP-audited connection**, limiting access to sensitive criminal databases and delaying operations.
- **Outdated technology** (ex. Code Officer's laptop) and **reliance on personal devices** impede fieldwork and documentation.

Reynoldsville's crumbling facilities, failing fleet, nonexistent IT systems, and complete lack of capital or financial planning have left the Borough legally exposed, dangerously under-equipped, and structurally **unprepared to deliver even the most basic public services.**



5 Goal 5 - Protect What Matters



To achieve this goal, the following action steps should be taken...



5A - Develop and Implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Create a structured, multi-year plan to assess, prioritize, and fund essential capital needs across all departments.

Reynoldsville's lack of a formal Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) has resulted in reactive spending, deferred maintenance, and critical asset failures - from inoperable vehicles to unsafe municipal buildings and obsolete technology. To reverse this trend, the Borough should develop a comprehensive CIP that begins with a Capital Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) to evaluate the current condition and remaining useful life of facilities, fleet, equipment, and IT infrastructure. The plan should identify and rank priorities, assign cost estimates, establish funding strategies, and align with long-term operational goals. Implementing a CIP is essential to restoring service reliability, controlling long-term costs, and demonstrating fiscal responsibility to residents and potential funding partners.

5 Goal 5 - Protect What Matters

5B - Adopt a Formal Facilities Plan to Guide Strategic Investment and Improve Public Safety Infrastructure

Conduct a comprehensive facilities assessment and establish a long-term plan to modernize, reconfigure, or relocate Borough operations.

Reynoldsville's municipal buildings are outdated, unsafe, and inadequate for the effective delivery of services. The Police Department lacks secure ingress/egress, compliant detention space, and proper evidence storage; the Municipal Building is inaccessible to individuals with disabilities and fails to meet basic functional standards; and other key facilities, including the Public Works Garage and Community Pool, face serious maintenance and safety issues.

The Borough should initiate a formal Facilities Plan to assess current building conditions, evaluate space utilization, and determine whether reconfiguration, expansion (ex. using \$500,000 in LSA funds), or relocation to alternative sites would better serve operational needs. This plan should prioritize life safety, ADA compliance, security improvements, and energy efficiency while aligning with future staffing, equipment, and service demands. Without a coordinated strategy, facilities will continue to deteriorate - undermining staff productivity, legal compliance, and community confidence.

5 Goal 5 - Protect What Matters

5C - Initiate a Formal Fleet Replacement and Maintenance Schedule to Ensure Reliable and Safe Public Service Delivery

Establish a comprehensive vehicle replacement plan that prioritizes aging and inoperable fleet assets while integrating maintenance scheduling and long-term capital budgeting.

Reynoldsville's small but vital fleet includes several vehicles in poor or inoperable condition, such as the 2003 Ford F-550 plow truck, the 2006 tractor / mower, and the 1995 street sweeper, which require immediate attention. Currently, the Borough lacks a formal replacement or maintenance plan, resulting in reactive repairs that jeopardize service reliability and increase costs. A structured fleet management program should be created to assess vehicle conditions, set replacement timelines based on useful life and operational needs, and allocate funding through multi-year capital planning. This approach will improve operational efficiency, reduce emergency expenditures, enhance safety for public works and police personnel, and mitigate liability risks - especially considering that the Code Enforcement Officer uses a personal vehicle for official duties.

Step 6 - Multi-Year Implementation Strategy

Act Now or Fall Further Behind → Urgent Steps to Turn Strategy Into Results

Strategic planning isn't a one-time event - it's a continuous cycle of reflection, adjustment, and action. In line with Step 6 of DCED's STMP framework, long-term success depends on routine evaluation, shared commitment, and consistent execution by both the stakeholders who contributed to the plan and those charged with making it a reality.

To fully realize its strategic objectives, the Borough must ensure ongoing involvement from elected officials, senior leadership, department managers, and frontline staff. This means not only activating the plan, but also tracking progress, revisiting goals, and adapting to changing circumstances.

To support this effort, eight key management practices should shape and sustain the implementation process:

1) Identify High Priority Goals - COMPLETED

As established in Step 5, the Borough identified its Five Bold Goals to Rebuild Operations. These reflect the most critical factors for organizational success and community sustainability, with a focus on:

- Strengthening internal operations
- Fixing the Borough's finances
- Serving the public better
- Sharing services and creating efficiencies
- Maintaining and improving public assets

2) **Develop Action Items - COMPLETED**

Each goal is supported by specific action steps and a realistic timeline. These actionable strategies form the backbone of implementation and provide a roadmap for measurable progress.

3) **Set Annual Objectives**

Annual objectives help keep the plan on track by establishing:

- Clear guidance for day-to-day efforts
- Transparency and accountability to stakeholders
- Performance standards and milestones
- Motivation and clarity for staff
- A framework for aligning roles and responsibilities

4) **Align Organizational Structure**

Strategic goals may require organizational adjustments to ensure success. In Reynoldsville's case, this includes recommendations such as increasing professionalism and accountability, as well as establishing solid financial practices.

By institutionalizing this cycle of review, action, and adjustment, the Borough can ensure that its strategic plan remains a living document - guiding progress, building momentum, and fostering a more resilient and responsive local government.

5) Identify and Mobilize Resources

Planning without execution is a common pitfall - often due to overlooked needs for time, funding, or staffing. To avoid this, Borough Council should partner with department heads to identify the financial, personnel, and technology resources required for implementation, supported by a clear funding strategy that includes both internal allocations and outside opportunities like grants, partnerships, and shared services.

6) Build a Meaningful Evaluation Framework

Implementation should be tracked with the same care as planning. An Implementation Manager - working with Council and staff - should create a strategy evaluation matrix to monitor progress, adapt to changing conditions, and assess goal achievement using both data and stakeholder feedback. Regular check-ins will keep the Plan focused, flexible, and aligned with community needs.

7) Measure What Matters

To gauge progress toward strategic goals, the Borough must define clear, meaningful metrics. The Implementation Manager should help leadership identify both quantitative and qualitative indicators - such as year-over-year trends, peer benchmarks, and compliance with state or national standards. Measures like staff satisfaction, service quality, and workplace culture are also vital markers of success.

8) Embrace Continuous Improvement

Even strong plans need adjustment. Taking corrective action signals adaptive leadership, not failure. The Implementation Manager should support the Borough in identifying structural or strategic changes - such as reorganizing departments, refining goals, or reallocating resources - to boost performance and stay responsive to new opportunities. The focus is on flexibility, evidence-based decisions, and long-term resilience.

Full Team Ahead

STMP Implementation Strategy for Success

Step 6 of the STMP program launches the critical transition from planning to action - demanding a coordinated, all-in approach. Success hinges on the active participation of Borough Council, the Implementation Manager, department leaders, staff, consultants, and DCED representatives, all working together to carry out the plan.

To maintain momentum and accountability, an Implementation Committee will steer progress, supported by focused task forces and subcommittees aligned with specific goals. This inclusive framework strengthens coordination, promotes transparency, and taps into the specialized expertise needed to deliver long-term, measurable results.



Implementation Framework

Taking Action

Successful implementation of the STMP requires a clear, organized approach to ensure that priority goals are addressed efficiently and effectively. Establishing a structured framework with dedicated committees, engaged stakeholders, and active task forces will help maintain momentum and accountability throughout the process. Regular evaluation and flexibility to adjust course are essential to overcoming challenges and achieving the Borough's strategic objectives.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Identify high-priority goals and assign them to an appropriate Implementation Committee
- ☐ Engage additional stakeholders and subject matter experts to provide necessary expertise
- ☐ Schedule regular meetings focused on advancing action items
- ☐ Determine which priority goals and action items should be tackled in the first year
- ☐ Organize task forces to support the Implementation Manager in specific initiatives
- ☐ Expand capacity by recruiting volunteers to assist with implementation efforts
- ☐ Conduct ongoing evaluations to monitor progress on action items
- ☐ Implement corrective measures promptly to address any deficiencies or obstacles

Implementation Timeline

The Time Is Now → Igniting Change. Building Momentum.

With a clear vision and a focused set of priorities in place, the next step is to put the plan into motion through a practical, phased implementation strategy. This timeline lays out suggested time frames for tackling the Borough's most critical goals - balancing quick wins with longer-term, high-impact initiatives.

To make the most of available capacity and sustain momentum, the Borough should seek annual funding through future phases of DCED's STMP program (Phases II–VI), especially for large or complex initiatives outlined in this plan. At the same time, lower-cost improvements - such as staff development, internal procedures, and service enhancements - can begin using current resources.

The following graphic offers a high-level timeline that organizes recommendations into implementation blocks based upon STMP phases - supporting steady, measurable progress toward a stronger, more resilient Reynoldsville.

Implementation Timeline by STMP Funding Phase

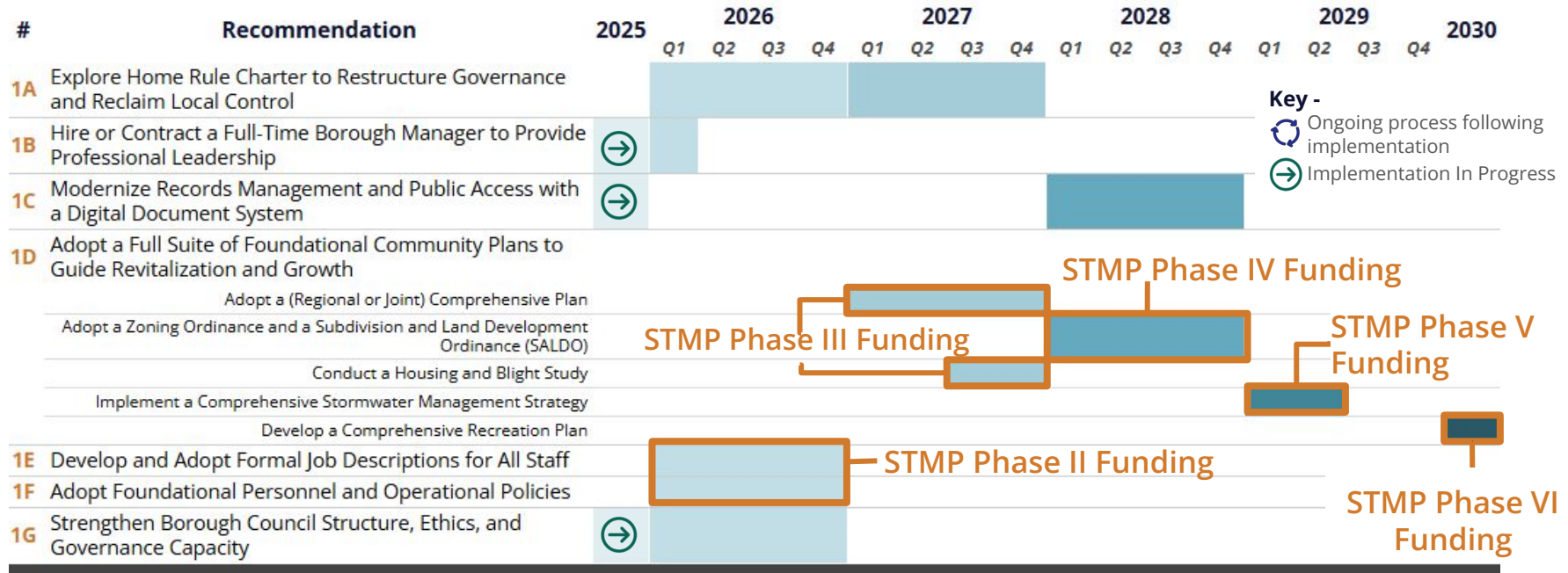


1 Goal 1 - Stabilize and Strengthen

Building the Foundation for Stable Governance and Sustainable Growth

Implementation is underway, with 2026 bringing finalized personnel policies, job descriptions, and major initiatives - such as community planning and exploring a Home Rule Charter - to drive revitalization and long-term stability, supported by future STMP funding priorities.

Goal 1 - Implementation Timeline

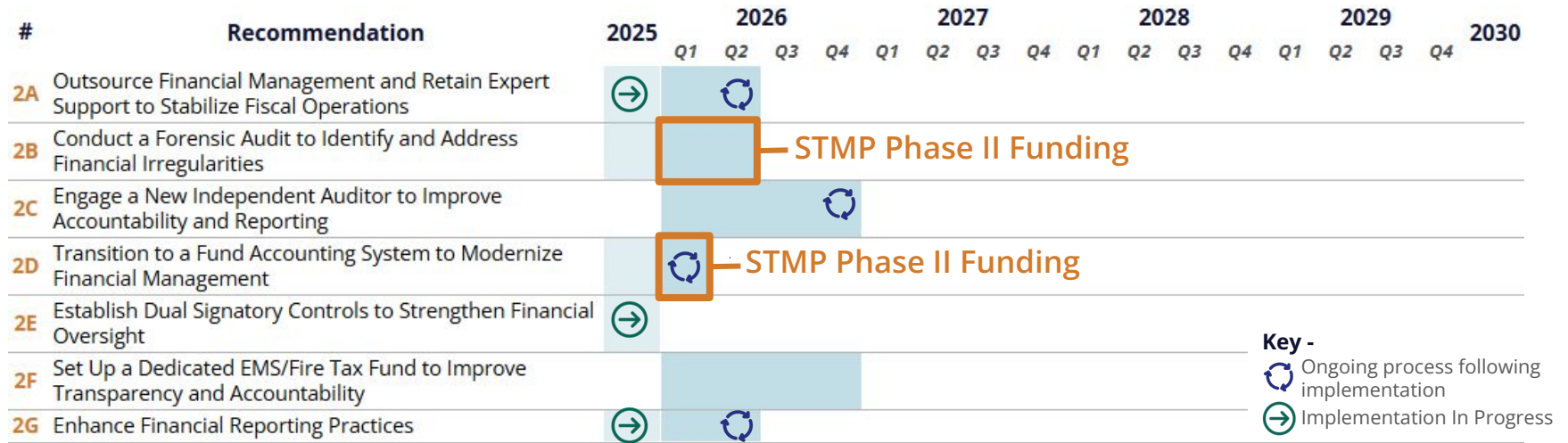


2 Goal 2 - Build a Stronger Financial Foundation

Restoring Fiscal Integrity Through Reform and Accountability

This goal focuses on correcting years of poor financial oversight by implementing targeted reforms that both address past irregularities and establish modern, accountable systems. In the short term, efforts such as a forensic audit, engaging a new independent auditor, and outsourcing financial management will stabilize operations and uncover the full scope of fiscal issues. Longer-term actions - including adopting fund accounting, enhancing reporting practices, and strengthening internal controls - will institutionalize transparency, prevent future mismanagement, and position the Borough for sustainable financial health.

Goal 2 - Implementation Timeline

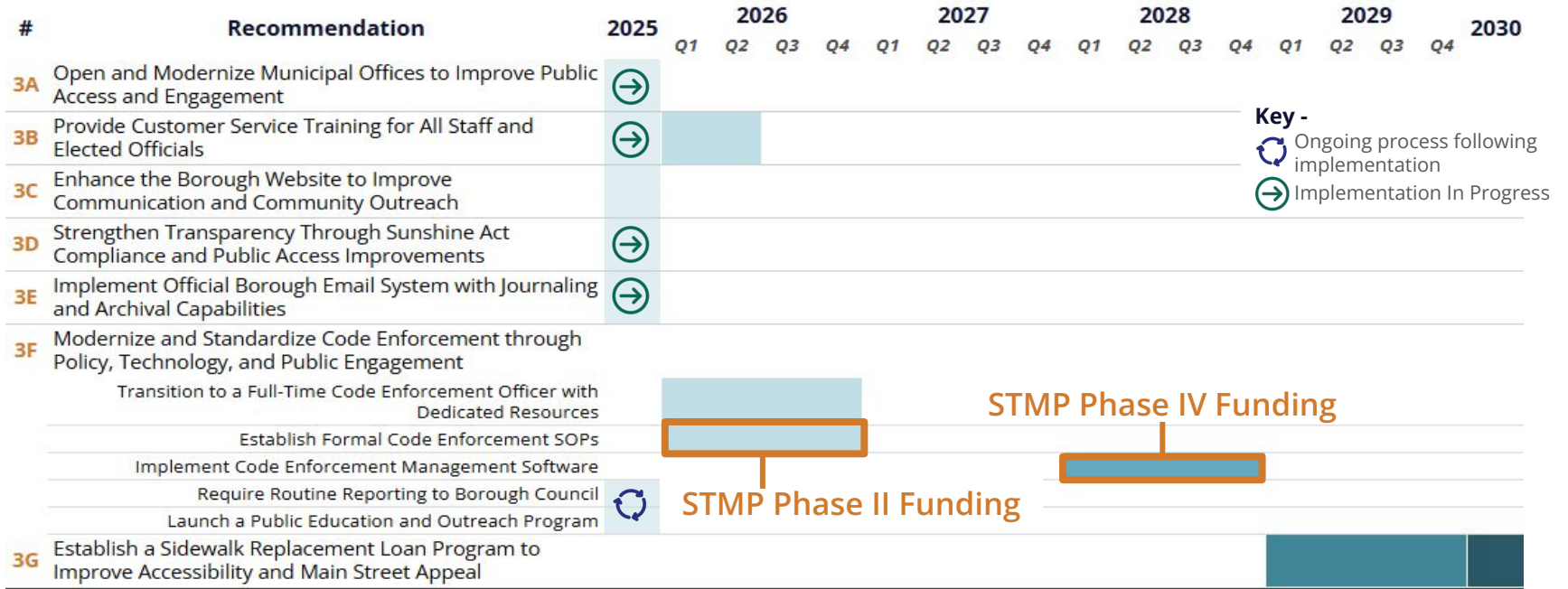


3 Goal 3 - Open for Opportunity

Advancing Trust, Access, and Momentum

Focused on accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness, these actions will modernize operations, enhance public engagement, and create a more welcoming environment for residents, businesses, and visitors. Many are already underway, with future STMP phases supporting continued progress.

Goal 3 - Implementation Timeline



4 Goal 4 - Bridging the Gaps

Uniting Resources for Greater Impact

Focused on collaboration and resource sharing, these actions aim to improve service delivery, reduce costs, and strengthen regional partnerships. Several initiatives - including establishing a Shared Fiscal Director position, launching a Regional Grant Writer partnership, and engaging with the Jefferson County Council of Governments (COG) - will require formal institutionalization as ongoing operations to ensure lasting impact and sustained regional capacity. Together, these efforts will build a more resilient, efficient, and connected Borough government.

Goal 4 - Implementation Timeline



5 Goal 5 - Protect What Matters

Maintaining Our Foundation for a Safe and Reliable Future

Centered on asset stewardship and long-term resilience, these actions focus on modernizing and maintaining the Borough's facilities, fleet, and infrastructure. Key initiatives - including the ongoing development of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), adoption of a formal Facilities Plan, and implementation of a fleet replacement and maintenance schedule - will guide strategic investments to ensure safe, reliable, and sustainable public service delivery.

Goal 5 - Implementation Timeline

#	Recommendation	2025	2026				2027				2028				2029				2030
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
5A	Develop and Implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	→				↻													
5B	Adopt a Formal Facilities Plan to Guide Strategic Investment and Improve Public Safety Infrastructure																		
5C	Initiate a Formal Fleet Replacement and Maintenance Schedule to Ensure Reliable and Safe Public Service Delivery									↻									

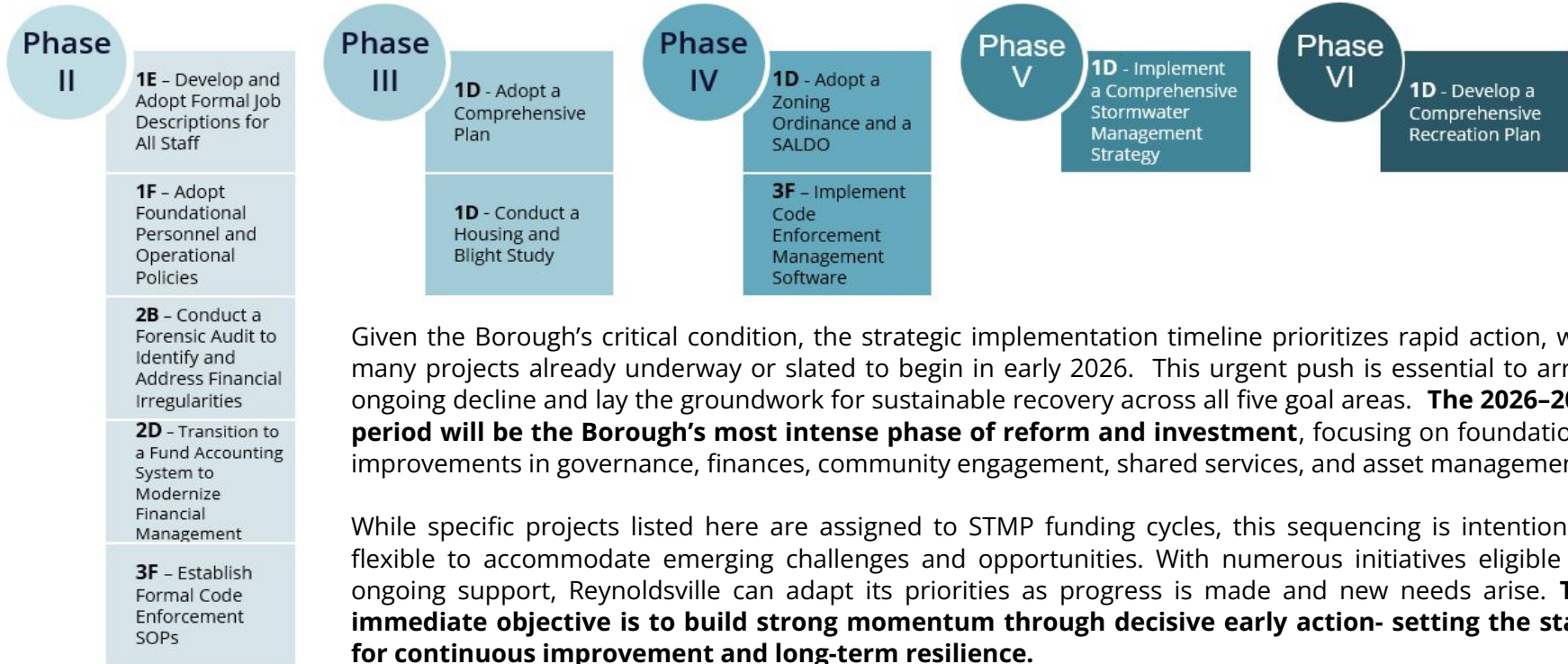
Key -

- ↻ Ongoing process following implementation
- Implementation In Progress

Funding Phase Overview

Prioritizing Urgency, Embracing Momentum

Project List by STMP Funding Phase



Challenges to Implementation

Aligning Resources with Strategy: A Prerequisite for Sustainable Success

Effective resource allocation is one of the most essential responsibilities in local government management - it turns strategic intent into tangible results. When decisions about time, money, and personnel are made without a clear, structured approach, they often drift toward political pressures or individual preferences rather than the Borough's long-term priorities. In contrast, a strategically aligned system ensures that resources are purposefully directed toward clearly defined goals and annual objectives, turning the Borough's vision into measurable outcomes.

Yet, even with the best of intentions, several common challenges can undermine effective resource allocation:

Short-Term Thinking

A focus on immediate cash flow can come at the cost of investing in future capacity - limiting opportunities to bring in professional expertise, implement modern systems, or plan for long-term impact.

Political Distractions

Popular demands and political considerations can sometimes sideline high-impact strategic goals, especially when those goals require sustained effort or carry delayed rewards.

Change Aversion

Fear of disruption often deters departments from adopting new technologies, structures, or processes. But without change, there is no improvement - and no resilience.

Guarded Budgets

Elected officials may be hesitant to invest in staff development or internal infrastructure, aiming to minimize visible costs in the short run. However, this approach often sacrifices long-term sustainability and performance.

Lack of Specificity

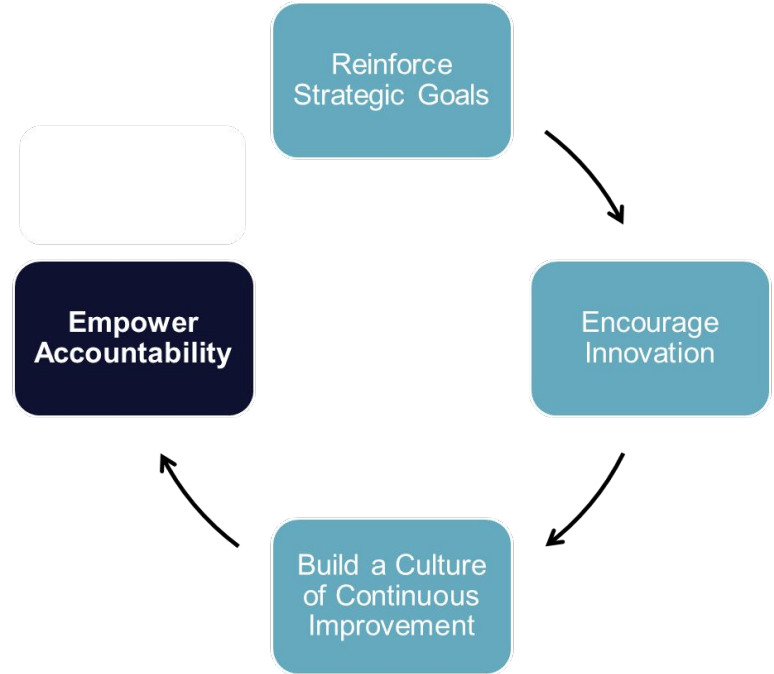
When goals are vague or performance metrics are missing, it becomes difficult to prioritize funding or evaluate success - leading to scattershot investments rather than focused progress.

Leadership Gaps

In local government, leadership transitions are frequent, and knowledge doesn't always transfer. When priorities are unclear or poorly communicated, it creates disconnects between strategy and execution.

Challenges to Implementation

Overcoming these obstacles requires **more than good intentions**. It demands a **disciplined, transparent, and performance-based approach** to resource allocation - one that reinforces strategic goals, encourages innovation, and builds a culture where continuous improvement becomes standard operating practice.



Funding the Future

Aligning Resources with Priorities

To successfully fund and advance the Borough's priority projects, the Implementation Manager should follow these steps:

1) Identify Funding Opportunities

- Research and compile a list of local, state, federal, and philanthropic funding sources that align with prioritized strategies.
- Focus on programs that support capital improvements, infrastructure, sustainability, and community revitalization.

2) Develop a Comprehensive Funding Matrix

- Create a matrix that outlines eligible costs, deadlines, match requirements, and agency contacts for each funding source.
- Update the matrix regularly to reflect newly released programs and changes to existing opportunities.

3) Prepare Project Briefing Books

- For each high-priority initiative from Step 5, develop a briefing packet including scope, cost estimates, timelines, and impact narratives.
- Include "impact statements" that clearly articulate the community value of each project for use in grant applications and public communications.

4) Align Resources to Action Plans

- Match identified funding sources with specific action items to ensure resource allocation supports strategic goals.
- Prioritize applications for projects with immediate readiness, strong public support, or urgent needs.

Funding the Future

5) Pursue Grant Applications Strategically

- Coordinate with department heads and external partners to prepare strong, timely applications.
- Ensure supporting documentation - including Borough Council resolutions, cost-benefit analyses, and community letters of support - is ready in advance.

6) Report Progress at Public Meetings

- Establish a recurring schedule for presenting updates to the Borough Council and the public.
- Share funding wins, applications in progress, and project milestones to promote transparency and build community trust.

7) Track Outcomes and Adjust as Needed

- Monitor awarded grants and funded projects for compliance, outcomes, and lessons learned.
- Update the funding strategy based on results and feedback from council, staff, and residents.

8) Celebrate Successes and Build Momentum

- Publicly recognize and celebrate key milestones, successful grant awards, and project completions.
- Use newsletters, social media, and community events to highlight progress and express appreciation to staff, partners, and residents.
- Celebrating wins reinforces community pride, motivates continued engagement, and sustains momentum for future implementation efforts.

Funding the Future

Resources to GET IT DONE.

While subsequent phases of STMP implementation funding provide a key resource for advancing the Borough's strategic goals - as detailed in the implementation timeline - additional funding opportunities also exist. Exploring a diverse mix of grants and local sources will be essential to fully support and sustain these critical efforts.

Grant and Loan Funding

- **Business in Our Sites (BOS)** - BOS provides grants and loans for infrastructure improvements that prepare undeveloped properties for future commercial or industrial use. While funding is limited, periodic availability and potential recapitalization by the state legislature make this program worth monitoring.
- **Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)** - This state program through DCNR supports planning and development of parks, trails, and recreation infrastructure. Grants are awarded annually, with applications due in April, and align well with projects that enhance quality of life and outdoor amenities.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program** - CDBG provides flexible funding for infrastructure and community improvement projects, including water and sewer upgrades, blight removal, ADA accessibility enhancements, and public facility improvements. The county currently utilizes this program, but the Borough does not.
- **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program** - Administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, the JAG Program is the leading source of federal criminal justice funding for states and local governments. These grants support a wide range of initiatives including law enforcement, prosecution and court programs, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment, and mental health programs. Funds can also be used for technology improvements and training. JAG awards are flexible and can be tailored to local priorities, making them a valuable tool for counties seeking to enhance public safety through evidence-based strategies.

Grant and Loan Funding

- **Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP)** - Administered by the Commonwealth Financing Authority, this program offers up to \$250,000 for planning, developing, and maintaining recreational trails, greenways, open space, and community beautification efforts.
- **Growing Greener Plus Program** - Focused on improving water quality, this program supports efforts to reduce nonpoint source pollution through projects like streambank restoration, stormwater BMPs, and compliance with MS4 and TMDL regulations.
- **Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program (FEMA via PEMA)** – Competitive federal funds for projects that reduce long-term risk from natural hazards.
- **Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grants** – Funds planning, training, and exercises related to hazardous materials.
- **Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP)** – Funds emergency preparedness, response, and recovery activities at the local and regional level.
- **Keystone Communities Program** - This flexible community development program supports a wide range of revitalization initiatives, including façade improvements, public space enhancements, accessible housing development, and main street upgrades. It is particularly useful for projects that promote livable, walkable communities and downtown reinvestment.
- **Marcellus Shale Act 13 Funds** - Revenue from Pennsylvania's natural gas impact fees can support a range of public improvement projects, including building rehabilitation, park development, and strategic property acquisition. Application windows vary by agency.
- **Municipal Assistance Program (MAP)** - MAP offers matching funds to municipalities and councils of governments for planning and management initiatives, including shared services studies, comprehensive planning, fiscal management, and code enforcement. This program is well-suited to help implement many of the planning and capacity-building goals identified in the STMP.

Grant and Loan Funding

- **PA Small Water and Sewer Program** - Through the Commonwealth Financing Authority, this program offers up to \$500,000 in funding for essential water and wastewater infrastructure projects, including system upgrades, stormwater controls, and flood prevention efforts.
- **Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE)** – Funds the creation and preservation of affordable housing.
- **PennDOT Transportation Alternatives / PCTI Programs** - These competitive programs fund transportation improvements that enhance community livability, such as pedestrian safety enhancements, traffic calming measures, intersection redesign, and walkability projects.
- **Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank (PIB)** - PIB offers low-interest loans through PennDOT for local transportation projects. This financing tool is ideal for accelerating critical phases of road and bridge projects, particularly those waiting on longer-term federal or state funding.
- **Recycling & Stormwater Planning Grants** – Supports recycling programs (Sections 901–904) and stormwater planning (Act 167).
- **Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP)** - A state grant program that supports major economic development, infrastructure, and community revitalization projects over \$1 million in total cost. RACP awards require a 50% match and are typically announced through a competitive annual application process.
- **State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program** (federal funding, via PEMA) - provides funding to help state and local governments address cybersecurity risks, strengthen cybersecurity of critical infrastructure and ensure resilience against persistent cyber threats to services governments provide their communities.

Taxes and Fees

- **Act 13 Open Space Funding** – Annual set-aside from shale impact fees for counties to invest in open space preservation.
- **Bingo, Small Games of Chance, and Firearm Permit Fees** – Local fee revenues tied to licenses or permits.

A comprehensive funding strategy should include a targeted review of private and community foundations, as they can provide funding for specific project components, especially those benefiting the public, such as senior services, recreation, or community health.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's Governor's Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS) serves as a comprehensive resource for local government officials. It offers guidance, technical assistance, and a wide range of publications on topics essential to effective local governance across the Commonwealth. These materials and tools are available for review and download on the DCED website.

Turning Crisis into Opportunity - A Path Forward for Reynoldsville

Reynoldsville faces serious challenges - deep operational dysfunction, ongoing staff turnover, significant ethical concerns, and longstanding weaknesses in financial and administrative practices. Since the Management Audit presentation in July, the Borough has experienced further turnover, including the resignation of the Borough Administration Assistant of 43 years and her daughter, the Assistant Borough Secretary and Code Enforcement Officer. These departures create a critical opportunity for a clean slate and a fresh start.

The Borough has already begun taking decisive steps toward recovery by initiating key implementation actions. Efforts currently underway include hiring or contracting a full-time Borough Manager to provide professional leadership, modernizing records management and public access with a digital document system, and strengthening Borough Council structure, ethics, and governance capacity. On the financial front, outsourcing financial management and retaining expert support to stabilize fiscal operations, establishing dual signatory controls, and enhancing financial reporting practices are active priorities. Additionally, work to open and modernize municipal offices to improve public access and engagement is progressing, alongside the development and implementation of a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

These initial actions demonstrate a commitment to addressing the root causes of dysfunction and laying a foundation for long-term stability. While the road ahead remains challenging, Reynoldsville's future depends on sustained urgency, transparency, and collaboration. By embracing change and following the clear roadmap set forth in this Strategic Management Planning Program, the Borough can rebuild public trust and create a more resilient, effective, and responsive local government that truly serves its community.

We're doing a lot with what we've got, but we know things will need to change.

