

Robert B. & Helen S.
Meyner Center
for the Study of State & Local Government

**City of Easton
Early Intervention Plan
Program Review
September 2007**

Robert B. & Helen S. Meyner Center
for the Study of State & Local Government
002 Kirby Hall of Civil Rights
Lafayette College
Easton, Pennsylvania 18042-1785

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The Robert B. and Helen S. Meyner Center for the Study of State and Local Government is a non-partisan, academic, and public service program at Lafayette College whose mission is to:

- Engage in local, regional, and international public service, training, and outreach to state and local governments and civic organizations
- Provide education, internships, and public service opportunities for undergraduate students in state and local government at home and abroad
- Promote scholarly and applied research and publication on state and local government, especially in the context of federal democracy and intergovernmental relations

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Preface

This report was prepared by David L. Woglom, Associate Director for Public Service of the Robert B. and Helen S. Meyner Center for the Study of State and Local Government at Lafayette College. The report has been produced by the Center pursuant to a 2007 contract with the City of Easton to determine the implementation status of recommendations contained in the 2006 Early Intervention Report prepared for the City by external consultants. The Center thanks all of the city officials, employees, and others who participated in interviews and meetings needed to complete research for this report. Any views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Lafayette College.

John Kincaid
Director & Professor

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INTRODUCTION

This report has been completed pursuant to a contract between the City of Easton and Lafayette College's Robert B. and Helen S. Meyner Center for the Study of State and Local Government. It is a Program Review of recommendations contained in the 2006 Early Intervention Report, which was completed by Public Financial Management, Inc. (PFM) with assistance from Keystone Municipal Services. Specifically, the scope of work included:

1. Meeting individually with each of Easton's five Department Directors and other employees to review the recommendations made in the PFM Report and to determine which of the recommendations have been implemented, rejected, or not completed yet;
2. Reviewing with each Department Director and other employees why any recommendations were rejected;
3. Addressing with each Department Director and other employees the realistic feasibility of implementing each recommendation;
4. Discussing with each Department Director and other employees additional operational issues that are both important, and of potential value to the efficient and productive delivery of public services; and
5. Offering recommendations to each Department Director and other employees to assist and guide them in achieving goals and objectives.

This report has five sections: (1) Introduction; (2) Executive Summary of recommendations that the Meyner Center believes should be priorities for the City; (3) Historical and Background Information; (4) General Observations; and (5) Program Review of the individual recommendations in each department. In the Program Review section, each recommendation of the Meyner Center *has been italicized for ease of reading*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the PFM Report, there were recommendations for the City to improve its operations. Many of the individual recommendations were similar, so for purposes of non-repetition, the Meyner Center combined many of these recommendations; therefore, the total number of recommendations in this report does not correspond to the total number in the PFM Report. For review purposes, all recommendations were classified as “Implemented” (meaning that the City reviewed and implemented the change), “Rejected” (meaning that the City reviewed the change and decided not to implement), or “Not Implemented” to date. Most of the recommendations that were rejected were first reviewed by Directors, and decisions not to follow particular recommendations were made when a Director believed that a change was not warranted. Based on these criteria, the City has either implemented, or reviewed and rejected 80% of all the individual recommendations in the PFM Report. Throughout this report, the Meyner Center makes recommendations on individual operational components that the City should consider. Of all these changes discussed in the Program Review, the Center recommends that the City focus on the following issues of significant importance:

1. Prepare a public relations program that highlights the positive attributes of living and working in Easton. The City should take steps to promote all of its accomplishments and the services it provides to residents and visitors. The City should adopt this strategy by adding information to its website, and by including this information in its newsletter.
2. If the Charter Commission changes are not approved by the voters in November 2007, the new Mayor should reconfigure the management staff to include a qualified Director of Finance who has significant local government experience and who focuses attention directly on financial management.
3. Create and implement a plan for a newly renovated or located police station.
4. Conduct a facility study to address the building needs of the Fire Department. Currently, the City has no long-term plan for addressing the issue of replacing/renovating the buildings that house its employees and equipment.
5. Increase the personnel in the Fire Department from 39 to 44 employees, which was the personnel level in prior years.
6. Adopt a five-year Capital Improvement Plan, which addresses the vehicle, equipment, building, road, and bridge repair needs of every department in the City. This plan should include the cost of such replacement, and the means to fund the improvements.
7. Increase the personnel level in the Human Resources Department by at least one employee. Given that there are more than 200 City employees, current staffing of only one employee is insufficient to the human resources needs of the City.
8. Develop a comprehensive training program for employees in areas such as supervisory skills, leadership, customer service, sexual harassment, specific technical skills, and implementation of all applications of the pentamation software package, particularly with employees in the Administration and Planning Departments.
9. Institute a program in the Planning and Development Department to increase the International Building Code certifications of the building and property inspectors.

HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

“The Five Year Plan and Financial Management Plan” was prepared by Public Financial Management, Inc. and Keystone Municipal Services in May 2006, and portions of the financial plan were later updated in December 2006. The document was prepared under the auspices of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Early Intervention Program (EIP). As stated in the plan, the EIP “is intended as a way for Pennsylvania cities to address long-term budget challenges before a crisis develops, and to strengthen the overall fiscal capacity of local governments.” This report is a program review of the 2006 Early Intervention Report completed by PFM, and includes a review of other City of Easton initiatives to determine implemented recommendations and their impact upon actual or projected costs and revenues.

Each of the five members of City Council and the Mayor were interviewed to collect their views and perceptions of City operations. Meetings were held with each of the five Department Directors (Fire Chief John Bast, Business Administrator Stu Gallaher, Public Works Director David Hopkins, Planning and Development Director Barbara Kowitz, and Police Chief Larry Palmer) and other employees to review the list of recommendations in the Management Audit and Multi-Year Financial Plan portion of the PFM Plan. During this review, interviews were held with a total of 28 employees and elected/appointed officials. In order to focus more intently on business operations, 16 of these interviews were held with employees and staff members involved in administrative activities. For this report, all interviews were conducted and meetings were attended between May 10 and September 12, 2007. Ten weekly meetings of the Mayor and Directors were attended as well, so as to observe how the City’s management team operates. All of the individuals were cooperative in answering questions and providing information during the interviews and the writing of this report. When relevant to any of the specific recommendations in the PFM Plan, several facilities, including the police station, fire houses, and public works complex, were inspected by the researcher.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The City of Easton faces many of the same financial and operational challenges as other municipalities in Pennsylvania. However, as a third-class city, its financial challenges are more acute due in part, to constraints that result from expenditures increasing at a faster rate than revenues. Therefore, the City needs to conserve funds and be extremely efficient, while at the same time providing the highest quality of public services possible to residents and visitors. In its report, PFM documented many of the City's operational and financial challenges in great detail. It is not necessary to repeat this analysis here, except to note that fiscal constraints and public service demands require the City to continually prioritize how it spends its funds, particularly on capital expenditures such as vehicles, equipment, and additions to facilities.

The current members of City Council voiced a strong commitment to the City. They express support for the Directors and the improvements that have been made during the past several years. Each believes that the relationship between the Mayor and City Council has improved in comparison to previous years, and that this positive relationship is one of the reasons for improvements in the quality of management in the City.

The Mayor's leadership and management style is based on delegation of authority to his Directors. It is apparent that he works to instill confidence in them to perform their responsibilities efficiently without undue outside influence.

During the completion of this report, it was evident that one of the City's strongest assets is its Directors, who express a dedication to providing a high quality of public services, while understanding the financial constraints of managing in the public sector. The Directors ordinarily work well together, support each other, and believe that the current management team is making a difference in the operational efficiency of City government. They each believe that the Mayor and City Council have been supportive, and have increased the resources available for them to manage their departments.

It has been more than a year since "The Five Year Plan and Financial Management Plan" was prepared by Public Financial Management, Inc. and Keystone Municipal Services. During that time, many programs and departments of the City have experienced change. Only one of the current Directors was a Director in 2005 when the PFM Report was begun (Mr. Gallaher was the Chief of Staff in 2005, not the Business Administrator as he is now). As documented more specifically in the Program Review section of this report, 80% of the recommendations in the PFM Report have been either implemented or reviewed and rejected. Other intended improvements have occurred due to changes created by the Department Directors on their own. The recommendations classified as rejected were first reviewed by Directors, and decisions not to follow particular recommendations were made when a Director believed that a change was not warranted. As will be reviewed in the specific departmental reviews following, the issues addressed by the Directors have been intended to increase the efficiency and productivity of services provided by the City.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Administration Department

Business Administrator Stu Gallaher and 15 other employees and appointed staff were interviewed and participated in the review and discussion of the recommendations in the PFM Report. Mr. Gallaher is currently serving as Business Administrator, having initially been appointed as Chief of Staff in January 2004. He also worked as an Assistant to the Mayor and then Business Administrator under two previous administrations for two different Mayors. Through his more than 15 years of administrative management for the City, he has become intimately familiar with City operations and personnel. He is well respected by the administrative and supervisory staff, many of whom credit him for improving City operations.

In 2006, the city merged the position of Chief of Staff into that of the Business Administrator. The City saved more than \$70,000 in 2007 by combining these two positions. However, given the fiscal complexities of a City of this size, there is a critical need to have one position with the sole function of fiscal management. This need will be addressed if the proposed Charter Commission changes are approved by the public in November 2007 because the proposed charter would create the position of Director of Finance. *If the Charter is not approved, it is recommended that the new Mayor reconfigure the management staff to include a qualified Director of Finance who has significant local government experience and who focuses attention directly on financial management. The City needs to have one person who organizes the fiscal focus of the Administration Department and its responsibilities, reviews monthly financial reports, and analyzes special reports. Through this emphasis on the finances of the City as a whole, the elected officials and management staff will be better able to continually monitor the City's current financial position, and analyze the financial ramifications of policy decisions they make for the future.*

Of the 37 recommendations made in the PFM Report, 23 (62%) were either implemented, or reviewed and rejected. The following is a review of the current status of the recommendations and comments made in the PFM Report:

1. Restructure the form of government.

At the time of the PFM Report, the City was contemplating creation of a Charter Study Commission to review and recommend changes to the City Charter. This Commission was created, and it presented recommendations that will be voted on during the election in November 2007. While the draft charter is a hybrid of different opinions on the most efficient way to manage the City, the appointment of an experienced and qualified City Administrator and a City Finance Director would provide the City with much needed managerial expertise.

Status: Implemented

2. Seek competitive proposals every three to five years for auditing services.

The company currently providing auditing services has been doing so without competitive competition for several decades. There are many accounting firms in the Lehigh Valley and suburban Philadelphia which are experienced in Pennsylvania local

government accounting and auditing. *It is recommended that the City seek competitive proposals from qualified accounting firms for the audit of fiscal year 2007.*

Status: Not Implemented

3. Complete financial audits of various City operations and programs.

The PFM Report noted that the Controller has conducted financial audits on an infrequent basis. *The City would be well served if, after consultation with the Business Administrator, the Controller performed more frequent audits of individual programs and/or financial operations.*

Status: Not Implemented

4. Review the cash handling and deposit procedures.

The Treasurer maintains that daily deposits and reconciliations are completed by his staff. This practice should continue to maximize interest earnings, and to minimize the opportunity of misplacement of money received.

Status: Implemented

5. All securities, such as letters of credit and surety bonds, should be stored in an offsite, secure facility.

The City does not handle many of these documents, and the Business Administrator indicates that all securities are stored at an off site facility.

Status: Implemented

6. Restructure the use of solicitors by creating one full-time staff attorney.

Currently, the City has three private-practice attorneys who provide the bulk of legal work. Each is salaried differently and receives medical and pension benefits; the total cost to the City is approximately \$172,000 per year. This structure is unusual in that while each attorney is salaried, there is no definition of the hours per week that each one will work. According to estimates provided by each attorney, the number of hours worked collectively can range as high as 65-70 hours in a given week, but the average is approximately 53 hours per week. From the City's perspective, this equates to an average cost of only \$62 per hour (including benefits), which is extremely low in the marketplace. If the City hired a full-time staff attorney and employed private attorneys—all at market rates—the total, annual cost to the City would not be significantly less than its present cost. *Presuming that City Council and the Mayor are satisfied with the quality of legal representation, the City should continue its current structure.*

Status: Rejected

7. Hire a full- or part-time management analyst to review financial activities.

As discussed in other sections of this report, the City needs to focus greater attention than they have been on financial management in the aggregate, and on separate programs and reports, whether the studies are completed by in-house staff or by outside consultants.

Status: Not Implemented

8. Increase payment options for residents and businesses to pay their bills.

To date, the City has not changed its financial operations to allow these kinds of payments. Recently, the City has met with an area financial institution to review the cost

and feasibility of accepting credit cards, debit cards, on-line charges, and ACH transactions. Local government has been slow to accept these forms of payment so commonly used in the private sector because of the cost incurred by the municipality. Although these options would be attractive to some residents, the City should be certain that any of these changes will be cost neutral to the City before implementation.

Status: Rejected

9. Monitor the effectiveness of monthly billing.

The City has been reviewing this situation. In 2006, the City sold its water company and customer billings to the Suburban Water Authority. In order to coincide with Suburban's recent change to bill customers on a monthly basis for water, the City has also changed the frequency of its trash and sewage bills to a monthly basis. Just recently the City sent a letter to the Authority with its concerns over the timeliness of receipt of water meter readings. The City needs these readings promptly in order to make the City's billing system for sewage more timely.

Status: Implemented

10. Create a cross-training program for employees.

The City has not implemented this kind of program so that employees' skills are diversified in order to minimize any kind of disruption caused by changes in personnel or employee leaves. *Even though it is time consuming to provide this training, the need and benefits are important enough that the City should cross train its employees within each department.*

Status: Not Implemented

11. Research the feasibility of utilizing bulk mailing to decrease postage costs.

After considering utilization for many purposes, the City started to utilize a bulk-mailing system for several purposes, including its recreational program letters and water-quality notifications.

Status: Implemented

12. Amend the City Administrative Code relating to purchasing to correspond to state law.

The City should amend its current regulations to correspond to state law that individual purchases between \$4,000 and \$10,000 do not have to be bid publicly, and can be legally transacted by securing three quotes.

Status: Not Implemented

13. Utilize state cooperative purchasing contracts whenever possible.

The City is utilizing these state and regional purchasing programs whenever possible.

Status: Implemented

14. Review the system of cost accounting used for charging costs to various budget accounts.

The Business Administrator has reviewed the system of charging costs to various budget account numbers, and has determined that the City's current system is appropriate and provides the City with the accountability it needs.

Status: Implemented

15. Improve the City website, including links to City Council; create a system for employees to communicate with each other electronically.

The City has made significant increases in the quality of its website, including information not heretofore found on the site. Emails may be sent directly to Council members from a link on the website. All supervisory and most administrative employees have email addresses so that they can communicate with each other electronically. The City should continue to update its website so that information is topical and current.

Status: Implemented

16. Revise the Codified Ordinances.

The City is in the process of completing this task.

Status: Implemented

17. Perform an evaluation in the Treasurer's Office to determine if some services should be outsourced.

The Treasurer indicates that his office conducted a review to address this recommendation in the PFM Report, and determined that the current system is efficient. He believes that his office is using its staff in an efficient way to collect all fees owed to the City.

Status: Implemented

18. Utilize the services of a credit bureau to supplement the work currently done by staff and the Portnoff law firm.

The City currently uses the Portnoff firm to collect all delinquent taxes and fees. In the course of their work, Portnoff uses a credit bureau to assist them. The City reviews on a monthly basis the status of Portnoff's work, and believes that the firm is working diligently to collect these outstanding debts to the City, some of which are very time consuming and complex to collect.

Status: Implemented

19. Maintain an accurate and up-to-date database of property ownership.

On a monthly basis, the Treasurer's Office enters updated information on property ownership into the pentamation software system.

Status: Implemented

20. Increase the level of communication between the City administration and the Treasurer's Office.

The Business Administrator and the Treasurer both believe that in the recent past significant improvements have been made to increase both communication and cooperation between their two offices. This is important because of the fragmented structure currently in place wherein no one person is responsible for all the financial operations of the City. The elected Treasurer and his staff collect revenue for the City, and the Business Administrator administers all other financial operations. It should be noted that this fragmented structure will be corrected if the proposed changes to the City Charter are approved by the voters in November 2007. In any case, it is crucial that all

employees involved in financial operations work and communicate with each other in efficient ways.

Status: Implemented

21. Redefine the role and increase the staffing level of the Human Resources Office.

Currently, there are two employees in this office. The sole responsibility of one employee is to administer the payroll system and retiree benefits. What this means is that all other human resource activities are the responsibility of the Human Resources Manager. There are no employee handbooks that contain comprehensive information on benefits for employees, nor is there a comprehensive compilation of employee personnel policies and regulations. Statistics such as sick-leave use and vacation days available per employee are not kept up-to-date, or analyzed. *Given the complexity of union contract issues and different hiring and promotion procedures, the Human Resources Manager does not have sufficient time to complete all the needed activities that any company with more than 200 full-time employees should accomplish. The result of this inefficiency is that some needed activities are not completed, and others are accomplished too slowly. It is strongly recommended that the City add at least one full-time employee to the Human Resources Office. It should be noted that each of the Directors in the City also made this observation and recommendation. Additionally, the City should implement the change to its payroll input procedures currently under review, which will result in available time for the existing employee in the Human Resources Office who provides payroll duties to address other needed activities. In addition to assisting the Human Resources Manager with management of the current work load, the new employee and payroll clerk should prepare employee handbooks, formulate personnel policies, update the affirmative action plan, review and update as necessary all job descriptions, and administer an annual employee evaluation program.*

Status: Not Implemented

22. Conduct employee performance evaluations.

The City does not perform written evaluations of most of its employees. *Despite the fact that employee salary increases are not connected to individual performances, the City should begin this formal program for all employees. In any company, supervisors should perform annual, written evaluations of its employees to improve productivity and efficiency, and increase communications between management and workers. Through the years, written evaluations also provide one benchmark to use when considering employee promotions.*

Status: Not Implemented

23. Review the City's business privilege-tax database of taxable versus non-taxable transactions.

The City is in the process of reviewing its history of classification for purposes of collecting the business privilege tax. The City has discovered that several classifications in the past were incorrectly determined, and are correcting these errors, as well as addressing the need for accuracy in the future. Additionally, the City should hold meetings from time to time with the auditors, code enforcement officers, planners, health officers, and members of the tax office to review the classification system.

Status: Implemented

24. Adopt a policy of maintaining a minimum balance in budget accounts.

The City has been successful in having sufficient funds to cover all expenses during the year. This accomplishment has been a challenge during the first quarter in recent years until the new fiscal year's tax revenues are received beginning in March. In response to this need, the City actually created an account in the 2006 budget to increase its minimum opening balance. The City needs to monitor this situation very closely to be sure that it has sufficient funds on hand at all times to meet its expenses.

Status: Implemented

25. Change the structure of the pension plan benefits from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan.

As the chief negotiator of collective bargaining contracts, the Business Administrator is aware of this recommendation. The annual cost of maintaining a defined benefit plan has increased considerably in the past five years, due in part to volatile earnings from the stock market. The City would need an amendment to its collective bargaining agreements in order to effect the change. It would likely be fiscally prudent for the City to include this kind of change in pension benefits in its collective bargaining strategy.

Status: Implemented

26. Create a program to offer employees a cash incentive to use their spouse's medical insurance and decline the City's coverage.

This type of program is becoming more common, and when the employer participates in a traditional health-care insurance program, both the employee and the employer are financially rewarded for employee participation. However, the City is self-insured for medical insurance, and the Business Administrator indicates that the City would not realize a significant and definable savings through the creation of this type of program.

Status: Rejected

27. Increase the quality of customer service provided by employees.

The PFM Report noted that phone calls to City Hall were not answered consistently and that residents who visited City Hall were waiting alone for service for periods of time. *According to the Business Administrator, customer service could be improved. What the City needs to correct this problem is increased training and a clear policy that makes individual employees responsible for services such as answering the phone before the call goes into voice mail. The City is strongly encouraged to develop policies that address these unnecessary shortcomings.*

Status: Not Implemented

28. Increase the communications between City leadership and employees.

The PFM Report recommended that city-wide employee meetings be held and a newsletter for employees be produced on a regular basis. To date, the City has not addressed this recommendation. Inter-departmental meetings are difficult to schedule during regular work hours. However, *intra-departmental meetings are an excellent idea to increase communications within each department, as is a newsletter or email sent directly to all employees. As recommended in the Human Resources review, an excellent*

first step would be to produce employee handbooks, which would include comprehensive information on employee benefits and personnel policies.

Status: Not Implemented

29. Improve the relationship with county government.

According to the Business Administrator, the City does not have frequent contact with the county administration or with the Northampton County Council due to the fact that there have not been important issues to discuss. City-County interaction occurs over specific issues only. The Center can not say that the relationship needs to be “improved” due to individual perception.

Status: Implemented

30. Improve the supervision of the Business Privilege Tax personnel.

The PFM Report found that the Business Privilege Clerks should be supervised by one person; the Assistant Treasurer has been supervising these clerks.

Status: Implemented

31. Develop a training program for employees.

The City does not have any kind of formal training program for its non-uniform employees. *In addition to developing a program for training on the pentamation software packages, the City should develop a program and/or make an on-going effort to provide training for employees in areas such as supervisory skills, leadership, customer service, sexual harassment, and specific technical skills.*

Status: Not Implemented

32. Formulate a light duty program for employees who are hurt either on or off the job.

Although some departments do have informal policies to encourage employees to return to duty, there is no City-wide policy. The PFM Report states that research has shown that individuals brought back to work on a part- or full-time basis typically recover faster than those who stay at home. Further, the City can save money in claims paid and lower insurance premiums by having an employee return to work earlier. The policy will have to be enacted with legal guidance due to the fact that the existing collective bargaining contracts cannot be violated. *It is recommended that the City conduct its necessary investigation, and establish a formal policy providing a light duty program for employees.*

Status: Not Implemented

33. Review annually the driver license record for all employees who drive City-owned vehicles.

Currently, the City does not annually verify that all employees who drive City-owned vehicles have a valid driver's license. The City should begin this program to protect itself from unnecessary exposure to liability.

Status: Not Implemented

34. Enhance the relationship with Lafayette College to enhance City operations.

During the past year, the City has entered into several partnership programs with Lafayette College, including the rehabilitation of properties and the painting of sidewalk

fencing along College Avenue, construction of brick crosswalks on Cattell Street, and joint funding of the Ambassador Program.

Status: Implemented

35. Develop a program of disease testing for new employees, and a program for inoculating current employees.

Currently the City does not require all new employees to be tested for hepatitis exposure and updated for TB and tetanus before beginning work. There is a benefit to the City of creating this program. *Prescreening for hepatitis protects the City against future claims, and maintaining updated TB and tetanus boosters will help to limit future sick leave for employees. It is recommended that the City create a formal program concerning this testing, and updating/administering these inoculations.*

Status: Not Implemented

36. Develop a program that requires all employees to fill out time sheets for payroll purposes.

Employees are not required to fill out individual timesheets for payroll purposes. *All employees should fill out individual timesheets every two weeks as a part of the payroll process; this system would create personal responsibility and accountability by each employee.*

Status: Not Implemented

37. Develop a program whereby employees will learn Spanish.

The PFM Report recommended that the City institute this program in recognition of the growing non-English speaking population in the City. With the exception of the Police Chief, each Director did not believe that this was necessary in each department; although the non-English speaking population is growing, it is not a detriment to operations.

Status: Rejected

Police Department

Chief Larry Palmer and Captains Dave Ryan and Michael Vangelo were interviewed and participated in the review and discussion of the recommendations in the PFM Report. These three individuals have been instrumental in making positive changes in the Police Department. They meet frequently during the course of each week, and their personalities, experiences, and skills complement each other. They bring passion with purpose, as well as constant energy, to the management of the department. As an example, they indicated repeatedly during the course of interviews and meetings that despite the recent completion of state accreditation, they have many more issues that they want to address, and changes they want to make to improve operations.

There have been significant changes in department operations since the original PFM Report was completed in 2006. Chief Palmer and Captains Ryan and Vangelo have been in their current positions for approximately 12-15 months. In July 2007 the department received accreditation by the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. This accreditation certifies that the department is in compliance with criteria administered by the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association; it is an indication that the department has put into place professional policies and technical procedures that have been recognized in Pennsylvania as the industry standards. During the course of this accreditation process, all of the recommendations and comments in the PFM Report were addressed. Therefore, all 19 (100%) of the following recommendations in the PFM Report were implemented to some degree.

The following is a review of the current status of the recommendations and comments made in the PFM Report:

1. **Implement Problem Oriented Policing.**

The department is in the process of implementing the program of Problem Oriented Policing, which is a program that focuses on finding solutions to repeated problems affecting the community, rather than reacting to incidents. Its implementation was delayed during the time that the department was seeking accreditation.

Status: Implemented

2. **Utilize internal data sources and statistics.**

The department is utilizing internal data sources through the compilation of statistics, and reviewing this information on a monthly basis. Officers' daily activities are being monitored by supervisors.

Status: Implemented

3. **Complete the disbanding of the SWAT Team.**

The department has disbanded the SWAT Team and disposed of all equipment previously used by this team. In its place, the department has utilized both the Pennsylvania State Police and its own employees during times of emergencies that previously used SWAT resources. *It is recommended that the City begin discussions with the other police departments in Northampton County to create a county-wide SWAT program that utilizes members from all Northampton County police departments in responding to emergencies across the county. This type of program has been very successful, efficient, and productive in Bucks and Montgomery Counties.*

Status: Implemented

4. Restructure the K-9 Unit and create a policy.
Consistent with the PFM recommendation, a policy for the K-9 Units has been created, and there are now four K-9 units in the department.
Status: Implemented

5. Review the effectiveness of the Parking Enforcement Program.
There are currently two part-time, meter enforcement officers in the department, and the City is in the process of filling four more positions. However, the positions remain open due to an insufficient quantity of qualified candidates. Meter enforcement is a program that if done correctly, will pay for itself, and produce net revenue for the City. It is recommended that the City continue its search for qualified people to fill these positions.
Status: Implemented

6. Review the staffing level in the department.
By the middle of 2007, the department will have completed its hiring process and will have a total of 60 sworn officers. Although this is fewer than the 64 officers in the department in 2005, the Chief and Captains believe that the department is more productive and efficient now, and that morale is at a new high, and rising. As openings occur within the department, management needs to act efficiently to fill these positions. The PFM Report recommended that the department study the supervisory structure carefully once the new Chief was hired in 2006. Since the appointment of the new Chief in June 2006 and throughout the accreditation process, the department supervisory structure has been set with one Chief, two Captains, seven Lieutenants, and three Sergeants.
Status: Implemented

7. Consider changing the manpower schedule to a system of two, 12-hour shifts per day.
The current schedule for the department is based on three 8-hour shifts per day. Many of the departments in the suburban Philadelphia area have adopted a schedule utilizing two, 12-hour shifts per day. The Chief is in the process of researching the feasibility of implementing this schedule, which has become popular to municipal management because it saves overtime, and to rank-and-file members because of the flexibility that affords officers every other weekend off. The Chief should continue his research to implement this program in the department.
Status: Implemented

8. Increase the level of training in the department.
There has been a significant increase in training for all officers in both supervisory and police science programs. The Chief and one Lieutenant have graduated from the FBI National Academy, and both Captains and one Lieutenant have graduated from the Northwestern Institute. Officers have become certified as in-house trainers to save money, and the Chief is seeking to create a smart classroom so that county and state-run programs can be coordinated in Easton, saving additional funds. An Emergency Operations Plan was adopted in May 2007.
Status: Implemented

9. Correct problems in evidence tracking and storage.

A written policy has been created to govern evidence tracking and storage. This new policy eliminates the poor practices and policy non-compliance of the past.

Status: Implemented

10. Correct problems in weaponry and ammunition.

A written policy has been created to govern weaponry and ammunition storage, and firearms safety. This new policy eliminates the poor practices and policy non-compliance of the past.

Status: Implemented

11. Evaluate the police station facilities due to their dysfunctional nature.

Positive changes, including both physical and aesthetic upgrades, have been made in the police station that makes it more functional for officers. Additionally, officers have improvised to maximize their productive use of the station. However, *insufficient space in the station restricts the department's effectiveness. In response to this need, the City has hired an architect who has presented plans for renovations to the station. The City should make this needed renovation of the police station, or the relocation to another site one of its main, short-term priorities. The Police Department has made major, positive improvements in its policies and practices; the transformation of the department will not be complete until implementation of this physical renovation of the police station.*

Status: Implemented

12. Acquire new equipment and technology for the department.

Additional equipment improvements have been made. Mobile data terminal units were installed in the police cars in the summer of 2007. Bulletproof vests are being replaced when their warranty expires. The department is working with Northampton County to implement electronic booking of individuals who are arrested in the City. Steps are being taken to install a proper fire extinguisher in each vehicle. The Chief should continue to monitor equipment and technology needs to assure that department staff utilizes state of the art standards.

Status: Implemented

13. Reduce excessive use of sick leave.

According to analysis completed by the Chief, in 2005 the number of sick leave days utilized by officers in the department averaged 12.85 days per officer. In 2006, this usage dropped to 8.49 days per officer. For 2007, using the statistics available through September, the projected average for the whole year is 6.02 days per officer. The Chief believes that there are two main factors that have caused this positive transformation. The first is a major increase in morale amongst personnel caused by the turnaround in practices and policies in the department. The second cause is a change in the collective bargaining contract that offers officers a financial bonus for using 2 or fewer sick days per year. In any case, it is a very positive personnel development.

Status: Implemented

14. Implement a Police Chaplain Program.

The Chief has indicated that the feasibility of appointing this position is currently under review.

Status: Implemented

15. Increase the control over the use of overtime.

The PFM Report stated that there appeared to be a long-standing pattern of high overtime costs within the department. Much of the overtime expense that occurs in all police departments is uncontrollable to the degree that filling minimum staffing levels, providing officers for magisterial hearings and court trials, covering shifts for vacation and personal time, and completing calls that take place at the end of a shift always occur. Furthermore, overtime expense will be higher when a department is not at its full capacity due to vacancies in positions. The Chief and both Captains indicated that they are acutely aware of the potential cost of excessive overtime, and regulate its occurrence on an on-going basis. According to an analysis completed by the Chief, total overtime expense in 2005 was \$628,202; in 2006 it dropped to \$586,481; in 2007, using statistics through September, the projected total is \$616,000. Given that salary levels have been increasing each year, these statistics indicate that overtime is being managed well.

Status: Implemented

16. Review the policy governing emergency management.

An Emergency Operations Plan was adopted in May 2007, and the Fire Chief was appointed as the Emergency Management Coordinator.

Status: Implemented

17. Review policy governing the use of motorcycles.

The PFM Report recommended that the department only be used for traffic enforcement, escorts, parades, and other special events. In accordance with state accreditation, there is now a policy for use of motorcycles that generally follows this recommendation.

Status: Implemented

18. Review policies on other internal services and issues.

Other administrative issues are being addressed by department supervisors. The department has a light duty policy for officers injured both on and off the job. The Chief is preparing a program to update disease immunizations for all officers. Several officers are currently taking conversational Spanish classes to facilitate communications with people who do not speak English. The driver's license record of each officer is reviewed each year. The department has increased the use and efficiency of its volunteer program, called the Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS). Beginning this year, the department will conduct semi-annual employee evaluations in conjunction with the new job descriptions that have been developed.

Status: Implemented

Fire Department

Chief John Bast and Deputy Chief John Price were interviewed and participated in the review and discussion of the recommendations in the PFM Report. While the Chief and his Deputy have been Easton firemen since 1989 and 1982 respectively, they have been in their current management positions only since mid-2006. They both appear to be dedicated to the City and the needs of the Fire Department. They have a thorough knowledge of departmental operations and a management style that delegates authority to the Captains and Lieutenants in each of the three platoons. This style of management results in greater employee involvement in departmental operations, and gives the Captains, Lieutenants and firefighters a sense of involvement and accomplishment. Monthly meetings are held with all Captains and Lieutenants to review issues that affect the department. Currently, the department has 39 full-time employees, including the Chief and Deputy Chief. The department responded to approximately 2,200 calls in 2006, which averages out to approximately six calls per day.

The Chief believes that the current City Council and Mayor have been supportive of the department in recognizing its needs. Individual officer equipment is in excellent condition, and is replaced as needed. The main needs of the department are replacement of vehicles, increasing the personnel back to its previous level of 14 people per platoon, and a plan for increasing the space in the firehouses for storing vehicles and equipment.

Although neither the Chief nor the Deputy Chief was in his current position when the PFM Report was completed in 2006, the majority of the recommendations in the report have been addressed in the past year, and most of the issues not addressed relate to the capital needs of the department.

Of the 19 recommendations made in the PFM Report, 17 (90%) were either implemented, or reviewed and rejected. The following is a review of the current status of the recommendations and comments made in the PFM Report:

1. Review the standard operating procedures of the department.

The department has reviewed its policies and practices in relation to responses to calls and use of neighboring departments for mutual aid. The department follows Insurance Service Organization (ISO) regulations in determining what equipment to use when responding to calls. However, in accordance with its collective bargaining agreement, it must utilize city firefighters on overtime before calling other neighboring departments for mutual aid firefighters. The Chief also believes that the use of part time firefighters would not be productive or efficient due to lack of familiarity with equipment and personnel.

Status: Implemented

2. Develop run books and acquire mobile data terminals to assist with information on fire calls.

The PFM Report recommended that the department prepare “run books”, which provide directions, hydrant locations, utility locations, nearby hazards and a general description of each section and street in the City; and that the department acquires mobile data terminals for trucks that electronically provide this same information. The Chief indicates that he

has considered the preparation of these books and the acquisition of the mobile data terminals and determined that while it would be useful to some degree, the department personnel have this information through their experiences, and that the expenditure of money to acquire the terminals is not a priority, given other needs.

Status: Rejected

3. Increase the level of training for officers.

Training has increased significantly in the department for firefighters and for supervisory personnel. The Deputy Chief has been assigned the responsibility of researching courses and scheduling the classes. Accreditation for individual officers is ongoing; currently, 20 of the 39 officers are state accredited, and 34 of the 39 officers have either EMT or first responder training certification. Currently, there are no plans for seeking state accreditation. Two of the three firehouses currently have internet access; service to the College Hill Station will be completed in 2007. The Fire Chief is the City Emergency Management Coordinator, and has completed training for this position. A tabletop emergency drill was conducted in 2006, which was an excellent exercise for the department; plans are underway to repeat the exercise in the future. The City does not have a permanent training site, although the Chief does not believe that this is an operational problem.

Status: Implemented

4. Utilize internal data sources and statistics.

Statistics are kept monthly to assist the Chief in reviewing the department's performance. The Chief believes that this analysis assists him in his management of the department.

Status: Implemented

5. Review the staffing level in the department.

The current staffing level of the department is at 39, including the Chief and Deputy Chief. This level has been reduced from 44 to 39 through attrition in the past several years. According to a financial analysis by the Chief, shift overtime to maintain a minimum of 10 officers on duty during each shift is approximately \$200,000 per year. In his budget presentation last year, the Chief made an argument for replacement of the five officers to bring the personnel level in the department back to 44 officers. According to the financial analysis completed by the Chief, while the first-year gross cost of an additional officer is approximately \$70,000 (this total cost grows to \$80,000 when the firefighter is at maximum salary), the savings in overtime will be approximately \$40,000 per officer; therefore the net cost per officer is \$40,000 per year. *The public demand for effectiveness in public emergencies has grown significantly during the past 5-10 years. Although the current personnel level is sufficient for most emergencies, it is insufficiently low for those that involve potential and actual losses of human life and/or buildings. Under a cost/benefit analysis, the benefit of an additional firefighter is significantly more than the annual cost of \$40,000 per employee. It is recommended that the City bring its Fire Department level back to a level of 44 full-time firefighters by the re-hiring of five officers.*

Status: Implemented

6. Remove the Captains from the collective bargaining agreement; assign a supervisor to the College Hill and Southside Stations.

The current collective bargaining agreement includes all firefighters, Lieutenants, and Captains. The PFM Report called for removing the Captains from the bargaining unit; it also called for the assignment of a supervisor to the College Hill and Southside Stations. These changes have not been made; the Chief does not believe that assignment of a supervisor to the College Hill and Southside Stations would add productivity or efficiency to the department. The City has not been able through labor negotiations to remove the Captains from the collective bargaining unit.

Status: Rejected

7. Change the schedule to a 12-hour shift; alter the schedule of the Deputy Chief.

The schedule for the department currently is 24 hours on duty and 48 hours off duty to coincide with the use of three platoons. The PFM Report recommends a study to evaluate the use of a rotating 12-hour shift. This kind of schedule needs four platoons to implement, which would require the City to hire more than the five officers recommended above. The report also recommends that the Deputy Chief's schedule be changed to include late afternoon and weekend hours. Inasmuch as the platoons appear to operate smoothly with the current command structure of the on-duty Captain and Lieutenant in authority, this change has not been made.

Status: Rejected

8. Make improvements to the fire stations.

The City's fire headquarters is located in the Central Fire Station, with satellite stations in the Southside and College Hill neighborhoods. Although the College Hill Station is generally in good shape and meets its needs, the Central and Southside Stations are extremely cramped for space. *The City has no long-term plan for addressing the issue of replacing/renovating the buildings that house its employees and equipment. Meeting this need will obviously be an expensive challenge for the City, but this kind of study is crucial when the current and long-term needs of the City are analyzed. It is recommended that the City establish a long-term capital improvement plan for upgrading buildings and/or facilities that house the equipment and employees of the Fire Department.*

Status: Not Implemented

9. Make improvements to the fire-fighting apparatus.

The department's vehicles include one 1995 command vehicle, one 2004 pumper truck, two 1998 pumper trucks, one 1989 ladder truck, and three reserve pumper trucks (ranging from 12 to 37 years old). *Currently, the City has no capital improvement plan to replace these vehicles. In particular, the ladder truck is now 18 years old, and its replacement should be a major priority for the City. It is recommended that the City establish a capital improvement plan for replacing its Fire Department vehicles.*

Status: Not Implemented

10. Acquire an additional thermal imaging camera.

The department now has four thermal imaging cameras, and is adding another in 2007-08.

Status: Implemented

11. Install preemption devices into the traffic signals.

Currently, traffic signal preemption devices are not installed in the City. This system would allow the department's vehicles to control the operation of a traffic light so that it turns green in the direction of an emergency vehicle as it approaches the intersection. Although this type of system would assist the department, it is not a priority in the Chief's opinion; maneuvering through traffic lights has not been a problem in the past, and the benefit would not exceed the cost of installation.

Status: Rejected

12. Change the staffing level at the College Hill Station.

The PFM Report recommended that the City stop staffing the College Hill Station, and transfer its employees to the Central Station. The Chief does not believe that this would add any increased efficiency or productivity to operations. As discussed above, the more important issue in staffing is to increase the overall number of employees in the department.

Status: Rejected

13. Outsource internal fire investigations.

The Chief believes that the cost of outsourcing this service would be expensive, and that the current system of performing this in-house service is satisfactory.

Status: Rejected

14. Eliminate the Technical Rescue Program.

This program has been discontinued.

Status: Implemented

15. Utilize employees in the City's rental inspection program.

The report recommended that Fire Department employees be used as inspectors in the City's rental inspection program. The Chief believes that the current level of staffing in the department is insufficient to provide this service for the rental inspection program. Additionally, an amendment to the collective bargaining agreement would need to be negotiated before employees could perform this service.

Status: Rejected

16. Monitor the EMS program in the City.

The Easton Emergency Squad is the primary provider of emergency medical services (EMS). Although the City contemplated taking a more active role, there is currently no plan for the City to increase its role in EMS.

Status: Implemented

17. Develop and incorporate a volunteer program into the department.

The PFM Report recommended that the City utilize volunteer firefighters and develop a volunteer special services unit. The Chief is opposed to this because there would be a lack of cohesiveness between a part-time and a full-time firefighter. Further, the collective bargaining contract currently prohibits the use of volunteer firefighters.

Status: Rejected

18. Implement additional financial incentives.

The Chief searches for grants for programs and equipment for the department. As recommended in the PFM Report, the City is providing contractual services to the Borough of Glendon.

Status: Implemented

19. Enact an emergency response fee.

The PFM Report recommended that the City enact an emergency response fee to bill insurers for fire calls and motor vehicle accidents; the City's current legal research indicates that this kind of fee is not permitted in Pennsylvania.

Status: Rejected

Public Services Department

Public Works Director Dave Hopkins was interviewed and participated in the review and discussion of the recommendations in the PFM Report. Mr. Hopkins has been managing department operations since early 2004, and is well qualified to be a Public Works Director. He has a Bachelors Degree in Environmental Science, a Masters Degree in Public Administration, and is a certified wastewater and water treatment officer in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Prior to assuming this position with the City, he worked for two private engineering firms, and provided consulting services to municipalities. Among other changes and new programs, he has been instrumental in creating the new recycling program and acquiring a \$272,000 recycling equipment grant, qualifying for a \$14,000 recycling performance grant, restructuring the trash collection program, and saving the City \$1.1 million over the next 15 years by entering the City into Pennsylvania's Act 77 program. He has both short- and long-term plans and goals for maintaining and improving the current quality of public services.

The Public Services Department is composed of many diverse bureaus, including engineering, electric, wastewater, vehicle repair, parking, property maintenance, recreation, swimming pools, solid waste, and stormwater. With more than 70 employees in these diverse functions, it is a major challenge for one person to manage the entire department. Mr. Hopkins expresses pride in the increased efficiency and productivity that has occurred in more than three years of his management of the department. He believes that his workforce is competent, and has dedicated supervisors. He believes that overall morale in the department is excellent, and that he has a respectful relationship with the employees in his department. He indicates that the Mayor and City Council have been supportive of his department and its needs.

Of the 36 recommendations made in the PFM Report, 34 (94%) were either implemented, or reviewed and rejected. The following is a review of the current status of the recommendations and comments made in the PFM Report:

1. Increase the availability of underground utility-line plans.

The Bureau of Engineering is in the process of preparing and updating plans (through a GIS system) showing the location of utility lines. This is a time-consuming process that will provide a benefit to the City. The bureau should continue its update of these plans, and should set an aggressive schedule with a realistic deadline for completion.

Status: Implemented

2. Review and amend the City's schedule for fees on PA One Call, street cut, and sidewalk repairs.

The department has completed this review, and the Director believes that fees are representative of costs to the City. Outside utility companies, such as the Easton Suburban Water Authority and UGI, are held accountable for their own street repairs, and the department keeps up to date in its own street repairs.

Status: Implemented

3. Change the light bulbs in all traffic signals.

The City has already replaced the incandescent bulbs in the traffic signals with energy efficient LED bulbs. Further, in accordance with Pennsylvania Act 77, the City signed an

energy performance contract that replaced all lights in City-owned buildings, with an expected saving to the City of \$1.1 million over a 15-year period.

Status: Implemented

4. Review the cost of outsourcing traffic signal maintenance and repair.

The City has a full-time electrician and one assistant who perform a number of services for the City, including traffic signal repair, installation of the holiday decorations, and repair to many electrical facilities. The financial efficiency of this program saves the City thousands of dollars each year because of the skills of this electrician in comparison to the high market price of electricians and traffic signal personnel in the private sector. The Director believes that the outsourcing of this service would be significantly more expensive for the City than the current in-house operation.

Status: Implemented

5. Evaluate the feasibility of purchasing all street lights.

The Director has spoken to Met-Ed in connection with the possible acquisition of all street lights in the City. Bethlehem Township and municipalities in the suburban Philadelphia area completed this type of acquisition several years ago, saving thousands of dollars each year. *The strategy of the acquisition is that the cost of owning and maintaining the street-light hardware while only paying for the electricity to power the lights is less than the current system of paying one monthly fee for renting the hardware, including the electricity. Although Met-Ed's initial response to the Director was negative, the City should consider this type of feasibility study.*

Status: Implemented

6. Outsource the major repair of vehicles (including the paint booth operation), continue the in-house service only on minor repairs and routine maintenance, and conduct a cost/benefit analysis on continued use of the City-owned hydraulic lifts.

The Motors Bureau has four mechanics and one supervisor who perform most vehicle repairs and maintenance; all mechanics are currently certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). Paper work records are kept, which could be more effectively maintained electronically, but this is a minor inefficiency.

The City does subcontract its major repairs to private vehicle repair garages, but only if City employees do not have the knowledge and/or equipment to perform the repair. With approximately 250 vehicles and many other pieces of equipment in the City fleet, all of these employees are busy.

The paint booth was installed in 2003, and its annual cost is not prohibitive to the City. The City owns three hydraulic lifts used by the mechanics, and all are in excellent shape and safety certified.

Overall, the Director believes that the Motor Bureau is an in-house operation that is efficient and productive, and that the cost of outsourcing vehicle and equipment maintenance would be greater than the current cost.

Status: Rejected

7. Review the feasibility of continuing the in-house sign shop.

The City operates its own sign shop, which is certified by PennDOT (at the time of the PFM Report, it was not PennDOT certified). The department maintains the necessary

quantity of needed materials, and can produce signs faster and less expensively than if purchased from a private company.

Status: Implemented

8. Evaluate the staffing level of the department.

With one exception, the Director believes that the current level of employees is sufficient to be both efficient and productive. The exception is the lack of seasonal employees available between May and August. The cost of these employees (typically college students who are working during summer vacation) is approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000 per summer per employee. The benefit of these employees is far greater than the cost; this kind of seasonal employee is able to perform many kinds of maintenance tasks at a time of year when there are an extreme number of maintenance tasks to be performed. *It is recommended that the City return to its previous practice of utilizing 6-10 seasonal employees during the summer.*

Status: Implemented

9. Close the Eddyside Swimming Pool.

The PFM Report recommended that the City-owned and operated swimming pool on College Hill be closed. The City reviewed this recommendation in 2006 and 2007. The City Council decided to keep the pool open to the public. Given the fact that City Council made its decision, further comment is not necessary except to say that few public swimming pools are profitable, but many municipalities and their residents view a public swimming pool as a valuable service that is offered to residents regardless of its cost.

Status: Rejected

10. Eliminate the City-operated youth sports programs.

The City directly sponsors and operates football, baseball, soccer, basketball, and cheerleading programs for youth. Given the cost and insurance liability of such programs, the PFM Report recommended that the City work, or help to establish, an organization that would manage these programs. *According to the Director, parental and other adult volunteer support to run these types of programs is insufficiently low; if the City ceases to sponsor and operate these programs, they will ultimately not exist. Given this situation, the City should continue to sponsor and operate these programs. The long term benefits of the City providing this service to the youth of today (who will be the adults of tomorrow) outweigh the short term costs.*

Status: Rejected

11. Develop a recreation plan.

The City has completed a new recreation plan. It has also recently applied for a grant of \$45,000 from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to perform a swimming pool master study and running track construction study.

Status: Implemented

12. Administer the scheduling, setup, and cleanup of cultural events and concerts.

The department has assumed the responsibility for many of these programs.

Status: Implemented

13. Enter into an agreement with the Pennsylvania Boat Commission to have the state take control of the City's boat ramps.

The department has not looked into this possibility, but the Director does not believe that maintenance of these ramps is expensive, nor does he believe that the likelihood of insurance claims is very high.

Status: Rejected

14. Increase the use of volunteers in department operations and consider the creation of programs that generate fees which will improve financial self-sufficiency.

The department does utilize volunteers, such as the Master Garden Association. These volunteers have assisted the City in several beautification activities, including the planting of landscaping and painting of meter posts.

Fees are charged for youth sports, but the Director is concerned that an increase in participant fees (as proposed in the PFM Study) to generate additional revenue would reduce the number of participants in the programs.

Status: Implemented

15. Increase the maintenance done in Hugh Moore Park; increase the visibility of the Historic Canal Museum.

This park is owned by the City, but maintenance of the park and marketing and maintenance of the museum are the responsibility of the Hugh Moore Park Commission. The City makes a financial contribution to the Commission each year, and provides ancillary assistance as needed.

Status: Implemented

16. Establish a preventative maintenance program for the bridge to Hugh Moore Park.

The City is responsible for maintaining the bridge that enters the park, but not for the one exiting the park. *The City Engineer has provided annual inspections of its bridge, and determined that, while the bridge is safe to use, maintenance to several components of the bridge is necessary. The City needs to include this needed maintenance work in its annual capital improvement plan, which is addressed throughout this study.*

Status: Not Implemented

17. Restructure the role between the Easton Area Joint Sewer Authority and the City as it pertains to the industrial pretreatment program and engineer.

The City has a long-standing financial relationship with the Authority concerning operations at the wastewater treatment plant. This type of relationship between a municipality and its authority is not unusual, but through the efforts of the Director, in recent years changes have been made to maintain the efficiency of the plant. The engineer is currently the Executive Director, although Mr. Hopkins is still significantly involved in operational matters. In the past year, the City ended a privatization contract that resulted in the City hiring two employees of its own to save money. The contract with the private firm that is administering the industrial pretreatment program expires in the spring 2008, and the City will be carefully analyzing the situation before any decision is made concerning industrial pretreatment services in the future.

Status: Implemented

18. Examine the equipment being used to dry the sewage plant sludge and how the sludge is transported to the final disposal site.

The department is using filter presses to dry (dewater) the sludge. These presses are achieving 18% efficiency, which is acceptable for disposal purposes. As an alternative, the concept of drying the sludge to usable pellets is being considered. After careful review by the Director, the City has contracted with Chrin Hauling to transport the sludge to the landfill.

Status: Implemented

19. Repair the grit chamber in the wastewater treatment plant.

The grit chamber is a facility in the wastewater treatment plant that removes large products, such as rocks and concrete, from the sewage influent. This facility is currently being repaired, in accordance with the recommendation.

Status: Implemented

20. Prepare a comprehensive list of other facilities in the wastewater treatment plant that need repair.

The department is in the process of preparing this list.

Status: Implemented

21. Increase the level of training for employees.

The department has scheduled regular safety and standard operating plan (SOP) training for its employees. Further, employees have completed technical courses, such as those offered by the Pennsylvania Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP).

Status: Implemented

22. Review the feasibility of amending the trash collection contract to have the City-contracted trash collection contractor collect trash from the curbside City-owned trash containers.

The Director has looked into this possibility, and determined that it would be more expensive to have any private contractor collect the 200 trash containers than it would be for the City to continue to perform this service.

Status: Implemented

23. Revise the City's trash collection contract and program.

The City secured a new trash contract for 2007 through competitive bidding. By eliminating commercial and multi-family (greater than six) collections from the contract, the City was able to minimize the increase for residents (from \$23 to \$28 per month).

This price is competitive in the marketplace.

Status: Implemented

24. Restructure the recycling program.

The City has secured its first ever Pennsylvania Act 902 grant for \$272,000, which is paying for 90% of the cost of new collection equipment and resident recycling buckets. The City also started a recycling education program to alert commercial customers about the need to recycle, and has since received its first Pennsylvania Act 901 performance

grant for \$14,000. However, the Director knows that resident involvement could and should increase. The City should continue its resident and commercial customer education process to increase the amount of recyclables that are collected and reported to the state.

Status: Implemented

25. Establish a yard-waste recycling site.

The City has a drop-off site at 500 Bushkill Street for yard waste and recycling material.

Status: Implemented

26. Appoint a recycling coordinator.

The City has appointed a part-time person to fill this role.

Status: Implemented

27. Eliminate the weights and measures service.

This program has been eliminated.

Status: Implemented

28. Develop and implement an effective document management program that includes off-site back-up of information.

The City backs up its data daily, and once per week the storage disk is removed from City Hall to an off-site location.

Status: Implemented

29. Flood proof the public works facilities.

The City has experienced several floods in the past several years that incapacitated the public works complex on Bushkill Street. In 2007 the Director evaluated the feasibility of moving to another location versus better flood proofing the existing complex, and determined that it is preferable and significantly less costly to keep the complex at its current location. Another site would be a multi-million dollar expense, and although prone to flooding, the current site is spacious enough to house the department comfortably. Many measures have been taken to safeguard damage from another flood, including shelving that stores material above the flood levels experienced in the past.

Status: Implemented

30. Perform an energy audit to reduce costs.

In conformance with Pennsylvania Act 77, the City entered into an energy performance contract through competitive bidding. The result of this program is that the City is guaranteed to save approximately \$1.1 million over a 15-year period, averaging more than \$73,000 per year.

Status: Implemented

31. Evaluate and modify standard operating procedures for the department.

The Director has completed this program for the department.

Status: Implemented

32. Perform analysis of departmental operations through compilation of internal data statistics.

The Director established specific goals for the department at the beginning of the year, and maintains statistics related to activities completed, and whether goals are accomplished.

Status: Implemented

33. Develop and implement a capital replacement program.

The vehicle fleet used by the department is in the process of being upgraded through the \$272,000 recycling grant received by the City. However, *the City has no formal or informal capital replacement program. It is important that the City establish a capital improvement plan for all departments so that there is a schedule for replacing all capital equipment, knowing the cost of each year's program and how it is to be paid for each year.*

Status: Not Implemented

34. Purchase notebook computers and GIS units.

The PFM Report recommended that this electronic equipment would assist the City and save time. The Director believes the current computer equipment is sufficient for departmental needs, and that purchase of new electronic equipment would not produce benefits greater than the cost. He believes that the department can operate just as efficiently and productively without spending the money necessary to acquire this equipment.

Status: Rejected

35. Update employee job descriptions.

The Director indicates that this has been accomplished and that descriptions are revised, if necessary, whenever a position vacancy occurs.

Status: Implemented

36. Hire employee who speak Spanish

The PFM Report recommended that the department hire employees who speak Spanish because a large number of contractors have employees that speak only Spanish. The City has not implemented this policy other than to consider all applicants equally for all positions within the City.

Status: Rejected

Planning and Development Department

Director Barbara Kowitz was interviewed and participated in the review and discussion of the recommendations in the PFM Report. Ms. Kowitz has been Director of the department since July 2006. She is also the Executive Director of the Easton Redevelopment Authority. She first came to the City workforce as an Assistant to the Mayor in 1992, and became the Chief Planner in the Planning and Development Department in 1999. The Planning and Development Department performs all of the zoning and land-development reviews for projects in the City; completes the annual health and restaurant inspections; performs the code inspections required by the Uniform Construction Code; applies for and administers many of the grants awarded to the City; administers the Buyer Notification Inspection Program; provides all inspections involved in the Rental Property Inspection Program; administers the Community Development Block Grant Program; and fulfills the role as liaison to the Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board, Health Board, Redevelopment Authority, and Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. The Department is composed of 17 full-time employees and 4 part-time employees; even when the department is at full staff, it is a challenge to meet the demand for services.

Ms. Kowitz indicates that the Mayor and City Council have been supportive of the department and its needs during the time she has been Director. She believes that there is an excellent group of employees in her department, and that they work well together. In her opinion, there are three distinct needs for the department that would lead to greater efficiency and productivity. The first is increased use of the pentamation software, which would provide employees with easier and more thorough access to building, zoning, and other relevant information on city properties. *The City has had the pentamation software for its employees for several years, but department employees need to be trained in its use; despite having access to the software, employees are not currently using these programs. However, the City has begun this needed training in September of 2007.*

The second need for the department is the filling of all staff openings. *There have been several openings in the past several months, but due to the quality of applicants and civil-service testing requirements, it has taken many months to fill these openings. As of the date of this report, the City expects to have all authorized positions filled except for the important position of building inspector. In order for the department to operate more efficiently, it is important that the City find a qualified individual who is certified in many disciplines to fill this position.*

The final need for the department is an increase in the additional certification of inspectors, and cross training and education of clerical staff. The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code requires that all code inspectors be certified, and *the City needs to have its inspectors become certified in more disciplines, such as commercial building, plumbing, mechanical, fire protection, and accessibility. This will provide the City with a greater efficiency so that only one person will have to provide required inspection (such as building, electric and plumbing) services at a construction project/site. For clerical staff, the existing employees should be cross-trained about the different programs within the department so that their skills are more versatile to all of the operations within the department. This will help to ensure that there is a smooth transition in the event that individual staff members leave the department.*

Of the 32 recommendations made in the PFM Report, 24 (75%) were either implemented, or reviewed and rejected. The following is a review of the current status of the recommendations and comments made in the PFM Report:

1. Review City ordinances, procedures, and regulations to address problem properties in the City.

This recommendation from PFM was very general and encouraged the City to create a unified “force multiplier” approach using several city departments to increase the code compliance of buildings and property. The City has created the Technical Review Committee, consisting of representatives from the Police, Fire, and Planning Departments. This committee’s purpose is to review land development and subdivision applications, and to propose changes and corrections to improve neighborhood problems, including problem properties.

Status: Implemented

2. Monitor the progress of the Rental Property Inspection Program to ensure its effectiveness.

The City created a rental inspection program in 2006 that requires that all rental properties be inspected for code compliance once every four years. The City contracted with Keystone Municipal Services to administer the program, using City employees to do the required inspections. The contract with Keystone is expiring in September, and administration of the program will either continue to be provided by Keystone or will be done by the Planning and Development Department staff. With its first year almost completed, recent reports indicate that the City is slightly behind schedule on issuance of licenses. However, the Keystone representative administering the program indicates that the reason for this is that the number of inspections located in the year one district is greater than the other districts, and that, with diligent continuation, the City will be able to issue all required licenses in the four-year time frame. The Director is aware of how important it is for the department keep up-to-date with inspections and permits to continue the effectiveness of this program.

Status: Implemented

3. Improve enforcement of needed corrections in the Buyer Notification Program.

Approximately eight years ago, the City passed an ordinance to require that all property be inspected prior to sale or transfer. Along with the Rental Property Inspection Program, the purpose was to increase the code compliance (and therefore safety and quality) of buildings. Although initial inspections are usually completed prior to the actual sale or transfer of a property, required corrections can take up to 12 months due to the fact that there is no enforcement mechanism to require that the code deficiencies be corrected within any reasonable period of time. *The City is encouraged to improve the enforcement mechanism in this program. One way would be to pass an amendment to the existing ordinance that would require a buyer to secure a “certification stamp” from the City before a deed can be recorded at the Northampton County Courthouse. The City would not apply its certification stamp unless the required inspection had been made, or if appropriate, some formal agreement reached as to the schedule for making any required code improvements. This program would give the City final control in enforcement of the program.*

Status: Not Implemented

4. Develop a program that provides turnkey packets to applicants that includes information on health licenses, building inspections, zoning applications and subdivision/land development.

This recommendation calls for the distribution of comprehensive packets to applicants to reduce staff and applicant time necessary to gather all of the information necessary to open a business, modify an existing business or building, or construct a new building. *The department has not prepared this kind of comprehensive information packet, which would be an excellent, applicant-friendly approach to the securing of permits. Additionally, the City could place this information on its website; the availability would reduce staff and applicant time. The City is strongly encouraged to prepare this kind of packet of information, and to amend its website to include the same information.*

Status: Not Implemented

5. Improve financial self-reliance by reviewing permit fee schedules to determine if fees are representative of actual cost to provide services.

Municipalities should review their fee schedules to determine if the fees they are charging are both representative of the cost to provide the services, and fair in the marketplace compared to the schedules of other municipalities in the region. In the fall of 2006, the Director completed this analysis and submitted recommendations to City Council, which adopted the proposed changes.

Status: Implemented

6. Increase the cross-certifications of inspectors.

The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code requires that all inspectors in Pennsylvania be certified in specific disciplines under the International Building Code (IBC). The more certifications that an individual inspector possesses, the more efficient a code inspection program can be through fewer inspectors having to visit an individual site. The department has eight inspector positions, including the Chief of the Code Division. Currently, there are two staff openings. Of the remaining six current employees, the majority are only certified in one discipline. The Chief (with certifications in six disciplines) is the only inspector qualified to make multiple inspections on a regular basis. *The City should seek to have all inspectors become certified in additional disciplines, and to provide the same opportunity to new employees so as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the inspection program.*

Status: Not Implemented

7. Consider the feasibility of establishing other programs that encourage the preservation and improvement of owner-occupied residential properties.

In its report, *PFM proposed that reverse-mortgage, tax-abatement and neighborhood-improvement programs be created for residential property improvements. These types of programs would benefit property owners, and the City is encouraged to research the feasibility of their creation after other issues of greater importance are addressed in the department.*

Status: Not Implemented

8. Revise the Comprehensive Plan.

Pennsylvania municipal law requires municipalities to undergo a review to update their comprehensive plan every ten years. Inasmuch as Easton's last review was 1997, this update should be done soon. The City is encouraged to utilize its Planning Commission, department staff, and/or a private consultant to complete this review. At the time of this report, the City is discussing the feasibility of conducting a regional approach to comprehensive planning with several other municipalities in Northampton County.

Status: Not Implemented

9. Revise the timing of final adoption of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

The City has just completed the first draft of a new Zoning Ordinance, and is going through the required legal procedure prior to adoption. The PFM Report suggests that final adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance should be postponed until adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is completed; under normal conditions, this proposed procedure is correct. Given that there is no current plan for preparation of the new Comprehensive Plan, from a practical viewpoint, the City should move ahead with adoption of the new Zoning Ordinance. If the new Comprehensive Plan ultimately provides for needed changes to the Zoning Ordinance, changes can be made at that time.

Status: Rejected

10. Update the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

The same consultant the City used to prepare the proposed Zoning Ordinance has been contracted to prepare needed changes to this ordinance.

Status: Implemented

11. Reduce the formality of the pre-application process for land development applications, and streamline staff review.

The department has encouraged land development applicants to file preliminary development plans. This process is more efficient than the previous procedure, and provides staff with the opportunity to offer comments to applicants prior to the formal submission of plans. The PFM Report also recommended that the staff address engineering issues in the plans before the Planning Commission begins its review. The Director believes that the current procedure is more applicant-friendly; therefore, the process has remained the same relative to engineering issues. It is common that engineering issues are resolved during or at the end of the review of land development plans.

Status: Implemented

12. Expand the role of the Technical Review Committee to include review of subdivision and land development applications.

The Technical Committee is composed of planners, the City Engineer, the City Traffic Officer, and inspectors who meet regularly to discuss issues and projects. The role of this committee has been expanded to include review of land subdivision and land development applications.

Status: Implemented

13. Encourage land development applicants to submit subdivision plans in electronic and paper form.

The Director believes that this is a good recommendation, but has not yet implemented the proposed change. *Currently, applicants submit plans in paper format only; simultaneous submission in electronic form would make some reviews faster for staff. The department is encouraged to request applicants to submit plans in both forms.*

Status: Not Implemented

14. Create changes to city ordinances to address floodplain management.

The City has experienced several, severe floods in recent years, and the PFM Report proposed that ordinances be revised to increase the floodplain management program. The Director indicates that the proposed Zoning Ordinance addresses this need by extending the City's review of proposed development into the 500-year floodplain zone. The Director has also spoken to FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and encouraged them to perform a study to verify the floodplain elevations on the existing map.

Status: Implemented

15. Consider a change in administration of the Historic District Management program.

The City has an ordinance that requires property owners in a designated historic district to undergo a more extensive review than other property owners when applying for building permits. The application is then referred to the Historic Commission, which completes the review. The Director agrees that in some cases, it would be more thorough to outsource the staff time to a more experienced consulting firm. However, in order to save money, the Director has continued to have the department staff provide the review.

Status: Rejected

16. Update and expand the Geographic Information System (GIS).

A GIS program is an invaluable tool to map out streets, utility locations, and other details. The Chief Planner in the department is the unofficial GIS Manager. She coordinates all requests from other City departments to provide information from GIS files. The City was recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to upgrade the existing "arcview" program so that all department personnel are using the same version of arcview. In order to fully utilize GIS, employees must take the necessary time to input the data into the files; the City is still in the preliminary stages of this implementation.

Status: Implemented

17. Create a program that backs up all computer data.

The data processing division of the City backs up all computer hard drives nightly and stores these information disks at an off-site location.

Status: Implemented

18. Create a formal public relations campaign to promote the accomplishments of the department.

PFM recommended that the department should promote itself by highlighting its accomplishments. Although this recommendation was limited to this department, *the City should take steps to promote all of its accomplishments and the services it provides*

to residents and visitors. While the media frequently reports on “negative” activities that occur in the public sector, municipalities need to highlight the positive attributes, services, and developments of their municipality as a good place to live and work. The City should adopt this strategy by adding information to its website, and by including this information in its newsletter to give residents a more positive view of the advantages of living and working in Easton.

Status: Not Implemented

19. Update standard operating procedures.

The department currently has few written SOP guidelines. Two written policies were created recently. One is for the handling of cash in the department whereby all employees will remit fees collected to the Treasurer’s office daily. The other written policy concerns the completion of daily log books. The Director should continue to produce these types of written policy so all employees have standard rules to follow in day-to-day activities.

Status: Implemented

20. Produce monthly and annual reports on all activities.

The Director has been in her current position for only one year, but has made some progress on producing these types of reports, though significantly more needs to be done. The Director did prepare a report for City Council in November 2006 that presented statistics on departmental activities, but monitoring of these activities was not done during the year. Monthly and annual reports on department-wide activities, and specific programs such as the buyer inspection and rental property inspection programs, Zoning, Historic and Planning Commissions, and Redevelopment Authority should be completed. These kinds of reports show the activity in the department and allow for effective evaluation of work completed over a number of months and years.

Status: Implemented

21. Change the structure of the department to require that the City Planner reports to the Chief Planner.

This change has been made.

Status: Implemented

22. Consolidate the health and code divisions of the department.

The Director has not incorporated this recommendation; although the function of the two divisions is related, she believes that their activities are different enough to maintain the current structure of the two divisions. Further, she does not believe that any cost savings would be realized by this change.

Status: Rejected

23. Review staffing levels.

The Director presented in November 2006 a written analysis to City Council proposing increases in personnel levels. The result of her recommendations was the addition of several part-time positions. The main staffing concern currently is the City’s inability to fill the position of Building Inspector due to civil service regulations, and a lack of

qualified applicants. The City needs to continue with its efforts to fill this much needed position.

Status: Implemented

24. Change manpower schedules to create evening and weekend hours.

It is true that in today's changing world, this kind of change would be resident and customer friendly. It could only be accomplished with modifications to the collective bargaining agreement.

Status: Not Implemented

25. Purchase additional computer hardware.

The PFM Report recommended that the department acquire new handheld computers, GPS units, and improved desktop computers. The Director agrees with the recommendation for handheld computers, but wants to wait to monitor the success of the new mobile data terminals recently purchased by the Police Department. She does not believe that the department would benefit from use of the GPS units. Currently, all desktop computers meet the needs of the staff.

Status: Rejected

26. Require employees to prepare daily logbooks to document their activities.

This requirement should be one of the standard operating procedures of the department. Recently the Director issued a written directive to all inspectors requiring them to document all of their activities.

Status: Implemented

27. Update all job descriptions.

This has been done.

Status: Implemented

28. Retain a third-party inspector to provide supplemental services for inspections.

The department is using the services of Codemaster to perform inspections when needed.

Status: Implemented

29. Consolidate volunteer committees.

The PFM Report recommended that the City explore the feasibility of consolidating the Vacant Property Committee, Planning Commission, Zoning Review Committee and the Redevelopment Authority. The Director disagrees with the recommendation, and believes that the current structure allows these committees to focus on their individual assignments and subject matters. Contrary to the PFM Report analysis, she does not believe that a consolidation would result in greater efficiency of staff time.

Status: Rejected

30. Transfer the management of cultural arts activities to another person or department.

Recently, the City has received a grant to hire a part-time person within the Public Services Department to manage these programs.

Status: Implemented

31. Reduce reliance on use of Community Development Block Grant funds.

The PFM Report pointed out that the City uses its annual, federally funded CDBG grant to pay for operational costs of the department. While PFM is correct that there is no guarantee that CDBG funding will continue in the future, the Director says that this is a permitted use, and given the City's financial condition, it has no choice but to use CDBG funds for operational costs.

Status: Rejected

32. Consider the use of lobbyists to secure additional federal funding.

The PFM Report stated that its experience is that the use of lobbyists in Washington produces a favorable return on investment. There are few municipalities in eastern Pennsylvania that utilize the services of a lobbyist. Although lobbyists might produce a positive return, they charge for their services without any guarantee of securing a grant. The City has not used a lobbyist to date, and researching the feasibility of use of one at this time is not a high priority.

Status: Rejected

Economic Development

Mayor Phil Mitman, Planning Director Barb Kowitz and Main Street Manager Kim Kmetz were interviewed during the review of this section of the PFM Report.

The PFM Report recommended that the City establish the promotion of residential growth as its main economic development strategy. While the City has not formulated any kind of written policy concerning economic development, the stimulation of economic activity is a strategy established through a team effort which is led by the Mayor. Mr. Mitman indicates that throughout his (almost) four years as Mayor, he has spent as much as 60-70% of his time on economic development activities. He has three goals: to improve the business economic development on Northampton Street between the river and Seventh Street; to revitalize the overall economic climate in all of downtown Easton through the efforts of the Greater Easton Development Partnership and the Main Street Program; and to make Easton a location attractive to residential developers. He wants to increase the visibility of the City in the Lehigh Valley area through his involvement in regional activities. Although landlocked to a large degree, the City has several existing and proposed, commercial and residential projects, including the Eastonian, Riverwalk, Pomeroy's, Delaware Terrace, North Third Street (by Lafayette College), the Majestic, Jacobs Knoll and the Bushkill Creek Corridor. The Mayor indicates that he is proud of how he has set a foundation of economic development for the City to grow upon in the future. In May 2006, consultant Wallace Roberts Todd completed an Economic Development Plan for the Greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP). The plan called for a vision of "a Central Business District that capitalizes on its assets—a strategic location, magnificent natural setting, visitor attractions such as State Theater and Two Rivers Landing, and rich history and heritage—to reinforce its role as a regional destination that attracts new residents, visitors from inside and outside the Lehigh Valley, and workers." This vision is consistent with that of the Mayor.

The City provides assistance to various economic development programs to stimulate growth, including the creation of a Keystone Opportunity Zone, the provision of loans for residential rehabilitation through the HOME program, and the acquisition and ultimate sale of properties under the Disposition Program.

The City was one of the first Elm Street Program municipalities in the state, which will provide financial assistance to property owners in the City's West Ward who make improvements to their property.

Currently the City is considering the creation of a special tax abatement program under the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Act (LERTA). This program can delay the additional property tax that is incurred when rehabilitation occurs on a property that would otherwise increase the property tax liability.

Of the 13 recommendations made in the PFM Report, 8 (61%) were implemented. The following is a review of the current status of the recommendations and comments made in the PFM Report:

1. Develop a long term strategy and plan of economic development that includes promotion of residential growth as its focus, using a review of best practices.
Although the City has worked to improve economic development as discussed above, they have not developed any kind of written plan and strategy.
Status: Not Implemented
2. Conduct an analysis of the existing tax assessment data to assist in the evaluation and prioritization of real estate developments.
The City has not completed this kind of analysis.
Status: Not Implemented
3. Frame all of the development projects to be consistent with the City's strategy and the WRT study, and create a plan document that presents this strategy.
The City has not prepared this plan, but is utilizing the strategy of promotion of residential development in its interactions with developers.
Status: Implemented
4. Utilize grant dollars from the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation to develop a logo/branding effort.
The Easton Main Street Program has completed this task, according to Manager Kim Kmetz.
Status: Implemented
5. Create another staff position in the Planning and Development Department to assist with economic development activities.
The City has been searching for a part time employee to assist with these activities, but has been unable to find a qualified person. In the meantime, they are using a consultant to assist with grant project administration.
Status: Implemented
6. Utilize department staff to focus on proposed projects that are consistent with the strategy of promotion of residential development.
The Planning and Development Department does not have sufficient staff to assign individual employees exclusively to a project. However, consistent with the team effort to encourage economic development, staff members provide whatever assistance is necessary to assist all developers who file applications with the City. The Mayor attempts to establish positive relationships where appropriate.
Status: Implemented
7. Reduce the number of small, sub-recipient Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) awards, and increase both CDBG and capital expenditures on activities that promote economic development.
The City utilizes CDBG grants to support services that also help the City balance its budget. There are fewer grants provided than in prior years, and although much of CDBG grant money goes to City-provided services, the money is used for quality-of-life projects and services that improve the overall economic development in the City, such as

police protection, fire equipment and sidewalk improvements. The City spends its limited, capital expenditure funds on improvements, equipment and projects that are most crucial to the City. As proposed earlier in this report, the City needs to complete a five year Capital Improvement Program that addresses its most needed projects.

Status: Implemented

8. Develop a strategy to improve development of vacant and underutilized land in the Southside of the City.

While the City does not have a written strategy for economic development for the Southside, it has tentatively agreed to provide one million dollars for the \$70 million dollar reconstruction of the Delaware Terrace Housing Project, which is being completed by the Easton Housing Authority.

Status: Not implemented

9. Become involved with the Lehigh Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau.

This recommendation has not been followed.

Status: Not Implemented

10. Establish a partnership with Lafayette College.

In the past year, the City has entered into several partnership programs with the college, including the rehabilitation of properties and the painting of sidewalk fencing along College Avenue, construction of crosswalks on Cattell Street, and the joint funding of the Ambassador Program.

Status: Implemented

11. Strongly support the Easton Main Street program.

The City provides financial support to both the GEDP and the Main Street Program.

Status: Implemented

12. Review the feasibility of a regional approach to the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan.

Through the coordinating effort of State Representative Robert Freeman, the eight municipal members of the Two Rivers COG (including Easton) are in the process of discussing this possibility.

Status: Implemented

13. Develop a long-term strategy to improve the appearance of the entrances to Easton.

While the City has not established any kind of written long term strategy plan, several improvements have been made or are being planned, including additional signage and the repainting of the mural along Route 611.

Status: Not Implemented

