



# Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania Proactively Attacks Data and Problems with OpenGov



AGENCY TYPE  
Township

POPULATION  
33,000

ANNUAL BUDGET  
\$56 Million

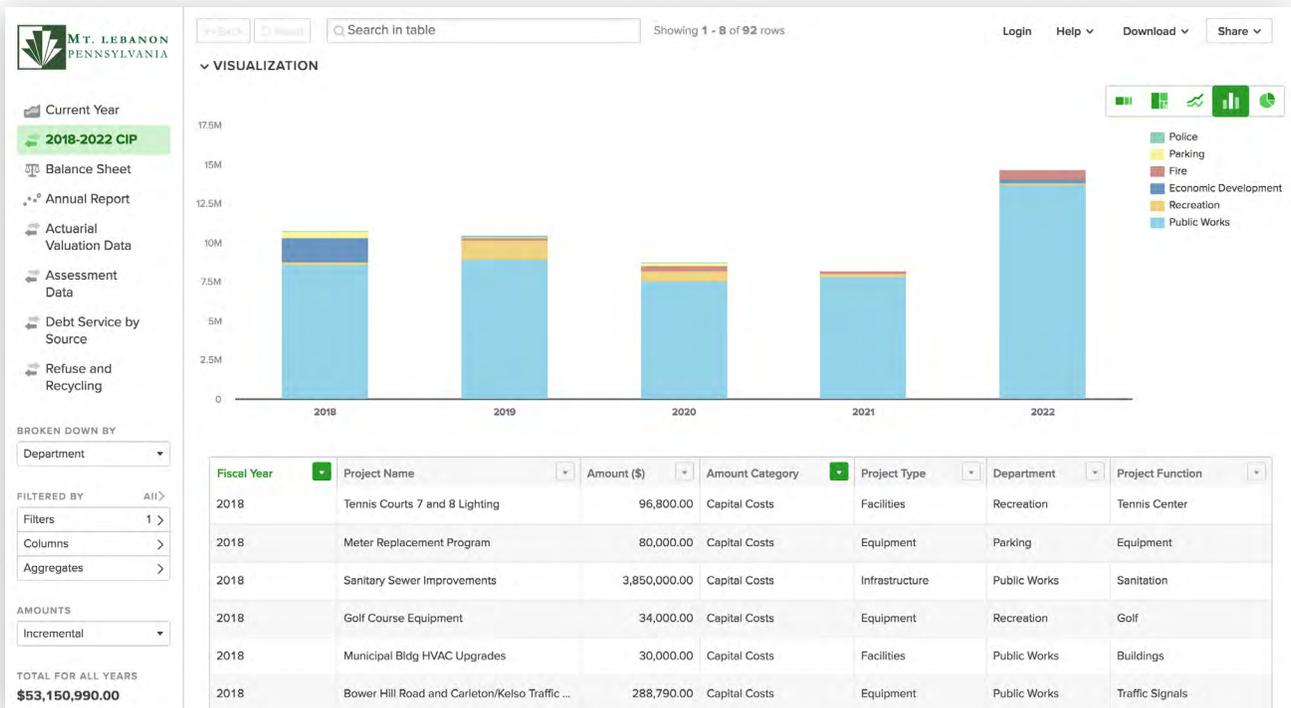
Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania is an affluent suburb located just seven miles south of Pittsburgh and known for, among other things, once being home to famous residents including Mark Cuban, Joe Manganiello, Mario Lemieux, and Gillian Jacobs. On land purchased from William Penn’s descendants now sits a bustling business district comprised of art galleries, restaurants, and boutiques.

Mt. Lebanon’s Finance Director, Andrew McCreery, sought a way to augment the town’s Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to improve communications with department heads and the public. The town’s staff also needed a better way to view relevant information at a more detailed level to determine the cause of reduced revenue streams.

## Inability to Manipulate Data Hindered Critical Insight

Before Mt. Lebanon implemented OpenGov in 2016, department heads received information as static, paper reports. “It was really difficult for directors to slice and dice the information,” McCreery said. The Finance Department was also not equipped to run reports easily. “We were relying on the department heads to run ad hoc reports themselves,” he said. It was difficult for them because the existing ERP system did not allow for simple manipulation of data.

McCreery and his staff used OpenGov to analyze revenue streams and better understand town finances at a more detailed level. “OpenGov has allowed me to see different problems and use the power of the system to attack them,” he said.



Mt. Lebanon's Capital Improvement Planning report helps communicate the City's upcoming costs associated with capital projects.

For instance, at one point, the town recognized that its Earned Income Tax receipts were remaining flat, but it did not know exactly why. Before using OpenGov, navigating the data points was overwhelming, which hindered meaningful analysis. But when McCreery drilled down into the data in OpenGov, he had a real explanation for the trend within an hour: the decrease was not pervasive. There was actually a slight increase within the town's core earner band. However, the number of the high-earners had decreased, which resulted in the flat receipts.

“OpenGov has absolutely made us more proactive in looking at data and attacking the data, instead of saying, ‘It’s too big,’” McCreery said. “You can use the platform to analyze any data that you choose. My favorite thing about OpenGov is not knowing what you’re about to see. You put in data and think you know what you’re going to see, and all of a sudden, something else jumps out at you.”

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**ANDREW MCCREERY**  
Finance Director, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania

## Quick OpenGov Implementation and Consistent Support

McCreery was very familiar with his ERP system and Excel, and he was initially skeptical that importing all of his town's information into the OpenGov platform could be done quickly. “Most cities would think it would be very hard to upload any amount of data into OpenGov,” McCreery said. “In Mt. Lebanon's case, it took us just half a day.”

Not only was OpenGov’s Customer Success team key to the software’s deployment, but the team also remained a constant resource beyond the platform’s launch, including supporting the town’s efforts in actively engage citizens and stakeholders using the platform. “They’ve been there all along the way, helping to ensure that there is a successful implementation,” McCreery said.

McCreery said the platform’s ease of use is its best quality. “We’ve loved using OpenGov from the moment we got it,” he said. “It’s adaptable to whatever your situation is.”

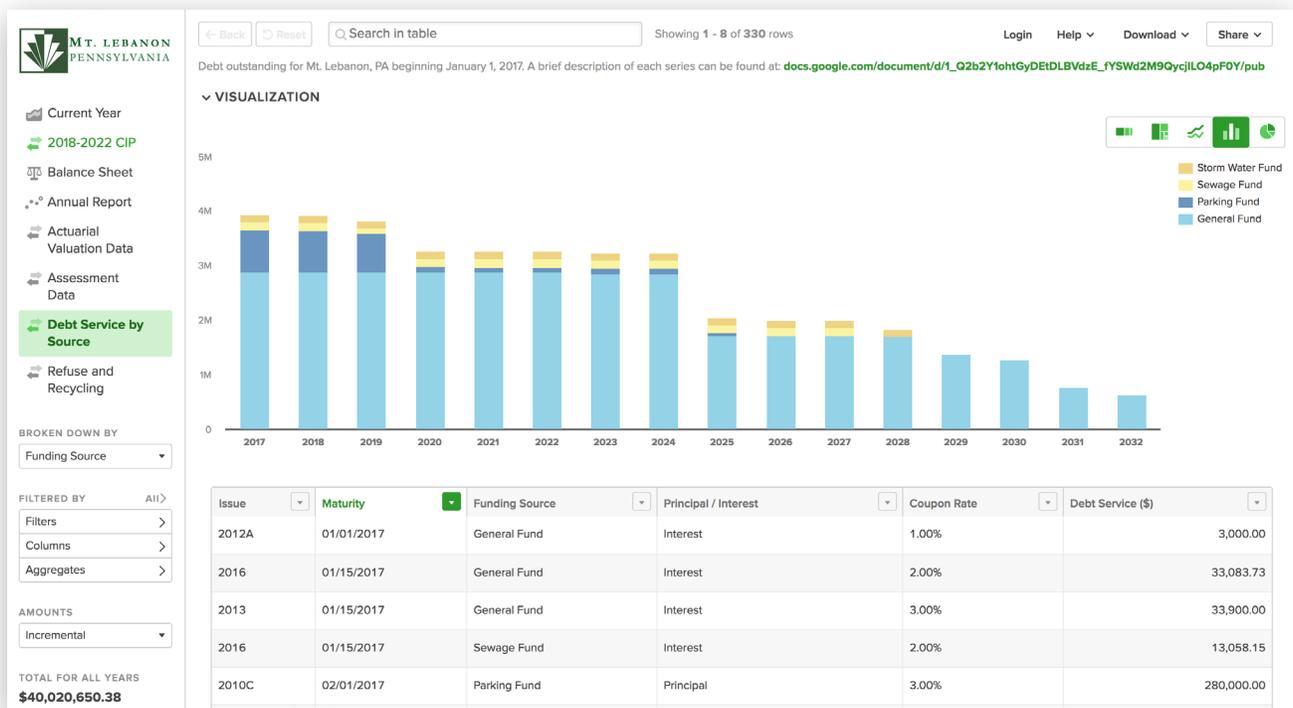
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## Internal Reporting Gets a Boost

Before OpenGov’s implementation, the town did its reporting exclusively in Excel. Not only did the staff have to wrangle numerous spreadsheets, but department heads were left to undertake any data manipulation on their own. “What OpenGov really allowed us to do is provide a point-and-click process for staff to better understand their own numbers,” McCreery said. “It’s all online, and easy for them to understand.”

McCreery said, “Internal reporting has really blossomed under OpenGov.” He pointed out that the system notifies department heads and other selected users when data sets have been uploaded or updated. “People have come to expect that they can go in and see real-time data,” he noted. This has led to department heads becoming more involved in their own data. “We’ll be sitting in meetings, and department heads are



OpenGov makes Mt. Lebanon’s ERP data dynamic, easier to work with, and more useful for reporting.

getting the e-mail that data has been uploaded, and they're clicking on it," he said. "This was not happening before."

## Communication with Stakeholders is Enhanced

"OpenGov has made my organization highly effective in communicating financial data, not only to department heads and commission members but also to the public," McCreery said. He has seen value in using OpenGov in presentations to Commissioners and other elected officials because the interactive platform helps staff present the information they want to convey while also offering real-time access to the data of interest to officials, making presentations more dynamic.

"Using OpenGov in a financial presentation really breaks down the barriers that were there with static data," McCreery explained. He noted how non-financial professionals might not have confidence with numbers presented in column after column on physical paper, but OpenGov's easy-to-understand visualizations can make a meaningful difference. "With bar graphs, pie

graphs, and interactive charts, the things you need can be shown in real time as you navigate the data, and it empowers people," he said.

He said presenters also benefit when using OpenGov during presentations. OpenGov's adaptability makes mid-stream adjustments much simpler during live presentations. "You might have one mindset as to where the presentation should go, but you can change views if things go in a different direction," he explained.

## Transparency and Accountability Strengthened

McCreery, a long-time open data proponent, noted how OpenGov has been a valuable partner in Mt. Lebanon's transparency efforts. The features that empower elected officials during presentations are the town's first step in communicating more effectively with town residents. McCreery plans to proactively push data out to citizens, creating awareness of trends that impact them with new dashboard features. "OpenGov is helping me be more accountable not only to the citizenry but also to myself," McCreery said.

## RESULTS

- ✓ **Improved Revenue Analysis.** Finance Director quickly uncovered true reason behind flat Earned Income Tax receipts using OpenGov.
- ✓ **On-Demand Data Empowered Department Heads.** With on-demand access to real-time information, department heads became proactively involved in manipulating and understanding their own data.
- ✓ **Stronger Presentations to Commissioners.** OpenGov's interactive interface provided easy-to-understand visualizations of the staff's narrative while enabling them to answer questions on the spot.