Acknowledgements

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Adopted July 31, 2018
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Cambria County Board of Commissioners
Adopted June 27, 2018
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Fulton County Board of Commissioners
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Huntingdon County Board of Commissioners
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Alleghenies Ahead is made possible by financial support from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

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INTRODUCTION

We need jobs. Jobs will fix our problems.

We can't find workers for the jobs we have.

These two statements echo across the Southern Alleghenies and shape many of the public and private discussions about what ails the region and what will make its communities and families stronger.

These are not contradictory statements, however. Instead, they reflect a reality that regions across the country have been grappling with for decades. Jobs that many parts of the Southern Alleghenies used to rely on in manufacturing, energy, and transportation — offering excellent wages in the postwar era to workers with a high school diploma or less — have mostly vanished and are not returning. This void is strongly felt in the form of empty or distressed houses and families that struggle to get by with low-wage jobs and lowered expectations.

On the other hand — and in stark contrast — the portion of our region’s workforce that is skilled is in high demand and able to live very comfortably in affordable communities. As Baby Boomers continue their transition to retirement, though, there won’t be enough of these workers.

This will create a shortage of electricians, nurses, plumbers, doctors, engineers, managers, farmers, and a wide range of other skillsets that businesses, institutions, and residents in the region rely on. These shortages are due, in part, to the decades of outmigration caused by previous economic ebbs and the thousands of people who don’t live here today because their parents or grandparents moved out in 1972, 1985, or more recently.

So, what is there to do that hasn’t already been done to deal with limited economic opportunities for workers with few or outdated skills and a looming shortage of skilled workers across the region’s economy? Why is there a nagging sense that decades of investment in highways, workforce training, industrial development, and numerous other initiatives haven’t fundamentally ‘fixed’ these issues? Why can’t we just create good jobs and use them to lure people back?

All good questions. It’s important, though, to acknowledge that creating jobs isn’t something that counties, cities, boroughs, or other public entities can do — outside of hiring people to maintain water systems, roads, courts, and perform other services for the public. Aside from just hiring people, the public sector’s role is limited to the task of directing limited resources and adopting policies that create the conditions that increase the likelihood that jobs will be created by the private sector and that skilled workers will have a greater probability of being retained in or attracted to our region.

The work needed to create these conditions in 2020 or 2030 — the investments we make in ourselves and our communities, in other words — will likely not resemble efforts made in previous eras. The work will require new financial and policy tools to accomplish certain goals, but it will also — and perhaps more importantly — require a change of attitude. Embracing risk and collaboration are central to the work of successful regions in the 21st Century.

Alleghenies Ahead is a collaborative effort to develop and implement strategies that will increase the region’s chances to create jobs, increase the region’s capacity to compete for households who have choices, and become a region of stronger and more vital communities. Alleghenies Ahead recognizes that no single project or issue or entity can do this — that it requires attention on multiple fronts that haven’t traditionally been connected to the problem of job creation or household attraction such as housing, recreation, and technology. Businesses and families have countless options today, and helping them choose the Southern Alleghenies is something that every investment and policy decision in the region — from whether to renovate a middle school, to the design of a Dollar General on Main Street — stands to influence.

Also shared by the region are numerous opportunities and assets that already make the region competitive, contribute to a high quality of life, and provide a strong base to build around.

A collection of natural landscapes and outdoor recreational opportunities that are equaled by few places in the eastern United States.

A rich agricultural heritage that remains vital today.

Proximity to the economic and cultural hubs of Pittsburgh, Baltimore/Washington, and State College — providing residents with easy access to major metropolitan assets.

Guided by the principle to “plan regionally and implement locally,” the counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset are working together on Alleghenies Ahead — Pennsylvania’s largest comprehensive planning and implementation effort — to pave the way for collaboration and joint action in a region where many opportunities and challenges are shared.
INTRODUCTION

How to Use This Document

Alleghenies Ahead provides a framework for making decisions and prioritizing actions in ways that best respond to key issues and the region's core values. Local governments and institutions at all levels – from regional to local – can use the framework to align their actions with those of other entities and to ensure that their actions are helping to contribute to stronger, more competitive communities.

In addition to its decision-making framework, Alleghenies Ahead also identifies specific priorities and actions to implement. But rather than serving as a static to-do list, these priorities and actions are intended to be regularly revisited and evaluated. Conditions change over time, after all, and priorities in 2022 could be different from priorities in 2018.

Trends and Conditions

What are the most important trends shaping the region and its communities today – and how do they influence the region’s ability to compete and thrive? This section defines the region’s demographic disadvantage – especially its rapidly aging population – and the market conditions that inhibit investment by local governments.

Critical Issues

What are the biggest issues facing the region and how do they relate to the ability of communities to compete for households and businesses – especially those that have options? This section describes seven “Big Things” that have relevance across the region.

Values and Principles

Decisions are made everyday by public and private entities throughout the region on matters big and small. What values and principles can help in coordinating decision-making for collective impact?

This section identifies core values that are then distilled into four principles for decision-making: (1) Our region must first look within; (2) Our region must work together; (3) Our region must protect its natural beauty and historic character; (4) Our region must support creativity.

Setting Priorities

The financial and human resources needed to make progress on critical issues and position the region to better compete for businesses and households are limited. Channeling these resources in a focused way – rather than spreading them thin to little effect – is not only wise but necessary. This section identifies current priorities in the region and each county – areas where counties and communities are able and willing to dedicate the resources necessary to translate ideas into action.

Taking Action

What will be done to make progress on our priorities, and why? What outcomes will we seek and measure? Who will be accountable? What resources will they tap into? When will the work be done? This section identifies the specific activities to be undertaken at the local and regional levels.
INTRODUCTION
Forging Alleghenies Ahead

Alleghenies Ahead has been shaped by contributions from individuals throughout the region – including 75 residents serving on six county-level steering committees. They, in turn, engaged over 400 of their friends, neighbors, colleagues, and family members in “kitchen table conversations” to discuss the state of their communities, their core values, and how they make decisions.

The work of steering committee members was supplemented by an online survey, a week of open house events throughout the region, and small stakeholder meetings with leaders in key sectors.

But the work of Alleghenies Ahead – implementing strategies in the coming years that address critical issues and make the region more competitive – will be ongoing. Honest dialogue about resource allocation, priorities, and trade-offs will be essential as residents and their elected leaders are faced with decisions both foreseeable and unforeseeable.

75 Local Residents Serving on County Steering Committees

The voices behind Alleghenies Ahead

400+ Participants in kitchen table conversations

1,100+ completed responses
What trends and conditions are essential for us to address through our decisions and investments?

Our quality of life is great. Our schools are excellent. We’re close to big cities, but not too close. My family is rooted here.

Ask almost anyone in the Southern Alleghenies region about why they live here or what’s working in the region’s favor, and you’re likely to hear one or more of these sentiments. You’re also likely to get a list of what isn’t working or what threatens the health and viability of their communities. It might be jobs. It might be taxes and regulation. It might be the children or grandchildren who live two states away. It might be a dozen or more other things that people find discouraging, even as they acknowledge the region’s many advantages.

So, what are the most important underlying trends and conditions to be aware of in the Southern Alleghenies – and to address through actions taken on a daily basis in communities throughout the region? Two overarching trends stand out for the impact they are having, or will likely have, on the region’s long-term competitiveness and economic health.

Demographic Disadvantage

The aging of the region’s population isn’t a new phenomenon. The median age of every county in the region has been higher than the national median since 1970. And since 1980, the region’s population has been getting older at a faster rate than the rest of the country.

In the past, this could be shrugged off as an inevitable and perhaps even benign consequence of longer life expectancies. But the aging of the region doesn’t merely reflect the fact that people are getting older and living longer. It also reflects the relative smallness of the region’s younger generations – a gap that could have significant implications for the region’s labor and housing markets in the near future.

As this population age diagram demonstrates, populations above 35 all grew dramatically between 1980 and 2010 as Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, and their parents aged. Meanwhile, age cohorts below 35 all shrank during the same period – despite Millennials now forming the largest single generational block in the U.S.

The influence of the region’s Baby Boomers at a time when most are still in the workforce and at the peak of their earning potential (the last Baby Boomers will turn 65 in 2029) can be seen in recent economic data. Median household incomes in all six counties have either kept pace with or outpaced statewide income performance since 2000 – an unlikely scenario if the region had had thousands more early-career workers in the labor force.

Varying Implementation Capacity

Six counties and over 230 local jurisdictions make decisions and investments that influence their own competitiveness and that of the region. But many of these jurisdictions – especially cities and boroughs – have little capacity to invest in ways that are likely to make them more attractive to households and businesses that have options and can locate anywhere.
The stunted size of the region’s younger age cohorts is further expressed by vital statistics.

For example, the number of deaths have exceeded births in five of the region’s six counties since 2010, resulting in over 6,500 more deaths than births overall. The region’s birth rate – now 9.7 births per 1,000 residents – is well below the U.S. average of 12.3 and similar to rates found in Slovakia, Latvia, and other rapidly aging countries.

Migration patterns also reflect the widening demographic gap, in part because younger adults (especially those under 30) are more mobile and more likely to move from one place to another than older households. Between 2010 and 2016, all six counties in the region experienced a net out-migration of residents to other parts of the U.S., with a net regional loss of just over 10,000 residents. And unlike the rest of Pennsylvania, immigration from other countries to the Southern Alleghenies was too small to offset domestic losses.

A significant part of the region’s demographic gap is much harder to measure – the people who were never born here to begin with because of out-migration in past decades. The gap coming into focus today is the cumulative result of decades of population loss or stagnancy.

6,500 more deaths than births in the region since 2010

**Birth Rate, 2016**

- **Southern Alleghenies**: 9.7Births per 1,000 residents
- **PA**: 11.0Births per 1,000 residents
- **US**: 12.3Births per 1,000 residents

**Migration Patterns, 2010-2016**

- **Pennsylvania**: -183,614 Domestic Migration (within US), 195,038 International Migration
- **Bedford**: -1,035 Domestic Migration, 32 International Migration
- **Blair**: -1,252 Domestic Migration, 213 International Migration
- **Cambria**: -6,057 Domestic Migration, 336 International Migration
- **Fulton**: -250 Domestic Migration, 30 International Migration
- **Huntingdon**: -406 Domestic Migration, 164 International Migration
- **Somerset**: -1,214 Domestic Migration, 194 International Migration
- **So. Alleghenies**: -10,214 Domestic Migration, 969 International Migration

10,200 more people moved out of the region’s counties to other parts of the country than moved in. Nationally, younger adults are the most mobile age group.

Only 969 people moved to the region from another country — not nearly enough to offset domestic losses.
What needs to be addressed?

A consistent message from employers in the region is this: they have a hard time finding workers to fill available jobs.

The region’s demographic disadvantage is likely to make this even more difficult in the coming decade, across most economic sectors and at most skill levels.

The labor force in prime working age (25-54) has fallen steeply in each county since 2000 despite rising nationally by 6%. Additionally, workers over 55 are nearing 30% of the workforce in the region, a dramatic shift from 2000 when only 10% of jobs were held by workers of that age.

One-third of all homeowners in the Southern Alleghenies region are age 65 or older. Collectively, they own nearly 45,000 homes.

Even a region with a growing population and strong housing demand would struggle to deal with the level of housing succession faced by the Southern Alleghenies. With almost 11,000 currently abandoned housing units across the region and relatively stagnant housing markets, the challenge facing the region is considerable.

Who will work in hospitals, schools, factories, restaurants, offices, fire departments, and other work settings in the coming years if the number of people leaving the workforce exceeds the pool of younger workers?

Will the region be able to attract enough younger workers from elsewhere?

Will companies want to operate here if they lack confidence in a ready labor supply?

Who will buy these houses as they land on the market – especially houses that have significant levels of deferred maintenance?

To what extent will prices be depressed by excessive supply – and what effect will that have on development of new housing stock and reinvestment by current owners?

If abandoned houses proliferate, will communities be able to respond to contain the damage to confidence and surrounding property values?
TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

2 Varying Implementation Capacity

Strong levels of demand for real estate and services are an indication that a place is competitive – that households and businesses want to be there and invest there. When demand is strong, property values rise, the tax base expands, and a community’s ability to invest in itself and shape its own future grows.

Using several indicators of demand and market strength, five types of local markets have been identified in the Southern Alleghenies region and reflect wide variations in local capacity to invest proactively in themselves. Only a few communities in the region are truly competitive today and exhibit strong levels of demand. Many more have more moderate levels of demand and are vulnerable to decline in the coming decade, or have low levels of demand.

Competing for younger households and entrepreneurs, or encouraging existing businesses to expand, requires investments in assets that people and businesses seek. Where demand is low, capacity to become more competitive is also low.

FIVE MARKET TYPES

Competitive Markets
These are the places where households and businesses with options – that can choose almost any location in the region – are choosing to be. Demand is strong, household incomes are strong, and levels of private and public investment are healthy – making these markets ever more desirable.

Stable Markets
These are not the most competitive markets in the region, but they are still doing well. Prices are rising at a healthy pace, vacancy and abandonment are minimal, and household incomes are strong.

At-risk Markets
These communities are in the middle – demand for housing is neither strong nor weak. Household incomes and poverty rates are about average for Pennsylvania. In a region that isn’t growing, though, these markets are at risk of slipping due to the region’s demographic disadvantages and may have limited means to deal with the fallout.

Weak Markets
The region’s weak markets may have been stable through most of the 20th century, but aging building stocks with growing levels of deferred maintenance have been stunting demand, dampening prices, and leading to growing concentrations of households with low incomes and few options. Tax bases are stagnant and limit local capacity to attract investment.

Distressed Markets
Demand has been weak for a prolonged period in these markets, resulting in high vacancy rates, low property values, and high concentrations of impoverished households that have few options. Perceptions of high risk keep private investment at a minimum.

Note: The county maps on the following pages (18-23) describe general market conditions in each municipality using the categories described above. These were determined through an equal weighting of the following indicators of demand: Population Change (2000-2015), Median Home Value vs. PA Median (2015), Median Home Value Change Relative to PA Medians (2000-2015), Housing Abandonment Rate (2015), Median Household Income vs. PA (2015), Median Household Income Change Relative to PA Medians (2000-2015), % of Residents Receiving SSI Income (2015), and % Receiving Public Assistance and/or SNAP (2015).

What needs to be addressed?
Counties and communities need to coordinate and invest limited resources in ways that will make themselves more marketable and competitive – and that requires focus and prioritization.
Bedford borough has one of the region’s most vibrant and charming central business districts. **To what extent can this be an engine to draw new households and businesses to the borough and county?**

A column of stable rural townships runs north-south through the center of the county. Some have strong agricultural sectors, others are buoyed by retirees and second homes. **What will farm succession and age-based housing turnover do to their stability?**

Several boroughs have weak or distressed markets and very little capacity to stimulate demand. **Who will invest in them and buy houses there? Do any of them have assets to preserve and build demand around?**

Frankstown is one of the strongest markets in the entire region. **For it and other suburban markets surrounding Altoona, what adaptations will be necessary as homes and infrastructure age?**

As a group, Blair County’s boroughs have stronger markets and more capacity than boroughs in other counties – led by a very stable Hollidaysburg. **What investments do they need to make, and what risks should they take, to get stronger?**

Altoona is out from under its Act 47 “financially distressed” status, but remains a fundamentally weak market. **What will it take to make Altoona a ‘community of choice’ in Blair County?**
Extreme municipal fragmentation has created a patchwork of stable, vulnerable, and distressed markets in close proximity around Johnstown. Can blight and abandonment in this area be addressed in a way that spurs reinvestment around key assets?

Central Cambria County – centered around Ebensburg – is generally stable. **What investments will keep these communities stable and help them compete with nearby Indiana?**

There are numerous weak and distressed boroughs with nominal tax bases. **Which ones will pursue merger or consolidation to bolster their financial capacities? Which ones are destined to keep shrinking – and is that okay?**

Fulton County is rural and mostly stable, helped in recent years by demand filtering across the Maryland border. A small population historically means that the county isn’t confronted with issues of oversupply.

McConnellsburg – the county’s lone population center – is a key asset and important for retaining skilled workers and essential services. It is also a weak market. **What investments will help to stimulate demand and make it one of the region’s more vital boroughs?**

**What happens if JLG Industries downsizes or leaves? What can be done to diversify a vulnerable economy?**
**TRENDS AND CONDITIONS**

**Huntingdon County**

The historic fabric of Huntingdon borough is remarkably well-preserved. What can be done to boost investment in this asset and bolster the borough's finances?

Raystown Lake is a major economic driver. How can the lake experience be enhanced and better tied to the economies of surrounding boroughs?

Can strong demand in nearby State College be coaxed into at-risk markets in northern Huntingdon County? How?

**Somerset County**

Most of the county's boroughs have weak levels of demand and investment. What collaborations with neighbors or each other will boost their capacity?

Downtown Somerset is well positioned to serve tourists and residents as a vibrant, mixed-use hub. Why hasn't this happened yet, and what can it learn from successful peers in the region?

Proximity to Pittsburgh is an asset – what can the county do to leverage it?
TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

The Bottom Line

Competing for younger households and expanding our ability to invest in ourselves – this is what we need to address through the decisions we make on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis.

Will the decisions we make...

...increase the likelihood that young skilled workers who live here will want to stay here?

...increase the likelihood that young skilled workers who don’t live here will choose to move here?

...increase the likelihood that entrepreneurs will start businesses here?

...improve our financial capacity to invest in ourselves?

...improve our community’s ability to make trade-offs that make us stronger?

What kinds of actions will help us compete for younger households and expand our ability to invest in ourselves?

It depends, of course, on the matter at hand...

Is our housing stock appealing?

How do our recreational and cultural opportunities stack up?

Are we wired to compete?

More broadly, what do we need to get right to make households and businesses more likely to stay and thrive here, or to move here from somewhere else?

Critical Issues

- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Agriculture
- Housing and Blight
- Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets
- Business and Workforce Development
- Public Health and Safety
- Transportation
What critical issues are having the biggest impact on the vitality and prospects of the Southern Alleghenies — and how do these issues influence the region’s ability or inability to compete for younger households and build financially sustainable communities?

Seven critical issues stand out for being relevant to some degree in each county — and as issues where the region is already experiencing some level of progress to build from.

- **Broadband and Cellular Service**: Adequate internet speeds are essential to competing in the 21st Century, connecting otherwise isolated areas to a global economy.
- **Collaboration and Coordination**: The region’s ability to implement its priorities and maintain critical assets is tied to how well a variety of partners work together.
- **Business and Workforce Development**: A healthier job market and more dynamic business environment is a key to limiting out-migration and stimulating healthy levels of immigration.
- **Housing and Blight**: Blighted and chronically vacant properties are a drag on the market and limit the levels of investment in new or existing housing stock.
- **Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets**: The region’s recreational amenities — which often intersect with its natural assets — play an increasingly vital role in attracting investment by contributing to the lifestyle options that help the region compete for households and visitors.
- **Agriculture**: Agriculture is the region’s single largest active land use and could play a significant role in the development of a diverse local food economy.
- **Public Health and Safety**: Health outcomes are poor in much of the region and drug abuse has emerged as one of the major health threats to residents from all walks of life. This affects overall well-being as well as labor force engagement and family stability.
- **Transportation**: For decades, expansion of transportation networks was an important focus, driven by a need to reduce isolation, boost economic opportunities, and improve safety. Today, preserving and maintaining this system is a priority and a challenge.
Broadband and Cellular Service

Broadband and cellular services that are reliable and high quality are essential to economic competitiveness and even public safety – and anecdotes abound about their shortcomings in the Southern Alleghenies.

More needs to be learned about service levels and quality, but recent federal data on fixed broadband services reveal a common urban/rural split, with higher levels of access to high speeds in the more populous counties – with universal access to 25mbps service achieved, in part, through the availability of satellite-based internet. Even in those more populous counties, however, competition and consumer choice are much lower than the national average.

Broadband access and speeds have been improving year after year across the Southern Alleghenies, but the region risks falling well behind the pace of communities that are quickly moving forward and achieving speeds measured in gigabytes per second, including Pittsburgh, State College, Harrisburg, and Bethlehem. Although mountainous terrain and low population densities make such service uneconomical for much of the region at this time, targeted upgrades must be pursued.

People who work from home and can live almost anywhere – a population that increasingly relies on broadband and should be a key part of the region’s economic future – grew by 20% in Pennsylvania between 2009 and 2015, and by 14% nationally. In this region, however, the number actually fell by 1.8% and now accounts for 3.2% of all workers compared to 4.4% nationally. Better broadband will be needed to grow this workforce.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

For younger households and most businesses today, access to high speed internet and reliable cell service is an expectation not unlike electricity. Places that don’t have it cannot be competitive.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

PROGRESS BEING MADE

Somerset County, in a partnership with state and federal partners, is installing a 22-mile fiber optic line in 2018-19 to improve broadband service to industrial parks and adjacent customers.

Cell Service and Safety

Two train derailments in Hyndman in 2017 highlighted the public safety risks posed by some of the region’s cellular service gaps, especially the limits they place on communication with and between residents during emergencies. Identifying the most critical gaps and working with service providers to find solutions will do much to alleviate future risks.

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Access to internet speeds of 100 Mbps (which New York State has set as a near-universal goal) is limited in the region’s most rural areas, while competition among high speed service providers is low throughout the region – much lower than national averages.

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Cell Service and Safety

Two train derailments in Hyndman in 2017 highlighted the public safety risks posed by some of the region’s cellular service gaps, especially the limits they place on communication with and between residents during emergencies. Identifying the most critical gaps and working with service providers to find solutions will do much to alleviate future risks.

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Photo Credit: Pennsylvania Sky Ops
The region’s ability to implement its priorities and maintain critical assets is tied to how well a variety of partners work together. Many issues cut across municipal boundaries and require productive working relationships between multiple entities and sectors.

The presence of 237 municipalities in the region, many of which have very limited staffing and financial capacity – and even struggle to maintain state-required boards and administrative duties – make this challenging. Compounding this challenge are numerous additional entities, including 170 special-purpose districts (such as fire, water, and sewer districts) and 43 school districts, that bring the total number of service-providing entities in the region (including the counties themselves) to 456. This equates to one entity for every 1,000 residents.

There are success stories in the region that demonstrate a capacity for high-level coordination and inter-municipal cooperation. But there is also considerable frustration that this doesn't happen often enough.

### The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

Retirements, looming labor force shortages, and stagnant tax bases make partnerships and structural change not only desirable but necessary.

### The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.

### PROGRESS BEING MADE

Alleghenies Ahead represents acknowledgement by all six counties in the region about the importance of collaboration and the potential power of a unified regional voice on certain issues.

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**Number of Municipalities and Other Public Jurisdictions in the Southern Alleghenies Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>School Districts</th>
<th>Other Districts and Authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambria</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>Fulton</td>
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<td>Huntingdon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Bureau, Census of Governments
The region experienced a net loss of 5,800 private sector jobs (a fall of almost 4%) between 2006 and 2015, with four of the six counties shedding jobs. The number of business establishments also fell during that period, in all six counties, by a combined 800 firms.

The 7% drop in total business establishments between 2006 and 2015 underscored a pattern perhaps more troubling than the loss of jobs: relatively low levels of the economic dynamism needed to create new (often small) businesses in the wake of inevitable business failures. Census data on business births and deaths in 2012-13 revealed, for example, that 10% of businesses across the U.S. were newly born (a year old or less) compared to 8.2% in Pennsylvania and just 6.1% in the Southern Alleghenies region. During the same period of analysis, 114 more businesses died in the region than were started.

A healthier job market is key to limiting out-migration and stimulating healthy levels of in-migration, and traditional tools of economic development in the region are critical to achieving this. Emerging tools that connect entrepreneurs with each other and with advice from mentors are increasingly important, and have already showed promise through the new StartUp Alleghenies initiative.

Quality of life factors – such as the variety and quality of leisure activities – is also essential for business development and retention today. With thriving metropolitan areas nearby, the lifestyle assets of the Southern Alleghenies will frequently play a deciding role for entrepreneurs choosing between this and other regions.
Agriculture is the region’s single largest active land use – with over 4,900 farms covering nearly 40% of the region’s land and generating annual crop sales that surpass $500 million.

The size and nature of the sector varies from county to county and includes everything from dairy (the largest commodity, by value, in all counties except Cambria) and other goods that serve national and international markets, as well as organic farms that serve local and regional niches.

While access to capital and labor and the cultivation of younger farmers are longstanding issues, opportunities are numerous. The sector is a central part of the region’s identity that could play an increasingly important role in small business development (through internet sales of local food products) and Main Street activity (restaurants and farmers markets).

While threats to farmland from non-agricultural development are limited in most parts of the region, land use conflicts are not unheard of – especially where industrial-scale operations (such as concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs) have been proposed recently, or where residents unaccustomed to farming odors move from urban to rural areas. Such conflicts often occur in an environment where land use regulation is nonexistent.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

Generational succession is an issue for agriculture across the U.S. — but even more so in regions with a diminished base of young people.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Rural agricultural townships and the boroughs that service them are facing some of the most acute struggles to fill decision-making boards and fund investments in aging infrastructure.

PROGRESS BEING MADE

Across all six counties, 100 farms covering over 15,000 acres have been protected by Pennsylvania’s Easement Purchase Program since 1989. At the same time, over 500,000 acres of farmland have been given favorable assessments under the Clean and Green Program.

Agricultural Land and Production Measures, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Farms</th>
<th>% of Change, 2007-2012</th>
<th># of acres farmed</th>
<th>% of Change, 2007-2012</th>
<th>Median farm acreage</th>
<th>% of Change, 2007-2012</th>
<th>Share of production value as livestock as crops</th>
<th>% of Change, 2007-2012</th>
<th>Average market value of products sold per farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEDFORD</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>209,795</td>
<td>↓-1%</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>$101,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLAIR</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>90,117</td>
<td>↑3%</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>$205,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMBRIA</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>76,889</td>
<td>↓-16%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$59,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FULTON</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>112,210</td>
<td>↑8%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>$80,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUNTINGDON</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>158,300</td>
<td>↓-10%</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>$112,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMERSET</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>214,581</td>
<td>↓-1%</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>$91,411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture
Decades of soft real estate market conditions in much of the region — resulting from population loss or very tepid growth — has dampened investment in most types of housing. Relatively low rents and prices make the region extremely affordable for the vast majority of households, but they discourage healthy levels of reinvestment by owners and slow the production of new housing products.

Part of attracting and retaining households with skilled workers today is having high-quality, move-in ready housing units that match modern tastes and needs. But both the rental and ownership opportunities in the region for households making at least $50,000 are limited — putting many current households in the position of renting or owning housing that is a poor fit for their purchasing power. For a household considering a move to the region, this lack of options may have a significant influence on their decision.

Underinvestment in housing and low demand are expressed over time by a deteriorating housing stock and blighted properties — which drag down surrounding property values, threaten quality of life for occupants and neighbors, and provide a bad first impression for visitors and prospective residents. And at the end of the road for such properties is vacancy and abandonment. There are currently 11,500 abandoned housing units across the region, ranging from 4% to 7% of housing in each county.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

Attracting and retaining younger households will be challenging if available housing is a poor match for their needs and blight discourages them from investing.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Removing blighted properties and stimulating the production of new market-rate housing is critical for the region’s competitiveness. But very few communities have the resources or expertise to do this on their own.

### PROGRESS BEING MADE

Cambria and Somerset counties adopted Act 152 in 2017 to make more resources available to demolish blighted buildings throughout the county.

More than a dozen market-rate apartments have been developed in downtown Altoona since 2015, introducing a much-needed housing product and boosting downtown-wide revitalization efforts.

### Two interrelated housing trends that undermine the region’s competitiveness

1. **Too much housing that is rapidly deteriorating from years of underinvestment, dampening the overall market**

   - 24,000 owner-occupied homes in the region (17% of the stock) are valued at $50,000 or less.
   - 20,000 rental units in the region (50% of the rental stock) rent for $600 or less per month.
   - 11,500 housing units are abandoned across the region, ranging from 4% to 7% of housing in each county.

2. **Too few options to meet the needs of middle- and upper-income households, who settle for inferior alternatives or choose to live elsewhere**

   - 71,000 home-owning households in the region make $50,000 or more and can afford a home priced at $150,000 or greater.
   - Only 44,000 homes in the region are valued at $150,000 or more.
   - 13,000 renting households in the region make $50,000 or more and can afford rent of at least $1,250 per month.
   - Only 1,400 rental units in the region are priced at $1,250 or greater.
The region’s recreational amenities play an important role in attracting investment to the region by contributing to the set of lifestyle options that will make the Southern Alleghenies competitive to businesses and households that could locate almost anywhere. Parks, trails, rivers, museums, and restaurants – and everything in between – make the region attractive to tourists and bolster the service economy, but their role in making the region a good place to live is of foremost importance.

The region’s natural environment, in particular, presents a unique opportunity – few places in the United States with such proximity to major population centers have a comparable range of accessible outdoor assets. Protecting these assets and connecting them to the region’s communities is work that must continue.

Within the region’s population centers, a handful of historic downtown areas currently stand out as providing high-quality experiences and amenities to both residents and visitors. Carefully designed and maintained spaces, as well as special events, are attracting private investment and businesses to these areas – boosting the range of things to do and making them increasingly desirable places to be. Continuing this progress in the region’s best downtowns – and spreading good design and investment practices to others – will be essential for boosting quality of life.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Consistently high-quality assets are important for growing the region’s reputation for quality of life. Well-maintained outdoor assets, and great Main Streets to complement them, require a high level of care-taking and investment.

PROGRESS BEING MADE
The Old Pennsylvania Pike (TOPP), running between Bedford and Fulton counties, is an ongoing effort to convert an abandoned highway and tunnel system into a one-of-a-kind recreational asset.
Quality of life is closely tied to a population’s health and well-being.

Statistics compiled by the national County Health Rankings project reveal that four of the region’s six counties ranked in the bottom half among counties in Pennsylvania on overall health outcomes (including rates of premature death, incidence of poor physical and mental health, and low birthweights), while all six counties ranked in the bottom half on health factors (behaviors and habits that influence health, including alcohol and drug use).

The poor health issues indicated by these rankings have wide ranging impacts – on the quality of life and outlook of families in the region, on labor force participation, and on demand for health care and emergency services. These health rankings are reflected in disability statistics for the region. In all six counties the proportion of adults between ages 18 and 64 who are disabled exceeds national and state averages. Overall, 14.1% of working-age adults in the region are disabled compared to 10.3% nationally. While the difference may seem small, it equates to nearly 10,000 more disabled adults than if the region matched the national rate.

Responses to poor health rankings run the gamut from substance abuse prevention and treatment, to promotion of active lifestyles and good health habits, to investments in health care delivery systems – all of which require careful and sustained coordination to be effective.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

As the region’s health care and emergency services workforce ages, attracting and retaining personnel to fill critical roles will be a challenge – and an indication of how well the region is competing for younger households generally.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Changes in rural health care delivery, combined with rapidly aging populations, may require adaptations that most communities are ill-prepared for.

PROGRESS BEING MADE

Operation Our Town in Altoona and Blair County represents a multi-sector partnership to address drug addiction and violence.

The health factors (behaviors and habits) that affect health outcomes can be influenced by public policies and investments related to economic opportunity, recreation, transportation, and other issues prioritized by Alleghenies Ahead.
The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

The region’s transportation networks need to adapt to the needs of an aging population and provide modal options that will help attract and retain younger residents. Meeting both needs will often involve similar strategies.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Keeping up with maintenance of local roads and infrastructure will be a challenge – but falling behind will further dampen private sector confidence and erode public investment capacity.

PROGRESS BEING MADE

Blair and Cambria counties have both adopted local Act 89 ordinances to provide an additional stream of transportation funding for local projects.

The Southern Alleghenies Rural Planning Organization (RPO) adopted a regional bike and pedestrian plan to guide the development of active transportation infrastructure in the region’s rural counties.

The share of structurally deficient bridges in the region has been declining thanks to recent infusions of state funding. Limited resources, however, will require some difficult choices in coming years regarding how to prioritize bridge and road improvements. Which bridges and roads are most critical to economic competitiveness and public safety? Which ones are less so, and what is gained or given up by downsizing infrastructure networks?

Sources
Commuting Characteristics: 2016 American Community Survey (5-year estimates).
CRITICAL ISSUES

How do we move forward on these critical issues?

Making progress on the region’s critical issues, and in ways that directly address the region’s need to attract younger households and build its implementation capacity, requires that attention be paid to two broad areas of work: technical and adaptive.

Technical challenges are those best solved by fine-tuning existing systems using known policy or financial tools. These may include the creation of specific revenue streams to fund an initiative, establishing a position or entity to carry out specific work, or enacting regulatory ordinances to accomplish a desired outcome. The county action plans for Alleghenies Ahead have numerous examples of technical work.

Adaptive challenges, by contrast, generally require a shift in the community, often characterized by the work of letting go of old assumptions and habits and replacing them with new learnings and new approaches. When made, such behavioral changes can – and very often do – result in dramatic forward progress towards important community goals.

In the Southern Alleghenies region, behavioral adaptations – away from ingrained ways of thinking that have stifled forward progress in the past – are an essential part of addressing the region’s critical issues. Some of the region’s most counter-productive habits include the following:

- Not investing and expecting to get ahead.
- Cost shifting and blame shifting.
- Contradictory actions and values.
- Risk aversion.

HABITS TO OVERCOME

**Not investing and expecting to get ahead.**

In many places, there’s a general unwillingness to invest at levels that will help re-position a community to compete for households and businesses – for fear that raising taxes will be unpopular or will hurt the community’s competitiveness. You can’t expect to realize a return, though, if you invest too little or not at all. And you can’t expect others to invest in your community if you’re unwilling to invest in it yourself.

**Cost shifting and blame shifting.**

The unwillingness of some communities to invest in themselves is combined with an expectation that Harrisburg and Washington should do more for the region, with money from elsewhere often central to the conversations about how to address key issues. The onus is too often placed elsewhere.

**Contradictory actions and values.**

Self-reliance and independence is genuinely valued in the region – without question. But it’s a value that doesn’t align with the tendency to look toward Harrisburg or Washington first. And while live-and-let-live is a common attitude, it comes into tension with some not-in-my-backyard impulses.

**Risk aversion.**

The fear of failure in the region is acute, despite a sense that parts of the region have very little to lose from taking risks. This is expressed in the unwillingness to place bets with local money. This isn’t because there’s a shortage of people with the skills and risk tolerance to push concepts toward reality – there are plenty of thriving enterprises across the region that prove the opposite. But the flack people get if they attempt something risky in the public sphere is considerable. There’s little incentive for the region’s biggest risk-takers to take their focus away from their own enterprises and enter such an arena.
Values and Principles

The region's communities are shaped by countless decisions made by hundreds of different boards, commissions, and committees. On what basis do they make these decisions, and is there any way to coordinate decision-making – to the extent possible – so that they have a positive cumulative effect on the region's ability to compete?

A set of core values and principles are central to consistent and coherent decision-making. They serve as a filter for evaluating whether an action does or does not align with what a community believes in and is trying to achieve.

These core values for our region reflect values expressed across all six counties. The planning principles reflect those values and the key issues we seek to address.

Values & Principles

What are core values?

- Deeply held beliefs that are widely shared
- Characteristics that define how people view themselves and their community
- Things that people will fight vigorously to preserve, strengthen, or achieve
- Building blocks for a vision of the future – “what are we working towards?”

We value our families, our strong social connections, and our neighbors

Our families, friends, civic clubs, and faith traditions make our communities strong, resilient, and neighborly.

We aspire to improve how we treat newcomers, outsiders, and those of diverse backgrounds – to make them feel more welcome and part of our communities and social networks.

We value independence and self-reliance

Living here has taught us the value of hard work, of adapting to overcome adversity, and the dignity of self-determination.

We are responsible for our future and for the heavy-lifting that will be needed to achieve our goals.

We value our natural resources and connections to the land

Our land shapes our communities, our way of life, and the opportunities that lie ahead.

We aspire to continue improving how we treat our environment and our natural landscapes.

We value our heritage and the sense of identity it provides

Our history, buildings, institutions, and traditions give our communities a strong and unique sense of place.

We aspire to improve as stewards of the assets left to us by previous generations.
### Values & Principles

#### What are planning principles?

- A by-product of core values and prevailing conditions
- A basis for making decisions about our community that align with our values, our vision for the future, and what we’re building from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We will...</th>
<th>We will not...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>We must first look within</strong></td>
<td><strong>We must first look within</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will invest in what we want to improve or change.</td>
<td>We will not look to Washington or Harrisburg to fix our problems – we will look to them as partners in realizing our own vision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will leverage our ingenuity to seize opportunities and address challenges.</td>
<td>We will not sell ourselves short by setting a low bar for what’s acceptable and what we can achieve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will protect and strengthen assets that give our region value.</td>
<td>We will not look to Washington or Harrisburg to fix our problems – we will look to them as partners in realizing our own vision.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>We must work together</strong></th>
<th><strong>We must work together</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will make collaboration central to how we get things done.</td>
<td>We will not see our political boundaries as limitations to whom we work with or how problems are addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will actively look for common ground.</td>
<td>We will not exclude or isolate newcomers from decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will embrace the perspectives and contributions of those who are new to the region or who come from diverse backgrounds.</td>
<td>We will not see our political boundaries as limitations to whom we work with or how problems are addressed.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>We must protect our region’s natural beauty and historic character</strong></th>
<th><strong>We must protect our region’s natural beauty and historic character</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will nurture the economic and cultural value of our natural landscapes.</td>
<td>We will not evaluate opportunities based purely on economic gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will preserve and strengthen our agricultural heritage as a fundamental part of our region’s sustainability and character.</td>
<td>We will not make choices that deface our natural or built environments without careful consideration of alternatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will promote high-quality design and upkeep in our communities.</td>
<td>We will not see our political boundaries as limitations to whom we work with or how problems are addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will create environments that promote active and healthy lifestyles – in nature and in our communities.</td>
<td>We will not exclude or isolate newcomers from decision-making.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>We must support creativity</strong></th>
<th><strong>We must support creativity</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will encourage risk-taking by individuals and organizations because inventiveness is part of our independent streak.</td>
<td>We will not simply dismiss or criticize something that doesn’t work – we will learn from it and move forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will accept that nothing is guaranteed and that breaking new ground is part of our heritage.</td>
<td>We will not simply dismiss or criticize something that doesn’t work – we will learn from it and move forward.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Applying the Values and Principles

Land use and development patterns of the past century or more have a profound impact on the region today. They strongly influence how the region’s communities look, how they function, and how they compete for households and businesses with varied preferences and needs in the 21st Century. Although policies that shape land use and development have regional impacts, deciding ‘what goes where’ – via such tools as zoning with development standards, and through the location of public facilities and investments – rests largely with the region’s local governments. Alleghenies Ahead does not provide explicit land use or investment recommendations to municipalities. But the recent trends, core values, and planning principles described by Alleghenies Ahead do provide context to aid local councils and commissions with decision-making, so that policy and investment choices can be made in ways that reinforce regional goals and the work of municipalities across the six counties. The following questions represent simple checklists that can be applied to a broad range of big and small decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>We must first look within</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you putting enough of our own resources into this action to demonstrate to others that we’re willing to invest in ourselves?</td>
<td>Are we putting enough of our own resources into this action to demonstrate to others that we’re willing to invest in ourselves?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we expect someone else to pay the bill, are we comfortable giving up control over how or when it gets done?</td>
<td>Are we setting or upholding high standards for our community through this action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we setting or upholding high standards for our community through this action?</td>
<td>Are there past experiences we need to learn from to increase the likelihood of success?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we willing to stand alongside our partners when the going gets tough?</td>
<td>How does this decision impact what we are trying to achieve? Will it encourage the right investments in the right places?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>We must work together</strong></th>
<th><strong>We must work together</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is everyone who should be involved actually involved with this decision or action?</td>
<td>If we’re seeking different or better outcomes, what traditional boundaries (political or otherwise) should we be crossing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we using all of the policy and regulatory tools at our disposal to shape the future we want to achieve?</td>
<td>Are we using all of the policy and regulatory tools at our disposal to shape the future we want to achieve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What problem needs solving and what outcomes are being sought?</td>
<td>Do all parties have the same understanding about asset stewardship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will this action build our capacity to invest in our assets?</td>
<td>If there is resistance to doing things differently, what is at the root of that resistance? How can we address these concerns proactively?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Does this action have an impact on natural and historic assets?</td>
<td>Does this action have an impact on a Main Street or downtown area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we balancing short-term financial considerations with longer-term considerations about asset stewardship?</td>
<td>If it does, does it mean that the downtown area (political or otherwise) should be crossing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do all parties have the same understanding about asset stewardship?</td>
<td>Are we willing to stand alongside our partners when the going gets tough?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we lack the fiscal or staff capacity to do something that we think is important, what partnerships do we need to involve, or what partnerships should be build and lead?</td>
<td>Are we using all of the policy and regulatory tools at our disposal to protect and strengthen our assets?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>We must support creativity</strong></th>
<th><strong>We must support creativity</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this action express a willingness to take risks – to accept that nothing is guaranteed?</td>
<td>Are we prepared to learn from our actions and adjust course if needed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we getting input or feedback from people who have fresh eyes on this matter?</td>
<td>If this action represents business-as-usual, are we really expecting to see different results?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are we using all of the policy and regulatory tools at our disposal to protect and strengthen our assets?</td>
<td>If there is resistance to doing things differently, what is at the root of that resistance? How can we address these concerns proactively?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Spreading resources too thin for impact

Trying to tackle every issue that deserves attention is the natural impulse of anyone who wants to improve their community. But doing so poses the danger of not giving anything the resources needed to actually make a sustainable difference. Everything gets some attention, but nothing is done well.

Creating a lack of discipline around choices and consequences

Life is about making choices and living with the consequences of those choices. If a community wants more of something, it has to pay for it or give something else up in return. If it chooses not to invest in an asset, the decline of that asset must be accepted as par for the course. And if there is no stomach to choose priorities, the consequence is a lack of focus that undermines progress on critical issues.

Our Priorities

What requires our focused attention as we work to overcome our demographic disadvantages and capacity limitations? Which areas of work – if addressed at a high level – will best position our communities to compete for households and business?

During 2017, the steering committees in the six counties identified priorities around which to develop detailed action plans. They did so with an understanding that priorities can – and should – change over time as conditions change, but that focus is necessary at any given time to ensure that ideas become actions.

Creating a lack of discipline around choices and consequences

Life is about making choices and living with the consequences of those choices. If a community wants more of something, it has to pay for it or give something else up in return. If it chooses not to invest in an asset, the decline of that asset must be accepted as par for the course. And if there is no stomach to choose priorities, the consequence is a lack of focus that undermines progress on critical issues.

Among the seven critical issues identified through Alleghenies Ahead, three of those issues – Broadband and Cellular Service, Collaboration and Coordination, and Business and Workforce Development – arose as priorities that are well-suited for collective action at the regional level. Priorities likely to entail more localized implementation efforts were also identified, though considerable potential for regional sharing of best practices exists on all fronts.

Though they represent a certain level of focus, these priorities are themselves quite broad and require further definition of outcomes, aims, and opportunities for intervention in the context of each county. This level of detail is contained in the Action Plan for each county.
Regional Priorities

**Bedford County**
- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Business and Workforce Development
- Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets
- Public Health and Safety

**Blair County**
- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Business and Workforce Development
- Agriculture
- Housing and Blight
- Public Health and Safety

**Cambria County**
- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Business and Workforce Development
- Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

**Fulton County**
- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Business and Workforce Development
- Agriculture
- Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

**Huntingdon County**
- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Business and Workforce Development
- Housing and Blight
- Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

**Somerset County**
- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Business and Workforce Development
- Housing and Blight
- Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

Priorities with high potential for action and advocacy at the regional level.

Priorities for county and local action informed by regional best practices.
Toolbox Overview

The Region’s Toolbox - A Glimpse
Translating broad priorities into specific actions is another layer of prioritization – of choosing, for example, to focus on four feasible initiatives to support business development rather than being paralyzed by dozens of potential options. Detailed action plans for each county (in Section 6 of this plan) reflect carefully considered choices to use specific policy or programmatic tools to make progress toward positive outcomes.

The following is a broad overview of the kinds of tools and activities contained in the county action plans. Some tools and activities – especially those related to regional priorities – will be used collectively, with all or multiple counties contributing to the same action. Most will be wielded in a more localized fashion, but will nonetheless represent opportunities for local experience (of what worked or didn’t work) to inform ongoing and future work throughout the region.

A Glimpse at Collective Priorities and Actions

| Broadband and Cellular Service | REGIONAL | Convene a task force of county representatives and industry experts to determine appropriate action steps |
| | LOCAL | Engage service providers in proactive conversations about investments and service gaps |

| Collaboration and Coordination | REGIONAL | Provide legal and financial guidance to support local collaborations |
| | LOCAL | Engage local government officials in conversations about collaboration and best practices |

| Business and Workforce Development | REGIONAL | Support entrepreneurial activity through initiatives such as StartUp Alleghenies |
| | LOCAL | Invest in downtowns to support business development |

A Glimpse at Localized Priorities and Actions

| Housing and Blight | Expand resources for targeted blight removal (Cambria, Huntingdon, Somerset) |
| | Create strategies to stimulate production of market-rate housing (Blair, Cambria, Huntingdon) |

| Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets | Promote greater local usage of outdoor recreational assets (Cambria) |
| | Invest in the improvement and expansion of targeted recreational assets (multiple counties) |
| | Form a consortium of Main Street advocates to make borough centers a more vital amenity for residents and visitors (Huntingdon, Somerset) |

| Public Health | Convene a multi-sector task force on addictions (Bedford) |
| | Create model development codes to support pedestrian-friendly environments (Blair) |
| | Promote use of parks and trails for personal health (Blair) |

| Agriculture | Improve access to capital for upgrading farm equipment and technology (Blair, Fulton) |
| | Expand processing capacity to boost production of value-added food products (Fulton) |

| Transportation | Preserve existing roadways in a state of good repair and improve structurally deficient bridges (Cambria; part of other planning initiatives in multiple counties) |
| | Accommodate and expand recreational uses of transportation infrastructure (Cambria; part of other planning initiatives in multiple counties) |
Addressing priorities in ways that lead to actual progress – this is what entities across the region set out to do every day. But how do we know if our work is accomplishing what we want it to, rather than just being action for action’s sake? What do we do if we determine that something has been less effective than we thought it might be? What if a new opportunity comes along and we need to decide whether it makes sense to shift attention and resources?

The updateable action plans for Alleghenies Ahead – for guiding implementation of specific activities at the regional and county levels – are based on a simple structure. Whatever the priority might be, there must be clarity about the outcomes being sought – about what a project or activity is intended to influence, why that’s important, and how progress can be measured. Outcomes, then, represent both an endpoint for implementation but also the starting point for action planning.

Once outcomes have been defined, specific activities (or outputs) that can reasonably be expected to achieve the outcomes must be identified, along with the resources (inputs) that are needed to activate the chosen projects or initiatives. Insufficient attention to the inputs – the funding, the staff capacity, and everything else that feeds into the outputs – is usually why actions stall.

This section presents the action plans for regional and county priorities, using outcomes, outputs, and inputs as a structure for continuously refining and updating the plans. This intentional cycle of assessing outcomes and updating action plans and priorities – something that should occur annually – recognizes that no single project or list of projects is a guaranteed solution that will achieve desired outcomes once and for all. Improving the likelihood of positive outcomes requires a commitment to experimentation, honest assessments of project impact, and changing course as needed to reflect new opportunities and evolving conditions.
Bedford County

ACTION PLAN

Please Note:

• The projects and initiatives identified in this action plan are numbered for organizational purposes only and are not ranked in order of importance. Where sequencing of a project is necessary – one following the completion of another – this is noted under the description of project timing.

• Many of the action items identify resources in general terms by the types of resources necessary (financial or otherwise) or by the likely contributors. If a project requires a financial commitment and specific dollar amounts are not listed, they are unknown at this time and must be determined through further planning by project partners.

• This action plan is intended to bring focused attention to projects and initiatives that can be expected to contribute to the realization of desired outcomes. As with any community action plan, it must be recognized that no single project or list of projects represents a guaranteed solution to a community’s challenges. Improving the likelihood of success requires a commitment to experimentation, honest assessments of project impact, and regular refinements to the action plan to reflect new opportunities and evolving conditions.
Broadband and telecommunications services are expanded around and beyond key institutions, population centers, and economic assets, resulting in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety.

### Inputs

**Knowledge:** Identify existing private infrastructure networks and the locations of major customers or groups of customers. Determine existing and desired levels of service.

**Management Capacity:** Organize public-private partnerships around addressing service improvements and expansions in areas of sufficient or potential demand. Troubleshoot public safety gaps through partnerships with service providers and public agencies.

**Capital:** Allocate public resources to help cover cost gaps that preclude priority service expansion by market forces alone.

### Outputs

Public private partnerships complete projects (fiber installation, cell tower development, etc.) that resolve critical service gaps.

### Outcomes Sought

**Broadband and Cell Service**

For younger households and most businesses today, access to high speed internet and reliable cell service is an expectation not unlike electricity. Places that don’t have it cannot be competitive.

Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

### Priority

**BEDFORD COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**Broadband and Cell Service**

**Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

Progress on this regional priority will require long-term coordination to determine appropriate action steps and oversee their implementation. Examples of steps currently being explored include items A and B below.

**Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Working with private service providers to expand service and coverage requires knowledge of existing public and private infrastructure, current levels of service, and the presence of anchor users (schools, hospitals, companies) whose demand for service can be pooled and used as a base for expansion.

As areas of potential service expansion are identified, capacity will be needed to negotiate with service providers, perform customer/user outreach, and manage projects that involve public-private partnerships.

### Action Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>County planning commissions, SAPDC, and subject matter experts</td>
<td>Dedication of time by task force participants</td>
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<td><strong>A. Infrastructure Inventory, Customer Survey, and Identification of Anchor Customers</strong></td>
<td>Working with private service providers to expand service and coverage requires knowledge of existing public and private infrastructure, current levels of service, and the presence of anchor users (schools, hospitals, companies) whose demand for service can be pooled and used as a base for expansion.</td>
<td>SAPDC with support from participating counties</td>
<td>$50,000 estimated for regional inventory and survey</td>
<td>Complete asset inventory, customer survey, and anchor identification by October 2018</td>
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<td><strong>B. Hire tele-communications project manager at SAPDC</strong></td>
<td>As areas of potential service expansion are identified, capacity will be needed to negotiate with service providers, perform customer/user outreach, and manage projects that involve public-private partnerships.</td>
<td>SAPDC with support from participating counties</td>
<td>County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties.</td>
<td>Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Broadband Outreach and Aggregation</strong></td>
<td>Through Act 183, areas with no or very limited internet service can aggregate customer demand and request service through completion of a Bona Fide Retail Request Program. Services are provided if sufficient demand is proven.</td>
<td>Information on the Act 183 process can be distributed by the Bedford County Planning Commission for dissemination by local governments.</td>
<td>Time of staff and elected officials to inform constituents about aggregation process</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaboration and Coordination

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Service improvements and/or savings realized by collaborating municipalities; improved services and efficiencies result in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Retirements, looming labor force shortages, and stagnant tax bases make partnerships and structural change not only desirable but necessary.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.

INPUTS
Will to collaborate:
The political will to overcome territorial instincts in order to broker inter-municipal agreements and partnerships around critical services.

Capital:
Savings may ultimately accrue from collaboration, but sometimes there are up-front costs that need to be covered.

Process know-how and guidance:
Drafting inter-municipal agreements, consolidating municipalities, or establishing regional service districts requires the navigation of legal and financial details and processes.

OUTPUTS
Inter-municipal agreements to share particular resources and capacities are developed and executed

Multi-municipal service districts are established around critical services

Self-selected municipalities are successfully guided through the merger/consolidation process

BEDFORD COUNTY ACTION PLAN

ACTION ITEMS

WHAT? WHY? WHO? WHAT RESOURCES? WHEN?

1 County grants facilitator Demand for grant writing and management in Bedford County exceeds current capacity for these services. A dedicated grants facilitator would fill this capacity for the county and its partners, including local governments. Bedford County Funded by county, with a fee-for-service model to offset costs Create, fund, and fill position by December 2018

MODEL TO CONSIDER

Cambria County Grants Facilitator
Cambria County has paid for a full-time grants facilitator since 2010 – a position charged with seeking funding from public and private sources to support projects throughout the county and to inform municipalities and organizations about grant opportunities.

2 Legal and financial guidance for collaboration Executing inter-municipal agreements, forming regional service districts, and exploring structural changes to local government often requires a level of legal and financial expertise that isn’t readily available to local governments. SAPDC Commitment of SAPDC in-house expertise and retainers to provide legal and financial guidance 2018

3 Outreach and education Sharing information about local and regional best practices in problem solving and service delivery, as well as the costs/benefits of intermunicipal cooperation, can help stimulate greater levels of collaboration. Bedford County Planning Commission; Bedford County Township Officials Association; private sector leaders Commitment of staff time 2018

4 Coordinated Marketing Initiative The effectiveness of all efforts to market Bedford County could be improved through greater coordination of messaging and strategy – so that marketing for economic development, tourism, and other purposes reinforce each other. Bedford County, BCDA, BCVB, Chamber, DBI Commitment of time by coordinating agencies Use new county website as a central tool for this initiative 2018
**BEDFORD COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**PRIORITY**

Business and Workforce Development

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

- Business creation and retention rates improve; number of small businesses grows; growth in net number of jobs and capital investments; entrepreneurial activity is more visible; risk-taking becomes more widely accepted; increase in labor force participation.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

Despite job losses, many employers indicate difficulty with filling the jobs they have – a situation that will worsen as the workforce continues to age. Attracting new workers to the region will be central to retaining current businesses, let alone growing new ones.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Creating the conditions for job development means investing strongly in the services and infrastructure that businesses expect – and that their skilled workers will expect.

**INPUTS**

- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with other counties and agencies in the Southern Alleghenies on small business development and entrepreneurship; strengthening relationships between public sector agencies and local businesses.

- **Capacity:** Staff capacity to coordinate economic development initiatives related to small business cultivation and technical assistance.

- **Space:** Committing existing or new facilities as space for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

**OUTPUTS**

- Participation in Startup Alleghenies to grow entrepreneurs into successful businesses.

- Development of additional high-quality spec space to serve current and anticipated demand.

**WHAT?**

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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>StartUp Alleghenies</strong></td>
<td>Currently underway in Blair, Cambria, and Somerset counties; this program is designed to cultivate the talents of home-grown entrepreneurs to spur new business activity.</td>
<td>SAPDC, Bedford County Development Association</td>
<td>SAPDC provides centralized systems and grand funding for program; BCDA provides office space for entrepreneurship coach and identifies post-grant funding for coach position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expansion of industrial park spec space</strong></td>
<td>There is limited space remaining in ready-to-lease facilities in Bedford County, making it increasingly difficult to accommodate new and expanding businesses.</td>
<td>Bedford County Development Association</td>
<td>Equity from BCDA property sales to leverage funds from EDA, ARC, and/or USDA, RCAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Biotech Incubator</strong></td>
<td>Lampire Biological Laboratories in Everett, a biotech career program at the Tech Center, and a large and continuously modernizing agricultural sector provide a cluster of assets for cultivating small biotech businesses.</td>
<td>Bedford County Development Association, with advisement from Lampire Biological Laboratories</td>
<td>Equity from BCDA property sales to leverage funds from EDA, ARC, and/or USDA, RCAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Russell House – Business &amp; Education Center</strong></td>
<td>Flexible and shared workspaces for small businesses, along with technical support services, will grow downtown Bedford’s capacity to be an incubator for business development in the county.</td>
<td>Bedford County Chamber of Commerce as lead with numerous partners</td>
<td>$1.23 million (30% from Chamber and local donors; 50% from Economic Development Administration; 20% from Appalachia Regional Commission)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Growth in home-based workers and residents under age 40; growth in number of unique visits to Bedford County; growth in property values, business variety, and investment in targeted borough centers.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

**Outcomes Sought**
- Growth in home-based workers and residents under age 40
- Growth in number of unique visits to Bedford County
- Growth in property values, business variety, and investment in targeted borough centers

**Inputs**
- **Capacity:** Staff capacity to coordinate improvements and programming at key assets.
- **Partnerships:** Private sector partners to development and maintain businesses and services that support utilization of key assets.
- **Capital:** Funding for improved recreational infrastructure and maintenance, as well as investments to market existing recreational and cultural assets.

**Outputs**
- New or improved recreational amenities to attract people to live in and visit Bedford County
- Protection and utilization of natural assets for both environmental and economic gain

**Recap**
- The County dedicates resources annually to match funds raised by non-profits, individuals, and corporations to improve public recreation facilities (such as improvements to trails, lighting, ballfields, restrooms, and landscaping).

**Model to Consider**
- **Roanoke County (VA) Capital Improvement Incentive Fund**
  - **What:** Roanoke County dedicates resources annually to match funds raised by non-profits, individuals, and corporations to improve public recreation facilities (such as improvements to trails, lighting, ballfields, restrooms, and landscaping).
  - **Why:** For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.
  - **Who:** Roanoke County
  - **What Resources:** Funds raised by non-profits, individuals, and corporations.
  - **When:** 2020 and onward

**Action Items**

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<tr>
<td>1 Recreation Improvement Fund</td>
<td>A recreation improvement fund capitalized by local resources will allow Bedford County to expedite priority projects and compete for state and federal matching funds.</td>
<td>Bedford County</td>
<td>Begin capitalizing the fund with Act 13 (Marcellus Shale) revenue.</td>
<td>2020 and onward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Heritage Trail, Phase 2</td>
<td>Extension of the Heritage Trail from Bedford Borough to Old Bedford Village and Friendship Village will connect key recreational and quality of life assets.</td>
<td>Bedford Joint Municipal Authority</td>
<td>$2.5 million (DCED Multi-modal transportation fund and other sources)</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The Old Pennsylvania Pike</td>
<td>Conversion of the abandoned Turnpike and its tunnels into a multi-modal trail will create a one-of-a-kind destination for recreational tourists and a regional quality of life asset.</td>
<td>Southern Alleghenies Conservancy; The Old PA Pike Authority</td>
<td>RACP authorization of $8 million; additional state, federal, and private sources to be identified in pending master plan</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Huntingdon – Broad Top Trail</td>
<td>Continued extension of trail north to Huntingdon County.</td>
<td>Broad Top Township Supervisors</td>
<td>In-kind resources provided by Broad Top Township; PennDOT TAP</td>
<td>2018-2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Mid State Trail improvements in Bedford County</td>
<td>Route and safety improvements to the Mid State Trail in Bedford County will enhance a 500+ mile network and add to Bedford County’s marketability as a hiking destination.</td>
<td>Mid State Trail Association, with cooperation from PennDOT and property owners</td>
<td>$10,000 in private donations to MST; time commitment by MST volunteers</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Agricultural Easement Purchases</td>
<td>State resources have been used, and are available, to preserve agricultural land. Staff and volunteer time needs to be dedicated to pursue and finalize easement purchases with willing land owners.</td>
<td>Bedford County Conservation District; Bedford County Planning Commission</td>
<td>Dedication of staff and volunteer time</td>
<td>2018 and onward</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Public Health and Safety**

**Outcomes Sought**
- County health rankings improve; rate of drug- and alcohol-related fatalities and crimes falls; labor force participation improves; disability rates fall for working-age residents.

**Inputs**
- Facilitation Capacity: Ability and authority to convene multiple sectors in a productive and ongoing dialogue about the extent and nature of the drug and alcohol addiction problem in Bedford County, monitor/assess existing interventions to prevent and treat addiction, and investigate or lead new interventions.
- Research and partnership development: The work of understanding potential alternatives to a traditional hospital-based obstetrics unit, as well as the partners needed to provide those alternatives.

**Outputs**
- Creation and maintenance of a Bedford County Coordinating Council on Addictions
- Decision made on how to proceed with a local birthing center

---

**Bedford County Coordinating Council on Addiction**

**What?**
- Bringing multiple sectors together to coordinate service delivery, share information, and educate the wider public to ensure that decision-making and perceptions are based on a sound understanding of addiction and best practices for addressing the impact of addiction on families and communities.

**Why?**
- Broaden the role of the advisory council maintained by Personal Solutions, Inc. (Bedford County's Single County Authority) to encompass this initiative. Encourage participation by:
  - PA Department of Health
  - UPMC Bedford Memorial
  - Local school districts
  - Local pharmacy sector
  - Local businesses and employers
  - County Correctional Facility and law enforcement
  - E.X.I.T. Program
  - Human services agencies

**Who?**
- Secure in-kind or cash commitments from the county, the Department of Health, and local healthcare entities to organize and facilitate meetings, including an annual meeting/strategy session led by healthcare management experts.

**When?**
- 2018

---

**Birthing Center Advisory Committee and Plan**

**What?**
- The end of full-time obstetric services at UPMC Bedford Memorial has started a discussion about how to provide local alternatives for county families. An advisory committee will research alternative models and recommend a course of action.

**Why?**
- Empanel an advisory committee with representation from all potential partners and relevant sectors.

**Who?**
- Advisory Committee will identify funding models for implementation based on findings; Committee will utilize Health Needs Assessment for Bedford County as an information resource

**When?**
- 2018 (advisory committee work)
- 2019-20 (implementation)
Blair County Steering Committee

Pat Baechle, Baechle Architects
Bruce Erb, County Commissioner
Donna J. Fisher, Blair County Conservation District
Nicole Germaux, CONTACT Altoona
Donna Gority, Retired County Commissioner
Rodney Green, Roaring Spring Borough
Coleen Heim, Healthy Blair County Coalition
Jim Hudack, Blair County Social Services
Mark Ickes, Explore Altoona
Christie Jordan, DiVersity Salon & Spa
Lucas Martsolf, Antis Township
David W. McFarland, III, Blair Planning
Steve McKnight, Altoona-Blair County Development Corporation
Cassandra Schmick, Logan Township
Lee Slusser, City of Altoona
Linda Smith, Spring Cove School District
Eric Wolf, AMTRAN

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- This action plan is intended to bring focused attention to projects and initiatives that can be expected to contribute to the realization of desired outcomes. As with any community action plan, it must be recognized that no single project or list of projects represents a guaranteed solution to a community’s challenges. Improving the likelihood of success requires a commitment to experimentation, honest assessments of project impact, and regular refinements to the action plan to reflect new opportunities and evolving conditions.
Critical broadband and cell coverage gaps are identified and filled, resulting in a reliable network and enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety.

**Knowledge:**
- Identify broadband and cell coverage gaps through (1) an inventory of well-known and documented gaps, and/or (2) a comprehensive survey of existing levels of service. In particular, identify gaps that do the most to undermine the county's ability to compete for businesses and households or that present a high risk to public safety.

**Management Capacity:**
- Organize public-private partnerships around addressing each high priority gap to pinpoint options and select a course of action tailored to the location.

**Capital:**
- Allocate public resources to cover the cost gaps that preclude the private sector from addressing gaps on its own.

Public private partnerships complete projects (fiber installation, cell tower development, etc.) that resolve critical service gaps. Improvements will position the network to adapt to changing technologies. Broadband technology will provide alternative workplace options, thereby reducing dependence on traditional forms of transportation for commuting and gathering for meetings and training.

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**
- Critical broadband and cell coverage gaps are identified and filled, resulting in a reliable network and enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**
- For younger households and most businesses today, access to high-speed internet and reliable cell service is an expectation not unlike electricity. Places that don't have it cannot be competitive.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**
- Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

**BLAIR COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**PRIORITY**

**Broadband and Cell Service**

**ACTION ITEMS**

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<td>Complete asset inventory, customer survey, and anchor identification by October 2018</td>
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<td>Hire telecommunications project manager at SAPDC</td>
<td>As areas of potential service expansion are identified, capacity will be needed to negotiate with service providers, perform customer/user outreach, and manage projects that involve public-private partnerships.</td>
<td>SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED</td>
<td>County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties</td>
<td>Timing and nature of work dependent on needs identified by action item 1a</td>
</tr>
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**WHAT?**

1. Establish regional broadband and cell service task force
2. Broadband Outreach and Aggregation

**WHY?**

- Progress on this regional priority will require long-term coordination to determine appropriate action steps and oversee their implementation. Examples of steps currently being explored include items A and B below.
- Through Act 183, areas with no or very limited internet service can aggregate customer demand and request service through completion of a Bona Fide Retail Request Program. Services are provided if sufficient demand is proven.

**WHO?**

- County planning commissions, SAPDC, and subject-matter experts
- Information on the Act 183 process can be distributed by the Bedford County Planning Commission for dissemination by local governments.

**WHAT RESOURCES?**

- Dedication of time by task force participants
- $50,000 estimated for regional inventory and survey ($7,500 to $10,000 commitment from Blair County)
- County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties

**WHEN?**

- Spring 2018 and ongoing
- 2018-2019
Collaboration and Coordination

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Service improvements and/or savings realized by collaborating municipalities; reduction in number of low-capacity and low-function units of government; improved services and efficiencies result in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Retirements, looming labor force shortages, and stagnant tax bases make partnerships and structural change not only desirable but necessary.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.

INPUTS
Will to collaborate:
The political will to overcome territorial instincts in order to broker inter-municipal agreements and partnerships around critical services.

Capitol:
Savings may ultimately accrue from collaboration, but sometimes there are up-front costs that need to be covered.

Process know-how and guidance:
Drafting inter-municipal agreements, consolidating municipalities, or establishing regional service districts requires the navigation of legal and financial details and processes.

OUTPUTS
Inter-municipal agreements to share particular resources and capacities are developed and executed.

Multi-municipal service districts are established around critical services.

Self-selected municipalities are successfully guided through the merger/consolidation process.

Capacity concerns surrounding the provision of emergency services are addressed through careful study and deliberative actions to ensure adequate protection of our citizens and their property.

ACTION ITEMS

WHAT? WHY? WHO? WHAT RESOURCES? WHEN?

1 Evaluate opportunities for shared services, consolidation, and potential effectiveness of a Council of Governments (COG)
Evaluate opportunities for shared services, Consolidation, and potential effectiveness of a Council of Governments (COG) to leverage municipal purchasing and reduce costs associated with things like government administrative/professional services, overhead, and code enforcement.
Blair County Government Advisory Committee, in coordination with the Blair County Chamber of Commerce, and ABCD Corp
Commitment of staff time 2018

2 Outreach and education to municipalities, businesses, and the general public
Sharing information about local and regional best practices in problem solving and service delivery, as well as the costs/benefits of merging or consolidating services, can help stimulate greater levels of collaboration and save costs. Build on what was discussed during the process to develop the County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
Blair Planning, Blair County Chamber of Commerce, ABCD Corp, Explore Altoona – annual Main Street round table
Commitment of staff time, resources identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan 2018

3 Establish matching grant program to incentivize inter-municipal agreements and service sharing
A financial incentive, when combined with legal and financial guidance could initiate a greater willingness for inter-municipal agreements and service sharing. The private sector has a vested interest to improve government efficiencies.
Blair County Chamber of Commerce, Blair Planning, ABCD Corp
Private sector financial resources, Commitment of staff time 2019

Legal and financial guidance for collaboration
Executing inter-municipal agreements, forming regional service districts, and exploring municipal merger/consolidation often requires a level of legal and financial expertise that isn't readily available to local governments.
SAPDC, DCED
Commitment of SAPDC in-house expertise and retainers to provide legal and financial guidance; additional guidance from DCED Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 3
## Agriculture

### Outcomes Sought

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**
A growing percentage of agricultural lands are preserved; local food economy (small scale production, processing, and retail/experiencing) becomes a bigger part of the overall economy; diversification of agricultural sector to lesson vulnerabilities and capitalize on emerging technologies; bring healthy food to local communities.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**
Rural agricultural townships and the boroughs that service them are facing some of the most acute struggles to fill decision-making boards and fund investments in aging infrastructure.

### Inputs

- **Will to Collaborate:** The County, Penn State Extension, Blair County Conservation District, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, and other local and regional stakeholders must work together to identify and prioritize key agricultural issues.
- **Training and Education:** Training and exposure for farmers on the use of technology and best practices for more efficient and profitable farming techniques.
- **Labor:** Affordable and dependable skilled workers.
- **Capital:** Develop a loan program for investments in advanced technologies and practice.

### Outputs

A better understanding of the labor market and the costs to farmers.

Farmers are able to invest, diversify, and become more profitable.

Locally produced agricultural products are available to Blair County residents.

Agriculture is recognized as an important aspect of the County’s economic development framework.

Our transportation networks continue to provide access for our farm equipment to and from our farms.

### Action Items

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Include agriculture representation in County economic development agency</td>
<td>Including representation in the economic development discussions could help to expand the local reach and help to diversify farming in Blair County.</td>
<td>Conservation District, ABDC Corp</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
<td>Initiate mid 2018 and complete by 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Actively recruit new facilities to diversify agriculture in Blair County</td>
<td>Facilities including but not limited to a USDA Certified processing facilities for dairy products (yogurt, cheese, etc.) will help to expand the value-added capacity of the local farming community.</td>
<td>ABDC Corp, Conservation District</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
<td>Timing dependent on 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Develop Altoona as an agricultural hub</td>
<td>A central hub for local restaurants, farmers markets, accommodations and agritourism events will promote Blair County’s agriculture and add to the vibrancy of downtown.</td>
<td>Explore Altoona, Blair County Chamber of Commerce, Conservation District, ABDC Corp</td>
<td>$5,000 annually to promote, organize, etc. Sponsors and donations could play a role</td>
<td>Initiate mid 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Collaborate with agricultural lenders to provide low-interest loans to farmers</td>
<td>To provide access to capital and expertise for technological advancements and agri-business.</td>
<td>Conservation District, ABDC Corp</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
<td>Timing dependent on 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Explore the development of a agricultural worker placement agency</td>
<td>Farmers have reported having difficulty attracting and retaining skilled farm workers. A placement agency would help to connect farmers with skilled permanent and temporary workers.</td>
<td>SAPDC and CareerLink to coordinate and incentivize with local industrial placement agencies, private sector providers, and other agricultural stakeholders</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time, financial resources for start-up TBD</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Involve municipal and foundation support of easement purchases</td>
<td>Expanding the Purchase Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) program to include local municipal and a public/private foundation and conservancy participation would provide additional opportunities for protecting agricultural land.</td>
<td>Conservation District to coordinate with private sector and local municipalities</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The housing market across the county to be balanced and for different parts of the county to have contributions to make towards a “full housing ladder”. Variety and quality of housing options expands; demand revealed by incentivized production lowers perceptions of risk and stimulates more interest from developers; businesses have an easier time recruiting new workers due to improved housing options - competitiveness improves; housing needs of lower income households are met.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

Attracting and retaining younger households will be challenging if available housing is a poor match for their needs and blight discourages them from investing.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Removing blighted properties and stimulating the production of new market-rate housing is critical for the region’s competitiveness. But very few communities have the resources or expertise to do this on their own.

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

- Attracting and retaining younger households
- Removing blighted properties and stimulating the production of new market-rate housing
- Balancing the housing market across the county
- Improving the quality of housing options
- Increasing competitiveness and attractiveness of the region
- Meeting the housing needs of lower income households

**Housing and Blight**

**INPUTS**

- Will to intervene:
  - The political will to incentivize and, if necessary, subsidize the production of missing housing products.
- Capital:
  - Funding for infrastructure, tax abatement, or other incentives to help bring to market.
- Rehabilitation:
  - Target abandoned and underutilized properties that could exert substantial negative impacts on the market.
- Incentives:
  - Property upgrades in middle strength areas of the county and for missing products (new homes at certain price points).
- Code Enforcement:
  - Target key areas

**OUTPUTS**

- Number of new market-rate rental units added each year (with the goal of about 10 per year).
- Growth in the young adult population in Blair County.
- Provide viable modal choice to our residents to provide everyone a full opportunity to participate in their community.

**ACTION ITEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>WHY?</th>
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<th>WHAT RESOURCES?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Evaluate the use of municipal financing incentives and tax abatement tools.</td>
<td>There are several tools that should be considered to help lower the perception of risk and stimulate more interest from developers in housing development - (Tax Increment Financing districts (TIF), Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA), Business Improvement Districts (BID))</td>
<td>Blair County Commissioners, municipal / government bodies, schools districts, ABCD Corp</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time Blair Planning, ABCD Corp, municipal / government bodies, schools districts</td>
<td>Initiate late 2018 / early 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop a financial model to incentivize market-rate apartments, townhouses, and ADA accessible single-family homes.</td>
<td>To help lower risk and stimulate interest from developers in housing development. ADA accessible single-family homes in the $125k-$250K range</td>
<td>Blair Planning, ABCD Corp</td>
<td>TBD once evaluation of model</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Revitalize existing neighborhoods with a mix of infill and rehabilitated units.</td>
<td>The intent is to “kick start” the development of housing products that are not currently found in Blair County but are needed to accommodate people looking for market rate rental housing and middle market single-family homes. Target walkable neighborhoods that are in close proximity to goods and services.</td>
<td>Blair Planning, ABCD Corp, local municipalities, local property owners, and developers</td>
<td>TBD once evaluation of project program and incentives needed</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Provide 30 shelter beds and 6 double occupancy affordable housing units for Blair County homeless families.</td>
<td>The current Family Shelter turn away rate averages 512 individuals per year that would otherwise be eligible for shelter. Family Shelter serves an average of 160 individuals per year in current 16 bed facility.</td>
<td>Blair County Shelter Task Force and its individual members/partners.</td>
<td>$1,400,000 for Shelter Rehab; $878,400 for Housing Units Finding Sources: Act 137, CDBG Sources, ESG, NAP Tax Credits, Family Services Campaign, HOME Sources, Blair Health Choices</td>
<td>Initiate late 2018; complete 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Identify vacant commercial real estate for conversion into market rate housing.</td>
<td>The advent of cloud shopping and its related services and advantages is reducing need for retail space. This space could then be used to address the housing shortages identified in the plan.</td>
<td>Blair Planning, ABCD Corporation, local real estate agencies, area banking institutions</td>
<td>Initially, a commitment of staff time. Study will identify further needs.</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRIORITY

Public Health and Safety

OUTCOMES SOUGHT

County health rankings improve; rate of drug-related deaths falls; labor force participation improves; disability rates fall for working age residents; and physical activity continues to improve.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

As the region's health care and emergency services workforce ages, attracting and retaining personnel to fill critical roles will be a challenge – and an indication of how well the region is competing for younger households generally.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Changes in rural health care delivery, combined with rapidly aging populations, may require adaptations that most communities are ill-prepared for.

INPUTS

Capacity: Staff capacity to coordinate programming and improvements

Partnerships and coordination: Public and not-for-profit agencies working together to identify and address key community health issues.

OUTPUTS

Development of a stable public health framework.

Increased access to local healthy food in public places (workplaces, hospitals, nursing homes, grocery stores).

Establishment of a framework to decrease automobile dependency, integrate public health into the social fabric of the community as a priority and mindset, and increase the activity of walking, biking, and water trails to improve connectivity of non-auto paths and trails in Blair County.

Recognition that public, private and not-for-profit sectors all play a role in developing healthy communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1 Develop a mobile farm market / coop to bring locally grown healthy food to County residents.</td>
<td>Increasing the presence and visibility of locally grown food and other products and activities produced by Blair County farmers will promote local farmers and provide access to healthy food.</td>
<td>Blair Planning, Conservation District, private sponsors</td>
<td>$5,000 annually to promote, organize etc. Sponsors and donations could play a role</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Explore with law enforcement to develop a regional mobile prescription drug take-back/ collection program.</td>
<td>A region-wide mobile program could be coordinated with the County District Attorney / Sheriff in all 6 counties to heighten awareness and get more drugs off the streets.</td>
<td>SAPDC, participating County Commissioners, District Attorney and Sheriff, Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Initiate mid 2018</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Complete a County active transportation plan or bicycle and pedestrian master plan.</td>
<td>A dedicated plan to build and connect bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and set policy to encourage more active communities. It should also include a model complete streets policy and coordinate with existing and planned trails and connections.</td>
<td>Blair Planning, local municipalities (municipal planners), Blais Bicycle Club, Allegheny Trailrunners, Allegheny Hiking Club, and other local clubs and organizations</td>
<td>Commitment of time by coordinating agencies</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Develop model land development regulations and public health policies.</td>
<td>To address aesthetics and safety of the physical environment, encourage mixed-use development, street continuity and connectivity, residential density and proximity to businesses, schools, recreation, etc. Calibrate based on local context.</td>
<td>Blair Planning, Healthy Blair County Coalition, local municipalities (municipal planners)</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Market, promote, and preserve local trails, pedestrian routes/facilities and other recreational destinations/facilities.</td>
<td>The effectiveness and use of trails and routes could be improved through greater coordination of messaging and marketing.</td>
<td>Blair Planning, Healthy Blair County Coalition, Explore Altoona</td>
<td>$5,000 annually to promote, organize, etc. Sponsors and donations could play a role</td>
<td>Initiate 2018, ongoing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Ensure the sustainability of the Healthy Blair County Coalition and its efforts.</td>
<td>The Coalition has proved an invaluable resource in promoting health awareness and improving the overall health of county residents. It current informal structure needs to be studied to ensure the longevity of these efforts</td>
<td>Healthy Blair County Coalition, Blair Planning, United Way, Hospitals</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
<td>Initiate 2018; plan in place by end of 2019</td>
<td></td>
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Please Note:

- The projects and initiatives identified in this action plan are numbered for organizational purposes only and are not ranked in order of importance. Where sequencing of a project is necessary – one following the completion of another – this is noted under the description of project timing.

- Many of the action items identify resources in general terms by the types of resources necessary (financial or otherwise) or by the likely contributors. If a project requires a financial commitment and specific dollar amounts are not listed, they are unknown at this time and must be determined through further planning by project partners.

- This action plan is intended to bring focused attention to projects and initiatives that can be expected to contribute to the realization of desired outcomes. As with any community action plan, it must be recognized that no single project or list of projects represents a guaranteed solution to a community’s challenges. Improving the likelihood of success requires a commitment to experimentation, honest assessments of project impact, and regular refinements to the action plan to reflect new opportunities and evolving conditions.
Broadband and telecommunications services are expanded around and beyond key institutions, population centers, and economic assets, resulting in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
For younger households and most businesses today, access to high speed internet and reliable cell service is an expectation not unlike electricity. Places that don't have it cannot be competitive.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

INPUTS
Knowledge: Identify existing private infrastructure networks and the locations of major customers or groups of customers. Determine existing and desired levels of service. Management Capacity: Organize public-private partnerships around addressing service improvements and expansions in areas of sufficient or potential demand. Troubleshoot public safety gaps through partnerships with service providers and public agencies. Capital: Allocate public resources to help cover cost gaps that preclude priority service expansion by market forces alone.

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Broadband and telecommunications services are expanded around and beyond key institutions, population centers, and economic assets, resulting in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety.

CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY
Broadband and Cell Service

ACTION ITEMS

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<tr>
<td>1. Establish regional broadband and cell service task force</td>
<td>Progress on this regional priority will require long-term coordination to determine appropriate action steps and oversee their implementation. Examples of steps currently being explored include items A and B below.</td>
<td>Cambria County Planning Commission, SAPDC, and subject-matter experts</td>
<td>Dedication of time by task force participants</td>
<td>Spring 2018 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Infrastructure Inventory, Customer Survey, and Identification of Anchor Customers

Working with private service providers to expand service and coverage requires knowledge of existing public and private infrastructure, current levels of service, and the presence of anchor users (schools, hospitals, companies) whose demand for service can be pooled and used as a base for expansion.

SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED

$50,000 estimated for regional inventory and survey ($7,500 to $10,000 commitment from Cambria County)

Complete asset inventory, customer survey, and anchor identification by end of 2018

b. Hire telecommunications project manager at SAPDC

As areas of potential service expansion are identified, capacity will be needed to negotiate with service providers, perform customer/user outreach, and manage projects that involve public-private partnerships.

SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED

County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties

Timing and nature of work dependent on needs identified by action item 1a
**CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**PRIORITY**

Collaboration and Coordination

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

Service improvements and/or savings realized by collaborating municipalities; reduction in number of low-capacity and low-function units of government; improved services and efficiencies result in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

Retirements, looming labor force shortages, and stagnant tax bases make partnerships and structural change not only desirable but necessary.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.

**INPUTS**

- **Will to collaborate:** The political will to overcome territorial instincts in order to broker inter-municipal agreements and partnerships around critical services.
- **Capital:** Savings may ultimately accrue from collaboration, but sometimes there are up-front costs that need to be covered.
- **Process know-how and guidance:** Drafting inter-municipal agreements, consolidating municipalities, or establishing regional service districts requires the navigation of legal and financial details and processes.

**OUTPUTS**

- Inter-municipal agreements to share particular resources and capacities are developed and executed
- Multi-municipal service districts are established around critical services
- Self-selected municipalities are successfully guided through the merger/consolidation process

**ACTION ITEMS**

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<td>Legal and financial guidance for collaboration</td>
<td>Executing inter-municipal agreements, forming regional service districts, and exploring municipal merger/consolidation often requires a level of legal and financial expertise that isn’t readily available to local governments.</td>
<td>SAPDC, DCED</td>
<td>Commitment of SAPDC in-house expertise and retainers to provide legal and financial guidance; additional guidance from DCED</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td>Outreach and education</td>
<td>Sharing information about local and regional best practices in problem solving and service delivery, as well as the costs/benefits of merging or consolidating low-functioning units of government, can help stimulate greater levels of collaboration.</td>
<td>Cambria County Planning Commission; Council of Governments; private sector leaders; elected officials; PennDOT</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time; PennDOT Connects process</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish matching grant program to incentivize inter-municipal agreements and service sharing</td>
<td>A financial incentive, when combined with legal and financial guidance could initiate a greater willingness for inter-municipal agreements and service sharing, especially when start-up costs are involved.</td>
<td>Cambria County Planning Commission; Greater Johnstown-Cambria County Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Pair county funds with private sector commitments to establish a pool for matching grants</td>
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**CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

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CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY
Business and Workforce Development

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Business creation rates improve and number of small businesses grows; growth in net number of jobs; entrepreneurial activity is more visible; risk-taking becomes more widely accepted; increase in labor force participation.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Despite job losses, many employers indicate difficulty with filling the jobs they have – a situation that will worsen as the workforce continues to age. Attracting new workers to the region will be central to retaining current businesses, let alone growing new ones.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Creating the conditions for job development means investing strongly in the services and infrastructure that businesses expect – and that their skilled workers will expect.

INPUTS
Partnerships: Collaboration with other counties and agencies in the Southern Alleghenies on small business development and entrepreneurship.

Capacity: The political will to overcome territorial instincts in order to efficiently and effectively recruit, retain, and cultivate businesses.

OUTPUTS
Establish a high-quality and well-coordinated marketing effort in Cambria County.

Follow-through with commitments to Startup Alleghenies and shared-use kitchen as long-term efforts to cultivate local entrepreneurs and build a stronger and growing base of small businesses.

ACTION ITEMS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Coordinated Branding and Marketing Initiative</td>
<td>The effectiveness of all efforts to market Cambria County would be improved by greater coordination. A consistent and effective message around quality of life, recreational assets, and economic opportunities should be developed and used to promote the county to a range of audiences.</td>
<td>Lead by Greater Johnstown/ Cambria County Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time and existing marketing budgets of partnering agencies</td>
<td>Initiated in 2017 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Streamline Regulatory Processes</td>
<td>Land development processes vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and are often difficult to navigate. To make the process more consistent and predictable, work with county and local stakeholders to consider the value of a countywide land development ordinance and an online information clearinghouse.</td>
<td>Lead by Cambria County Planning Commission</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time by CCPC</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Identify Workforce Development Opportunities</td>
<td>Workforce shortages are a growing concern, making the retention and utilization of local workers a critical economic issue. Expand engagement between vocational schools and employers to identify ways to improve graduate retention, and remove barriers to the re-employment of remediated individuals with criminal backgrounds.</td>
<td>Coordinated by Cambria County Planning Commission and Workforce Development Board</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time by CCPC and Will</td>
<td>2018 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Support and grow the StartUp Alleghenies initiative</td>
<td>Currently underway in Blair, Cambria, and Somerset counties, this program is designed to cultivate the talents of home-grown entrepreneurs to spur new business activity.</td>
<td>JARI; Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA; SAPDC</td>
<td>In-kind contributions from local economic development agencies; federal and state grants; long-term local commitment to retaining entrepreneurial coaching capacity</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Coordination and expansion of agritourism</td>
<td>Agritourism has a strong tradition in Cambria County (tours, farm heritage days, harvest festivals) and can serve as a supplement to farm incomes, and a boost to local quality of life and food culture. Strong coordination of agritourism activities and marketing will grow the impact of these efforts.</td>
<td>Farm owners; Cambria County Farm Bureau; 4H; Penn State Extension</td>
<td>Coordination of existing resources and capacity, supplemented by a small budget for targeted marketing</td>
<td>Initiate in 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY

Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

OUTCOMES SOUGHT

Growth in home-based workers and residents under age 40; growth in number of unique visits to Cambria County; growth in property values, business variety, and investment in targeted borough and city centers through prioritized bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investments.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

INPUTS

Capacity:
Staff capacity to coordinate transportation improvements and programming at key assets. Enhanced communication between PennDOT and project focused volunteer/community groups.

Partnerships:
Private sector partners to develop and maintain businesses and services that support utilization of key bicycle, sidewalk, trail, waterway and other assets.

Capital:
Funding for improved recreational and transportation infrastructure and maintenance, as well as investments to market existing transportation, recreational and cultural assets.

OUTPUTS

Cultivation of business activity and transportation amenities (sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure) in traditional community centers (Johnstown and boroughs) that improves vitality, quality of life and transportation options for local residents while enhancing the appeal of nearby outdoor transportation based recreational assets (symbiotic relationships between Main Streets and recreational assets).

Stronger coordination of marketing to support higher utilization (local and regional) of recreational and transportation assets.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Promote recreational assets to local users
   - WHAT?
     - Maintaining a strong and growing network of recreational assets depends on a healthy base of local users and advocates. Many county residents are unaware of what’s in their own backyard or think of them only as tourism destinations.
     - As a component of a countywide marketing and branding initiative (see Business and Workforce Development), tools used to reach local audiences – signage, apps, websites – could serve multiple purposes.
   - WHY?
     - Johnstown Cambria County CVB; Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority (CC CRA); PennDOT
   - WHO?
     - Dedicate a portion of existing promotion budgets to target local audiences.
   - WHAT RESOURCES?
     - PennDOT resources
   - WHEN?
     - 2019 and ongoing

2. Targeted expansion of recreational opportunities in Northern Cambria County
   - WHAT?
     - A more fully developed and utilized set of outdoor recreational assets in the northern part of the county will help to make the county’s entire recreation network more rich and comprehensive.
     - Integration of existing assets such as Duman Lake and Prince Gallitzin State Park with trails (such as the proposed Patton to Carrolltown trail) and promotion of multi-function concepts such as “Bike to Fish” represent opportunities to build a strong foundation.
   - WHY?
     - CCCRA; PennDOT; Northern Cambria Community Development Corporation
   - WHO?
     - Use existing sources of CCCRA capital to leverage state funds
   - WHAT RESOURCES?
     - 2019 and ongoing

3. Develop an ‘Adventure Sport’ degree or certificate program
   - WHAT?
     - Making the most of the county’s outdoor assets will require a workforce that knows how to deliver positive experiences to residents and visitors through services that complement the assets. An ‘Adventure Sport’ program, such as the one at Garrett College and Frostburg State University in Maryland, can help develop these skills and inspire students who already have first-hand experience with the county’s parks and trails.
   - WHY?
     - UUJ and other institutions of higher learning; CCCRA, Johnstown Cambria County CVB
   - WHO?
     - Staff time of project partners to assess feasibility and develop a plan to achieve required accreditations
   - WHAT RESOURCES?
     - 2020

CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN

WHAT?

WHY?

WHO?

WHAT RESOURCES?

WHEN?

1. Promote recreational assets to local users
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   - Staff time of project partners to assess feasibility and develop a plan to achieve required accreditations
   - 2020

Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

Growth in home-based workers and residents under age 40; growth in number of unique visits to Cambria County; growth in property values, business variety, and investment in targeted borough and city centers through prioritized bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investments.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN

WHAT?

WHY?

WHO?

WHAT RESOURCES?

WHEN?

1. Promote recreational assets to local users
   - Maintaining a strong and growing network of recreational assets depends on a healthy base of local users and advocates. Many county residents are unaware of what’s in their own backyard or think of them only as tourism destinations.
   - As a component of a countywide marketing and branding initiative (see Business and Workforce Development), tools used to reach local audiences – signage, apps, websites – could serve multiple purposes.
   - Johnstown Cambria County CVB; Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority (CC CRA); PennDOT
   - Dedicate a portion of existing promotion budgets to target local audiences.
   - 2019 and ongoing

2. Targeted expansion of recreational opportunities in Northern Cambria County
   - A more fully developed and utilized set of outdoor recreational assets in the northern part of the county will help to make the county’s entire recreation network more rich and comprehensive.
   - Integration of existing assets such as Duman Lake and Prince Gallitzin State Park with trails (such as the proposed Patton to Carrolltown trail) and promotion of multi-function concepts such as “Bike to Fish” represent opportunities to build a strong foundation.
   - CCCRA; PennDOT; Northern Cambria Community Development Corporation
   - Use existing sources of CCCRA capital to leverage state funds
   - 2019 and ongoing

3. Develop an ‘Adventure Sport’ degree or certificate program
   - Making the most of the county’s outdoor assets will require a workforce that knows how to deliver positive experiences to residents and visitors through services that complement the assets. An ‘Adventure Sport’ program, such as the one at Garrett College and Frostburg State University in Maryland, can help develop these skills and inspire students who already have first-hand experience with the county’s parks and trails.
   - UUJ and other institutions of higher learning; CCCRA, Johnstown Cambria County CVB
   - Staff time of project partners to assess feasibility and develop a plan to achieve required accreditations
   - 2020
Non-seasonal vacancy rates begin to decline from the current 7% towards a healthier 4%; property values and reinvestment levels improve in areas where intervention occurs; first impressions and investor confidence improve in key areas; new market-rate products are added to the housing supply.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Attracting and retaining younger households will be challenging if available housing is a poor match for their needs and blight discourages them from investing.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Removing blighted properties and stimulating the production of new market-rate housing is critical for the region's competitiveness. But very few communities have the resources or expertise to do this on their own.

Inputs
Coordination and Partnerships:
The county and municipalities must work together to identify and prioritize problem properties. Private sector partners are needed to rehab/reuse salvageable properties.

Project Management Capacity:
Each property identified for intervention—whether demolition or redevelopment—becomes a distinct project that needs to be managed to a successful conclusion.

Capital:
Allocate public resources to cover demolition costs or support rehabilitation.

Outputs
Severely blighted and obsolete properties are acquired and demolished.
Salvageable or historic properties are transitioned to new owners and renovated.

Action Items

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<tr>
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<th>WHAT RESOURCES?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Stepped-up demolition pace: 80 to 100 properties per year</td>
<td>Demolition at a scale that will begin to stabilize the severe imbalance of supply and demand is an investment in a healthy and functional housing market. If the pace is sustained over time and targets properties that do the most damage to investor and homeowner confidence, it can help rebuild eroding tax bases and expand the financial capacity of local governments.</td>
<td>Cambria County Redevelopment Authority; Johnstown Redevelopment Authority; Blight Task Force</td>
<td>Take existing commitments to demolition (from Act 152 revenue and CDBG) and allocate an additional $750,000 per year towards demolition and project management. (Additional resource options: bond proceeds, general fund allocations, philanthropic contributions)</td>
<td>Achieve 80 to 100 demolitions countywide during 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Develop a financial model to incentivize market-rate apartments, townhouses, and ADA accessible single-family homes</td>
<td>Market-rate housing is risky in a weak housing market where the rents and prices that the market will bear are less than what developers/investors need to make a project feasible. This results in an increasingly outdated supply that makes the county less competitive for new households or businesses that need to attract outside talent. Market-rate housing products that support local development and redevelopment goals, including downtown revitalization.</td>
<td>Cambria County Planning Commission, Cambria County Redevelopment Authority, Johnstown Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td>Depending on model chosen, this effort may require that a loan and grant fund be capitalized (by public and private sources) to assist eligible projects and that necessary tax abatement tools be enacted.</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cambria County’s transportation system requires a certain focus on system preservation to serve and support its local communities and economy. Yet, local stakeholders desire a modern transportation system - one that supports a broad range of practical choices for travel, goods movement, access to markets and recreational opportunities.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**
The region’s transportation networks need to adapt to the needs of an aging population and provide modal options that will help attract and retain younger residents. Meeting both needs will often involve similar strategies.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**
Keeping up with maintenance of local roads and infrastructure will be a challenge – but falling behind will further dampen private sector confidence and erode public investment capacity.

**INPUTS**
**Will to collaborate:**
Strong connections exist at the County level through the Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Cambria County Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee is an emerging voice for the business community to prioritize its support of transportation investments.

**Capital:**
Through the Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization, PennDOT provides the bulk of the region’s transportation construction funding. Prioritization and planning for future investments is performed through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at the County level and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) at the state level. Local stakeholders and state agencies provide funding as local match to prioritize and plan for future investments.

**Process know-how and guidance:**
PennDOT and the Cambria County Planning Commission, as MPO secretary, assist local communities through established relationships as well as the new PennDOT Connects process.

**OUTPUTS**
Projects that enhance opportunities for local business and industry to access regional markets.

Increased recreation based transportation such as trails, sidewalks, waterway access and greenways.

Transit system that enhances workforce development opportunities, municipal connectivity and transportation choices.

**CAMBRIA COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**PRIORITY**

**Transportation**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**
Cambria County’s transportation system requires a certain focus on system preservation to serve and support its local communities and economy. Yet, local stakeholders desire a modern transportation system - one that supports a broad range of practical choices for travel, goods movement, access to markets and recreational opportunities.

**WHAT?**

**WHY?**
Safety of the traveling public is an overarching priority of PennDOT and local stakeholders. Projects will address structurally deficient bridges on the state highway system and maintain roadway pavement conditions in a "state of good repair."

**WHO?**
PennDOT; Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization; Local Municipalities

**WHAT RESOURCES?**
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding through PennDOT

**WHEN?**
2018 forward

**1 System Preservation**
Recreational amenities, most often transportation based, are key to attracting and retaining younger skilled workers necessary to maintain and advance the County’s workforce. Also key to improvement of health and well being of county residents.

**2 Recreation Based Transportation Projects**
Service to additional civic and employment destinations, and extended weekend and evening service, will increase ridership and revenue. Development and infrastructure planning for transit service with appropriate turning radii, bus pull-offs, standards for road construction, sidewalks from door to street.

**2018 forward**

**Enhanced and Expanded Transit Connectivity**
Commitment of staff time; Cambria County Planning Commission facilitating PennDOT Connects process with appropriate project based volunteer groups. 2018 County Bike/Ped Plan Update will identify and prioritize project needs and locations.

**2018 forward**

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Process know-how and guidance:**
PennDOT and the Cambria County Planning Commission, as MPO secretary, assist local communities through established relationships as well as the new PennDOT Connects process.

**WHAT?**

**WHY?**

**WHO?**

**WHAT RESOURCES?**

**WHEN?**

PennDOT; Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization; Local Municipalities

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding through PennDOT

2018 forward
Fulton County

**ACTION PLAN**

- Broadband and Cellular Service
- Collaboration and Coordination
- Business and Workforce Development
- Agriculture
- Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

Fulton County Steering Committee

- **Jim Delaplaine**, Business owner
- **Julie Dovey**, Fulton County Family Partnership
- **Jeremy Fletcher**, Fulton County Planning Commission
- **Marlin “Sonny” Har**, Ayr Township Supervisor
- **Marjorie Hudson**, Ayr Township resident
- **Dan Leese**, Fulton County Farm Bureau
- **Rodney McCray**, Fulton County Commissioner

- **Neill Miller**, Fulton County Conservation District
- **Seleen Shives**, Fulton County Conservation District
- **Kim Skee**, Fulton County Medical Center
- **Bob Swadley**, Thompson Township Supervisor

**Please Note:**

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- Many of the action items identify resources in general terms by the types of resources necessary (financial or otherwise) or by the likely contributors. If a project requires a financial commitment and specific dollar amounts are not listed, they are unknown at this time and must be determined through further planning by project partners.

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Broadband and telecommunications services are expanded around and beyond key institutions, population centers, and economic assets, resulting in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
For younger households and most businesses today, access to high speed internet and reliable cell service is an expectation not unlike electricity. Places that don’t have it cannot be competitive.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region- level action a necessity.

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Knowledge: Identify existing private infrastructure networks and the locations of major customers or groups of customers. Determine existing and desired levels of service.

Management Capacity: Organize public-private partnerships around addressing service improvements and expansions in areas of sufficient or potential demand. Troubleshoot public safety gaps through partnerships with service providers and public agencies.

Capital: Allocate public resources to help cover cost gaps that preclude priority service expansion by market forces alone.

Outputs
Public private partnerships complete projects (fiber installation, cell tower development, etc.) that resolve critical service gaps. Improvements will position the network to adapt to changing technologies.

PRIORITY
Broadband and Cell Service

ACTION ITEMS

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish regional broadband and cell service task force</td>
<td>Progress on this regional priority will require long-term coordination to determine appropriate action steps and oversee their implementation. Task Force can lobby on behalf of rural communities. Examples of steps currently being explored include items A and B below.</td>
<td>County planning commissions, SAPDC, and subject matter experts</td>
<td>Dedication of time by task force participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Infrastructure Inventory, Customer Survey, and Identification of Anchor Customers</td>
<td>Working with private service providers to expand service and coverage requires knowledge of existing public and private infrastructure, current levels of service, and the presence of anchor users (schools, hospitals, companies) whose demand for service can be pooled and used as a base for expansion.</td>
<td>SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED</td>
<td>$50,000 estimated for regional inventory and survey ($7,500 to $10,000 commitment from Fulton County)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Hire telecommunications project manager at SAPDC</td>
<td>As areas of potential service expansion are identified, capacity will be needed to negotiate with service providers, perform customer/user outreach, and manage projects that involve public-private partnerships.</td>
<td>SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED</td>
<td>County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Broadband Outreach and Aggregation</td>
<td>Through Act 183, areas with no or very limited internet service can aggregate customer demand and request service through completion of a Bona Fide Retail Request Program. Services are provided if sufficient demand is proven.</td>
<td>Information on the Act 183 process can be distributed by the County Planning Commission for dissemination by local governments.</td>
<td>Time of staff and elected officials to inform constituents about aggregation process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FULTON COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY
Collaboration and Coordination

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Service improvements and/or savings realized by collaborating municipalities; reduction in number of low-capacity and low-function units of government; improved services and efficiencies result in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Retirements, looming labor force shortages, and stagnant tax bases make partnerships and structural change not only desirable but necessary.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.

INPUTS
Will to collaborate:
The political will to overcome territorial instincts in order to broker inter-municipal agreements and partnerships around critical services.

Capital:
Savings may ultimately accrue from collaboration, but sometimes there are up-front costs that need to be covered.

Process know-how and guidance:
Drafting inter-municipal agreements, consolidating municipalities, or establishing regional service districts requires the navigation of legal and financial details and processes.

OUTPUTS
Inter-municipal agreements to share particular resources and capacities are developed and executed
Multi-municipal service districts are established around critical services
Self-selected municipalities are successfully guided through the merger/consolidation process
Residents’ and stakeholders’ perception of transparency and fairness about the local government process and decision making improve

ACTION ITEMS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach and education</td>
<td>Sharing information about local and regional best practices in problem solving and service delivery, as well as the costs/benefits of merging or consolidating low-functioning units of government, can help stimulate greater levels of collaboration.</td>
<td>Fulton County Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and approach potential candidates for merger or consolidation</td>
<td>Low-capacity and/or low-functioning units of government are often an unnecessary burden on tax payers. Shared services or consolidation could lead to greater efficiencies and opportunities for investment.</td>
<td>Fulton County Planning Commission, local municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and financial guidance for collaboration</td>
<td>Executing inter-municipal agreements, forming regional service districts, and exploring municipal merger/consolidation often requires a level of legal and financial expertise that isn’t readily available to local governments.</td>
<td>SAPDC, Dced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite office for SAPDC in Fulton County</td>
<td>Fulton County needs assistance with economic development, grant writing and other planning related activities. Utilizing the staff and expertise at SAPDC could be an effective alternative to hiring full time county staff. The idea would be for SAPDC to have a staff member in Fulton County for a specified number of hours per week.</td>
<td>Fulton County Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
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WHAT? | WHEN? | RESOURCES? |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach and education</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and approach potential candidates for merger or consolidation</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time and coordinating agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and financial guidance for collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment of SAPDC in-house expertise and retainers to provide legal and financial guidance; additional guidance from DCED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite office for SAPDC in Fulton County</td>
<td></td>
<td>Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FULTON COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY
Business and Workforce Development

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Business creation rates improve; growth in net number of jobs; entrepreneurial activity is more visible; risk-taking becomes more widely accepted; increase in labor force participation; number of long-term unfilled jobs fall.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Despite job losses, many employers indicate difficulty with filling the jobs they have – a situation that will worsen as the workforce continues to age. Attracting new workers to the region will be central to retaining current businesses, let alone growing new ones.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Creating the conditions for job development means investing strongly in the services and infrastructure that businesses expect – and that their skilled workers will expect.

INPUTS
Capacity: Staff capacity to coordinate economic development initiatives
Will to collaborate: The political will to overcome territorial instincts and status-quo in order to establish a County department or agency dedicated to economic development.
Partnerships: Private sector partners to development and maintain businesses and services that cater to both local residents and visitors.
Capital: Funding for improved infrastructure needed for development in Warfordsburg.

OUTPUTS
Fulton County economic development agency dedicated to promoting the county’s assets, coordinating business activities, and attracting new investment
“Main Street” program for McConnellsburg established to build promotional capacity, coordinate programming, and attract new investment

Economic development agency partners with County and private sector to access and develop needed infrastructure

ACTION ITEMS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Restructure/ Revamp Fulton County economic development organization responsible for County-wide business development</td>
<td>A proactive approach to economic development could lead to a diversified tax base, jobs, and/or additional goods and services available to local residents.</td>
<td>County commissioners, advised by planning commission</td>
<td>Capitalize an Economic Development Fund through bond proceeds and/or a dedicated revenue stream.</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Work with land owners to leverage the Interstate 70 corridor and attract new business / development in Warfordsburg</td>
<td>Interstate 70 is underutilized in Fulton County. The interchange at Warfordsburg provides economic development opportunities that should be explored including but not limited to business park development, light industrial, and lodging.</td>
<td>Revamped or repositioned Fulton Industrial Development Association (FIDA). Coordination with local property owners.</td>
<td>Staff of the new Fulton County economic development organization or repositioned Fulton Industrial Development Association (FIDA).</td>
<td>Initiate mid 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Leverage state grants for improvements to downtown McConnellsburg</td>
<td>Improvements (infrastructure, redevelopment of critical sites, planning, etc.) to downtown will require significant resources. State and Federal grants could help to leverage private sector investment.</td>
<td>Fulton County Planning Commission to coordinate with Borough, SAPDC</td>
<td>Commitment of time by coordinating agencies.</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Develop “Main Street” and downtown revitalization initiative (e.g. National Main Street Center’s Four-Point Approach)</td>
<td>As the County seat, McConnellsburg has a rich history as a significant economic and cultural resource. However, it is suffering from disinvestment. Young adults and seniors provide opportunity for revitalization.</td>
<td>SAPDC to coordinate with the Fulton County Planning Commission, Borough of McConnellsburg, Chamber of Commerce &amp; Tourism and the Chambers of the Alleghenies.</td>
<td>County and Borough to contribute to regional main street manager and/or revitalization initiative.</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Priority: Agriculture**

### Outcomes Sought
- Agriculture sector's output or profitability stabilizes and expands; local food economy (small scale production, processing, and retail/experiencing) becomes a bigger part of the overall economy; diversification of agricultural sector to lesson vulnerabilities and capitalize on emerging technologies and markets.

### The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Generational succession is an issue for agriculture across the U.S. – but even more so in regions with a diminished base of young people.

### The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Rural agricultural townships and the boroughs that service them are facing some of the most acute struggles to fill decision-making boards and fund investments in aging infrastructure.

### Action Items

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Include agriculture representation in County economic development agency</td>
<td>Including representation in the economic development discussions could help to expand the local reach and help to diversify farming in Fulton County.</td>
<td>Revamped or repositioned Fulton Industrial Development Association, Inc. (FIDA).</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time by new ED agency or FIDA</td>
<td>Initiate mid 2018 and complete by 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Actively recruit new processing facilities to locate in Fulton County</td>
<td>Facilities including but not limited to a USDA Certified processing facility for pork and poultry will help to expand the value-added capacity of the local farming community.</td>
<td>Revamped or repositioned Fulton Industrial Development Association, Inc. (FIDA), Conservation District, Penn State Coop Extension.</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time by new ED agency or FIDA</td>
<td>Timing dependent on 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Develop a public campaign to educate and raise public awareness and appreciation of County farmers</td>
<td>Increasing the presence and visibility of locally grown food and other products and activities produced by Fulton County farmers will promote local farmers as businesses and provide access to healthy food.</td>
<td>County commissioners, advised by planning commission, Conservation District, Penn State Coop Extension, and local farming stakeholders</td>
<td>2,500 annually</td>
<td>Initiate mid 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Collaborate with agricultural lenders to provide low-interest loans to farmers</td>
<td>To provide access to capital and expertise for technological advancements and agri-business.</td>
<td>Revamped or repositioned Fulton Industrial Development Association, Inc. (FIDA), Conservation District</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time by new ED agency or FIDA</td>
<td>Timing dependent on 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resources
- Coordination and Partnerships: The County, Penn State Extension, Fulton County Conservation District, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, and other local and regional stakeholders must work together to identify and prioritize key agricultural issues.
- Training and Education: Training and exposure for farmers on the use of technology and best management practices for more efficient and profitable farming techniques.
- Labor: Affordable and dependable skilled workers.
- Capital: A dedicated farm loan program for investments in advanced technologies and practices.

### Outputs
- A better understanding of the labor market and the costs to farmers
- Farmers are able to invest, diversify, and become more profitable
- Locally produced agricultural products are available to Fulton County residents
- Agriculture is recognized as an important aspect of the County’s economic development framework
- A better understanding of the value of agriculture to Fulton County, in all its forms
**FULTON COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**PRIORITY**

Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

- Growth in usage of recreational assets by locals and visitors; overall quality of facilities is consistent and strong; businesses connected to serving visitors and recreational needs thrive and expand; growth in home-based workers and residents under age 40; growth in number and variety of businesses in selected borough centers; growth in property values and private investment in borough centers; improved attraction/retention of middle and upper income households.

**INPUTS**

- **Capacity:** Staff capacity to coordinate programming and improvements
- **Partnerships:** Private sector partners to development and maintain businesses and services that cater to both local residents and visitors.
- **Capital:** Funding for improved recreation infrastructure and maintenance, as well as investments to improve and market existing recreational and cultural assets.

**OUTPUTS**

- Hiking trails and other recreational amenities to attract people to live in Fulton County
- County-wide hiking trail from north to south

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

**ACTION ITEMS**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Trail feasibility study for a county-wide north-south trail</td>
<td>Although the Tuscarora Trail is a well established hiking trail a Fulton County multi-use trail for hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, etc. could diversify recreational opportunities for residents as well as visitors.</td>
<td>County commissioners, advised by planning commission and Fulton County Chamber of Commerce &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>Approximately $25,000 as a 50% local grant match. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is a potential funding source.</td>
<td>Initiate 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Coordinate and cooperate with other Southern Alleghenies counties and chamber of commerce and tourism agencies to market both private and public recreational and cultural destinations</td>
<td>The State Game Lands in Fulton County are a tremendous asset for hiking, hunting and other outdoor recreational activities. The lands contains nearly 6,000 acres including a 200 acre lake. This could lead to private sector businesses opportunities for outfitters, ziplining and canopy tours, nature retreats, etc. Work with the State to expand access to State lands.</td>
<td>New Fulton County economic development organization to coordinate with the Fulton County Chamber of Commerce &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>Staff of the new Fulton County economic development organization and the Fulton County Chamber of Commerce &amp; Tourism.</td>
<td>Initiate mid 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Coordinate with Bedford County on The Old Pennsylvania Pike</td>
<td>Conversion of the abandoned Turnpike and its tunnels into a multi-modal trail will create a one-of-a-kind destination for recreational tourists and a regional quality of life asset.</td>
<td>Southern Alleghenies Conservancy; The Old PA Pike Authority</td>
<td>RACP authorization of $8 million; additional state, federal, and private sources to be identified in pending master plan.</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
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</table>
Huntingdon County

ACTION PLAN

Broadband and Cellular Service
Collaboration and Coordination
Business and Workforce Development
Housing and Blight
Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets

Huntingdon County Steering Committee

Greg Anderson, Standing Stone Coffee Company
Terry Anderson, Juniata College Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership
Brittney Baker Shur, Pennsylvania Association of Realtors
Ilona Ballreich, Penn State Sustainable Communities Collaborative
Robert Benson, Huntingdon County Planning Commission
Ken Burton, Mount Union Area School District
Phil Cahill, Juniata Valley School Commission
Jeremy Crouse, Huntingdon County Planning Commission
Fred Foster, Huntingdon Area School District
David Gardner, APEX Realty Group
Ryan Gibboney, ReInvision Huntingdon
Chris Gilday, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital
Pamela Grugan, Juniata Valley School District
Nicole Houch, Huntingdon Borough Council
Jim Hyslop, Standing Stone Consulting
Travis Lee, Huntingdon Area High School
Nancy McNamara, Huntingdon County Planning Commission
Larry Mutti, Huntingdon County Planning Commission
Matthew Price, Huntingdon County Visitor’s Bureau
Ron Rabena, Huntingdon County Planning Commission
Robert Reitman, Huntingdon County Business & Industry
Rick Rogers, Mount Union Veterans of Foreign Wars
Mark Sather, Huntingdon County Commissioner
Angie Thompson, Thompson’s Candle Company and Gage Mansion Bed & Breakfast
James Troha, PhD, Juniata College
Fran Vaughn, Mutual Benefit Group
Scott Walls, Huntingdon County Commissioner

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• Many of the action items identify resources in general terms by the types of resources necessary (financial or otherwise) or by the likely contributors. If a project requires a financial commitment and specific dollar amounts are not listed, they are unknown at this time and must be determined through further planning by project partners.

• This action plan is intended to bring focused attention to projects and initiatives that can be expected to contribute to the realization of desired outcomes. As with any community action plan, it must be recognized that no single project or list of projects represents a guaranteed solution to a community’s challenges. Improving the likelihood of success requires a commitment to experimentation, honest assessments of project impact, and regular refinements to the action plan to reflect new opportunities and evolving conditions.
HUNTINGDON COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY

Broadband and Cell Service

OUTCOMES SOUGHT

Critical broadband and cell coverage gaps are identified and filled, resulting in a reliable network and enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety and education.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
For younger households and most businesses today, access to high-speed internet and reliable cell service is an expectation not unlike electricity. Places that don’t have it cannot be competitive.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

INPUTS

Knowledge
Identify broadband and cell coverage gaps through (1) an inventory of well-known and documented gaps, and/or (2) a comprehensive survey of existing levels of service. In particular, identify gaps that do the most to undermine the county’s ability to compete for businesses and households or that present a high risk to public safety.

Management Capacity:
Organize public-private partnerships around addressing each high-priority gap to pinpoint options and select a course of action tailored to the location.

Capital:
Allocate public resources to cover the cost gaps that preclude the private sector from addressing gaps on its own.

OUTPUTS

Public private partnerships complete projects (fiber installation, cell tower development, etc.) that resolve critical service gaps
Improvements will position the network to adapt to changing technologies
Collaboration with educational partners to better compete in the 21st Century economy

Critical broadband and cell coverage gaps are identified and filled, resulting in a reliable network and enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety and education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
<th>WHAT?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
<th>WHO?</th>
<th>WHAT RESOURCES?</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish regional broadband and cell service task force</td>
<td>Progress on this regional priority will require long-term coordination to determine appropriate action steps and oversee their implementation. Task Force can lobby on behalf of rural communities. Examples of steps currently being explored include items A and B below.</td>
<td>County planning commissions, SAPDC, and subject-matter experts</td>
<td>Dedication of time by task force participants</td>
<td>Spring 2018 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Infrastructure Inventory, Customer Survey, and Identification of Anchor Customers</td>
<td>Working with private service providers to expand service and coverage requires knowledge of existing public and private infrastructure, current levels of service, and the presence of anchor users (schools, hospitals, companies) whose demand for service can be pooled and used as a base for expansion.</td>
<td>SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED</td>
<td>$50,000 estimated for regional inventory and survey ($7,500 to $10,000 commitment from Huntingdon County)</td>
<td>Complete asset inventory, customer survey, and anchor identification by end of 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Hire tele-communications project manager at SAPDC</td>
<td>As areas of potential service expansion are identified, capacity will be needed to coordinate with service providers, perform customer/user outreach, and manage projects that involve public-private partnerships.</td>
<td>SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED</td>
<td>County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties.</td>
<td>Timing and nature of work dependent on needs identified by action item 1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Broadband Outreach and Aggregation</td>
<td>Through Act 183, areas with no or very limited internet service can aggregate customer demand and request service through completion of a Bona Fide Retail Request Program. Services are provided if sufficient demand is proven. Information on the Act 183 process can be distributed by the County Planning Commission for dissemination by local governments.</td>
<td>Information distributed by the County Planning Commission</td>
<td>Time of staff and elected officials to inform constituents about aggregation process</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HUNTINGDON COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY

Collaboration and Coordination

OUTCOMES SOUGHT

Service improvements and/or savings realized by collaborating municipalities; reduction in low-capacity and low-function units of government; improved services and efficiencies result in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county; improved functioning and collaboration among both private and public organizations.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

Retirements, looming labor force shortages, and stagnant tax bases make partnerships and structural change not only desirable but necessary.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.

INPUTS

Will to collaborate:
The political will to overcome territorial instincts in order to broker inter-municipal agreements and partnerships around critical services.

Capital:
Savings may ultimately accrue from collaboration, but sometimes there are up-front costs that need to be covered.

Process know-how and guidance:
Drafting inter-municipal agreements, consolidating municipalities, or establishing regional service districts requires the navigation of legal and financial details and processes.

OUTPUTS

Inter-municipal agreements to share particular resources and capacities are developed and executed

Multi-municipal service districts are established around critical services

Self-selected municipalities are successfully guided through the merger/consolidation process

Local and regional stakeholders are better informed on what each is doing due to improved communication through cross-referencing and linking (e.g. newsletters, social media, web sites, etc.)

Improvements will help to retain and attract young people

WHEN?

Promote

Establish

Commitment of

Evaluate

Outreach and

Legal and financial

1

2

3

ACTION ITEMS

WHAT?

Develop Advisory Committee to evaluate opportunities for shared services, consolidation, and potential effectiveness of a Council of Governments (COG) to leverage municipal purchasing and reduce costs associated with things like overhead, roadway maintenance, and code enforcement.

Sharing information about local and regional best practices in problem solving and service delivery, as well as the costs/benefits of sharing/merging or consolidating services, can help stimulate greater levels of collaboration and save costs.

Once progress has been made and quality-of-life improves a concerted effort should be made to promote Huntingdon County as an attractive and affordable place to live and work.

A financial incentive, when combined with legal and financial guidance could initiate a greater willingness for inter-municipal agreements and service sharing. The private sector has a vested interest to improve government efficiencies. An incentive program could require participation in an educational/training session by SAPDC.

WHAT

Develop Advisory Committee

Sharing information about local and regional best practices

Once progress has been made and quality-of-life improves

A financial incentive, when combined with legal and financial

WHY?

Developing opportunities for shared services, consolidation, and potential effectiveness of a Council of Governments (COG)

Sharing information about local and regional best practices

Once progress has been made and quality-of-life improves

A financial incentive, when combined with legal and financial guidance

WHO?

Huntingdon County Planning Commission, County Associations of Township Officials, Councils of Governments (COG)

Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Advisory Committee from above, HCBI, SAPDC, Leadership Huntingdon County

HCBI, SAPDC, Leadership Huntingdon County, Huntingdon County Board of Realtors, County Visitors Bureau, etc.

HCBI, SAPDC

WHAT RESOURCES?

Commitment of staff time

Commitment of staff time

$5,000 annually to promote, organize, etc. Sponsors and donations could play a role

Private sector financial resources, Commitment of staff time

WHEN?

2018

2018

TBD

2019

a

b

a

a

b


**HUNTINGDON COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**
Growth in usage of recreational assets by locals and visitors; overall quality of facilities is consistent and strong; businesses connected to serving visitors and recreational needs thrive and expand; growth in home-based workers and residents under age 40; growth in number and variety of businesses in selected borough centers; growth in property values and private investment in borough centers; preservation of historic and cultural buildings and sites; and improved attraction/retention of middle and upper income households.

**INPUTS**
Capacity:
Staff capacity to coordinate programming and improvements

Partnerships:
Private sector partners to development and maintain businesses and services that cater to both local residents and visitors.

Capital:
Funding for improved recreation infrastructure and maintenance, as well as investments to improve and market existing recreational and cultural assets.

**OUTPUTS**
Hiking trails and other recreational amenities to attract people to live in Huntingdon County

Increase the number of visitors in shoulder season

Increase the number of businesses focused on 3 and 4 seasons

More types of users can be accommodated

Balance between recreational opportunities / amenities and economic / business progress

Improvements will help to retain and attract young people

---

**THE LINK TO DEMOGRAPHIC DISADVANTAGES**

For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.

**THE LINK TO VARYING IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY**
Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

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**ACTION ITEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHY</th>
<th>WHO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Implement the regional active transportation plan or bicycle and pedestrian master plan at the local level.</td>
<td>Build and connect bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and set policy to encourage more active communities. Should also include a model complete streets policy and coordinate with existing and planned trails and connections.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee and other local stakeholders</td>
<td>County staff time, volunteers, and local project-related resources as necessary.</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Analyze and prioritize gaps in trail network to improve connections to downtowns and commercial nodes.</td>
<td>Closing gaps in the network will improve the trail system as both a recreational and transportation asset and provide trail users access to local businesses.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee, property owners, and other local stakeholders</td>
<td>County staff time, volunteers, and local project-related resources as necessary.</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Implement Main Line Canal Greenway Trail and the September 11th Memorial Trail.</td>
<td>The trails illustrate the Main Line Canal’s legacy, preserving the heritage of the people and places that make Pennsylvania unique, and recognizing the national significance of Pennsylvania in the 9/11 memorial.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee, Main Line Trail Committee, and other local stakeholders</td>
<td>County staff time, volunteers, and local project-related resources as necessary.</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c Complete trail around Lake Raystown and connect to Huntingdon Borough.</td>
<td>It will be economically and recreationally beneficial to connect residents and visitors to local businesses.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee, property owners, and other local stakeholders</td>
<td>County staff time, volunteers, and local project-related resources as necessary.</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
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**MODEL TO CONSIDER**

Cambria County Hotel Tax
Act 18 of 2016 gave 57 counties, including Huntingdon, the authority to raise their hotel taxes to a maximum of 5%, with proceeds dedicated to tourism promotion. Cambria County did this in 2016 and the hotel tax now provides over $600,000 per year to support countywide marketing efforts.
## ACTION ITEMS, CONT’D.

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<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, State, and local municipalities to expand the permitted recreational uses of public lands including equestrian, snowmobile, ATV, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Support the efforts of the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau in requesting changes of the US Army Corps during the Raystown Master Plan Update as directed by the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expanding the use of Federal, State, and local public lands will diversify the recreational offerings within the County, could expand the shoulder tourism season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Master Plan provides investment and decision making direction to the Corp. for the next 15-25 years, which is the only time that land use classifications that govern the way land is managed can be updated. Working with the Visitors Bureau, support for land use changes and investment will allow for positive improvements for both residents and visitors to the county.</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huntington County Commissioners, Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Army Corp. of Engineers, Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau, Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Huntingdon County Commissioners</td>
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<th>WHAT RESOURCES?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rely on existing staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine funds needed to support improvements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
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<tr>
<th>WHEN?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Initiate mid 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiate 2018, Complete by 2019</td>
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</table>
### Business and Workforce Development

#### OUTCOMES SOUGHT

- Business creation rates improve; growth in net number of jobs; entrepreneurial activity is more visible; risk-taking becomes more widely accepted; increase in labor force participation; number of long-term unfilled jobs fall.

#### INPUTS

**Capacity:**
- Staff capacity to coordinate economic development initiatives related to small business cultivation and technical assistance.

**Partnerships:**
- Private sector partners to develop and maintain businesses and services that cater to both local residents and visitors.

#### OUTPUTS

- Increase in number of new businesses and expansion of existing businesses

"Main Street" program for downtown Huntingdon established to build promotional capacity, coordinate programming, and attract new investment. Expand to other boroughs.

Huntingdon County Business and Industry partners with County and private sector to access and develop needed infrastructure

Partnership for Economic Progress (PEP) to coordinate and collaborate with other local and regional stakeholders

Educational training and programs align with needed workforce

Workforce has proactively received the training necessary to compete locally and in a 21st Century global economy

Improvements will help to retain and attract young people

#### THE LINK TO DEMOGRAPHIC DISADVANTAGES

Despite job losses, many employers indicate difficulty with filling the jobs they have – a situation that will worsen as the workforce continues to age. Attracting new workers to the region will be central to retaining current businesses, let alone growing new ones.

#### THE LINK TO VARYING IMPLEMENTATION CAPACITY

Creating the conditions for job development means investing strongly in the services and infrastructure that businesses expect – and that their skilled workers will expect.

### ACTION ITEMS

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<tr>
<th>WHAT?</th>
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<th>WHO?</th>
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<th>WHEN?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strengthen locally owned farms by diversifying their products and services.</td>
<td>There is significant uncertainty in the agricultural sector, especially regarding milk prices. Local farmers should look to diversify their products and services in order to remain competitive. Local farmers are important in preserving open space and cultural resources. In addition, recruiting additional facilities including but not limited to a USDA Certified processing facilities for dairy products (yogurt, cheese, etc.) will help to expand the value-added capacity of the local farming community.</td>
<td>Huntington County planning Commission, Huntington County Farm Bureau, Huntington County Conservation District, Huntington County Business and Industry, Inc, Huntington County Career and Technology Center, and other agricultural stakeholders</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Explore the development of a educational / training program for farmers to learn about new technologies and business opportunities.</td>
<td>To provide training and access to expertise for technological advancements and agri-business. Explore opportunities to expand agricultural offerings, especially in downtown centers with farm-to-table / fork-to-table programs.</td>
<td>SAPDC, Huntington County Farm Bureau, Huntington County Business and Industry, Inc, Huntington County Career and Technology Center, Juniata College, Huntingdon County Local Food Association etc.</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Explore the development of a agricultural worker placement agency.</td>
<td>Farmers have reported having difficulty attracting and retaining skilled farm workers. A placement agency would help to connect farmers with skilled permanent and temporary workers.</td>
<td>SAPDC and CareerLink to coordinate with local industrial placement agencies, private sector providers, and other agricultural stakeholders</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Collaborate with the school districts and Juniata College to develop a student shadow program with local businesses</td>
<td>Job-shadowing is recognized as an important career-exploration activity for middle-school and high-school students. Shadowing helps students see how their textbook learning can be applied in the real world.</td>
<td>CareerLink, Huntington County Business and Industry, Inc, Huntington County Career and Technology Center, Juniata College, etc.</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### MODEL TO CONSIDER

**Farm to Fork Ithaca (NY)**

The Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau’s Farm to Fork Ithaca initiative helps to build linkages between restaurants, farms, residents, and visitors. These connections promote economic interactions between producers and consumers at a local and regional level.

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**Resource:**
- [Alleghenies Ahead](https://allegheniesahead.org/)

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**Contact:**
- [Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region](https://allegheniesahead.org/)

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**Staff:**
- [Alleghenies Ahead](https://allegheniesahead.org/)

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**Partners:**
- [Huntingdon County Planning Commission](https://www.huntingdonpa.com/)
- [Huntingdon County Farm Bureau](https://www.huntingdonfarmbureau.org/)
- [Huntingdon County Conservation District](https://www.huntingdonconservation.org/)
- [Huntingdon County Business and Industry](https://www.huntingdonbusiness.com/)
- [Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center](https://www.huntingdonctc.com/)
- [Juniata College](https://www.juniata.edu/)
- [SAPDC](https://www.sapdc.org/)
- [Huntingdon County Local Food Association](https://www.huntingdonfood.org/)

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**Implementation:**
- [Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region](https://allegheniesahead.org/)

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**Assessment:**
- [Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region](https://allegheniesahead.org/)

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**Evaluation:**
- [Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region](https://allegheniesahead.org/)
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<tr>
<td>3 Leverage state grants for improvements to downtown Huntingdon and Mount Union</td>
<td>Improvements (infrastructure, redevelopment of critical sites, planning, etc.) to downtown will require significant resources. State and Federal grants could help to leverage private sector investment.</td>
<td>Huntington County Planning Commission to coordinate with Boroughs, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc.</td>
<td>Commitment of time by coordinating agencies. Could require local money for grant matches</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Support the efforts of Mount Union Borough on completing the Pennsylvania Avenue Linear Park Corridor.</td>
<td>Provides new rail access to Riverview Business Center; Establishes a connection to regional trail network, such as September 11th National Memorial Trail, which would lead to better quality of life and recreational and ancillary business growth downtown; removes blight from downtown and restores access to abutting properties</td>
<td>Mount Union Borough, Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Keller Engineers, Commonwealth of PA</td>
<td>PennDOT and DCED MTF Grant, PennDOT TA-Set Aside, PA Infrastructure Bank Loan, USDA Rural Development Assistance, Local Tax Dollars, etc.</td>
<td>Initiate 2018, Complete by end of 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Develop entrepreneurial program to educate people on how to start a business.</td>
<td>Help the Huntingdon community and economy by educating local community members as to the value of entrepreneurship and help them understand how to start and maintain a business.</td>
<td>Juniata College, Huntingdon County Business &amp; Industry, Inc, Penn State, Huntingdon County Planning Commission</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time, $12,000</td>
<td>Initiate 2018 and running by mid-2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Identify and implement roadway, rail, and other infrastructure improvements to accommodate freight movement.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County does not currently have adequate infrastructure to accommodate the expansion of moving freight. Discussions regarding highways development and an intermodal rail center have been discussed.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Huntingdon County Commissioners, PennDOT, Rail Authority, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc, and other necessary stakeholders.</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time, other local resources TBD</td>
<td>Initiate 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Utilize the newly formed Huntingdon County Rail Authority to work with Norfolk Southern to reactivate the Fairgrounds Road rail spur.</td>
<td>Reestablishing rail infrastructure and access to local industrial properties could lead to business expansion and job growth to counteract lack of four lane highways.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Rail Authority, Huntingdon County Business &amp; Industry, Norfolk Southern, Huntingdon County Commissioners, Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Commonwealth of PA</td>
<td>DCED Grant Sources: MTF, RFA, RIFAP, RTAP, etc.</td>
<td>Initiate 2018, Complete by 2020</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**MODEL TO CONSIDER**

Main Street Oakland County (MI)

This is the oldest countywide Main Street program in the country and uses the Four Point Approach to Main Street revitalization promoted by the National Main Street Center. County staff assist local Main Street coordinators.
HUNTINGDON COUNTY ACTION PLAN

PRIORITY

Housing and Blight

OUTCOMES SOUGHT

The housing market across the county to be balanced and for different parts of the county to have contributions to make towards a “full housing ladder”. Variety and quality of housing options expands; demand revealed by subsidized production lowers perceptions of risk and stimulates more interest from developers; businesses have an easier time recruiting new workers due to improved housing options - competitiveness improves; non-seasonal vacancy rates remain stable at around 4%; property values improve in areas where intervention occurs.

The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

Attracting and retaining younger households will be challenging if available housing is a poor match for their needs and blight discourages them from investing.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Removing blighted properties and stimulating the production of new market-rate housing is critical for the region’s competitiveness. But very few communities have the resources or expertise to do this on their own.

INPUTS

Will to implement: The political will to incentivize and, if necessary, subsidize the production of missing housing products.

Coordination and Partnerships: The county and municipalities must work together to identify and prioritize problem properties. Private sector partners are needed to rehab/reuse salvageable properties.

Project Management Capacity: Each property identified for intervention – whether demolition or redevelopment – becomes a distinct project that needs to be managed to successful conclusion.

Capital: Allocate public resources to cover demolition costs and for infrastructure, tax abatement, or other incentives to help bring to market.

Demolition: Target abandoned properties that are exerting substantial negative impacts on the market.

Code Enforcement: Target key areas

OUTPUTS

Number of new market-rate rental units added each year (with the goal of about 8 per year).

Growth in the young adult population in Huntingdon County.

Severely blighted and obsolete properties are acquired and demolished.

Salvageable or historic properties are transitioned to new owners and renovated.

Growth in existing and new businesses in Borough centers as a result of improved housing for young adult population.

Improvements will help to retain and attract young people.

ACTION ITEMS

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>WHAT RESOURCES?</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Evaluate the use of municipal financing and tax abatement tools</td>
<td>There are several tools that should be considered to help lower the perception of risk and stimulate more interest from developers in housing development - (Tax Increment Financing districts (TIF)), Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA), Business Improvement Districts (BID)</td>
<td>Huntington County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Huntington County Board of Realtors</td>
<td>Commitment of staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop a financial model to incentivize market-rate apartments, townhouses, and ADA accessible single-family homes</td>
<td>To help lower the perception of risk and stimulate more interest from developers in housing development. ADA accessible single-family homes in the $125K-$200K range</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Planning Commission to convene a committee with representation from the Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Huntington County Board of Realtors, and local lenders</td>
<td>TBD once evaluation of model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Develop a financial model to incentivize the rehabilitation of underutilized or vacant commercial and mixed-use buildings</td>
<td>There are many buildings within and outside the Boroughs that need improvements and are likely to sit dormant unless some form of incentive is used to entice investors. Financing and tax abatement tools should be considered.</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Planning Commission to convene a committee with representation from the Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Huntington County Board of Realtors, and local lenders</td>
<td>TBD once evaluation of model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MODEL TO CONSIDER

Erie Downtown Development Corporation

A consortium of local banks, foundations, and corporations founded EDDC in 2017 to support downtown development goals. This includes the establishment of an equity fund to invest in private mixed-income residential projects in new or redeveloped downtown buildings.
### ACTION ITEMS, CONT’D.

#### 4 Capitalize a blight intervention program - pass Act 137 of 1992 and 152 of 2016.

- To create a stream of funding for blight intervention - this would place a $15 fee on deed recordings to support rehabilitation and demolition activity and provide a revenue stream of roughly $50,000 per year.
- Coordinate with recreational and cultural assets action plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment of staff time</th>
<th>Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission and the Huntingdon County Board of Realtors</td>
<td>Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission, other partnering communities, Center for Community Action, and the Huntingdon County Board of Realtors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### 5 Explore the development of an educational / training program for farmers to learn about new technologies and business opportunities.

Charge the Agency with coordinating stepped-up blight removal efforts and ensure that staff capacity is sufficient to handle this charge. The Agency would:

- Work with the county and municipalities to identify and prioritize problem properties. Set a goal of intervening at five locations per year – with a particular focus on tax delinquent properties that can be transferred to Agency.
- In collaboration with municipalities, manage the demolition of severely blighted and obsolete properties.
- For salvageable properties or historic assets, issue RFPs to attract capable new owners. Use proceeds from sale to underwrite other blight interventions.

<table>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Somerset County Steering Committee

Sharon Ackerman, Register of Wills
Ron Aldom, Somerset County Chamber of Commerce
Chris Burtner, North American Hoganas, Inc.
Matthew Coldwell, AK Coal
Regina Coughenour, Somerset, Inc.
Dennis Hutchison, PA Farm Bureau
Don Miller, Somerset Township
Josh Miller, Somerset County Economic Development Council

Cassie Moon, Somerset Trust Company
John Vatavuk, Somerset County Commissioner
Jon Wahl, Somerset Planning & Engineering
Gerald Walker, Somerset County Commissioner
Greg Walker, Stonycreek Township
Gary Wetterberg, Planning Commission
James Yoder, Somerset County Commissioner

Please Note:
• The projects and initiatives identified in this action plan are numbered for organizational purposes only and are not ranked in order of importance. Where sequencing of a project is necessary – one following the completion of another – this is noted under the description of project timing.
• Many of the action items identify resources in general terms by the types of resources necessary (financial or otherwise) or by the likely contributors. If a project requires a financial commitment and specific dollar amounts are not listed, they are unknown at this time and must be determined through further planning by project partners.
• This action plan is intended to bring focused attention to projects and initiatives that can be expected to contribute to the realization of desired outcomes. As with any community action plan, it must be recognized that no single project or list of projects represents a guaranteed solution to a community’s challenges. Improving the likelihood of success requires a commitment to experimentation, honest assessments of project impact, and regular refinements to the action plan to reflect new opportunities and evolving conditions.
**SOMERSET COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**PRIORITY**

**Broadband and Cell Service**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

Broadband and telecommunications services are expanded around and beyond key institutions, population centers, and economic assets, resulting in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county and/or improved public safety.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

For younger households and most businesses today, access to high-speed internet and reliable cell service is an expectation not unlike electricity. Places that don't have it cannot be competitive.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

**INPUTS**

**Knowledge:** Identify existing private infrastructure networks and the locations of major customers or groups of customers. Determine existing and desired levels of service.

**Management Capacity:** Organize public-private partnerships around addressing service improvements and expansions in areas of sufficient or potential demand. Troubleshoot public safety gaps through partnerships with service providers and public agencies.

**Capital:** Allocate public resources to help cover cost gaps that preclude priority service expansion by market forces alone.

**OUTPUTS**

Public private partnerships complete projects (fiber installation, cell tower development, etc.) that expand coverage and quality of service.

**ACTION ITEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Complete the current 22-mile fiber optic project</td>
<td>With federal and state assistance, Somerset County is making significant strides to boost broadband speeds at key industrial sites, which will also benefit nearby households.</td>
<td>Somerset County and SAPDC</td>
<td>$1.5 million in secured federal and state funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Establish regional broadband and cell service task force</td>
<td>Progress on this regional priority will require long-term coordination to determine appropriate action steps and oversee their implementation. Examples of steps currently being explored include items 2A and 2B below.</td>
<td>County planning commissions, SAPDC, and subject-matter experts</td>
<td>Dedication of time by task force participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Infrastructure Inventory, Customer Survey, and Identification of Anchor Customers**

- **a** Working with private service providers to expand service and coverage requires knowledge of existing public and private infrastructure, current levels of service, and the presence of anchor users (schools, hospitals, companies) whose demand for service can be pooled and used as a base for expansion.
  - SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED
  - $50,000 estimated for regional inventory and survey ($7,500 to $10,000 commitment from Somerset County)
  - Complete asset inventory, customer survey, and anchor identification by end of 2018

- **b** As areas of potential service expansion are identified, capacity will be needed to negotiate with service providers, perform customer/user outreach, and manage projects that involve public-private partnerships.
  - SAPDC with support from participating counties; potential for funding partnership with DCED
  - County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties.
  - Timing and nature of work dependent on needs identified by action item 2a
## SOMERSET COUNTY ACTION PLAN

### PRIORITY

**Collaboration and Coordination**

### OUTCOMES SOUGHT

**Service improvements and/or savings realized by collaborating municipalities; reduction in number of low-capacity and low-function units of government; improved services and efficiencies result in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county.**

### The Link to Demographic Disadvantages

Service improvements and/or savings realized by collaborating municipalities; reduction in number of low-capacity and low-function units of government; improved services and efficiencies result in enhanced marketability and competitiveness of the county.

### The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity

Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.

### INPUTS

**Will to collaborate:**

The political will to overcome territorial instincts in order to broker inter-municipal agreements and partnerships around critical services.

**Capital:**

Savings may ultimately accrue from collaboration, but sometimes there are up-front costs that need to be covered.

**Process know-how and guidance:**

Drafting inter-municipal agreements, consolidating municipalities, or establishing regional service districts requires the navigation of legal and financial details and processes.

### OUTPUTS

**Inter-municipal agreements to share particular resources and capacities are developed and executed**

**Multi-municipal service districts are established around critical services**

**Self-selected municipalities are successfully guided through the merger/consolidation process**

### ACTION ITEMS

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Legal and financial guidance for collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Executing inter-municipal agreements, forming regional service districts, and exploring municipal merger/consolidation often requires a level of legal and financial expertise that isn’t readily available to local governments.</td>
<td>SAPDC, DCED</td>
<td>Commitment of SAPDC in-house expertise and retainers to provide legal and financial guidance; additional guidance from DCED</td>
<td>2018 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Outreach and education</strong></td>
<td>Sharing information about local and regional best practices in problem solving and service delivery, as well as the costs/benefits of collaboration or consolidation, can help stimulate action by townships and boroughs.</td>
<td>Township and borough associations; fire and ambulance associations; school boards; state municipal associations; Somerset County Planning Commission; public and private sector leaders</td>
<td>Commitment of staff and volunteer time to communicate best practices and inform local officials about options for collaboration</td>
<td>2018 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Establish matching grant program to incentivize inter-municipal agreements and service sharing</strong></td>
<td>A financial incentive, when combined with legal and financial guidance could initiate a greater willingness for inter-municipal agreements and service sharing, especially when start-up costs are involved.</td>
<td>Somerset County; Private Foundations</td>
<td>Pair county funds with private sector commitments to establish a pool for matching grants</td>
<td>Begin in 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACTION ITEMS

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

Retirements, looming labor force shortages, and stagnant tax bases make partnerships and structural change not only desirable but necessary.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Collaborations that bring together the expertise and resources of multiple communities and sectors makes implementation of almost any initiative more likely to happen and more likely to succeed over time.
The Link to Demographic Disadvantages
Attracting and retaining younger households will be challenging if available housing is a poor match for their needs and blight discourages them from investing.

The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity
Removing blighted properties and stimulating the production of new market-rate housing is critical for the region’s competitiveness. But very few communities have the resources or expertise to do this on their own.

WHAT? | WHY? | WHO? | WHAT RESOURCES? | WHEN?
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1. Demolition of five to seven blighted properties per year | Identifying five to seven blighted properties per year – properties that threaten community assets and hamper investment – will allow Somerset County to deal with this issue at a realistic but meaningful pace. | Somerset County Redevelopment Authority; new Problem Property Identification Committee | $50,000 to $75,000 per year dedicated to demolishing five to seven properties per year. (Revenue stream can be achieved through local adoption of Act 152.) Allocation of staff time and capacity by SCRA and municipalities that participate on the ad hoc committee. | Initiate before June 2018

2. Negotiated sale of endangered but salvageable properties | Intervening with salvageable tax foreclosed properties in sensitive locations – where there is a public interest in guiding the transfer of the properties to capable owners with sound redevelopment plans – can significantly decrease the risk that a property will become or remain blighted. For such properties, an open RFP process leading to a negotiated sale offers greater control than the tax auction. | Somerset County Redevelopment Authority; new Problem Property Identification Committee For-profit and non-profit sector redevelopment partners | Allocation of staff time and capacity by SCRA and municipalities that participate on the ad hoc committee. | Initiate property identification process before December 2018

INTEGRATING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Non-seasonal vacancy rates remain stable at around 4%; property values improve in areas where intervention occurs; first impressions and investor confidence improves in key areas.

OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Severely blighted and obsolete properties are acquired and demolished.
Salvageable or historic properties are transitioned to new owners and renovated.

INPUTS
Coordination and Partnerships:
The county and municipalities must work together to identify and prioritize problem properties. Private sector partners are needed to rehab/reuse salvageable properties.

Project Management Capacity:
Each property identified for intervention – whether demolition or redevelopment – becomes a distinct project that needs to be managed to a successful conclusion.

Capital:
Allocate public resources to cover demolition costs or support rehabilitation.

OUTPUTS
Severely blighted and obsolete properties are acquired and demolished.
Salvageable or historic properties are transitioned to new owners and renovated.
**SOMERSET COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

### PRIORITY

**Recreational Amenities and Natural Assets**

**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

Growth in home-based workers and residents under age 40; growth in property values, business variety, and investment in targeted borough centers; growth in number of unique visits to Somerset County; higher utilization of Pittsburgh cultural assets by county residents.

**The Link to Demographic Disadvantages**

For younger households that have options, quality of life often plays a decisive role in choosing where to live and put down roots.

**The Link to Varying Implementation Capacity**

Local capacity to negotiate with service providers or stimulate new infrastructure is limited, making county- and region-level action a necessity.

### INPUTS

- **Capacity:**
  - Staff capacity to coordinate programming and improvements in borough centers.

- **Partnerships:**
  - Private sector partners to develop and maintain businesses and services that cater to both local residents and visitors.

- **Capital:**
  - Funding for improved infrastructure and maintenance in borough centers, as well as investments to improve existing cultural and recreational assets.

**OUTPUTS**

- County-level “Main Street” program established to build promotional capacity, coordinate programming, and attract new investment.

### ACTION ITEMS

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<tr>
<td>1 Convene a county-wide “Main Street” coalition</td>
<td>Somerset County’s boroughs have the potential to be vital centers of culture and small business activity that contribute substantially to the county’s attractiveness to tourists and residents.</td>
<td>Somerset County; Somerset County Conservancy; Somerset Lake Action Committee; Pennsylvania Fish &amp; Boat Commission; County Parks and Recreation Board</td>
<td>Secure resources to complete the Master Plan through Act 13 revenue, county general fund allocations, donor solicitations from SCC, foundation support, and DCNR.</td>
<td>2018 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Somerset Lake Park</td>
<td>The realization of Somerset Lake’s potential as a natural and recreational asset for the county has been in the works for years, with incremental progress made since the development of a master plan in 2006. Completing the community’s vision for Somerset Lake will establish a high quality and versatile recreational asset in the county’s largest population center, boosting the county’s ability to attract and retain residents and visitors.</td>
<td>Somerset County; Somerset County Recreation Board</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 County Tourism Committee</td>
<td>Somerset County has numerous recreational assets and entities that promote those assets. Coordinating efforts to improve and promote these assets – and linking them to other county priorities – will maximize their impact on the county’s economy and communities.</td>
<td>Somerset County Chamber of Commerce; Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau</td>
<td>Commitment of time for coordination by committee partners</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Implement the region’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2016) at the local level</td>
<td>Building and connecting bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and setting policies to encourage more active communities, will bolster the marketability and viability of Somerset County’s communities as well as connecting residents and visitors to the county’s numerous recreation assets.</td>
<td>Somerset County Planning Commission; County Parks and Recreation Board</td>
<td>County staff time, volunteers, and local financial resources, as necessary, to leverage state and federal resources</td>
<td>2018 and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Establish Trust Fund to insure long-term operation of current water treatment systems and to support development of additional systems

Somerset County watersheds have been damaged by man-made pollution such as abandoned mine drainage (AMD) for over 100 years, reducing recreational and sustainable economic opportunities. Because of public sector and volunteer initiatives to reduce pollution, water quality has been improving. There are currently 23 AMD passive treatment systems that must be maintained in perpetuity and additional projects must be designed, funded and constructed to continue to address unabated pollution sources.

Somerset Conservation District, Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project, Somerset County Conservancy, PA Association of Conservation Districts Technical Assistance Group, County watershed associations, PA Fish and Boat Commission, PADEP, Federal Office of Surface Mining, Somerset County Commissioners

Use multi-sector partnerships to obtain federal, state, local, and corporate resources

2018 and ongoing
**SOMERSET COUNTY ACTION PLAN**

**PRIORITY**

Business and Workforce Development

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**OUTCOMES SOUGHT**

Business creation and retention rates improve; number of small businesses grows; growth in net number of jobs and capital investments; entrepreneurial activity is more visible; risk-taking becomes more widely accepted; increase in labor force participation; tax bases grow stronger in communities along Route 219 and other areas of investment.

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**INPUTS**

Partnerships:
- Collaboration with other counties and agencies in the Southern Alleghenies on small business development and entrepreneurship; strengthening relationships between public sector agencies and local businesses.

Capacity:
- Staff capacity to coordinate economic development initiatives related to small business cultivation and technical assistance.

Space:
- Committed existing new facilities as space for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Capital:
- Resources to complete Route 219 between Meyersdale and Maryland and initiate other capital-intensive business development projects.

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**OUTPUTS**

Programs and projects identified in the county’s Economic Diversification and Growth Strategy are gradually implemented

Construction begins on Route 219 between Meyersdale and the Maryland line, with corridor plan in place to guide new development near Route 219.
Resolutions of Adoption

Bedford County Board of Commissioners

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE FOR BEDFORD COUNTY, INCLUDING ALL MAPS, CHARTS, AND TEXTUAL MATTERS CONTAINED HEREIN

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of 1968, P.L. 905, No. 247, as remodeled and amended, requires that county comprehensive plans be updated every ten (10) years; and

WHEREAS, the Bedford County Comprehensive Plan was last adopted by the Bedford County Board of Commissioners on December 19, 2006; and

WHEREAS, the MPC outlines content and procedural requirements associated with the preparation, review and approval of county comprehensive plans and have been followed in the County Plan Update process; and

WHEREAS, the Bedford County Planning Commission coordinated the preparation of the Bedford County Comprehensive Plan Update (“Plan Update”) that has been published as part of the document entitled Alleghenies Ahead Shared Strategies for a Stronger Region, dated June 2018, in cooperation with the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission and the five other counties comprising the Southern Alleghenies Region – Bedford, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Update was prepared in accordance with guidance published by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for an “Implementable” Plan, with specific, implementable Action Plans; and

WHEREAS, the Bedford County Planning Commission conducted a robust and inclusive public participation and engagement process and an official public hearing regarding the plan; and

WHEREAS, the draft Plan Update was made available for review and comment by citizens, school districts and municipalities within Bedford County, and contiguous counties, and the other five regional county partners did the same for their portions of the Update; and

WHEREAS, the Bedford County Planning Commission duly noted and considered all public comments received in finalizing the County Plan Update; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bedford County Board of Commissioners hereby adopt the Bedford County Comprehensive Plan Update that has been published as part of the Alleghenies Ahead document, dated June 2018 and comprised of maps, charts, textual matter and narratives, and other matters that form the whole of the County Plan Update; and fulfills County responsibilities under the MPC.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Bedford, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, this 17th day of July, 2018.

BEDFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Joelle Lang, Commissioner Chair

S. Paul Crooks, Commissioner Vice-Chair

Debra K. Brown, Chief Clerk

Helen P. Schmitt, County Administrator

Bruce Erb, Chairman

Terry Tonetti, Vice-Chairman

Ted Beam, Jr., Secretary

RESOLUTION 279-2018

ADOPTING ALLEGHENIES AHEAD: SHARED STRATEGIES FOR A STRONGER REGION AS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF BLAIR COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Act of 1968, P.L. 905, No. 247, as remodeled and amended, requires that county comprehensive plans be updated every ten years; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code outlines content and procedural requirements associated with the preparation, review and approval of county comprehensive plans and have been followed in the development of this plan; and

WHEREAS, the Blair County Planning Commission coordinated the preparation of the Blair County Comprehensive Plan that has been published as part of the document entitled Alleghenies Ahead: Shared Strategies for a Stronger Region, Adopted 2018, in cooperation with the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission and the five other counties comprising the Southern Alleghenies region – Bedford, Cambria, Huntington, Fulton, and Somerset; and

WHEREAS, the Blair County Planning Commission conducted a robust and inclusive public participation and engagement process, intergovernmental notifications, and an official public meeting regarding the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Blair County Planning Commission duly noted and considered all public comments received in finalizing the document.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Blair County Board of Commissioners hereby adopt the Blair County Comprehensive Plan that has been published as part of the Alleghenies Ahead document, and comprised of maps, charts, textual matter and narratives, and other matters that form the whole of the County Comprehensive Plan, and fulfills the responsibilities of Blair County under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

Duly enacted this thirty-first day of June, 2018.

BLAIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Bruce Erb, Chairman

Terry Tonetti, Vice-Chairman

Ted Beam, Jr., Secretary
RESOLUTION OF THE CAMBRIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE FOR CAMBRIA COUNTY INCLUDING ALL MAPS, CHARTS, AND TEXTUAL MATTERS CONTAINED HEREIN.

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act of 1968, P.L. 805, No. 247, as reenacted and amended, requires that county comprehensive plans be updated every ten (10) years; and

WHEREAS, the MPC outlines content and procedural requirements associated with the preparation, review, and approval of county comprehensive plans, and the MPC has been followed in the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan Update process; and

WHEREAS, the Cambria County Planning Commission coordinated the preparation of the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan Update that has been published as part of the document entitled Alleghenies Ahead Shared Strategies for a Stronger Region, dated June 2018, in cooperation with the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission and the five (5) other counties comprising the Southern Alleghenies region—Blair, Bedford, Cambria, Huntingdon, and Fulton; and

WHEREAS, the Cambria County Planning Commission conducted a robust and inclusive public participation and engagement process and an official public meeting regarding the plan; and

WHEREAS, the draft Cambria County Comprehensive Plan Update was submitted to school districts and municipalities within Cambria County and contiguous counties and made available for citizen review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the Cambria County Planning Commission duly noted and considered all public comments received in finalizing the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan Update.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cambria County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan Update that has been published as part of the Alleghenies Ahead document, dated June 2018, comprised of maps, charts, textual matter, and narratives and other matters that form the whole of the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan Update and fulfills Cambria County’s responsibilities under the MPC.

Duly enacted this 27th day of June, 2018.

ATTEST:

Michael Gelles, Jr., Chief Clerk

COUNTY OF CAMBRIA

Thomas C. Chemisky, President

B.J. Smith, Commissioner

Mark J. Wisniewski, Commissioner

[COUNTY SEAL]
Resolution 2018-11

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code (MPC), Act of 1965, P.L. 805, No. 247, as amended, requires that County comprehensive plans be updated every ten (10) years; and

WHEREAS, the MPC outlines content and procedural requirements associated with the preparation, review and approval of County comprehensive plans and have been followed in the County Plan Update process; and

WHEREAS, the Huntingdon County Planning Commission coordinated the preparation of the Huntingdon County Comprehensive Plan Update that has been published as part of the document entitled Alleghenies Ahead: Shared Strategies for a Stronger Region, dated July 2018, in cooperation with the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission and the five other counties comprising the Southern Alleghenies region – Blair, Bedford, Cambria, Fulton, and Somerset; and

WHEREAS, the Huntingdon County Planning Commission conducted a robust and inclusive public participation and engagement process and an official public meeting regarding the plan; and

WHEREAS, the draft Huntingdon County Comprehensive Plan Update was submitted to school districts and municipalities within Huntingdon County, and contiguous counties, and made available for citizen review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the Huntingdon County Planning Commission duly voted and considered all public comments received in finalizing the County Plan Update; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Huntingdon County Board of Commissioners hereby adopt the Huntingdon County Comprehensive Plan Update that has been published as part of the Alleghenies Ahead document, dated July 2018 and comprised of maps, charts, textual matter and narratives, and other matters that form the whole of the County Plan Update, and fulfills County responsibilities under the MPC.

Adopted this 3rd day of July 2018.

Mark A. Sather, Commissioner
Kathie Walls, Commissioner
Monte Barrett, Commissioner
Shared Strategies for a Stronger Region

Adopted 2018