PART 3

Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region

Huntingdon County

ALLEGHENIES AHEAD

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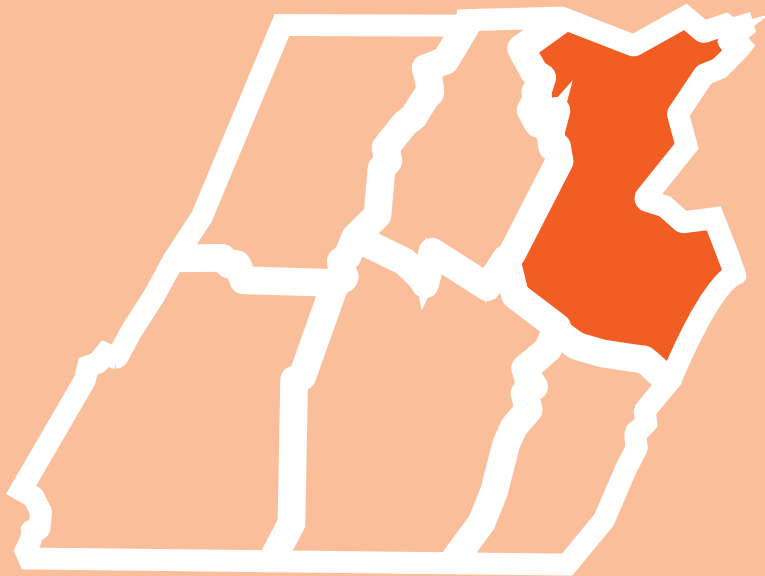**Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region**

Huntingdon County

MEETING MINUTES FOR HUNTINGDON COUNTY STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes for Meeting #1

December 8, 2016

Attendance: Ken Burton, Jeremy Crouse, Rick Rogers, Ilona Ballreich, David Gardner, Angie Thompson, Ron Rabena, Greg Anderson, Fran Vaughn, Terry Anderson, Pam Grugan, Chris Gildea, Fred Foster, Iona Conner, Mark Colussy, Matt Ingalls

On December 8, 2016 at 4 p.m., the Huntingdon County Committee met in the Bailey Building for a presentation by Matt Ingalls of Ingalls Plan and Design, a subcontractor to CZB, LLC, a Virginia-based urban planning and neighborhood development consulting firm specializing in neighborhood revitalization. Ingalls' company was hired to analyze market conditions, land use, design, regulatory, and other matters and to advise the six participating counties: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset.

This project is being coordinated by the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission and is the only one like it in Pennsylvania and possibly the nation.

Ingalls spent the week in Huntingdon County and had been touring select parts of the county with Huntingdon County Planning Director, Mark Colussy before the meeting; therefore; he had a feeling for the comments which arose during the meeting.

"Part of our job is being good listeners," Ingalls told the audience of 14 community members. This six-county project is unique in that it's focused on implementation rather than resulting in a document that will sit on book shelves unread, he explained. His company is still collecting data about the counties they are going to be working with

during the course of the upcoming year. Since so many issues are not confined by arbitrary borders (namely county lines), it's important to work on regional issues in conjunction with our neighbors.

Change happens at the township or borough level so that's going to be the focus of each committee – reaching out to others to help implement whatever goals are set forth in the final Regional Comprehensive Plan. This is not zoning; a comprehensive plan "sets general directions, [it] neither confers nor grants vested rights; at the county level and regional levels, [it] helps guide investment by local, county, and regional governing bodies and identifies cross-jurisdictional priorities," he read from his PowerPoint.

The first assignment for the committee was to tell Ingalls what's most important to them. What do they most want to see happen in the area? He explained that it's better to narrow the choices down to a few which can actually be implemented, than to create such a long list that it's overwhelming and impossible to achieve. We want to "make sure we get a few important things right," he said, approaching the easel and grabbing his marker. Here's what followed:

Jobs

Economic development

Preservation of natural resources (land, agriculture, water, the environment)

Transportation (public, other)

Post-secondary educational opportunities

Enticing young professionals (stop the brain drain)

Housing for young professionals

Communications infrastructure

Vocational training (carpenters, plumbers, electricians retiring; who will replace them?)

The county's population is aging and young people are leaving. How can we attract younger people to this area? It's approximately 149 miles from Baltimore and Washington, D.C. so that is a draw. Adventure tourism is catching on but municipalities need support. "We must plan for what is known and knowable and what is unknown. Either way, the goal is to create a value-based decision-making framework for the unforeseen," Ingalls said.

When the six-county plan is ready and the review process is over, it's going to be up to ordinary citizens to bring it to life. Ingalls urged the committee members to return home and start discussing the whole idea with their friends and neighbors casually and enthusiastically, i.e. "Hey, you know what? We're talking about the future of our community." What makes Huntingdon County different from the other five counties? Understanding this and building marketing strategies around it will help lure people of all ages to our county.

Assignment #1:

After the bulk of the PowerPoint had been presented, Ingalls handed out papers with a sign-wave curve and a few words at the top: "Where are we today? Where is the region, our county, and our community on this curve?" and "Why?"

We ere instructed to put dots and label them according to our perceptions of our home town, county, and region – are they on the upswing or going downhill? Have they hit bottom? We each wrote down the name of our municipality and Ingalls collected

them to analyze. Results will follow.

When it got to the "Why," these were some of the answers:

Complacency

Deferred maintenance (The elderly and poor are not able to maintain their houses for decades so they fall into disrepair and bring blight to the community -- graphs of Huntingdon County's aging population covering three decades are startling.)

One question presented was, "What are the implications of thousands of residents aging out of their current housing over the past 20 to 30 years? How will the market absorb those houses – where are the buyers? How do we handle that?" Falling property values are like a virus, Ingalls said. Johnstown has 900 to 1,000 houses that need to come down. They have devalued the property around them by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

A slide preceding aerial photos of the downtown areas of Altoona, Huntingdon, Breezewood, Johnstown, and Somerset read, "Increasingly outdated commercial sprawl is the face of many of the region's population centers – diminishing the region's natural beauty and cannibalizing demand that might otherwise be channeled to create more vibrant downtowns and borough centers."

Ilona Ballreich said, "We have to be very specific so everyone knows what we're talking about," adding that townships and boroughs need to start working together.

Assignment #2:

Ingalls asked us to break into groups and figure out how we would spend a $2 million inheritance dedicated to improving life in the county. He gave us plenty of time to discuss our dreams and choose ideas that would best help improve the quality of life in Huntingdon County. Then we shared our results. These varied widely and, if compiled, would make quite a difference over time.

Each one of the four breakout groups

answered the question in the following way:

Group A: 1. Community Center – 5th Street Building/DuBois Business College Building; 2. Invest in Updating Buildings for Efficiency (Water/Sewer/Energy)

Group B: 1. Hire a Grant Writer ($50k), Match with Main Street Support Staff, 2 Interns ($100k), Seed Capital for Micro Grants and a Mentor Program ($400k); 2. Renovate Downtown - Walking Center ($750k); Façade Improvement ($200k), Incubator

Group C: 1. Marketing (Outside or Locally), Signage/Mapping (Trails, Bike Paths, Restaurants/Late Night, Entertainment/Recreation); 2. Winter Tourism Opportunities/Attractions, Winter Festivals, Winter Indoor Activities

Group D: 1. Community Improvement (Invest and Leverage), Downtown Improvements Manager, Specialty Trades Training; 2. Improvements to High Speed Internet

When the focus of the group turned to the natural beauty of the place, members expressed comments such as, "Young professionals want to walk and bike," and "It doesn't have to look like that; it doesn't have to function like that," and "Mountain community beauty." One resident told about the contrasting development practices on two sides of the Juniata where there had been completely different sets of decision-makers on each side of the river. This kind of problem is what can be controlled only at the county level, or even the regional level.

Assignment #3 (Homework for committee members):

1. Become familiar with your county's current comprehensive plan.

2. Begin kitchen table conversations:

A. Discussion Point #1: Talk about the "status quo" in Huntingdon County. Do you think our county needs no course correction, a minor course correction, a major course correction, or a 180? Why?

B. Discussion Point #2: List and discuss the core values of your county. What makes your county different than other places? What must your county preserve and/or improve upon to make it stronger?

3. Elect a co-chair to serve with the county planning director on the project steering committee.

4. Schedule future meetings. [The group elected to maintain the Thursday 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. slot for their next meeting, which would be .]

Ingalls said he'll be doing a "deep dive data crunch and analysis" with the materials and feedback he received during his time in Huntingdon County. We walked him and his equipment to his vehicle as he headed back to his home in upper New York State on a cold, dark, snowy night.

Minutes for Meeting #2

January 19, 2017

Attendance: Ron Rabena, Matthew Price, David Gardner, Ken Burton, Bob Reitman, Nicole Hauck, Pam Grugan, Jim Troha, Greg Anderson, Ilona Ballreich, Mark Colussy, Matt Ingalls, Iona Conner

On January 19, 2017, the second meeting of the Huntingdon County Committee met at 4 p.m. in the Bailey Building. Mark Colussy and Matt Ingalls started off with a recap of the first meeting. Matt reminded everyone that "We need to focus on getting the big things right," but implementation happens at the local level, with action plans focusing on the issues the people feel are most important. The mountains and public lands are tremendous assets and the largest impediments are infrastructure and topography.

Referring to a portion of the first meeting's presentation, Mark then presented a slide show with aerial photos created with the help of Penn-Pilot, the PA State Data Center (PASDA), and the Huntingdon County Mapping Department illustrating the growth of the Huntingdon Borough/Smithfield Township area from 1938 to 2016 with photos of the landscape in 1938, 1958, 1967, 1993, 2003, 2007, and 2016. It was clear that the Route 22 corridor kept growing as did Huntingdon Borough. Land use patterns were easy to see over the decades and it became obvious that planning needs to play a critical role in deciding how the future of the county will look for posterity. Mark mentioned that this analysis can be done for anywhere in the County, Region, or State, albeit Huntingdon County would only have 2016 data.

An additional map was shown, including the Change Finder tool, which highlighted new construction with red dots so that altered footprints are visible for the time period of 2007 to 2016. This tool shows the change in our built environment.

The growth on Route 22 "is slowly ripping off traffic from downtown Huntingdon," Mark said. "What's lacking? What do we want to see? The two big issues today are recreation and agriculture. People don't think about what to plan for…What is the identity of this community? There is a naturally aging population and that age range is moving in. We need an identity, an economic identity, that's one of my big goals," he continued.

Matt Ingalls hoped to move both the regional comprehensive plan and the meeting along punctually, "We don't want to repeat things that aren't working. It's frustrating spending 2 to 2 ½ hours at a meeting that could be done in 1 or 1 ½ hours. Even when we were running past the 2-hour limit ourselves, Matt chose not to cut down on the valuable "Kitchen Table" discussions, which the remaining audience was sharing with everyone, as that had been their "homework" from the previous meeting, and so it ended shortly after 6:00.

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Matt Ingalls reiterated the overall goal of trying to, "Focus on getting the big things right" but the participants added two important items to the list of issues they had created last time: the mountains and agriculture. One man later shared his dismay that the primary focus thus far seemed to be the economy. "Is it all about wealth?" he asked, and not about intangible values like friendliness, the rural character of the place, generosity, leadership, health, family, abundant living?

Some people wanted more restaurants and shopping and others didn't. One person noticed that the Vision Statement for our Huntingdon County Comprehensive Plan describing "rural and small-town living" was contradictory to the current focus of the group on economic prosperity, especially after seeing the graphic aerial photos of the sprawl along Route 22 and mushrooming out of Huntingdon Borough.

Here's the Comprehensive Plan's Vision Statement written under the heading "Vision for the 21st Century":

It is our goal that Huntingdon Countyachieve economic prosperity while retaining the qualities of rural and small-town living.

Matt said that we need to create a vision representative of Huntingdon County which will unite people. It won't be the vision of those who attend these meetings but of all sorts of different people from various parts of the county, differing backgrounds, opposite points of view, etc. What is needed is, "to get a community vision through intimate conversations, more reflective."

"Some fragments in the community are like oil and water," one participant said.

"We have to have conversations to work things out; it may be difficult, some communities don't want to have these discussions," Matt replied.

"We really need a unified vision and leadership. People need to be open minded, not be afraid, start thinking forward," she added.

If one considers a comprehensive plan a form of regulation, there are many people in the county who don't want regulations. "How can we protect the rural character without regulations?" Matt asked. "Call a spade a spade. There will ultimately be trade-offs."

* * *

Results of Kitchen Table Discussions

Education:

The educational systems need to be upgraded. One man favors a single county school district to reduce the competitive nature of the current schools and the people in them.

Some long-time residents feel that if they went to a particular school, their children should also go to that school. "This is where I went to school, this is where my kid goes to school."

The effort needn't be on "post-secondary" education, but from K to 12.

One person who's been here 25 years saw the public schools go downhill at racing speed. The Huntingdon school district used to be the best.

Some people won't leave their school district because of sports.

Agriculture:

25% of the land in the county has prime soil for farming

Services:

Poverty is an issue. Poor people in far-flung parts of the county have trouble getting to places where they can receive medical care or other forms of assistance, or even jobs, or a free meal, or food, etc.

Values:

Values don't change.

Rely on identity to see the community go where you want it to go.

Intangibles are strong. It's a generous community of people who like to pull themselves up by their boot straps without asking for help, but in a crisis, help is there for them, especially if they know the person.

But it's not so generous with newcomers, nor is it friendly to newcomers.

People value the rural setting – hunting, fishing – that's why we moved here.

Even people who've lived here 20 years see the community differently from those who've been here all their lives.

Friendliness and willingness to reach out to those they know vs not very welcoming, especially if the other people are different.

Celebrate natural resources.

Huntingdon's intellectual base is really important for relationships and to be able to find like-minded people.

Economy/Jobs:

Friends in late 20s, professionals, trying to decide if they should stay or leave.

One person's daughters with college educations are considering moving out to be in more interesting locale with more people of their age and educational level.

Housing:

Lots of issues revolve around housing for young professionals, the elderly. There are not enough decent mid-priced homes for working professionals with families, such as townhouse or condos.

Vision:

This is what we want. This is what we need, the people connection. Close ties like family or the community at Westminster Woods.

Research links land use and design with public health. Even the health care industry is involved with this process because they understand the connection.

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Course Correction or Status Quo?

Whenever somebody tries to introduce something new, there is a barrier. "This is how it's always been done."

"I don't think we need a major course correction. I moved back here because we like the ruralness of the area." (after living in large cities around the country) There is no traffic, no stop lights. In the other places it could take four hours to drive home 12 miles on Thanksgiving Day.

NIMBY is a problem (Not In My Back Yard) because people born here ask, "Why is this happening in my back yard" because they see this as their land. They don't see visitors or newcomers as an asset.

There is a lack of progressiveness, thinking about altering things that could be better, a lack of coordination or planning or the intent to get the community moving in a direction.

"Are we even on a course at all? How can you change your course if you have no course?" another quipped.

Vibrancy:

Jim Troha of Juniata College has been here four years and spoke with great passion about vibrancy. "Vibrancy -- if we could do anything to lift the spirit of the place, a little forethought is needed, there are too many excuses," he said, adding that, "a sense of vibrancy is about strengthening our community." He went on to tell about parents who bring prospective students to the campus but are turned away by the lack of vibrancy in the downtown area. "This is not a college town," they say.

But Jim exclaimed, "This is OUR community. We (Juniata) thrived because of Huntingdon and Huntingdon has thrived because of the college."

"We don't have capacity from the people who can effect change, we need to go outside of elected positions which are either unable or unwilling to change. We're going to have to find other ways. We've got to kick something and start things before the plan is done. This is urgent. There are a lot of doers in this community. What if we did it in spite of those who won't budge? Let's just do it! Ask questions later. Apologize later. Nothing seems coordinated."

Where Do We Go Now?

Ilona Ballreich (a long-time community activist) stated that there is mistrust, caution with partnerships, folks aren't engaged in the conversations. "Let's go to the people and talk with them. Knock on the door and talk with them. They are not understanding. They are not being involved, they are not trusting."

"How can we define if we need a course correction if we don't even know what course we're on?" someone asked.

Mark concluded by saying that lots of people want something for nothing but President John F. Kennedy's had higher expectations of the citizenry: "My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Mark urged all the participants to ask

themselves, "What can I do for my community?"

Matt Ingalls gave everyone another Kitchen Table homework assignment (attached). The next meeting will be March 2, from 4:00 to 6:00 in the Bailey Building.

Minutes for Meeting #3

March 2, 2017

Attendance: Phil Cahill, Bob Benson, Larry Mutti, Mark Sather, Scott Walls, Ryan Gibboney, Fran Vaughn, Brittany Baker, Matt Price, Bob Reitman, Ken Burton, Jeremy Crouse, Ilona Ballreich, David Gardner, Greg Anderson, Fran Vaughn, Terry Anderson, Pam Grugan with Victoria Kyle (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Chris Gildea, Fred Foster, Matt Ingalls, Mark Colussy, Iona Conner

On March 2, 2017 at 4 p.m., the Huntingdon County Committee met in the Bailey Building for a presentation by Matt Ingalls of Ingalls Plan and Design, a subcontractor to CZB, LLC, a

Virginia-based, urban planning and neighborhood development consulting firm specializing in neighborhood revitalization. Ingalls' company was hired to analyze market conditions, land use, design, regulatory, and other matters and to advise the six participating counties: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset.

Prior to the meeting, Huntingdon County Planning Director, Mark Colussy, took Matt Ingalls on a tour of the southern part of the county. They started off in Mapleton along Route 655, then to Saltillo and Three Springs, over the mountains to Robertsdale where Mark pointed out the Coal Miners' Museum. After that, they drove through Broad Top City where the HOME housing rehabilitation project is going on and saw the first house that was inspected; then on to Trough Creek State Park, the Raystown Resort, back up Route 994 to Route 26 to Huntingdon.

Our new website was introduced: www.AlleghenizsAhead.com. The home page states: *Welcome to the official website of Alleghenies Ahead -- a collaborative effort between the six counties of Pennsylvania's Southern Alleghenies region to identify implementable strategies for a stronger future. Visit this website regularly or look for us on social media for updates about community meetings, surveys,*

and to learn more about the project.

Alleghenies Ahead is sponsored by the Southern Alleghenies Regional Planning & Development Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development, and the counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset.

At the top of the web page, is the opportunity to get on the email list and an online survey. Here's what that page says: *The Southern Alleghenies region – comprised of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Huntingdon, Fulton, and Somerset counties – is in the process of establishing goals and priorities that will help guide decision-making and investment activity in each county. This process depends upon the active involvement of the region's communities and citizens. Your input is important, and your responses to this survey are anonymous and confidential. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.*

Matt urged everyone to share this information on social media and any other avenues to let people know about this important project.

Future schedule:

- **April 13**, Committee Meeting 4 - 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Bailey Building: next Huntingdon County steering committee meeting.

- **Week of May 22**: OPEN HOUSE Public invited to meet steering committee members; opportunities to learn about project, data findings, and provide feedback on values, principles and priorities.

- **May 25**: Committee Meeting 5 (Possibly replaced by Open House)

- **Between May 22 and June 26**: Project steering committee, including co-chairs from each county committee, meet to identify county-level priorities that are regional in scope and impact.

- **June 29**: Committee Meeting 6 - Review and ratify county-level and regional priorities; exercise to identify

key action plan components around each county priority (partnerships, resources, phasing) to guide action plan development; discussion – what outcomes/indicators will help us know we are moving in the right direction?

- **August 10**: Committee Meeting 7 - Discuss and provide feedback on draft action plans
- **September 21**: Committee Meeting 8 - Discuss and provide feedback on early drafts of regional plan and county-level action plans; discuss role of steering committee in late phases of the project – support for adoption, implementation, cultivating champions
- **November 2**: Committee Meeting 9 - Discuss and provide feedback to Draft 1.0; game plan through March and beyond

Matt reminded everyone that the whole point of this effort is to have an implementable regional plan, one that works especially well in slow-growth areas, and one where:

- We can "get the big things right;"
- We plan for what is known and knowable;
- We create a values-based, decision-making framework for the unforeseen; and
- We prioritize what needs to be done and how to do it.

Extracts from the Discussions

Re: Natural Resources

- Our county has had many extractive industries (quarries, mines, sandstone, logging, coal – all which have helped the economy) but how do we balance that with preserving the natural resources and beauty, which attract tourists and future residents?
- Are we referring to "natural resources" as fracking or hunting cabins in the woods?
- It's important to build in towns and

not in our open spaces, that we love.

- There are alternative ways to develop land like land banks and community land trusts. (Community land trusts also preserve affordable housing.)
- The mountains are so awesome to new people but "a pain in the butt" to people who've been here 30 or 40 years.
- When the pipeline was started, someone told a reporter, "There's lots of tree-cutting going on and it's noisy."
- "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." - Shakespeare, added afterwards

Re: Values

- Some people want to keep the status quo; others want to see change.
- "Old Huntingdon" = "don't tread on me;" vs. newer residents who value economic opportunities
- Value of "independent and self-reliant" vs. those who rely on government to take care of us.
- Cultural blight = "The most important thing in this is ME."
- We're not healthy. As a community across the region, we currently don't value that. We need to move this needle forward, not take health for granted, and make being healthy a value that our community can embrace
- "Independent and self-reliant" can be construed as we don't need outside help – but we do need outside help.
- Contrast between people who don't want hog farms and those who don't want environmental regulations.
- Sense of place = older people had a strong sense of the brick factory in Mount Union.

Current Problems

- Struggling work force
- Aging population
- Why aren't we attracting younger people?
  1. Jobs and quality of life: If we don't have these things, Huntingdon County won't be attractive to them; they'll settle elsewhere.
  2. Lack of quality, responsible, trustworthy day care.
  3. Income issues impact child care affordability; i.e. why am I working if most of my pay goes to child care?
- Dead zone – Internet, cell phone access = young people will not live in areas without these things
- Severe distrust of government
- How do we get people into the downtown area? Need a sense of realism = it's not going to be Aspen or Portland, Oregon
- Marry what you have with what you want
- Future building needs to go in places where infrastructure and amenities already exist instead of "trying to create a village where no village exists…not create something that's not connected" (to anything)
- Who's going to maintain the infrastructure?
- "Let's not just park it (new development) out there in the middle of nowhere…get seamless growth to existing villages and shopping, etc."
- Blight – could restore many of homes in disrepair. We're too quick to take a house down. In many cases, it's cheaper to fix it up than tear it down and rebuild
- Calculate how many abandoned houses are on tax rolls but not paying taxes
- Blight in Johnstown drags down the community and discourages people from buying homes nearby

Re: Kitchen Table Discussions

- Styles of development – farmlands or subdivisions? Land was once forest. How can we regain the forests and deal with runoff?

- Impressions of Huntingdon Borough – Why isn't it full of college students? Most college towns have students walking around and supporting local businesses generating as much as $30,000 a day.

- Students don't want to go where they can't have Wi-Fi and use cell phones or have an active social life.

- Where can we put a three-year-old on a bike and feel safe? We don't have that culture yet.

- Not enough bike trails and walking paths.

Re: Moving Forward

- It's said that no matter what the issue is, 33% of the people will be with you, 33% will be against you, and the challenge is to sway the remaining 33%. These will become the agents of change.

- If you want this to move forward, there are issues that have to be resolved.

- Either the values (above) aren't real or some of the behaviors have to change. It's dysfunctional now.

- We have to have these conversations to make sure all of us in the six counties can say, "This is a plan we believe in and are supportive of."

- We're constantly looking for success stories, celebrate them to counteract negativity.

- We don't have a YMCA here for young and old alike.

- We need a healthy and safe community

- Place a high priority on creating a safe, healthy paradise in which to raise children.

- It's the government's responsibility to keep it safe with police, ambulances, fire companies, safe roads, etc.

- Improve the quality of the school systems.

- What would it take for a school district to elevate itself to the point where we can say, "We have an excellent school district?"

- We're building the future now – we have to have these conversations.

- Philosophical connections are important, too.

- Could we have a center of attraction like Old Bedford Village, Fort Roberdeau, the Whiskey Rebellion, Queen Aliquippa?

- We need to facilitate cooperation. The resources might be right here but we don't know about them.

- The regional Chambers of Commerce's have banded together as the Chambers of the Alleghenies and are working together to understand how each accomplished things.

- What things are you willing to do without so that those resources can go to new, improved things?

- What's the reason some places succeed and others don't?

- Are we willing to pay for and work toward a priority? If not, is it really a priority?

- Ed Stoddard of the Visitors' Bureau was quoted saying, "WE LIVE IN A GOLD MINE."

Minutes for Meeting #4

April 13, 2017

Attendance: Bob Benson, Jim Hyslop, Nancy McNamara, Angie Thompson, Jeremy Crouse, Rick Rodgers, Matt Price, Bob Reitman, Ilona Ballreich, David Gardner, Greg Anderson, Ron Rabena, Nicole Houck, Ken Burton, Mark Colussy, Matt Ingalls, Iona Conner

On April 13, 2017 at 4 p.m., the Huntingdon County Committee met in the Bailey Building for a presentation by Matt Ingalls of Ingalls Plan and Design, a subcontractor to CZB, LLC, a Virginia-based, urban planning and neighborhood development consulting firm specializing in neighborhood revitalization. Ingalls' company was hired to analyze market conditions, land use, design, regulatory, and other matters and to advise the six participating counties: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset.

Prior to the meeting, Huntingdon County Planning Director, Mark Colussy, took Matt Ingalls on a tour of the northern part of the county. They started off going north on scenic Route 26 to Greenwood Furnace, then stopped at Doan's Bones Barbeque for lunch, then on over the mountain through Rothrock State Forest, after which they headed southwest to Warrior's Mark. Next it was off to Birmingham, passing the Grier School on their way to Route 22 to view the boroughs of Petersburg and Alexandria with a stop at Warriors Ridge Dam before arriving back at the Planning Department office.

At the meeting, Matt shared highlighted the survey found on the Region's Comprehensive Planning webpage at: AllegheniesAhead.com. Matt encouraged everyone to complete the survey and ask others to complete it. He then distributed the the summary second draft of Core Values and Principles, which was tweaked based on the conversation had at the meeting in March.

Core Values

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?"

The following set of values reflect county committee discussions to date and from across the region:

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

• We value independence and self-reliance

• We value our natural resources and connections to the land

• We value our heritage and the sense of identity it provides

Planning Principles

What are planning principles?

• A by-product of core values and prevailing conditions

• A basis for making decisions about your (our) community that align with your (our) values, your (our) vision, and what you're (we are) building from

The following planning principles draw from the region's draft set of core values and discussions with various stakeholders:

• Our region must first look within

• Our region must work together

• Our region must protect its natural beauty and historic character

• Our region must support creativity

Once the Values and Principals were reviewed, Matt asked everyone to break up into two groups to start to shape the priorities. Here is a sampling of the comments:

How can small towns and boroughs get anything done? A friend in Virginia told him about certain expensive services that are managed county-wide instead of individually – fire, schools, police, etc. Incentives would be needed to encourage small municipalities to work together to save costs yet provided better services.

Health care was a concern.

There is a lack of participation in public discourse.

Why can't the County set a standard, which everyone can use instead of all these confusing ordinances and regulations. Develop model regulations that can be used anywhere in the County.

Need to be really unique and innovative.

When asked to prioritize needs, this group came up with the following four, not necessarily in order of importance:

1. Wireless/broadband

2. Blight remediation/housing repair

3. Employment and business opportunities

4. Vocational job training

The group realized that everything is connected, even child care. People who require child care are employed – where does the child piece fit into employment? We want income-earning families with healthy children with good homes and good schools to make a good community.

Matt Ingalls said he will be talking with HR people. They're having trouble filling positions. Is it a lack of skill sets? Having to move here? What's going on? Child care should be part of the benefit package, not free.

Blight is a nationwide problem. Sometimes individuals own the homes, sometimes the government bought them at a tax sale. Enforcement needs to be stronger: "This property belongs to you, you either do something or we'll tear it down." Code officers should fine the owners. Blight is a municipal issue; county can take the property if it's foreclosed.

Some landlords don't put rent money back into the property maintenance. Property values of adjacent homes plummet.

Problems with tax assessments. Maryland reassesses every three years. If you get a building permit, they are likely to reassess your home.

Many Huntingdon County municipalities are very poor. Carbon Township has a budget of $33,000; Shade Gap's is $6,000 with only 95 residents.

There will be push-back to our new ideas.

Once the two groups finished their discussions, both groups came up very similar list of priorities:

Group 1: Wireless, Blight/Housing Infill, Employment/Business Development, Job Training, Recreation

Group 2: Technology, Modern Housing, Employment Opportunities, Investment in Entrepreneurship, Natural Assets

As Matt Ingalls wrapped up the meeting, he told everyone it would be good to get a couple committee members at each open house. He also reminded us to use the www. AllegheniesAhead.com website and to encourage people to take the online survey.

Upcoming Meetings

• **May 25**: Project steering committee finalizes Draft Priorities in anticipation of Open Houses, while gaining training on helping lead discussions at the June 29 Open Houses.

• **June 29**: Tentatively scheduled Three OPEN HOUSES - Public invited to meet steering committee members; opportunities to learn about project, data findings, and provide feedback on values, principles and priorities.

• **August 7**: Discuss and provide feedback on draft action plans

• **September 18**: Discuss and provide

feedback on early drafts of regional plan and county-level action plans; discuss role of steering committee in late phases of the project – support for adoption, implementation, cultivating champions

• **October 30**: Discuss and provide feedback to Draft 1.0; game plan through March and beyond

Minutes for Meeting #5

May 25, 2017

Present: Matt Ingalls, Ilona Ballrich, Matt Price, Ron Rabena, Jeremy Crouse, Bob Reitman, Chris Gildea, Pam Grugan, Greg Anderson, Mark Colussy, Iona Conner

During the last steering committee meeting in April, the following were identified as priorities for Huntingdon County:

1. Broadband/wireless (recognized that this is linked to improving quality of life to attract and retain businesses/workforce)

2. Housing choices & blight remediation (recognized that this is linked to improving quality of life to attract and retain businesses/ workforce)

3. Business development/jobs (special mention of vocational training)

4. Recreational assets and amenities (recognized that this is linked to improving quality of life to attract and retain businesses/workforce)

Matt I. said that the Commissioners met with business owners at a farmer's home and sat around the kitchen table. Here are some statistics he mentioned:

• All six counties in this effort have lower median household incomes but kept pace with the state. In 2000, Huntingdon County was at .83 and in 2015 we were still at .83.

• Huntingdon County has a lower poverty rate than the nation. In 2000, that was 11.3 and in 2015 it was 2.4% higher. All six counties had higher poverty rates in 2015 than in 2000.

One man asked if the prison population was included and the answer was, "No." Poverty isn't high but higher than it used to be, but now it's quite visible.

The conundrum of "We need more jobs" vs. "We can't find workers" is answered in part by the fact that many people applying for jobs cannot pass drug tests. There is a

connection between drug abuse and hopelessness.

In the future, we will have more jobs as people move away and others retire from existing jobs.

Jeremy said that high school students are not aware of the kinds of jobs that exist here and we need to tell kids more about jobs and their requirements, like passing drug tests.

Staff at CareerLink notice that there is not a good work ethic among younger people today. There is an out-migration of native Baby Boomers, GenXers, and more recent generations.

All six counties are aging more rapidly than the U. S. or Pennsylvania as a whole. Also, in all six counties, 33% of homeowners are over 65. One reason older people are moving in is we have lower taxes on pensions, low property taxes, and a low cost of living.

Looking at the prime work force (people ages 25 to 54), in 2000 that population had dropped 2.9% but by 2015, it had dropped 11.7%. In the six counties of the Southern Alleghenies region that number had decreased by 14.1%.

The proportion of adults aged 25 to 34 with college degrees is well below national and state averages. We're the only county that decreased of the six, the U.S. and Pennsylvania.

Chris mentioned the value of a mentoring program if parents don't have good family support. After high school graduation, young people lose whatever identity they had of being "the best" at something as they become part of a larger population of adults. One way to promote a good work ethic is job shadowing.

Ilona said that people without jobs don't know how to speak up and where to speak up and participate in government. There is a huge disconnect. People need to be engaged; those who are engaged usually get their way, not always, but being engaged is the best investment.

We shoot ourselves in the foot when we give lots of credence to those who are older and stuck in their ways.

They are not knowledgeable about the world.

Matt I. said that 406 people have left Huntingdon since 2010 but 164 foreigners entered the county, many being farmhands. That number was stable until a year ago, when they started to leave.

Deaths exceeded births in five or our six counties.

Matt asked two essential questions: 1. What's the problem to solve? 2. Who are we planning for?

Older people are taxpayers and voters.

Mark mentioned a question that was raised at the Commissioners' meeting: What's the wiser choice for investing your money – redoing your kitchen or your granddaughter's education?

About elected officials: Who's putting these people in office? Answer: Older folks.

Ilona said the infrastructure is in poor repair.

Matt asked, "Do those things attract people?"

Ilona answered, "People attract people."

Matt replied, "You can't spend money on things that don't attract younger people."

Pam asked if we can look at towns like ours that are successful.

We are close to interesting and lively places such as Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh.

Iona said Huntingdon needs to be fun and exciting.

Young Juniata professors live in State College. Lewisburg is lively and connected with a good lifestyle.

What about the theater? Matt P. replied that that business is supported by teens and young kids.

Ilona said that the bottom line is that taxpayers need to buy into new projects, maybe spearhead one project for a start. Educate everyone in office – what resources are there?

Matt P. asked everyone, "Who's running for office?" Ilona was the only one who hesitantly raised her hand.

Pam was at a borough council meeting regarding the pipeline and there were 75 young people in attendance, but they were not considered valuable; they were made to feel as if they were a burden. They were not told, "We care, we are interested." They were made to feel like they shouldn't be bothering the council.

Matt I. mentioned that public officials tend to be older. The American Dream isn't the same anymore and we need to start planning for a different dream. An educational component is needed for a New American Dream.

Pam said that her kids talk about never even owning a house.

Matt added that young people prefer to rent homes and not mow three acres every Saturday.

He then reported on the online survey. There were 121 responses in Huntingdon County. Only 9% wished to maintain the status quo; the rest wanted to see a course correction.

Greg described how hard it is to get government to do anything different. The planning process might be able to work around government.

Ilona described State College Borough and how people brought an idea from the borough to the council and key leaders pushed for it. It failed the first time due to a lack of communication but they tried again. A very strategic effort was needed to be the greatest in the state. Government is similar. On-the-ground, well-informed workers can share information.

Chris mentioned coordination and capacity as overall goals.

Mark talked about the STEM program he is involved in with junior high school students, teaching them how to use a planning process to create an ideal community they design.

Bob would like to see Huntingdon County become a hospitality destination nurturing small businesses.

Matt P. discussed the failure of Huntingdon to attract a company from Ohio with 150 jobs. Kentucky acted faster and won them over. We lost out on that one.

Bob will call the Governor's Action Team to ask about another type of loan other than Enterprise Zones. He's looking for low-interest, small loans with quick pay backs.

Concrete plans were then promoted for the upcoming open houses, each to last about two hours so that people can come and go. There will be easels set up in stations such as:

• Data

• Regional Values and Principles

• Survey Results

• Priorities

• County Action Plans and Priorities

• Implementation

The tentative schedules are as follows:

Saxton – Broad Top Senior Center – 6/27 – 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Tyrone – Tyrone-Snyder Public Library – 6/28 – 2 to 4 p.m.

Mount Union – Bricktown Events – 6/29 – 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Huntingdon – Bailey Building Ballroom – 6/29 – 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Shade Gap – Women's Auxiliary – 6/29 – 7 to 9 p.m.

Minutes for Meeting #6

August 10, 2017

Present: Matt Ingalls, Matt Price, Jeremy Crouse, Greg Anderson, Chris Gildea, Travis Lee, Angie Thompson, Jim Hysop, Rick Rogers, Mark Colussy, Iona Conner

When asked about what people would do if given $5 million to improve the county, some of the answers were:

• Incentives to expand local businesses

• Expand drug abuse/treatment/ prevention facilities
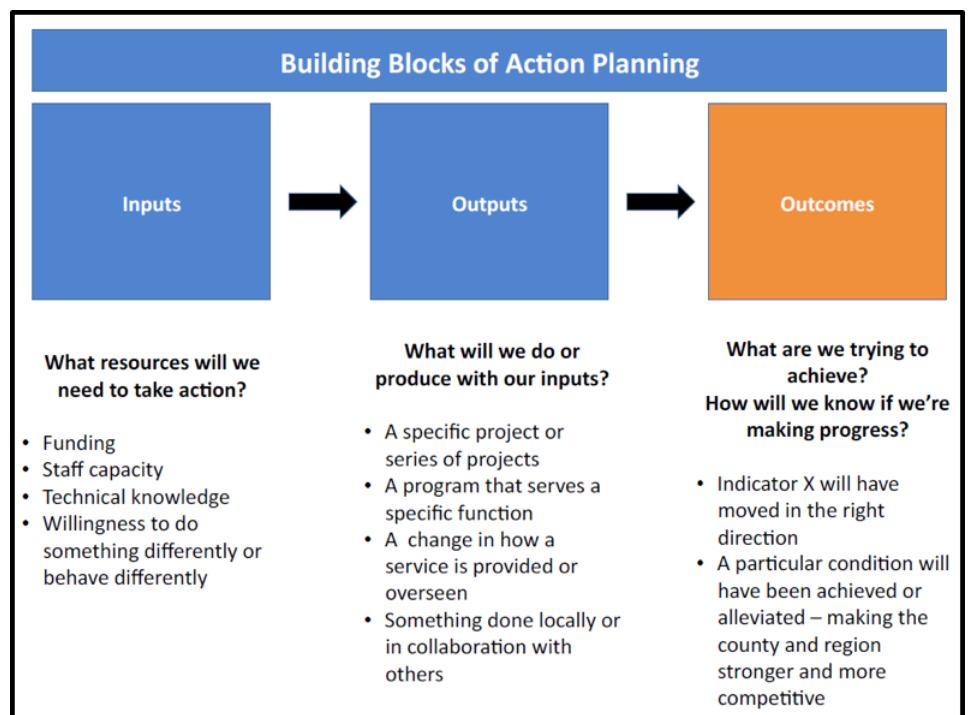
• Sidewalks

• Trails

• Recreation

How did online survey respondents in each county allocate $5 million across ten given options? The following chart shows the percentage of resources allocated by county residents to each of the options. Options that ranked first, second, and third in each county are highlighted.

Spending Options	Bedford	Blair	Cambria	Fulton	Huntingdon	Somerset
Fund the demolition of vacant and blighted properties	6.6	11.8	15.2	0.8	9.8	8.7
Incentives for recent college graduates in the region to live in your county	10.6	8.8	11.5	4.5	9.1	11.4
Incentives for existing businesses to expand	22.2	14.6	18.8	18.0	20.6	20.9
Improvements in sidewalks, signage, bike lanes, recreational trails, or beautification of public spaces	10.6	19.9	12.3	9.8	13.0	11.9
Incentives for existing home owners to upgrade their homes	6.2	8.1	8.8	7.0	8.0	6.4
Incentives for renters living in your county to buy a home	2.5	4.0	3.3	3.2	3.8	2.6
Funds to preserve and protect farmland	11.9	8.9	4.5	20.0	10.8	8.3
Incentives for collaboration/coordination between local governments	6.1	6.4	5.5	5.2	4.3	6.8
Expansion of drug abuse treatments programs	15.8	12.6	13.7	15.5	14.2	16.6
Other	7.5	5.0	6.4	16.0	6.4	6.5

1st	2nd	3rd

Mark reported that on a regional level, there has been discussion about broadband with the FCC and ARC. Mifflin County is putting together a survey to see which areas are lacking. The USDA is hosting a rural broadband forum in State College.

Matt reported on the five Open Houses in Huntingdon County with the "Big Things" listed as:

• Broadband/communication infrastructure

• Coordination and collaboration

• Recreational assets and amenities

• Business/economic development

• Gap in the housing stock

Building Blocks of Action Planning

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
What resources will we need to take action?	**What will we do or produce with our inputs?**	**What are we trying to achieve? How will we know if we're making progress?**
• Funding • Staff capacity • Technical knowledge • Willingness to do something differently or behave differently	• A specific project or series of projects • A program that serves a specific function • A change in how a service is provided or overseen • Something done locally or in collaboration with others	• Indicator X will have moved in the right direction • A particular condition will have been achieved or alleviated – making the county and region stronger and more competitive

Principals for planning

Continue to challenge counties

Work backwards, start at the Outcomes we want to achieve and back into Outputs, then back into Inputs – in other words, what exactly will be necessary to achieve our goals?

For 50 years, plans have focused on Outcomes and stopped there but we need to know how are we going to do this?

Matt Price mentioned increasing education in high school and post-secondary graduation rates, increased broadband would also increase EMS response times

Rick mentioned the problems of this being an economically depressed area. What about Hot Spots? Invest in kids so they can get their school work done, especially in trailer parks and public housing.

Travis told about buses in Maine having Hot Spots so that kids could work on their way to and from school. When the buses park in the garage at night, their wi-fi spreads to the surrounding neighborhood.

Matt Ingalls said that affordability and competitive pricing will play a role. The 8 Big Things are really a web with some Outputs helping increase other Outcomes.

Mark spoke about Joe Whitman of the PA Public Utilities Commission and a Pennsylvania requirement for DSL speeds. Today they are 10 MB downloads and 1 MB uploads, otherwise known as the "Netfilx Standard." Comcast, AT&T, and Verizon have networks here in the rural Pennsylvania hills and valleys. A major concern is fiber and getting lines to individual homes. Verizon cares less about providing fiber to homes since their business is primarily cell phones. AT&T and Verizon have 5G for faster downloading. The reach of towers here is smaller than in urban areas so it's easier for them to make a profit in cities.

Whatever system we develop needs to be able to keep up with advancing technology in the future or we'll become obsolete.

Chris advocated trying to get different people to run for office

Matt I. mentioned the problem of emotional attachment and parochialism; however, to make change, we're going to need public, private, and non-profits working together.

Egos and power plays get in the way of progress.

What about a Council of Governments like in Blair County?

Rick said that in Virginia, public officials let anyone use their grants freely as models to anyone wanting to write grants – don't wait till people are destitute, do the work of fundraising while things are viable.

Jim asked why we don't have a County Police Department instead of everyone being charged $25.

Mat P. said that there are only two state troopers to cover the whole county.

Chris reminded everyone that convincing people to try new things is very difficult without a local champion. The county might play a significant role in providing incentives such as saying, "We can get you the resources IF you get together on a project you all believe in."

Matt I. said that Fulton County put together a coordinating committee.

Rick said that leadership is lacking at the municipal level.

Matt asked, "How do you become a supervisor?" One man was upset that nobody helped him when the slope changed on his ditch. He picked up his phone to call the township but there was no response. His response was, "I'M GOING TO RUN!" In other words, it's mostly a "nuts and bolts" type of reaction to no action.

Rick mentioned that one supervisor won by only 10 votes. He also said that a new tax assessment for the entire county needs to be done as the current rates are outdated and bringing them up to date would provide more financial resources to accomplish some of our goals plus provide more resources for the county to function.

Matt I. noticed that in several cases, the Secretary is a Supervisor's wife and some even get a percentage of the checks they write.

Jim was amazed by how many people don't know about Lake Raystown in other Pennsylvania metropolitan areas.

Matt Price said that his agency only has a $350,000 per year budget from room taxes.

Angie asked if there are enough campsites, hotels, and rentals for increased numbers of visitors.

Matt replied that they're working hard to increase the number of non-summer visitors.

Chris added that there are other ways of attracting visitors than recreation such as being an Artist and Cultural Destination, Heritage, Arts, Folk Festivals, Juniata College events, etc.

Matt said that federal laws make some activities illegal, which would otherwise bring more outsiders. Horses are not allowed on some federal lands, nor are ATVs. Elk County does allow side-by-sides on township roads.

Mark pointed out that locally, there is no control over these obstacles. We have assets here which could be enjoyed by people outside of the county if the laws were loosened.

The topic switched to unemployment. Jim asked, "If the Business Roundtable says they have jobs, why are we trying to create new jobs?"

Chris responded by saying that the nature of employment is changing and people need to be retrained, as in "Workforce Development."

Mark's comments included:

• Business and workforce development should include school districts, the community college, etc. in figuring out what the community needs.

• The Outcome is that an educated community will have better

cooperation with the business community to fill employers' needs, i.e. "Education programs that align with business needs."

Jim said that the tech school keeps offering the same programs year after year. There has not been a survey of needs. Things that changed were painful because people had to get recertified or lose their jobs.

Chris mentioned literacy -- too many people are on a second-grade reading level and are too proud to admit it.

Mark explained that the financial resources aren't out there. When people want to establish a new business and get funding, they are laughed at by the banks if they haven't already been in business for five years. He also mentioned the concept of crowd sourcing and Angel Funds.

Matt I. suggested a Road Show. We don't want to encourage development in places detached from services. Build where there is already water and sewer, close to the hospital, etc.

There was some discussion about the meaning of "low income." Matt replied that Section 8 numbers, including the waiting lists are useful indicators. It is very difficult to get data from the real estate sector.

Next Steps

Matt I. is going to develop a preliminary Action Plan to encourage back-and-forth discussions such as:

• What role does (should) the county play, lead or supporting?

• Who else is involved?

• When should it take place and for how long before we know if we are making progress?

• How much willingness is there to commit resources to achieve the outcomes we want?

• Does each specific item merit being in the plan at all?

• Are we really making progress...

• .....or are we throwing money in a hole?

We have to have difficult conversations to accomplish our goals. Since the attendance at the Open Houses was so poor, Greg suggested sending the draft document out to all the municipalities. Iona suggested that be done by email.

Iona wants the language in the final product to be easily readable and not full of corporate/planning jargon.

Getting the Big Things Right

From the Open Houses, online survey, and meetings throughout the six counties, Matt I. had prepared a Power Point listing the following subjects and examples for each of

• Outcomes

• What are we trying to achieve?

• How will we know if we're making progress?

Broadband and Cell Service (A Preliminary Priority in **all counties**)

Coordination and Collaboration (A Preliminary Priority in **all counties**)

Recreational Assets and Amenities (A Preliminary Priority in Bedford, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Somerset)

Business Development (A Preliminary Priority in Bedford, Cambria, Fulton, **Huntingdon**, Somerset)

Blight and Abandonment (A Preliminary Priority in Cambria, **Huntingdon**, Somerset)

Gaps in Housing Stock (A Preliminary Priority in Blair and **Huntingdon**)

Minutes for Meeting #7

September 21, 2017

Present: Matt Ingalls, Matt Price, Bob Benson, Ron Rabena, Rick Rogers, Greg Anderson, Chris Gildea, Travis Lee, Jim Troha, Ilona Ballreich, Mark Colussy, Iona Conner

Mark kicked the meeting off by highlighting the Version 1.0 of the Action Plan that was distributed to the Committee electronically prior to the meeting. He reminded everyone that just because we see any item on paper now, that doesn't mean we can't completely blow up the plan and rebuild it to meet our needs. Mark then turned the meeting over to Matt I., who reminded everyone that our goal is to develop specific activities, backed by specific resources, to achieve specific outcomes. Fewer is better; we must be aware of the costs and they must be real. "Could do" or "might do" vs. MUST do.

Matt I. said this as about co-creating this document with feedback being up to us and that reevaluation and updating will need to happen as our deadline draws near. We must recognize the county's capacity to act and analyze what resources are available, especially in this rural area. We don't want to keep doing the things we've done in the past which don't work.

To avoid a dead end this plan must be:

• Specific

• Measurable

• Aggressive

• Realistic

• Time-bound

The Action Plan is the heart of the document. Each county will have its individual plan and when it's all put together, it becomes a Regional Plan with each county highlighted. The purpose of this meeting is to review version 1.0 of the Action Plan. Each Priority would then be discussed.

Broadband and Cell Service.
Greg asked if there was enough collaboration to allow for counties to

share resources and work together, to which Matt I. answered "Yes," specifically for the ongoing broadband collaboration. We are stronger when we work as a region.

Greg asked if business and workforce people can work together. Matt I. replied that he hasn't seen this but maybe the Chambers of Commerce in the region can do more in unison. He also said that the Mainstreet concept could benefit from regional coordination. We need to have conversations with the organizations with which we want to do things and make sure they're on board. To that end, there will be a round of meetings in November or December to flush out issues with directors and the Southern Alleghenies people.

Jim asked about funding issues. Matt I. replied that there are business decisions involved and consideration needs to be given to population, density, topography, etc. The Bedford County train derailment was a wake-up call because there was inadequate emergency response communication. Because of issues like this, companies are looking to locate in flatter, easier, cheaper places out West, like Montana.

Ilona told everyone that the more arguments you have for something with links to other priorities, the greater the odds are for success. We need to look for examples of successful places and learn from them.

Matt I. said that this needs to come from the top and urged us to tell our stories from the grassroots level – individual county or regional stories -- to win people over, especially elected officials. With our aging population, how can we attract younger people? What sort of quality of life are they looking for?

Greg wanted to know who owns and maintains infrastructure? Iona mentioned that there are environmental considerations, especially when it comes to drinking water and sewage. Matt I. wondered if we could run lines underground instead of having reception towers. Iona believes that beauty is important

for any new development and flowers would brighten any blighted area.

Ron suggested having a Regional Manager. Why not mount towers on church steeples or telephone poles rather than in natural places? Matt I. told everyone that Verizon had a lease on top of a water tower.

Mark said that a Regional Coordinator/ Manager would need to be up to speed with industry standards and look 10 years into the future. Cambria county spent lots of money county-wide to install Wi-Fi and it was outdated immediately. There needs to be awareness of market conditions, federal whims at the FCC, etc.

Knowledge is acquired over time, according to Matt I. Disruptive technologies are starting to emerge. What's needed is someone with understanding of the region vs. each municipality trying to figure it all out on their own. A Council of Governments (COG) could oversee and allocate purchasing, code enforcement, land development, etc.

Coordination and Collaboration.
Ilona said that Centre County has an excellent COG, which takes care of many services like parks. Every municipality pays in and all the equipment is bought with a collaborative effort. Before throwing out "low-capacity" municipalities in mergers, they need to be evaluated; just throwing them out doesn't strengthen the community.

Mark is concerned with how to work in such language and how it will be perceived.

Jim advocates for this document to be an agitator. "When we say 'reduction,' that's exactly what we need to say." Matt I. agreed, adding that we need to be honest about what we're saying.

Matt Price thought that would be a good idea, "If it makes people angry enough to get to council meetings," that might be beneficial.

Bob shared how Shade Gap and Dublin (two poor, neighboring communities) cooperate.

Rick's perspective was broader, "It's all

semantics; it's all nickels and dimes. Everybody's got to put something in the pot to run these programs." If people don't even vote, then they are silently saying, things are OK as-is. We need to add something about efficiency.

Iona said that results must be measurable. Many council meetings don't even get a quorum so they should merge. Matt P. said some supervisors are in by one vote because nobody ran; some places have no mayor. Bob mentioned that their municipal authority had meetings and nobody came until they started talking about raising the rates.

Matt I. asked, "Why don't people come to government meetings?"

Travis asked, "What is a high-functioning municipality?" People need to be educated.

Matt I. reminded the audience that it's important to have conversations at the local level. If everything's OK, maybe the hang-up isn't the people, maybe it's the government. If you want things to change, you need to have different conversations.

Bob noticed that people are afraid they'll lose their identity, as in Shade Gap and Dublin.

Ilona would like Southern Alleghenies to play a role and take the lead on providing legal advice and education. The Pennsylvania Municipal League is pooling resources. The group then decided to recommend the formation of an independent Advisory Committee could look at the merger of municipalities to take that responsibility off the Planning Commission since it could be very controversial.

Matt I. considered a chart showing overlapping functions to make things more clear. Ilona suggested under a "How" column to check off an approach as it applies. Matt I. is thinking about a chart of impacts and where people can go for details.

Recreational and Cultural Assets.
Rick mentioned social and cultural interests for an Advisory Board

-- not economics, not from a profit standpoint. Ten years from now, how do we preserve our assets? It was suggested to add an output of the Preservation of Cultural, Recreational, and Historic Assets.

Matt P. said there is a willingness to promote the county and encourage development along the highway corridors of Routes 22 and 522 since PEP Marketing found that other areas of the county were more resistant to change.

Rick thought of training programs to teach municipalities how to write grant applications.

There was discussion about the Main Street Program and the best fit for it, since it effects and is affected by multiple priorities. The plan should not be redundant, but graceful in how it cross-references itself.

The Active Transportation Committee was discussed as a possibility on how to achieve some desired outcomes.

Business and Workforce Development. Mark suggested a "carrot" for municipalities to get grant help and mentioned Charles Buki. The county can't do everything for everybody but there are other programs out there like low-interest loans, Enterprise Zone (EZ) and Keystone Opportunity Zone (KZ). Ilona mentioned tax incentives to bring business here and Matt I. responded by saying that Steve McKnight in Blair County does a tremendous job because of a great amount of energy and deep pockets.

Based on the Jump Start Program that the Career Link hosted for High School Seniors, Mark gave information about some questions he asked the students. Mark asked of the students are considering staying in the area or leaving the area after they graduate. 90% would leave. A follow-up question was asked, "What if you could stay and do a job here?" This resulted in an equal vote of 50/50. He then asked if anyone was interested in starting their own business or if they knew how to start a business. Only one replied in the affirmative to each question. He

then asked the students that if there were resources available to help then start a business, would they do it. The room then turned over and half the students said they would consider it. This gives hope for the future.

It was noted that if grants are going to be an option to look at how to implement the outcomes sought, it will need to be specific and tie into Coordination and Capacity.

This entire section will need to have additional work done to it in version 2.0.

Housing Choices and Blight Remediation. The issue of affordable housing arose. Matt I. wants to know, "Who's going to do it? How's it going to be done? Who's going to pay for it?"

In other areas, Low-Income Housing and First Time Homebuyer programs are successful when the borough owns the property. This could also be supplemented with an incentive program with major employers to collaborate on housing development and housing choices.

Iona replied that Community Land Trusts are a wonderful way of keeping housing affordable. With prospective homeowners, the Land Trust enters into a long-term, renewable lease instead of a traditional sale. When the homeowner sells, the family earns only a portion of the increased property value. The remainder is kept by the trust, preserving the affordability for future low- to moderate-income families.

A small discussion was had regarding if incentives would be needed to promote market-based housing, since it reduces risk. The true risk of this development will need to be considered.

Mark then brought up the fact that the stakeholders should still keep their Kitchen Table Conversations going. Ultimately, the plan will need to be prioritized so it can be implemented. He then offered everyone some homework to do.

HOMEWORK: How realistic are our goals/priorities? What can we really do in 5-10 years? What's really, really, really important? Our assignment is to consider those questions with their Kitchen Tables and eliminate the things in the action plan which appear unrealistic or undesirable.

Mark reminded everyone that the plan can only be an Implementable Plan if the projects can be accomplished. An easy way to determine this is to discuss if there are resources in place or available to implement that particular project. Prioritizing the projects will come much easier after that time.

The next meeting will be November 2 in the Bailey Building Ballroom at 4 p.m.

Minutes for Meeting #8

November 2, 2017

Present: Matt Ingalls, Matt Price, Ron Rabena, Greg Anderson, Chris Gildea, Ilona Ballreich, Angie Thompson, Bob Reitman, Pam Grugan, Mark Colussy, Laurie Nearhood

Mark apologized for the last minute change of location then explained that Version 2.0 of the Action Plan was provided prior to the meeting. He asked those present to speak up if anything is not in the Action Plan.

Referring to the homework assigned at the September 21 meeting, Mark commented that the Committee members were to return to their Kitchen Table Committees to determine what projects could realistically be accomplished with the resources available. Matt I. noted that the focus of the Committee must be to determine if these items are where we want to spend time and energy. If they are, the people and resources needed to move forward must be identified.

Matt I. explained that the first version of the Action Plan is being finalized for distribution before mid-November, and that finalization of the draft Plan is anticipated by the end of next week to send to County Planning Directors before Thanksgiving. The goal is to fine-tune the Plan through the end of 2017 for public review, adoption, and organization of implementation of action items during the first quarter of 2018.

The questions to determine whether the Action Plan is on course for adoption by March 2018 include:

Are actions attainable and relevant?

Does the "Who" make sense?

Can the County Planning Commission do all these things?

Are resources realistic?

Stating that anything is doable if funds are available, Ilona asked on what assumptions the Committee should operate. Since Mark's office is already working on a set of goals, she questioned how realistic it would be to expect his office to accommodate

additional work. Chris commented that the Committee's role is to give Mark's office direction. Matt I. noted that these items should be thought about realistically with the funding sources in mind. Mark then explained that, if his office does not have available capacity, then priorities must shift. He noted that the County Planning Commission has more power than they utilize. For instance, the Planning Commission can form committees and has done so in the past. Matt I. agreed that the County Planning Commission could be the lead agency but work with a subcommittee.

Referring to the Huntingdon County Partnership for Economic Progress (PEP), Mark explained that PEP is membership-constrained but recently agreed to invite economic development partners to specific discussion, as needed. Matt I. observed that things constantly evolve, but the Action Plan is a guide that can be revised when needed.

Matt I. stated that today's purpose is to review the draft actions. He then opened the discussion about the what, why, who, what resources and when for each priority.

Broadband and Cell Service				
What?	**Why?**	**Who?**	**What resources?**	**When?**
1. 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	$50,000 estimated for regional inventory and survey ($7,500 to $10,000 commitment from Fulton County)	Complete asset inventory, customer survey, and anchor identification by October 2018
2. Hire tele-communications 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	County contributes $10,000 to $20,000 per year to SAPDC, depending on participation of other counties.	Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 1

A comment was made that the effort would be stronger when working regionally. Chris asked if the person hired for Item 2 could also be the same person for Item 1. Matt I. explained that hiring one person for both could work short-term, but a long-term effort is needed to effectively improve both broadband and cell service.

Referring to the County contribution, Matt I. noted that this is an estimated amount that would vary by county. He asked if the County currently pays anything to SAPDC and suggested asking Blair County to help supplement. He cautioned that they may not want to do so.

Greg asked if grant funds are available for Item 1 and Bob responded that there are some, but they are divided among areas such as emergency management. Matt P. asked if a service area map could be part of Item 1 and Matt I. indicated that such a map could be part of the inventory. Chris mentioned that telehealth is more than just improving cell service. Bob agreed that improving broadband service is more than just installing fiber. Matt P. recommended plotting where service currently exists versus future demands and Matt I. agreed with looking for future opportunities.

Commenting that prioritizing goals is an internal process, Ilona stated that everyone at the table should be involved with coordination and collaboration.

For Item 1, all agreed that the Township Association, local municipalities and the COG should be added under "Who". During continued discussion, Greg questioned the role of the County Planning Commission and Planning Department in determining ways to partner with municipalities. Angie noted that this item creates a great opportunity

Coordination and Collaboration				
What?	**Why?**	**Who?**	**What resources?**	**When?**
Evaluate opportunities for shared services, consolidation, and potential effectiveness of a Council of Governments (COG)	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 and code enforcement.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission	Commitment of staff time	2018
Outreach and education	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Advisory Committee from #1	Commitment of staff time	2018
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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission	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	Commitment of SAPDC in-house expertise and retainers to provide legal and financial guidance	Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 3

for college interns, and all agreed that municipalities must see shared services as a way to save money. Noting that such details will not be determined in the Comprehensive Plan, Matt I. stated that the Advisory Committee would decide if such actions are a priority.

Under Item 2, the addition of both HCBI and Leadership Huntingdon County under "Who" was recommended. A comment was also made regarding reestablishment of the Jaycees and the Young Professionals Group and making a "who" to reference this as a separate action.

Referencing Item 3, Greg asked who has the authority to get people together and what can be done. Mark noted that an incentive could be through provision of examples of success stories and Matt I. suggested that SAPDC may be involved or may take the lead in such an effort. Responding to Ilona's statement that projects do not stop at the Borough line, Greg agreed that inter-municipal proposals should be discussed at municipal meetings. Matt I. emphasized that changing the mindset requires an educational component and noted the importance of encouraging municipal leaders to attend educational events. Chris suggested making attendance at educational sessions an eligibility requirement for receiving grant funds. It was noted that HCBI and SAPDC should be added in the "Who" column for Coordination and Collaboration Item 3.

Mark noted that historic cultural assets are identified in the 2015 Huntingdon County Heritage Plan.

Since SAPDC adopted a bicycle and pedestrian plan last year, it was agreed that Item 1 should be changed to "Implement the regional bicycle and pedestrian master plan at the regional level" and that the resource identified should be replaced with "Allegheny Ridge Corporation, Appalachian Regional Commission, education/coordination, and volunteer and staff time."

Under Item 2, a discussion of the "Who" followed with suggestions being made to create a list of resource opportunities and to add Act 13, SAPDC Greenways Partnership, CDBG funds, Hotel Tax, Huntingdon Landmarks, Huntingdon County Arts Council, Huntingdon County Historical Society, and the Allegheny Ridge Corporation.

Responding to questions about the hotel tax revenue, Matt P. stated that activities are phasing in and that there would be some impact from these funds this fiscal year. He explained that this revenue is not dedicated 1/3 and 2/3 as shown in the table; rather it is 50% for marketing and 50% for development, and the funds are earmarked for Visitor's Bureau activities that further tourism.

It was then agreed that Item 2 should be changed to "Coordinate a dedicated revenue source dedicated to the development, maintenance, and marketing of recreational and cultural assets" and that the beginning of the "Why" under Item 2 should be changed to state "maintain a stream of revenue".

Recreational and Cultural Assets				
What?	**Why?**	**Who?**	**What resources?**	**When?**
1. Complete a County active transportation plan or bicycle and pedestrian master plan	**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.**	**Huntingdon County Planning Commission**	**Approximately $50,000 for project costs. Local share could be lower based on access to State grants.**	**Initiate 2019.**
2. Create revenue to dedicated to the development, maintenance, and marketing of recreational assets.	**To create a stream of revenue to boost the development, maintenance, and marketing of recreational assets. Allocate the additional revenue from hotel tax, which must go towards activities that bolster tourism, in the following ways:** **• Dedicate one-third of the new revenue towards expanding the marketing capacity of the Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau.** **• Dedicate two-thirds towards a Recreation Improvement Fund to pay for capital improvements to new or existing assets that will bolster tourism, improve visitor experiences, and improve local quality of life.**	**Huntingdon County Commissioners, Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau, Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce**	**Rely on existing staff.**	**Initiate mid 2018**
3. 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.	**Expanding the use of Federal, State, and local public lands will diversify the recreational offerings within the County, could expand the shoulder tourism season.**	**Huntingdon County Commissioners, Huntingdon County Planning Commission**	**Rely on existing staff.**	**2019**

Mark commented that during a discussion with Nate Mowrer he learned that there is an agency used to hire farm workers. Mark agreed to follow up with Nate to find out the name of this agency. For Item 1, all agreed that the Conservation District was not the appropriate organization to develop an agricultural worker placement agency. It was agreed to remove the Conservation District from "Who" and to add the name of the agency used by Nate Mowrer.

For the "Who" under Item 2, it was agreed to remove the Huntingdon County Commissioners and to add Juniata College, the Career and Technology Center, the Chamber of Commerce and School Districts.

Referring to Item 3, Ilona recommended cross-referencing this Item to coordination with activities under recreation and cultural assets. She commented that the more an item can be cross-referenced the better the results. Under the "Who", it was agreed to add HCBI and the Huntingdon County COG.

Referring to Item 5, a recommendation was made to add the County Planning Commission, Juniata College and HCBI under "Who". Mark explained that a joint effort with the County Planning Commission, Juniata College and HCBI is underway to partner with the Penn State Extension and the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship to develop an entrepreneurial program based on the local economy. It was agreed to replace the "TBD" with "commitment of staff time and $12,000 to start" under "What Resources".

Business and Workforce Development				
What?	**Why?**	**Who?**	**What resources?**	**When?**
1. Explore the development of an agricultural worker placement agency	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.	Conservation District to coordinate with private sector providers and other agricultural stakeholders	Commitment of staff time	Initiate 2020
2. Collaborate with the school district to develop a student shadow program with local businesses	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.	Huntingdon County Commissioners, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc. and Huntingdon CareerLink	Commitment of staff time	Initiate mid 2018
3. Leverage state grants for improvements to downtown Huntingdon and Mount Union	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission to coordinate with Boroughs.	Commitment of time by coordinating agencies. Could require local money for grant matches	Initiate 2018
4. Develop "Main Street" and downtown revitalization initiative (e.g. National Main Street Center's Four-Point Approach)	The Boroughs have a rich history as a significant economic and cultural resources. However, they are suffering from disinvestment. Young adults and seniors provide opportunity for revitalization.	SAPDC to coordinate with the Huntingdon County, Boroughs of Huntingdon and Mount Union, Chambers of the Alleghenies.	County and Boroughs to contribute to regional main street manager and/or revitalization initiative.	Initiate 2019
5. Develop entrepreneurial program to educate people on how to start a business.	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.	Juniata College, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc.	TBD	Initiate 2018 and running by mid-2019

Mark commented that there is not a redevelopment authority or a housing trust fund in Huntingdon County.

All agreed to reword Item 1 to state "Evaluate the use of municipal financing and tax abatement tools" and to add the Board of Realtors under "Who".

For "Why" under Item 2, it was agreed to change the price range of ADA accessible single-family homes from the $225K to $250K range to the $100K - $200K range. It was also agreed that the Board of Realtors should be added under "Who".

Referring to Item 3, Mark recommended consideration of Act 147 before Act 152. It was agreed that the information under "Why" should be revised to replace the word "demolition" with the word "renovation" and to add Board of Realtors under "Who". Ilona recommended cross-referencing this item with cultural assets. Mark cautioned that the County Commissioners are hesitant to implement another fee-based funding stream so soon after implementing the Uniform Parcel Identifier (UPI) system, which levies an additional UPI fee and a separate recording fee for any document recorded in the officer of the County Recorder.

Regarding Item 4, it was agreed to replace "identify an agency" with "explore a partnership with surrounding counties". Under "Who", it was agreed to add the Board of Realtors and the Center for Community Action.

Regarding Item 5, Matt P. commented that the blank in the "Why" column could be because of a lack of homes and rental units. A suggestion was made to combine Item 5 with Item 2, but all agreed that Item 5 was not necessary and should be removed.

To wrap-up, Matt I. noted that prioritization of the priorities will take place at a late date and that a future meeting date is to be determined. He reiterated that the draft Comprehensive Plan and the revised draft of the Action Plan are anticipated for review and comment in November. He also explained that the Regional Southern Alleghenies Board Meeting is scheduled for November 15, with a second round of public meetings anticipated after the first of the year. He commented that the continued role of the Steering Committees will be discussed during upcoming regional meetings.

Housing Choices and Blight Remediation

What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
1. Evaluate the use of Tax Increment Financing districts (TIF) and other municipal financing and tax abatement tools	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)	Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission	Commitment of staff time	Initiate 2020
2. Develop a financial model to incentivize market-rate apartments, townhouses, and ADA accessible single-family homes	To help lower the perception of risk and stimulate more interest from developers in housing development.	Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission	Commitment of staff time	Initiate 2020
3. Capitalize a blight intervention program - pass Act 152	To create a stream of funding for blight intervention - this would place a $15 fee on deed recordings to support demolition activity and provide a revenue stream of roughly $50,000 per year.	Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission	Supplement with general fund allocations as needed.	Initiate mid 2018
4. Identify an agency with capacity to manage demolition or disposition of problem properties, or create a new entity to fill this role	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.	Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission	TBD	Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 1
5. Expand first-time homeownership and expand the supply of affordable housing pass Act 152		Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission	Commitment of staff time Planning Commission	Initiate late 2018 / early 2019

Minutes for Meeting #9

February 28, 2018

Present: Matt Ingalls, Fred Foster, Travis Lee, Rick Rogers, Matt Price, Chris Gildea, Ilona Ballreich, Bob Reitman, Pam Grugan, Mark Colussy, Laurie Nearhood

Mark explained that the purpose of this last Steering Committee meeting is to finalize the Action Plan and the next steps. Commenting that the public rollout of the plan and the sharing of work is done, Matt I. stated that there may not be many changes to the Action Plan today as it is now Version 5.0. He also indicated that today he would like to follow up on the Kitchen Table Conversation regarding attracting and retaining young adults.

Matt I. reported that submission of the draft regional plan to the commissioners is anticipated in early December for revised comments. Version 5.0 of the Action Plan presented today includes revisions based on the last Steering Committee meeting and a follow-up conference call with Mark.

Referring to the January 17, 2018 Retreat with all six counties in Johnstown, Matt I. reported that the eighteen attendees included representatives from the State, the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAPDC), and the six boards of county commissioners and county steering committees. The full day session included a morning broadband discussion followed by lunch then another discussion about broadband and coordination and collaboration. He mentioned that Huntingdon County added communication to coordination and collaboration. He also commented that fifteen of the eighteen attendees were able to attend the discussion after lunch.

Matt I. stated that a consensus was reached by all six counties regarding the need to conduct a broadband survey to determine the level and types of service available. Matt P. noted that all six sets of county commissioners were polled about contributing funds to Southern Alleghenies for a telecom planner and all six sets offered a verbal "yes" to commit county funds. He indicated the importance of reminding the county commissioners of the cost savings for this regional plan, which allows $80,000 to start implementation.

Responding to a comment from Bob regarding a divergence with county commissioners about the plan, Matt I. explained that each county plan was not looked at during the retreat rather the regional plan priorities were discussed with a major focus on obtaining a consensus to move forward with broadband initiatives.

Fred asked when funds would need to be budgeted and Matt P. stated that the amounts needed have not been determined. Fred asked if Huntingdon County is on a January through December budget and Bob confirmed that the Huntingdon County budget is from January through December with budget requests submitted in October.

Matt I. stated that we have not determined that one project is more important than another and that we would need to discuss moving special projects forward with other committees. He did note that there is now a state representative for broadband, which would mean the County would have to dedicate enough time and resources to move things forward.

Mark explained that the intent of the Action Plan development is to be able to move forward with implementing a specific number of items at a time (i.e. three) with County general funds. He asked the committee to determine if the Action Plan does enough, and, if all steps outlined are done, will the outcomes sought be accomplished. He stated that he has not asked the commissioners anything more than if they are willing to allocate $10,000 for a telecommunications planner staff position at SAPDC. Matt I. commented that financial resources need to be determined and Fred encouraged an assessment of the cost.

Regarding broadband, Matt I. asked the committee to think about the following questions: what do we have?; what is needed?; and what is the gap? He asked if there is a grant source to help fund this process. Matt P. stated that he would argue for this and Fred commented on the need for a study to determine the total assistance needed over a certain number of years. Chris asked if Southern Alleghenies is assisting and Mark responded that Southern Alleghenies is interested and may have POWER funds. He commented that POWER applications are due in March and indicated that ARC funds are a possibility. He also noted that a task force is to be formed.

Regarding the project schedule, Matt I. explained that this week county steering committees are holding their final round of planning meetings. Completion of additional revisions to the draft regional plan and county actions plans is anticipated by mid-March. When the drafts are finalized, they will be presented to the public before adoption in May. He noted that the plan will be provided to the public in a variety of ways, including presentations by the planning directors to various organizations, social media graphics and a media rollout.

Mark explained that he does not anticipate holding a traditional public meeting to present the plan. Instead, he is investigating releasing the plan in an educational format through a social media campaign using Twitter, Facebook and AllegheniesAhead. com. He is also investigating using a whiteboard presentation. To date, he has conducted specific stakeholder presentations with the Visitor's Bureau Board, the Rotary, the Huntingdon County Partnership for Economic Progress (PEP), and HCBI. He also plans to visit additional boards and committees to present the plan in a story form that includes the data describing the issues and how the issues are to be addressed.

Thought is also being given to using a video similar to one prepared for 814worx by a graphic designer, or an

intern temporarily on staff with Blair County Planning. It is anticipated that a video showing the collaboration between czb and the counties to create the plan would reach a younger workforce in a method that they prefer, and that a YouTube video could be used by media partners to share the plan. Since dialogue has centered on getting people involved in our vision, we want the public to discuss the plan, not the planning commission. The tentative plan now still relies on steering committees to tell friends and family about the plan. Mark reported that a full-color project update was sent to all 48 Huntingdon County municipalities and that he is seeking more venues for interactive dialog using the traveling road show prepared by Matt I. and the planning team to conceptualize the plan in a visual method while following the specific Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requirements.

Matt I. expressed that this is the opportunity to get the word out about the data gathered (i.e. older population), and he observed that social media networks are a great resource. Commenting that this is not a typical rollout, he stressed that this is not a typical comprehensive plan.

Referring to the media summit held last year, Mark explained that something similar is anticipated in May with a date to be determined. It is anticipated that this event would provide free media coverage and that people within the region will view the information on television. Chris agreed that we need to get the attention of WTAJ and WJAC. Mark then commented that WJAC attended the last media event and the planning team is hopeful that WTAJ will participate in the May event.

Bob recommended getting the Tribune to look at the uniqueness of the plan and Chris indicated that the Tribune's attention would depend on what else is happening that day. Matt I. observed that this six county regional effort appears to be one of a kind nationwide.

Bob reported that HCB&I received BREP funding and the draft plan seems to be getting the ball rolling. Matt I. noted that the impetus to move business development forward is a top priority in the regional plan. Observing that economies do not work on a local or county level, Mark stated that economies are regional and that we can focus on the regional plan while working on the county level.

Matt I. then turned the meeting to a review of Version 5.0 of the Action Plan. He began by explaining that the changes made since the last meeting are highlighted and additions are shown in red, while subcategories, shown in gray, were added.

Broadband and Cell Service

		What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
1		Establish regional broadband and cell service task force	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.	County planning commissions, SAPDC, and subject-matter experts	Dedication of time by task force participants	Spring 2018 and ongoing
	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 Huntingdon County)	Complete asset inventory, customer survey, and anchor identification by end of 2018
	b	Hire tele-communications 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
2		Broadband Outreach and Aggregation	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.	Time of staff and elected officials to inform constituents about aggregation process	2018-2019

Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration

	What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
1	Evaluate opportunities for shared services, consolidation, and potential effectiveness of a Council of Governments (COG)	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, County Associations of Township Officials, Councils of Governments (COG)	Commitment of staff time	2018
2	Outreach and education	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Advisory Committee from #1, HCBI, SAPDC, Leadership Huntingdon County	Commitment of staff time	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. An incentive program could require participation in a educational/training session by SAPDC.	HCBI, SAPDC	Private sector financial resources, Commitment of staff time	2019
4	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	Commitment of SAPDC in-house expertise and retainers to provide legal and financial guidance	==Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 3==

Matt I. agreed to add an Item 2.a that would state "promote Huntingdon County outside of region" and to rename Item 4 as Item 3.a.

Recreational and Cultural Assets

	What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
1	Implement the regional active transportation plan or bicycle and pedestrian master plan at the local level.	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee and other local stakeholders	County staff time, volunteers, and local project related resources as necessary.	Initiate 2019
a	Analyze and prioritize gaps in trail network to improve connections to downtowns and commercial nodes.	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee, property owners, and other local stakeholders	County staff time, volunteers, and local project related resources as necessary.	Initiate 2019
b	Implement Main Line Canal Greenway Trail and the September 11th Memorial Trail.	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee, Main Line Trail Committee, and other local stakeholders	County staff time, volunteers, and local project related resources as necessary.	Initiate 2020
c	Complete trail around Lake Raystown and connect to Huntingdon Borough.	It will be economically and recreationally beneficial to connect residents and visitors to local businesses.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Active Transportation Committee, property owners, and other local stakeholders	County staff time, volunteers, and local project related resources as necessary.	Initiate 2020
2	Coordinate a fund dedicated for the development, maintenance, and marketing of recreational and cultural assets.	Maintain a stream of revenue to boost the development, maintenance, and marketing of recreational and cultural assets.	Huntingdon County Commissioners, County Visitors Bureau, County Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council, Historical Society, and other stakeholders	Rely on existing staff, hotel tax, Act 13 funds, SAPDC, CDBG, and other eligible funds.	Initiate mid 2018
3	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.	Expanding the use of Federal, State, and local public lands will diversify the recreational offerings within the County, could could expand the shoulder tourism season.	Huntingdon County Commissioners, Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau	Rely on existing staff. Determine funds needed to support improvements.	Initiate mid 2018

Matt I. agreed to change the dates for Items 1, 1.a, 1.b, and 1.c to "Initiate 2018" to indicate a commitment to beginning work sooner rather than a year or two later.

Business and Workforce Development

	What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
1	Strengthen locally owned farms by diversifying their products and services.	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.	Huntingdon County planning Commission, Huntingdon County Farm Bureau, Huntingdon County Conservation District, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc, Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center, and other agricultural stakeholders	Commitment of staff time	Initiate mid 2018
a	Explore the development of a educational / training program for farmers to learn about new technologies and business opportunities.	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. See http://www.visitithaca.com/farm-fork-ithaca	SAPDC, Huntingdon County Farm Bureau, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc, Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center, Juniata College, Huntingdon County Local Food Association etc.	Commitment of staff time	Initiate 2019
b	Explore the development of a agricultural worker placement agency	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.	SAPDC and CareerLink to coordinate with local industrial placement agencies, private sector providers, and other agricultural stakeholders	Commitment of staff time	Initiate 2020
2	Collaborate with the school districts to develop a student shadow program with local businesses	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.	CareerLink, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc, Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center, Juniata College, etc.	Commitment of staff time	Initiate mid 2018

	What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
3	Leverage state grants for improvements to downtown Huntingdon and Mount Union	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.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission to coordinate with Boroughs, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc.	Commitment of time by coordinating agencies. Could require local money for grant matches	Initiate 2018
4	Develop "Main Street" and downtown revitalization initiative (e.g. National Main Street Center's Four-Point Approach)	The Boroughs have a rich history as a significant economic and cultural resources. However, they are suffering from disinvestment. Young adults and seniors provide opportunity for revitalization. A focus on specialty shops and boutiques would provide a unique regional niche. Coordinate with recreational and cultural assets action plan.	SAPDC to coordinate with the Huntingdon County, Boroughs of Huntingdon and Mount Union, Chambers of the Alleghenies	County and Boroughs to contribute to regional main street manager and/or revitalization initiative.	Initiate 2019
5	Develop entrepreneurial program to educate people on how to start a business and promote an entrepreneurial mind-set.	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.	Juniata College, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc, Penn State, Huntingdon County Planning Commission, and the local school district.	Commitment of staff time, $12,000	Initiate 2018 and running by mid-2019
6	Identify and implement roadway, rail, and other infrastructure improvements to accommodate freight movement.	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 discusses.	Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Huntingdon County Commissions, PennDOT, Rail Authority, Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Inc. and other necessary stakeholders.	Commitment of staff time, other local resources TBD	Initiate 2018

For Business and Workforce Development, Matt I. agreed to make the following revisions in the "What?" column: add Juniata College to Item 2 and remove "and promote an entrepreneurial mind-set" from Item 5. Under "Who?" Matt I. agreed to remove "and the local school district" from Item 5.

Housing Choices and Blight Remediation

	What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
1	Evaluate the use of municipal financing and tax abatement tools	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)	Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission, Huntingdon County Board of Realtors	Commitment of staff time Planning Commission	Initiate late 2018 / early 2019
2	Develop a financial model to incentivize market-rate apartments, townhouses, and ADA accessible single-family homes	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	Huntingdon County Planning Commission to convene a committee with representation from the Huntingdon County Business and Industry, Huntingdon County Board of Realtors, and local lenders	TBD once evaluation of model	Initiate 2019
3	Capitalize a blight intervention program - pass Act 141 and 152	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.	Huntingdon County Commissioners in collaboration with the Huntingdon County Planning Commission and the Huntingdon County Board of Realtors	Supplement with general fund allocations as needed.	Initiate mid 2018

	What?	Why?	Who?	What resources?	When?
4	Explore the development of an agency to manage demolition or disposition of problem properties	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.	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	TBD	Timing and nature of work dependent on action item 3

Matt I. agreed to revise Item 3 to replace "Act 141 and 152" with "Act 137 of 1992 and 152 of 2016". He also agreed to renumber Item 3 as Item 4 and Item 4 as Item 4.a and to create a new Item 3 stating "develop a financial model to incentivize the rehabilitation of underutilized or vacant commercial and mixed-use buildings". This new Item 3 would address buildings that need improvements in a way that would entice investors so that buildings would not remain vacant.

Mark explained that a preface to the Action Plan has been discussed and that it would include information to indicate that, as action plan steps are done, new items would be added along with partners under "who?" to identify capacity. Matt I. indicated that this process is similar to planning for a financial goal for retirement. We have the outcomes we are seeking but decisions need to be made along the way to achieve these action items. Mark observed that we must have identification of a marketing strategy.

Referring to the student shadow program described in Item 2 under Business and Workforce Development, Travis indicated that there are more Juniata College Interns involved in the school district, which creates an opportunities for our children and college students, including the possibility of establishing something at Juniata College. Matt I. commented that this is beyond marketing and stated that Huntingdon County has an opportunity to entice young people to stay, but Huntingdon is not a college town rather it is a town with a college because most Juniata College students remain on campus and are uninvolved in the community.

Mark commented that the portion of the County population that are Juniata College Alumni is made up of people who became involved in the community during college, while the other 90% of students are unknown to the local community.

Ilona observed that there is a need to promote and to follow up on the funding portion of the plan. She stated that any improvement to any community will only be done by investment not by grant funding and she emphasized the need for foresight in investing real money. Fred responded that our job is to promote this with the County, Huntingdon Borough, and others. Matt I. agreed that there is a cost associated with revitalization. He observed that this plan is a start to changing the mindset that funding must be invested. Fred asked how the Chamber could be more involved and how organizations can help since this is a group goal not just as an individual one.

Responding to a question from Ilona about the first semi-public rollout to identified partners, Matt I. explained that Mary Kay in Fulton County is ready. She is telling the public that it is their plan not the county's plan. He stated that Huntingdon County can do a collective roll-out or do separate roll-outs to individual organizations. Referring to previous discussions about measuring successes, Mark commented that return on investment can be part of this. As the "Who?" are identified and approached they will want to know the return on investment. Matt I. commented on the need for accessibility and a way to measure success.

Referring to the roll out, Ilona observed that an intentional decision is needed. She then asked who is on board and what form it would take. Matt I. responded that each county is doing their roll out differently. He also noted that Blair County is retaining their steering committee and starting subcommittees.

Matt I. then asked those present if there were any results from the last Kitchen Table Conversation provided below:

The population of every county in the Southern Alleghenies region is significantly older than the national average – and growing older more rapidly. A major factor driving this trend is the relatively small number of young adults in the region today. In fact, if the region's population reflected national age distributions, there would be roughly 12,000 more adults in the region between the ages of 25 and 34 — or 23% more than the current number.

In Huntingdon County today, there would be 620 more adults between the ages of 25 and 34 if the county's population reflected national age distributions.

Discussion: The following five issues have been identified as priorities in your county through the Alleghenies Ahead project.

• Broadband and Cell Service

• Coordination and Collaboration

• Recreational and Cultural Assets

• Business and Workforce Development

• Housing Choices and Blight Remediation

For each of the issues above, discuss the following:

• How does this issue influence the decisions that young adults make to stay in or leave your county? Do you think the influence is significant or minor?

• What would progress on this issue have to look like to make young people more likely to stay here or move here?

• What role can you play to help your community make progress on this issue? What types of investments are you willing to support?

It was noted that the number of new adults differs by county.

Reporting that he had a small sample, Fred stated that he had spoken to his nephew who indicated that entertainment and eating downtown are needed, not just shopping.

Ilona stated that housing is critical and that other things are not as important. She observed that our recreational assets rock. She then noted that the lake at Whipple Dam State Park is being dredged and that the Shavers Creek Environmental Center is a great asset that is willing to contribute to the community. Matt I. observed that momentum contagious.

Rick indicated that we need to start talking to young people. For example, he has spoken twice at the Mount Union High School for Black History, but instead of focusing on the past he spoke about the future. He explained that we need to determine what we need to do grow and then provide such information in an interactive format to schools and clubs. Referring to the local CHAMP effort to raise money for cancer research, he suggested using such an event to speak to students. Doing so would cost nothing and would promote the planning effort.

Matt I. challenged the group to think about what it means to collaborate and/or serve on a committee. He mentioned that we need to be willing to go out, serve, and promote change. He then expressed both his thanks for being welcomed to work in Huntingdon County and his excitement about roll out and the chance to make Huntingdon County better.

Mark offered Jeremy Crouse, Planet LoveJoy, and the student group as examples of agents of change. Matt I. reminded the members that they are planning for the next generation. Mark then thanked the members for their part in the process and asked that they provide him ideas regarding where he should go and who he should talk to regarding the draft plan and sharing of resources.

MEETING MINUTES FROM PUBLIC HEARING

Huntingdon County Planning Commission

December 8, 2016

The *Alleghenies Ahead Comprehensive Plan* Public Meeting was held at 6 p.m. in the Conference Room, Courthouse Annex I, Huntingdon, PA.

Attending

Commission members: Robert Benson; Nancy MacNamara; Phil Cahill

Staff: Mark Colussy; Laurie Nearhood

Visitors: April Feagley, The Daily News

Mark Colussy, County Planning Director, presented a summary of the Alleghenies Ahead Plan. Afterward, he summarized that the purpose of this public meeting is to hear public comment at the request of and on behalf of the County Commissioners prior to their ability to consider adopting the Plan. He noted that the adoption process is explicitly outlined in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). He then presented the two emailed public comments that were received during the comment period. Both comments, submitted via the Alleghenies Ahead website, were from George Conrad at gconrad3.16652@gmail.com:

Subject: Expanding Recreational Use of Public Land Managed by US Army Corps of Engineers

This comment is in regards to Page 115 detailing the expanded recreational uses on the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) managed land around Raystown Lake for snowmobiles and A TV s. It would be a horrendous idea to open up public land for motorized vehicles like ATV s and snowmobiles as it only serves to disrupt nature, increase noise pollution, *and decrease safety for other that use the areas for recreational purposes. Trails that permit A TV and snowmobile use would have a higher cost of maintenance and there is already evidence that the USACE cannot properly maintain trails as exhibited by the terrible conditions of Terrace Mountain Trail. I suggest removing this recommendation completely.*

Subject: Terrace Mountain Trail

In regards to Page 115 for recommendation about a trail around Raystown Lake to Huntingdon, here are my recommendations for improving Terrace Mt Trail which runs the entire length of the lake on the eastern shore.

Recommendations for Terrace Mountain Trail

Terrace Mountain Trail (TMT) is the only long-distance hiking trail that spans the length of Raystown Lake. Although some improvements have been made over the years, it still lacks what long-distance hikers desire in a trail and some sections in their current state make the trail unnecessarily hazardous due to limited blazing and signage. Also hikers do not need half mile posts and really just expect distance signs at major crossings. Lastly the blazes that do exist are not consistent in size and should be the standard 2" by 6" rectangle. Also a future goal of the trail should be to leave any road in favor a single track.

Below is a list of major improvements needed, but overall my recommendation is that the TMT has a club formed dedicated to its maintenance as maintenance is what is lacking most. A trail club would oversee major projects and allow for sections to be maintained by members. The sections could vary from 2 to 3 *miles and the maintainers would need to hike their sections a couple times a year to ensure the trail is clear and visibly marked. Trail club members would also have the experience to advise visitors, produce maps and guides, and further promote the trail.*

Current Recommendations:

Northern terminus on Corbin Road needs an obvious trail head marker.

Sign needs placed at bottom of the hill after leaving Corbin Road to show direction of the trail. Trail needs relocated away from private property as signs inform public that it is closed November to May.

Trail needs blazed through new logging area to above Hawn's Peninsula.

Hawn's Peninsula should be classified as limited recreation to maintain the outdoor experience and keep the area free from development.

Trail blazed at times in two directions and so old blazed should be "blacked out".

Sign needed at bottom of Fink Road as there are blazes going up the road and it is not clear where the trails is intended.

Trail along logging roads after Fink Road needs to be blazed.

After Trough Creek State Park in Rothrock State Forest, trail is difficult to follow and should be better blazed.

On hillside between Trough Creek State Park and Tatman Run, side hill needs dug out to make a wider path.

Better signage is needed along pipeline above Tatman Run.

Bridges are needed between Tatman Run Road and Old Plank Road.

From Old Plank Road to south of Lake Raystown Resort is the worst section

of trail which is impassible due to overgrown thorns.

Better blazing is needed here too.

From Lake Raystown Resort to Weaver Falls the trail would better suited being relocated away from road.

Southern terminus needs an obvious trail head marker.

Referring to the *Alleghenies Ahead* goal of identifying implementation partners and stakeholders, Colussy observed that both comments provided fit well with this process, as the Army Corps of Engineers must be contacted and the Terrace Mountain Trail Club is an excellent resource and stakeholder. MacNamara agreed that the Army Corps must be approached.

Colussy stated that formal consideration of the plan would be conducted at the subsequent regular public meeting of the Huntingdon County Planning Commission.

Adjourn

The *Alleghenies Ahead* Public Meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

STEERING COMMITTEE HOMEWORK AND EXERCISES

Homework Assignment #1 and Instructions for Kitchen Table Conversation

1. Familiarize yourself with your county's current comprehensive plan

a. Find it on the county's website or request a link from the planning director

2. Host First Round of Kitchen Table Conversations

Here's how the Kitchen Table Conversations should be structured:

a. Goal is to assemble a group of approximately 10-15 people

b. Someone needs to take careful notes

c. Meetings can be held in a library, coffee shop, living room, or similar location

d. 1-2 members of the County Committee should be at each meeting to help facilitate. Elected officials should be encouraged to attend, as able.

Questions for First Round of Kitchen Table Conversation:

Discussion point #1: Talk about the "status quo" in your county and community. Do you think the county needs no course correction, a minor course correction, a major course correction, or a 180? Why?

Discussion point #2: List and discuss the core values of your county. What makes it different than other places? What must it preserve and/or improve upon to make it stronger?

3. Elect Steering Committee Co-Chairs

a. Co-chair will serve with County Planning Director on the Project Steering Committee during deliberations on region-level priorities

Homework Assignment #2 and Instructions for Kitchen Table Conversation

Facilitate small group discussions in response to the following HYPOTHETICAL scenario written only to create a framework for discussing land use, fiscal challenges, and community vision as they relate to planning. Take care to keep copious notes, to help the group answer all the questions shown here, and to ensure everyone attending gets a chance to participate.

An Allentown-based developer who has built a few subdivisions in the State College market wants to continue buildings, but is turned off by relatively high land prices around State College. She has optioned some land from a retiring farmer near Alexandria in Huntingdon County.

She wants to build a **40-home subdivision**, believing that the 30-minute drive to State College and the proximity to Huntingdon borough and Raystown Lake will make the location and the product attractive. To move forward, she needs amenable zoning – and she needs the county to invest $1 million in infrastructure and utilities to make the development work at a reasonable price point. Without the county investment, the homes would have to be priced at between $300,000 and $350,000, which is unlikely to be feasible in the Huntingdon County market. But with the county's support, the homes can be priced in the $225,000 to $250,000 range

Simultaneously, she and a partner are considering the purchase of a property on Washington Street in Huntingdon borough and the conversion of the top two floors into 12 market-rate apartments. But the building needs a new elevator. The cost, including stabilization work to the existing shaft, would be $150,000. Without help from the county or borough, the rents would have to be in the $1300 to $1500 range, which seems unrealistic. Some public financing for the elevator project, however, would allow rents closer to the $900 to $1,100 range. They are requesting the $200,000 as either a grant or an interest-free loan.

As proposed, these two projects would contribute roughly $80,000 per year in combined property taxes when completed.

The County Commissioners have asked the County Planning Commission for its thoughts. As a member of the Planning Commission, do you think these projects are good for Huntingdon County? Why or why not? Are they worth the requested subsidies?

When discussing, consider the following:

• What are the benefits? What are the costs/risks?

• What should the final decision be? What will you recommend to the Board of Commissioners?

• What might the county be getting and what might the county have to give up?

• What should the final decision be? What will you recommend to the Board of Commissioners?

• What core values shaped your group's decision?

Homework Assignment #3 and Instructions for Kitchen Table Conversation

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 900 residential units in Huntingdon County are vacant and likely abandoned – they are neither for rent, for sale, nor used for recreational purposes. This represents 4.0% of all housing units in the county, or one in every 25. By comparison, the state average is 4.4%, the national average is 4.0%, and the average in a strong housing market such as Centre County (State College) is 2.5%. In other words, Huntingdon County's rate is normal but not excellent.

This number of abandoned residential units (homes and apartments) translates to roughly 450 abandoned structures that are likely to merit demolition over the next decade. Demolishing these structures can be expected to have the following benefits:

• Improved public safety, especially where a structure is close to other buildings or accessible to children;

• Reduction of blight and disorder in neighborhoods and along rural corridors where it undermines confidence and breeds further disinvestment;

• Reduction of excess housing supply, which weighs down prices and property values.

It is estimated that addressing this issue in full will cost $6,750,000. If performed at an even pace over 10 years, that equates to allocating $675,000 per year to demolish 45 properties – an amount equivalent to 7% of Huntingdon County's current property tax levy.

Based on this information, you and your fellow Huntingdon County residents are asked to consider the following:

1. Should the county government take a leadership role on the issue of blighted and abandoned housing by coordinating demolition activities with local governments? Or, should government get out of the way and let the market solve the problem of abandonment? Explain your reasoning.

2. Should the county allocate $675,000 per year towards this effort? Should some lesser amount be allocated? If not from the county, where specifically should resources come from? Explain your reasoning.

3. If you think the county should allocate resources to this challenge, should this be raised by increasing the property tax rate (a hike that would cost the average household $39 per year)? Or, by cutting something else in the county's budget? If something should be cut, what would you cut?

4. If there is some other issue that merits $675,000 per year from the county's coffers – and would do more good than demolishing abandoned houses – what would that be? And again, should these dollars come from a tax increase or a budget cut?

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Alleghenies Ahead Online Survey
Huntingdon County Resident Responses
Results Based on 148 Surveys Completed During Spring 2017
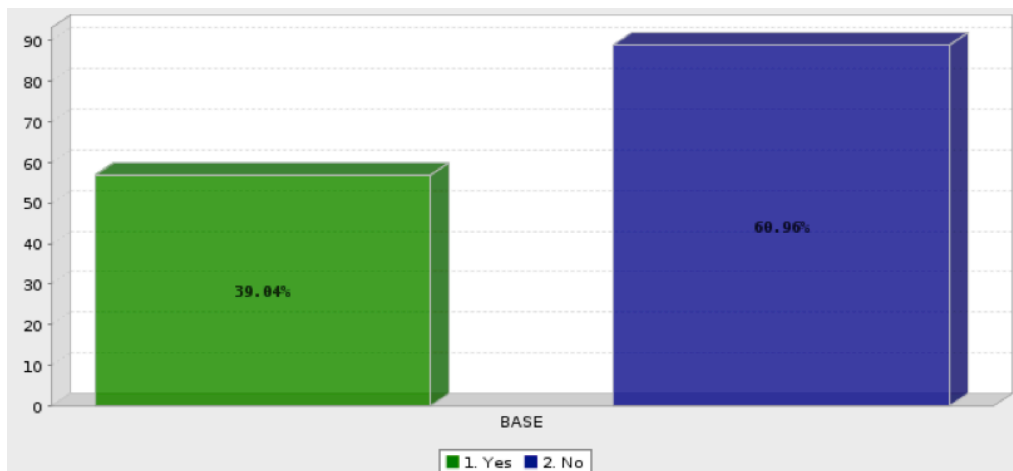
1. Do you rent or own your home?
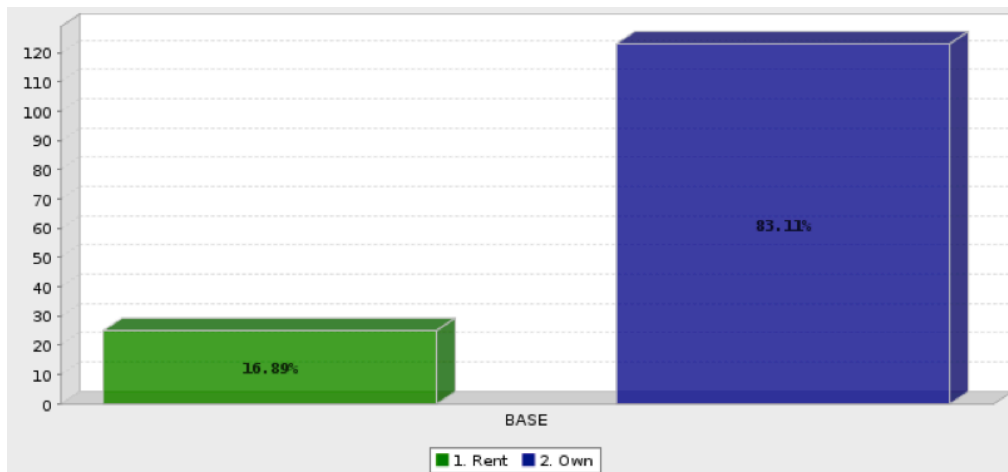
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Rent	25	16.89%
2.	Own	123	83.11%
	Total	148	100%

2. How long have you lived at your current address?
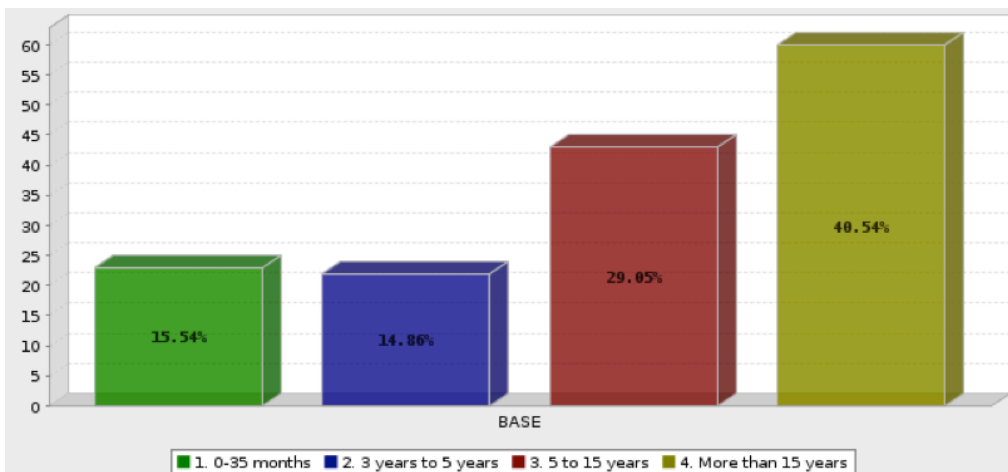
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	0-35 months	23	15.54%
2.	3 years to 5 years	22	14.86%
3.	5 to 15 years	43	29.05%
4.	More than 15 years	60	40.54%
	Total	148	100%

3. Do you have children in grades K-12?

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Yes	57	39.04%
2.	No	89	60.96%
	Total	146	100%

4. Are you employed in your county of residence or elsewhere?
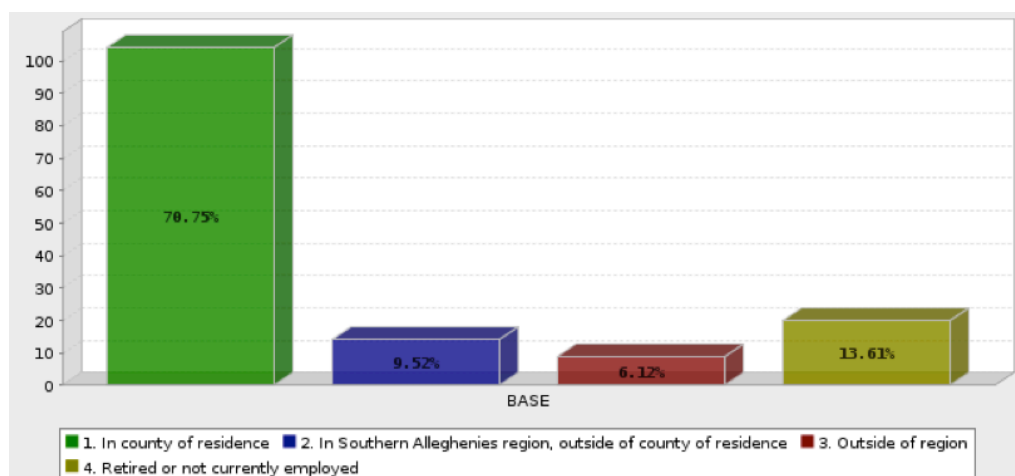
5. Think about the last four years... in general, is the county where you live...
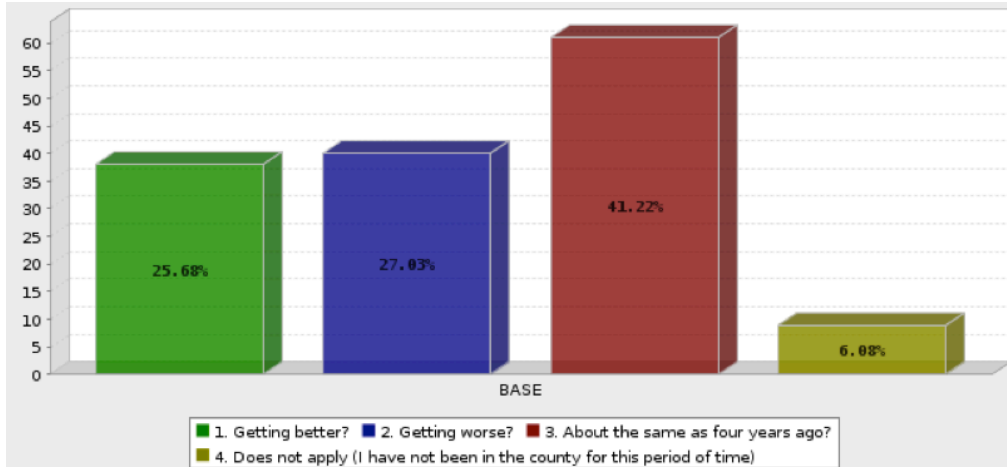
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Getting better?	38	25.68%
2.	Getting worse?	40	27.03%
3.	About the same as four years ago?	61	41.22%
4.	Does not apply (I have not been in the county for this period of time)	9	6.08%
	Total	148	100%

6. In the area where you live, neighbors on your street or road maintain their homes...
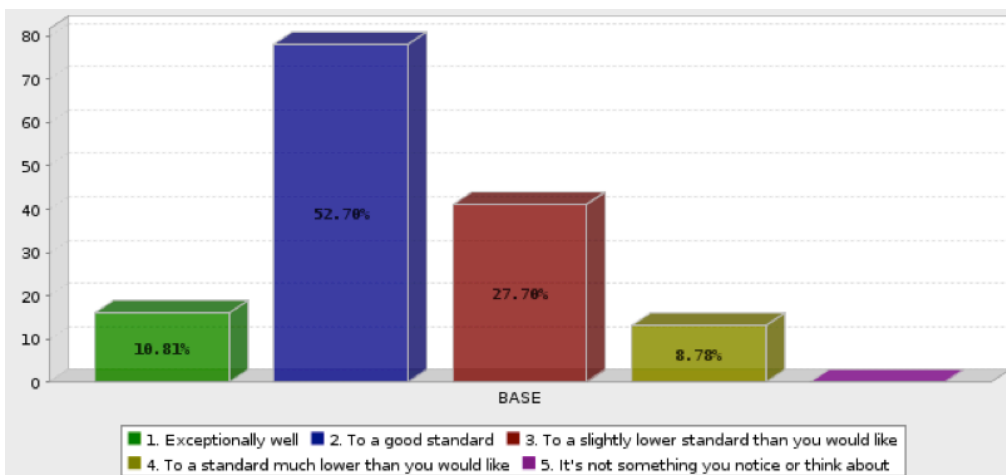
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Exceptionally well	16	10.81%
2.	To a good standard	78	52.70%
3.	To a slightly lower standard than you would like	41	27.70%
4.	To a standard much lower than you would like	13	8.78%
5.	It's not something you notice or think about	0	0.00%
	Total	148	100%

7. For your county and community to become the best it can be, it needs to...
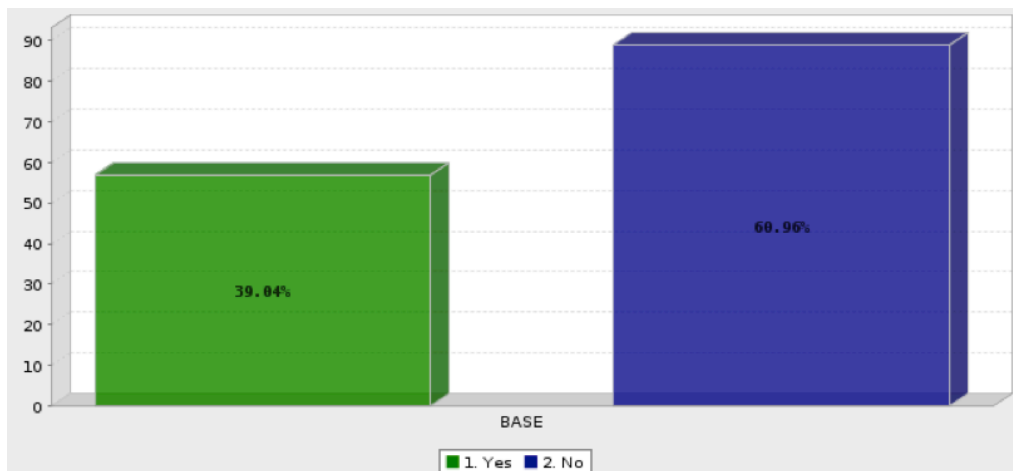
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Keep doing what it's been doing	13	8.78%
2.	Make minor adjustments	70	47.30%
3.	Make a major course correction	65	43.92%
	Total	148	100%

8. Taxes (local) are:
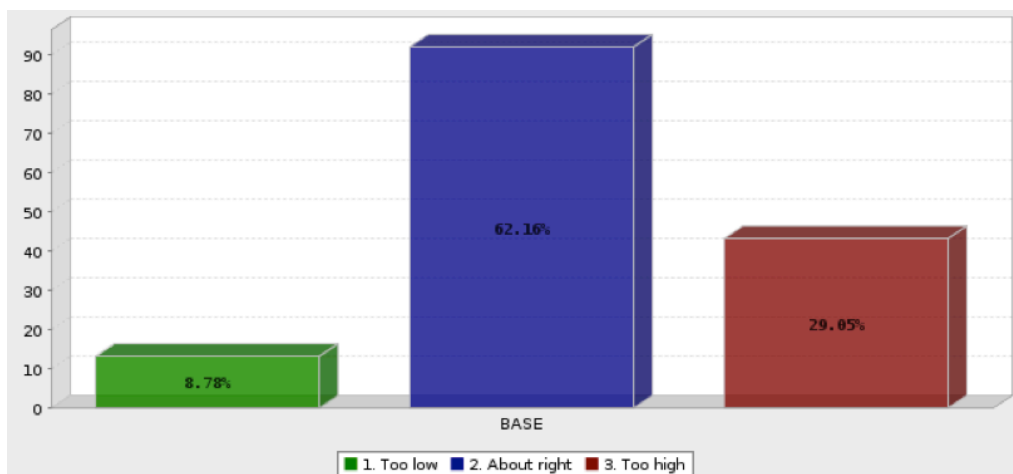
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Too low	13	8.78%
2.	About right	92	62.16%
3.	Too high	43	29.05%
	Total	148	100%

9. Housing quality for the price
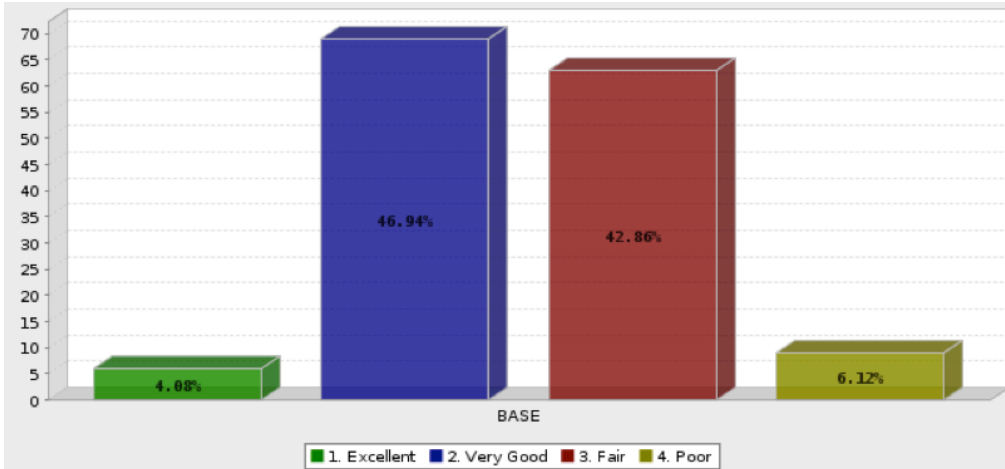
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	6	4.08%
2.	Very Good	69	46.94%
3.	Fair	63	42.86%
4.	Poor	9	6.12%
	Total	147	100%

10. Commercial activity and shopping
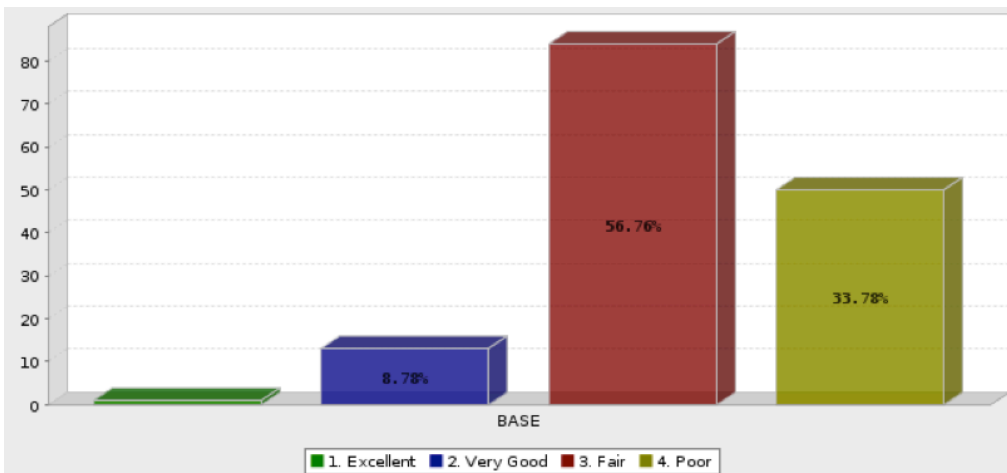
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	1	0.68%
2.	Very Good	13	8.78%
3.	Fair	84	56.76%
4.	Poor	50	33.78%
	Total	148	100%

11. Civic life (engagement in politics, public events, and culture)
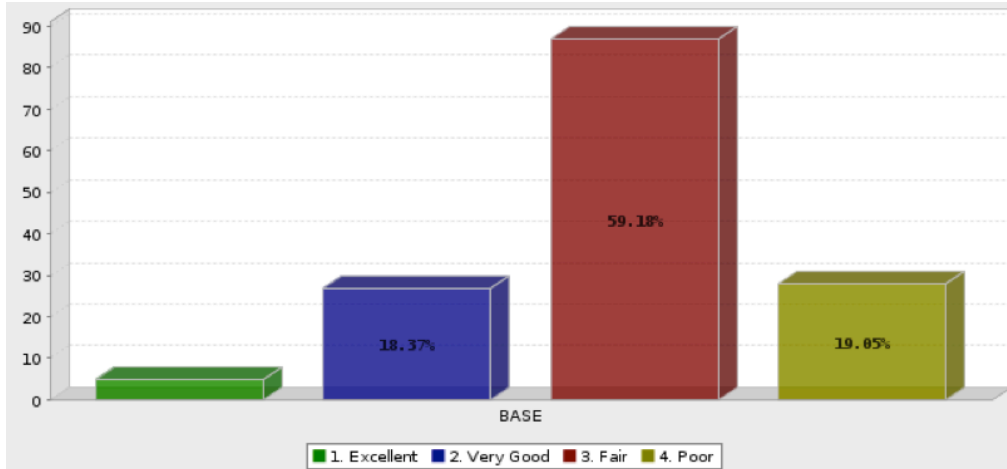
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	5	3.40%
2.	Very Good	27	18.37%
3.	Fair	87	59.18%
4.	Poor	28	19.05%
	Total	147	100%

12. Schools
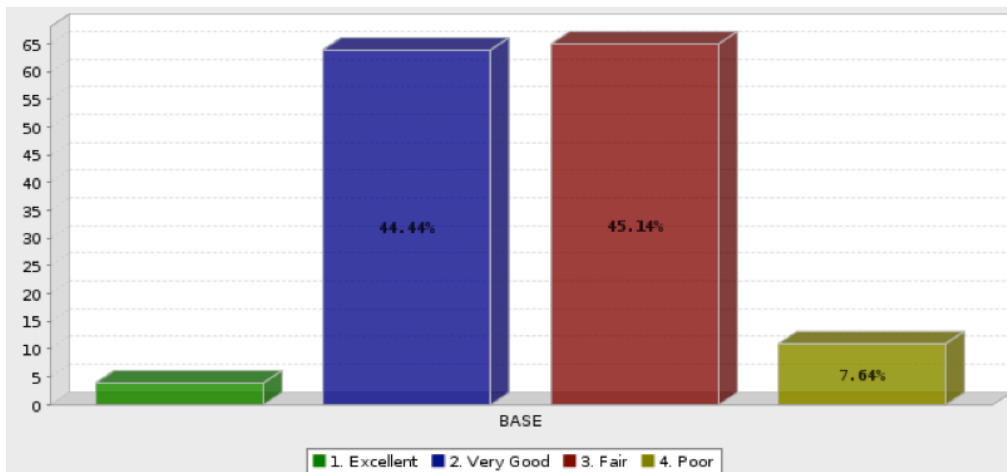
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	4	2.78%
2.	Very Good	64	44.44%
3.	Fair	65	45.14%
4.	Poor	11	7.64%
	Total	144	100%

13. Quality of life amenities (parks, recreation, parades, festivals, restaurants)
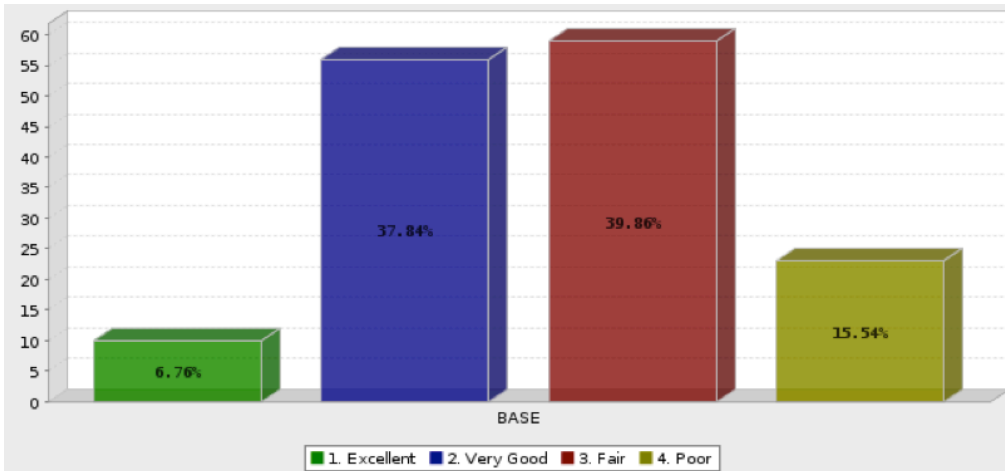
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	10	6.76%
2.	Very Good	56	37.84%
3.	Fair	59	39.86%
4.	Poor	23	15.54%
	Total	148	100%

14. Government (quality of services, expertise)
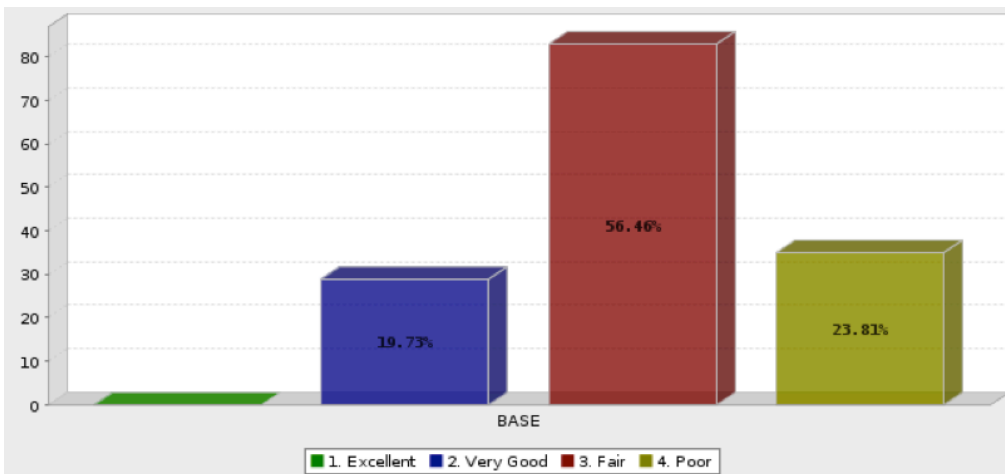
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	0	0.00%
2.	Very Good	29	19.73%
3.	Fair	83	56.46%
4.	Poor	35	23.81%
	Total	147	100%

15. Public safety
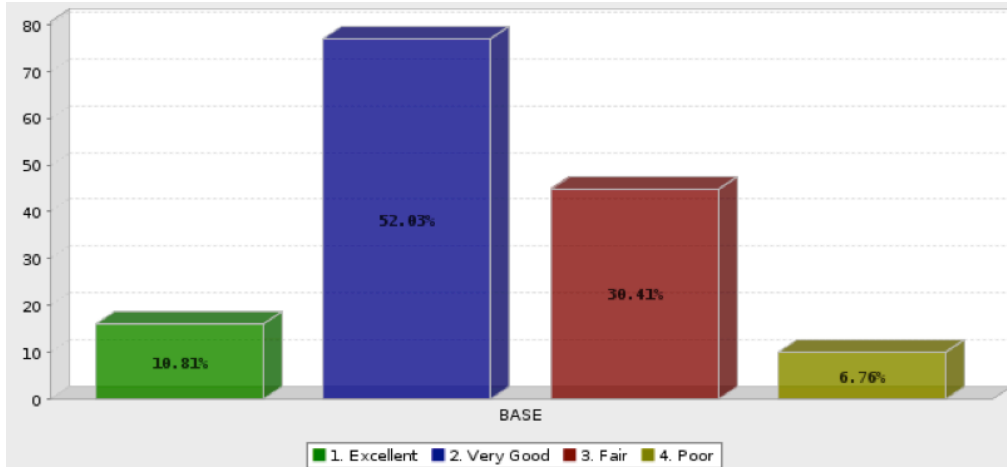
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	16	10.81%
2.	Very Good	77	52.03%
3.	Fair	45	30.41%
4.	Poor	10	6.76%
	Total	148	100%

16. Strength of the overall housing market (stability, equity)
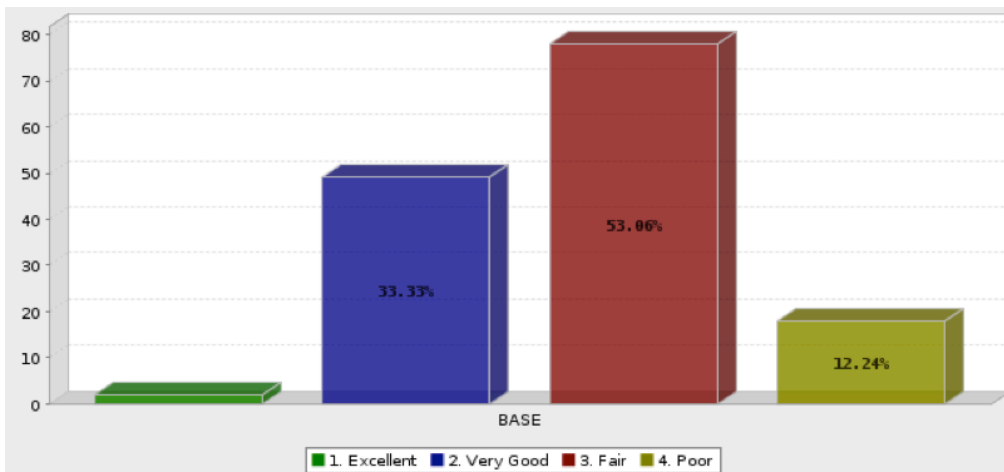
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	2	1.36%
2.	Very Good	49	33.33%
3.	Fair	78	53.06%
4.	Poor	18	12.24%
	Total	147	100%

17. Think about the places in the region where you prefer to shop because of convenience, selection, atmosphere, or whatever most influences your shopping habits. What place is at the top of your list?
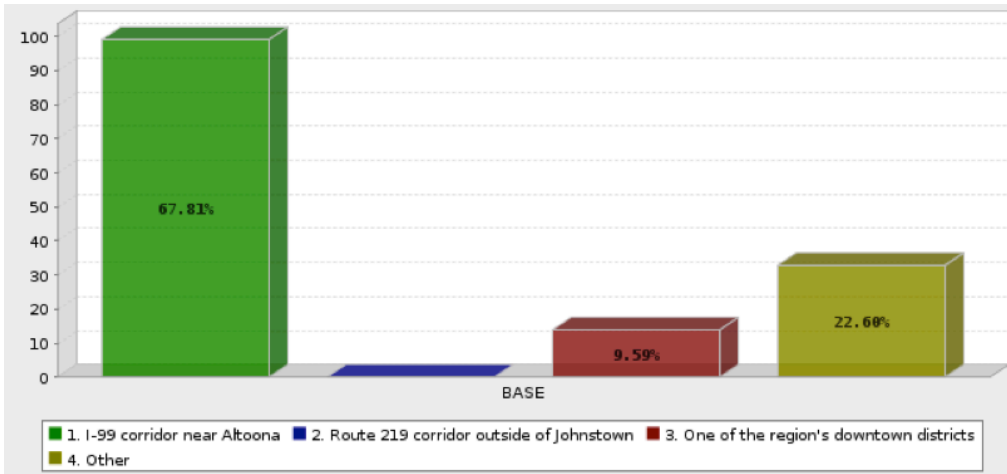
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	I-99 corridor near Altoona	99	67.81%
2.	Route 219 corridor outside of Johnstown	0	0.00%
3.	One of the region's downtown districts	14	9.59%
4.	Other	33	22.60%
	Total	146	100%

18. When you need to leave the region for goods, services, or entertainment, where do you typically go?
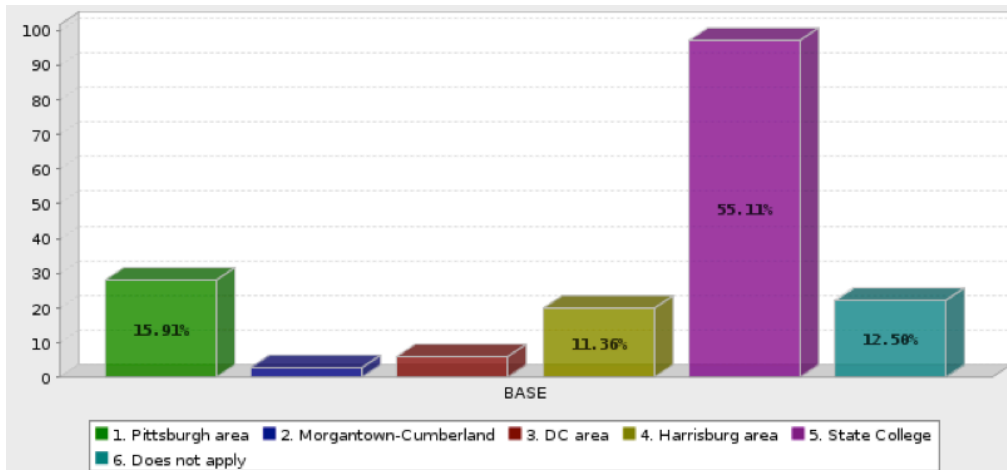
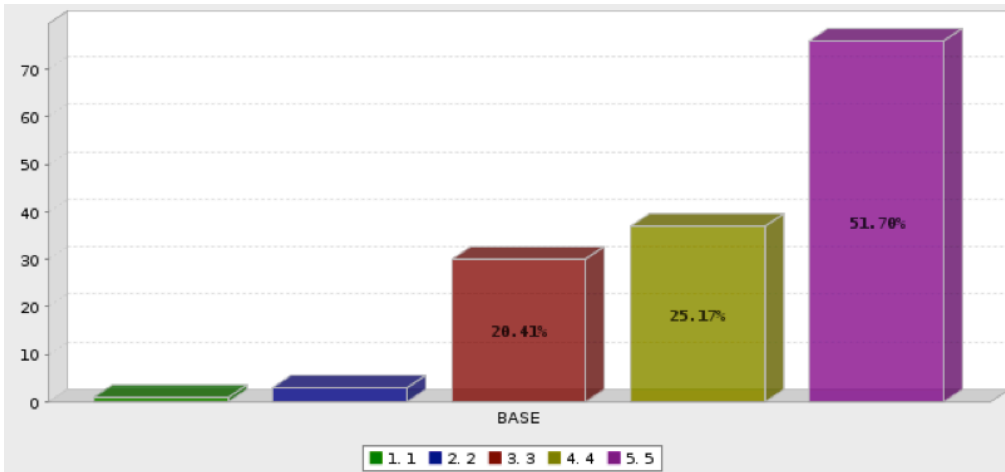|	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Pittsburgh area	28	15.91%
2.	Morgantown-Cumberland	3	1.70%
3.	DC area	6	3.41%
4.	Harrisburg area	20	11.36%
5.	State College	97	55.11%
6.	Does not apply	22	12.50%
	Total	176	100%

19. Please give 1 to 5 stars (5 being very important to you; 1 being not important to you) to the following...

Note: Scores represent averages of responses. Issues considered most important have the highest average scores. Detailed break-down of responses to each issue can be found in 19a through 19-q.

|	Question	Score
1.	Investment of today's tax dollars for the long-term, even if I am not around to see or benefit from the improvements	4.252
2.	The quality of public education	4.680
3.	The vibrancy of downtowns (in the region's cities and boroughs)	4.095
4.	Having a fund balance after all expenses are paid (rainy day fund)	3.685
5.	Your county being able to take care of itself without too much reliance on the state or federal government	3.823
6.	Low taxes	3.633
7.	Low levels of municipal debt	3.571
8.	The region's colleges	3.830
9.	The natural environment	4.456
10.	Small town life where everybody knows everybody	3.735
11.	Public safety	4.585
12.	Stable housing market	3.912
13.	Historic preservation	3.891
14.	Architectural beauty	3.755
15.	Collaboration between the region's governments	3.782
16.	Outdoor recreational opportunities	4.390
17.	Farmland preservation	4.014

19-a. Investment of today's tax dollars for the long-term, even if I am not around to see or benefit from the improvements
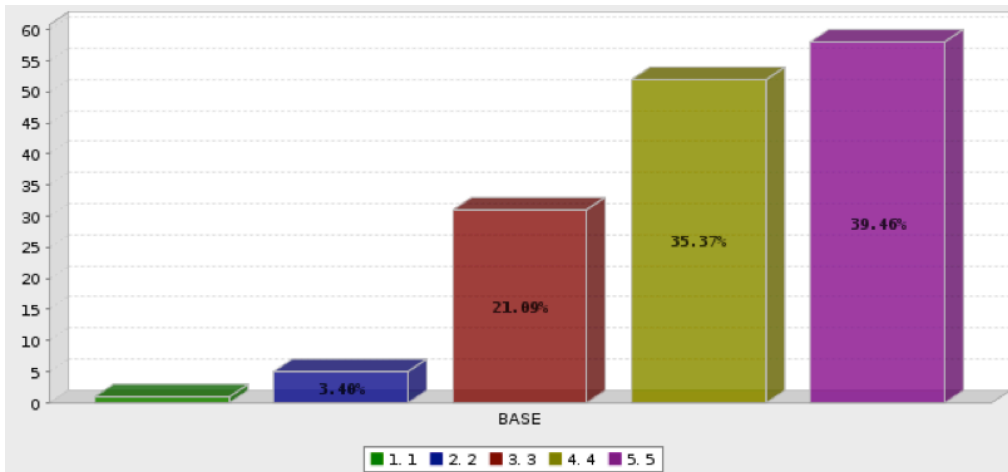

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	1	0.68%
2.	2	3	2.04%
3.	3	30	20.41%
4.	4	37	25.17%
5.	5	76	51.70%
	Total	147	100%

19-b. The quality of public education
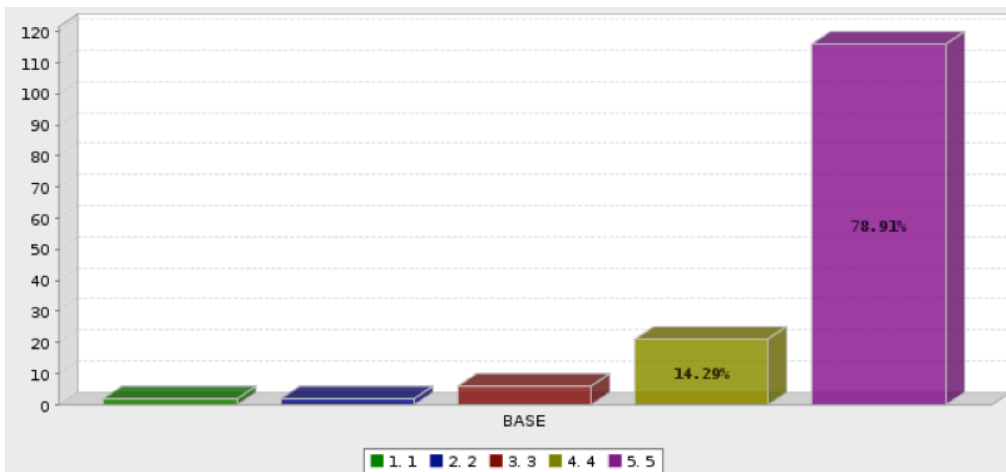
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	2	1.36%
2.	2	2	1.36%
3.	3	6	4.08%
4.	4	21	14.29%
5.	5	116	78.91%
	Total	147	100%

19-c. The vibrancy of downtowns (in the region's cities and boroughs)

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	1	0.68%
2.	2	5	3.40%
3.	3	31	21.09%
4.	4	52	35.37%
5.	5	58	39.46%
	Total	147	100%

19-d. Having a fund balance after all expenses are paid (rainy day fund)
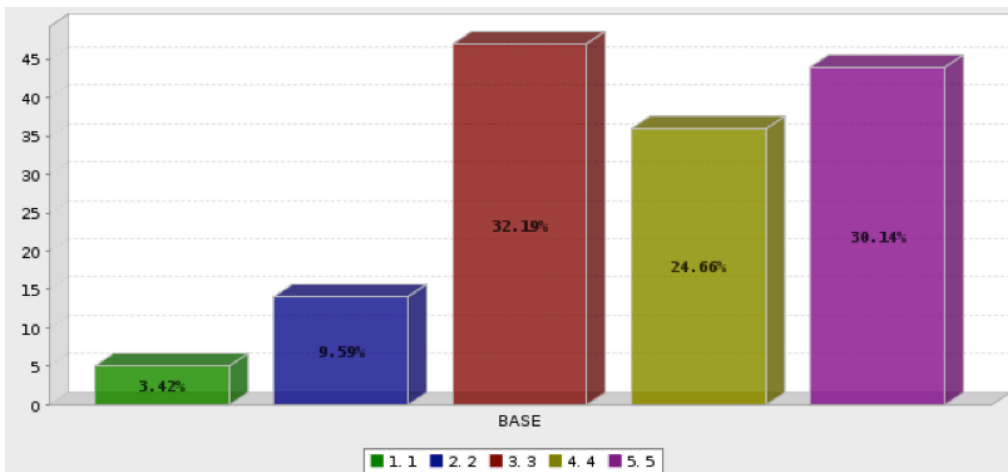
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	5	3.42%
2.	2	14	9.59%
3.	3	47	32.19%
4.	4	36	24.66%
5.	5	44	30.14%
	Total	146	100%

19-e. Your county being able to take care of itself without too much reliance on the state or federal government
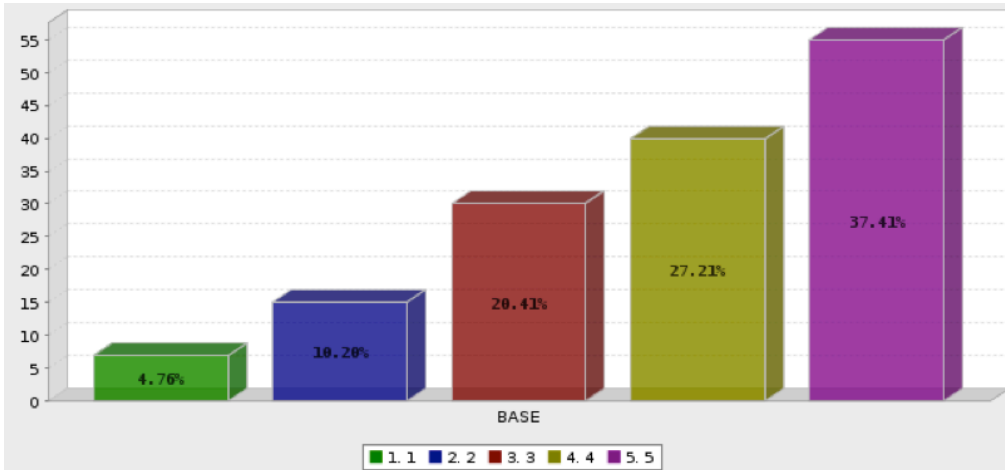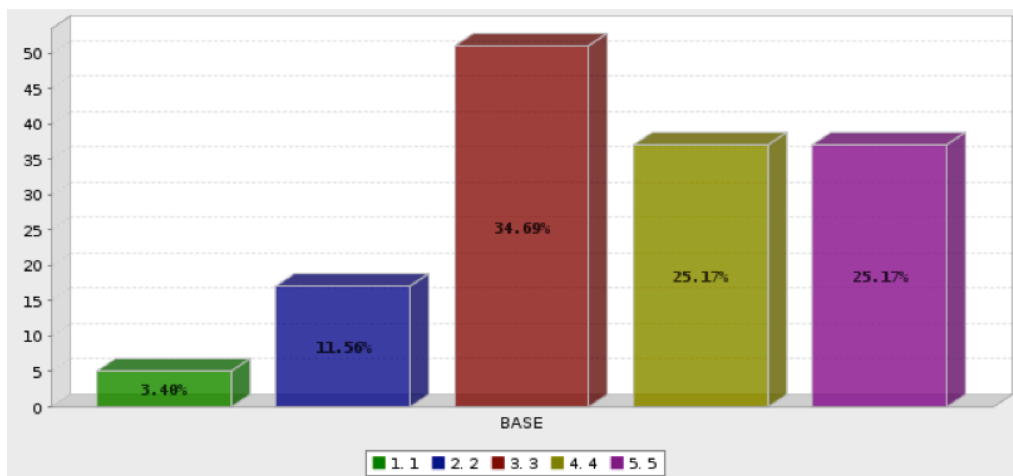

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	7	4.76%
2.	2	15	10.20%
3.	3	30	20.41%
4.	4	40	27.21%
5.	5	55	37.41%
	Total	147	100%

19-f. Low taxes
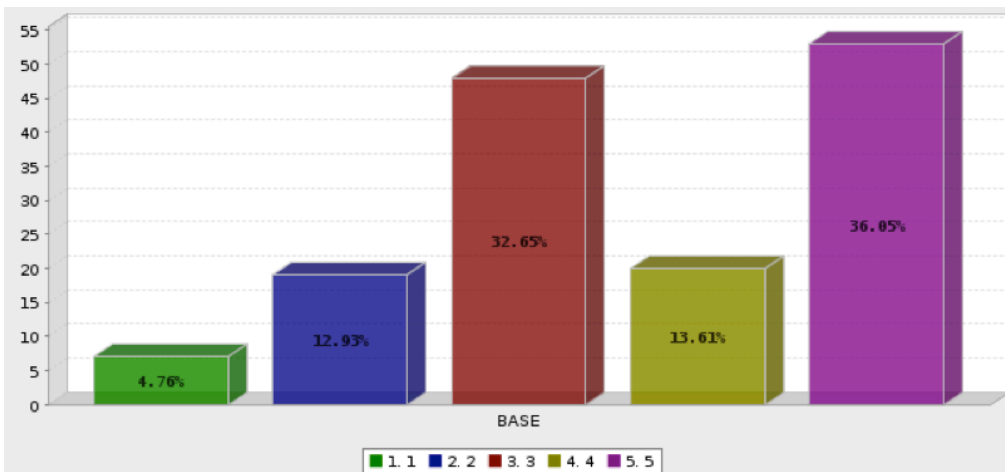
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	7	4.76%
2.	2	19	12.93%
3.	3	48	32.65%
4.	4	20	13.61%
5.	5	53	36.05%
	Total	147	100%

19-g. Low levels of municipal debt

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	5	3.40%
2.	2	17	11.56%
3.	3	51	34.69%
4.	4	37	25.17%
5.	5	37	25.17%
	Total	147	100%

19-h. The region's colleges
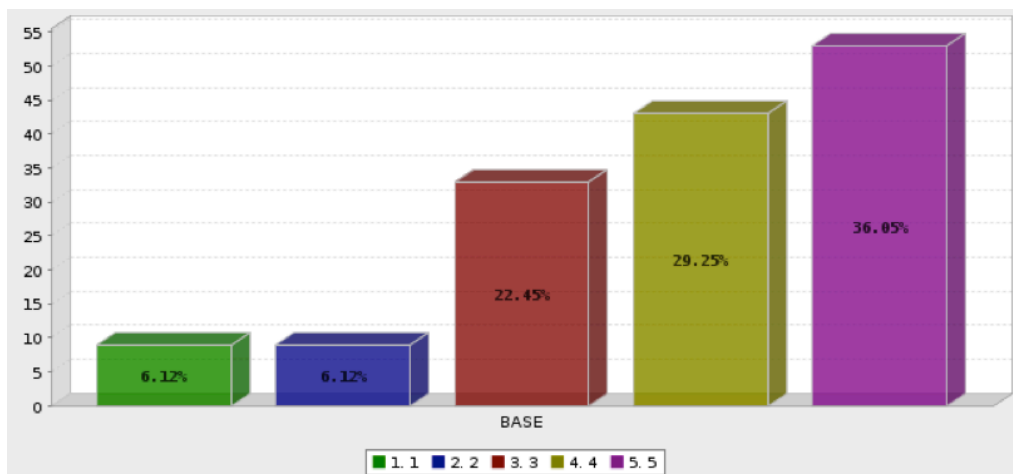
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	9	6.12%
2.	2	9	6.12%
3.	3	33	22.45%
4.	4	43	29.25%
5.	5	53	36.05%
	Total	147	100%

19-i. The natural environment
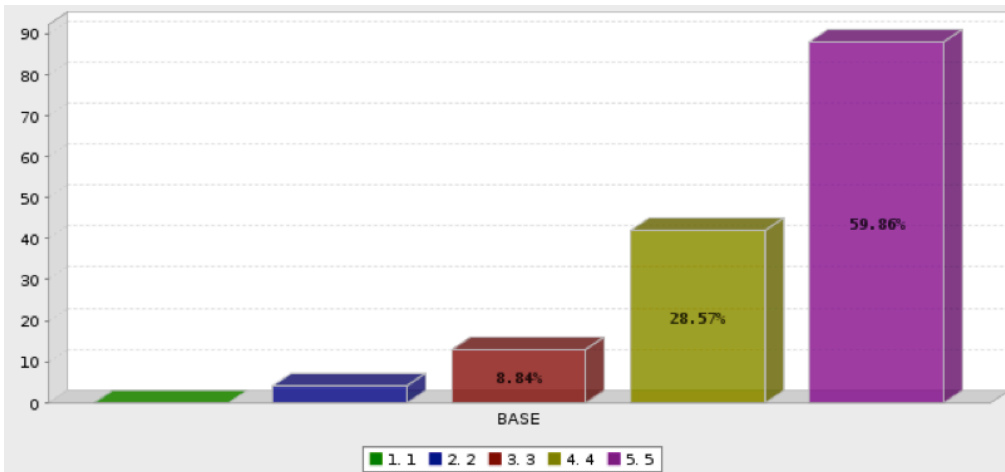
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	0	0.00%
2.	2	4	2.72%
3.	3	13	8.84%
4.	4	42	28.57%
5.	5	88	59.86%
	Total	147	100%

19-j. Small town life where everybody knows everybody
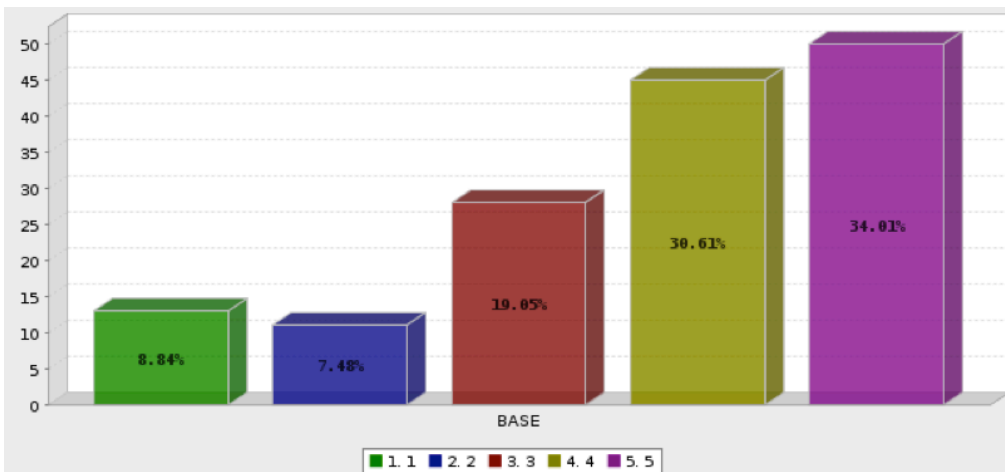
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	13	8.84%
2.	2	11	7.48%
3.	3	28	19.05%
4.	4	45	30.61%
5.	5	50	34.01%
	Total	147	100%

19-k. Public safety
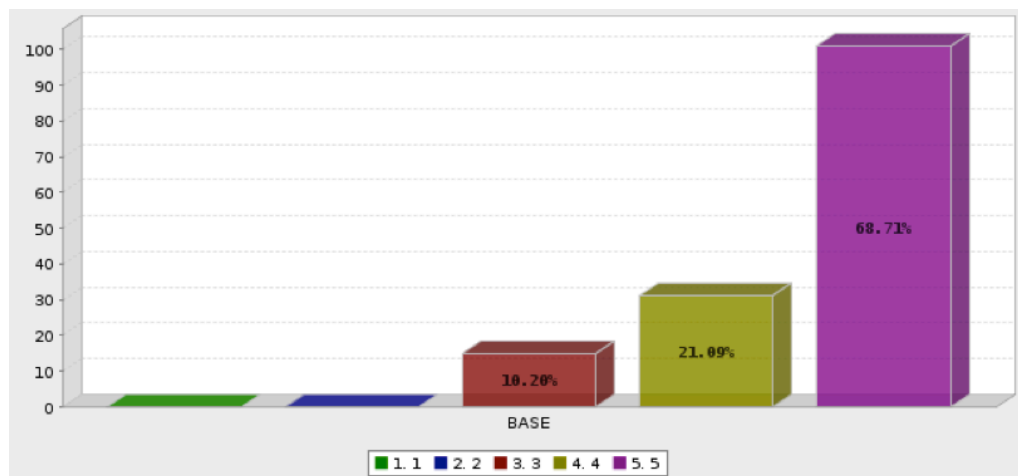
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	0	0.00%
2.	2	0	0.00%
3.	3	15	10.20%
4.	4	31	21.09%
5.	5	101	68.71%
	Total	147	100%

19-l. Stable housing market
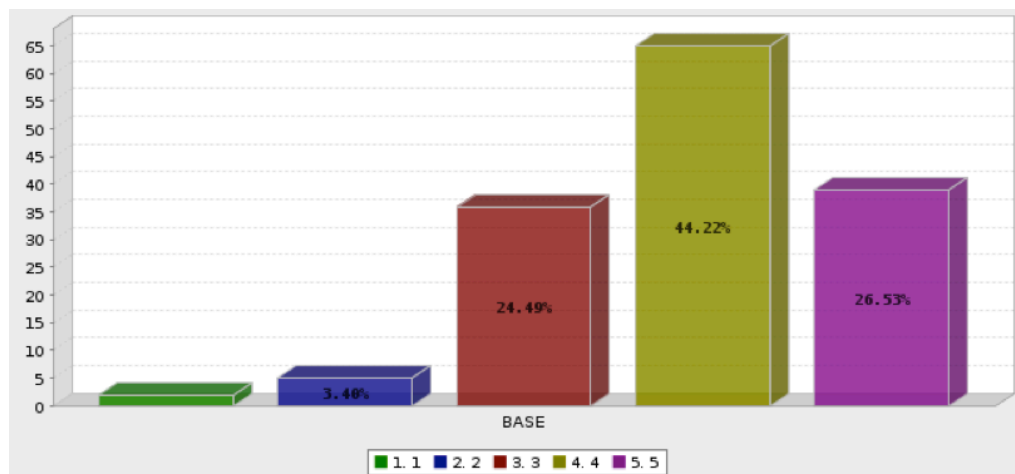
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	2	1.36%
2.	2	5	3.40%
3.	3	36	24.49%
4.	4	65	44.22%
5.	5	39	26.53%
	Total	147	100%

19-m. Historic preservation
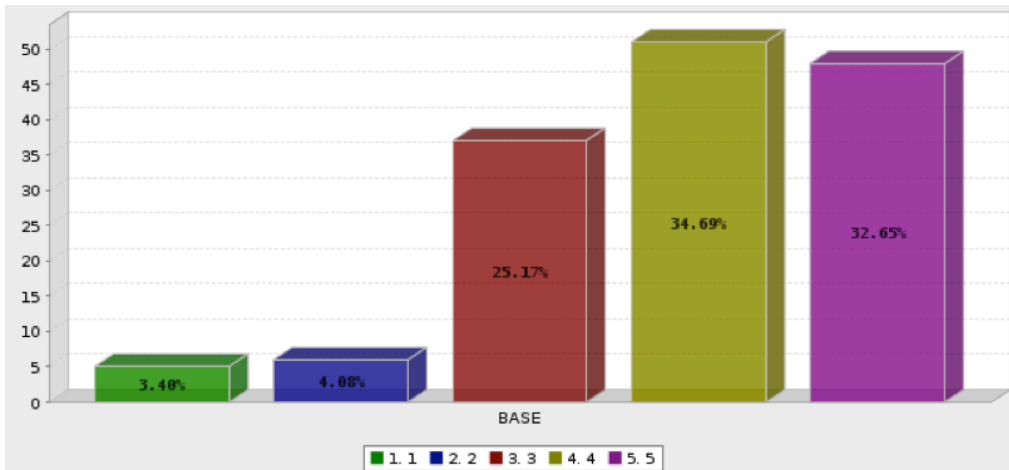
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	5	3.40%
2.	2	6	4.08%
3.	3	37	25.17%
4.	4	51	34.69%
5.	5	48	32.65%
	Total	147	100%

19-n. Architectural beauty
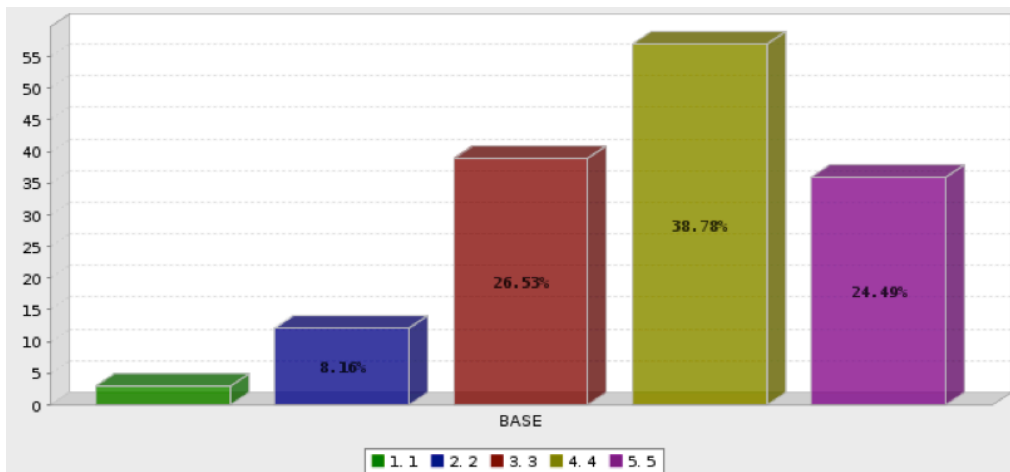
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	3	2.04%
2.	2	12	8.16%
3.	3	39	26.53%
4.	4	57	38.78%
5.	5	36	24.49%
	Total	147	100%

19-o. Collaboration between the region's governments
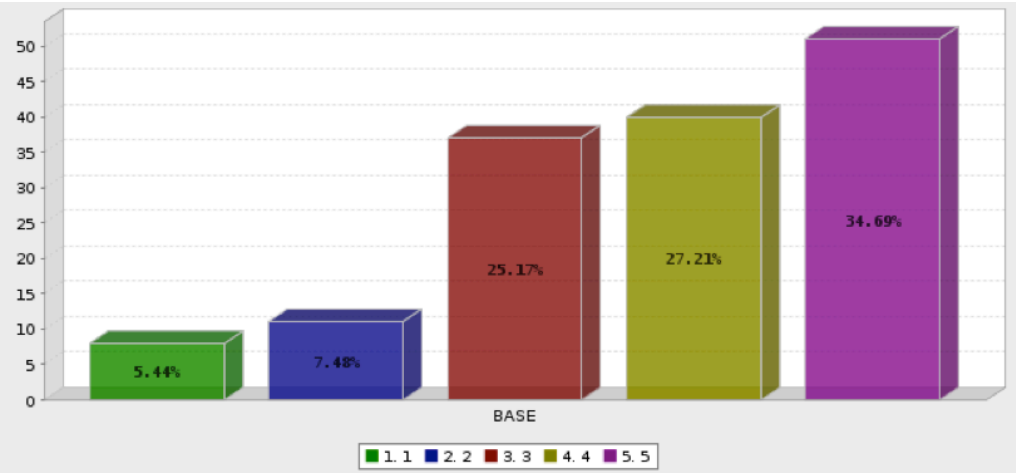
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	8	5.44%
2.	2	11	7.48%
3.	3	37	25.17%
4.	4	40	27.21%
5.	5	51	34.69%
	Total	147	100%

19-p. Outdoor recreational opportunities
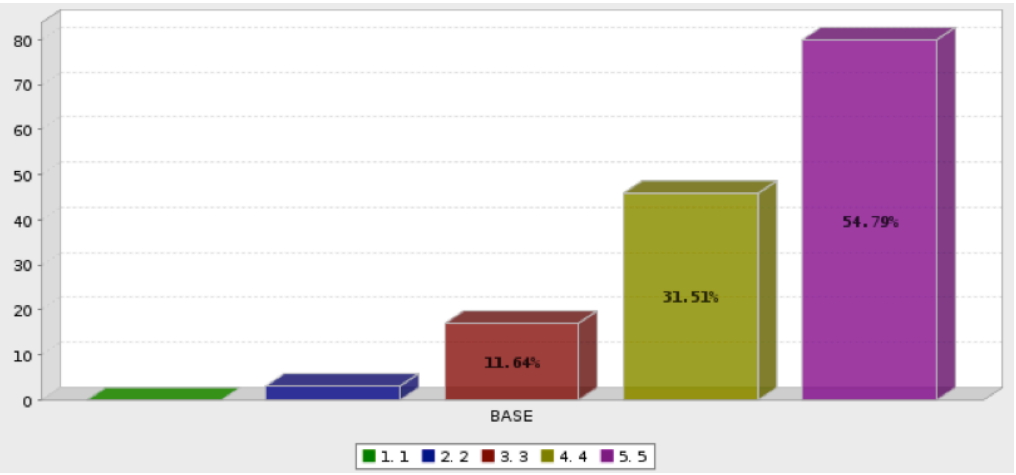
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	0	0.00%
2.	2	3	2.05%
3.	3	17	11.64%
4.	4	46	31.51%
5.	5	80	54.79%
	Total	146	100%

19-q. Farmland preservation
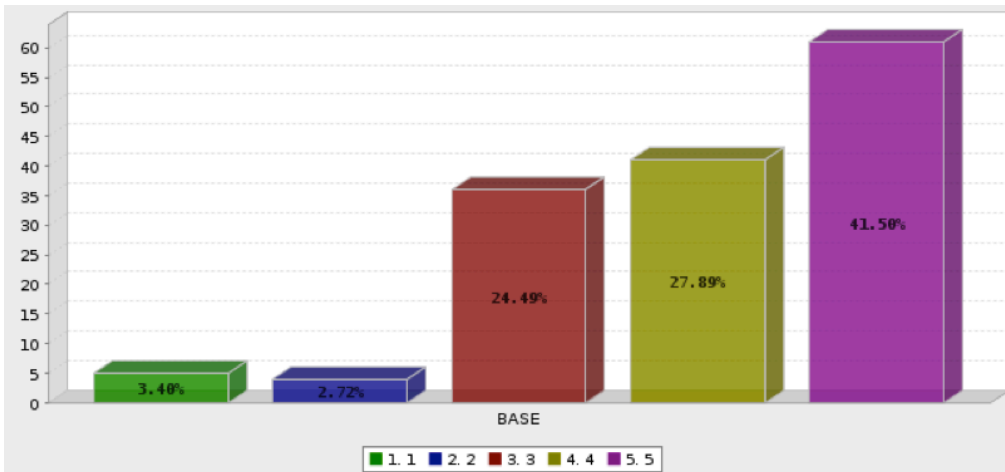
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	1	5	3.40%
2.	2	4	2.72%
3.	3	36	24.49%
4.	4	41	27.89%
5.	5	61	41.50%
	Total	147	100%

20. Please rank the following possible issues or concerns with the most important issue ranked first, then second most, and so on (1-6):
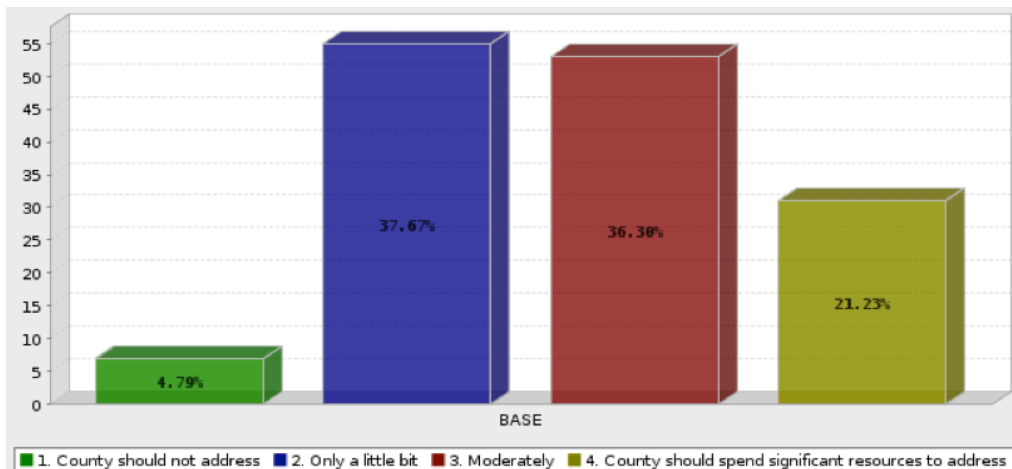
Note: Scores represent averages of responses. Issues considered most important have the lowest average scores.
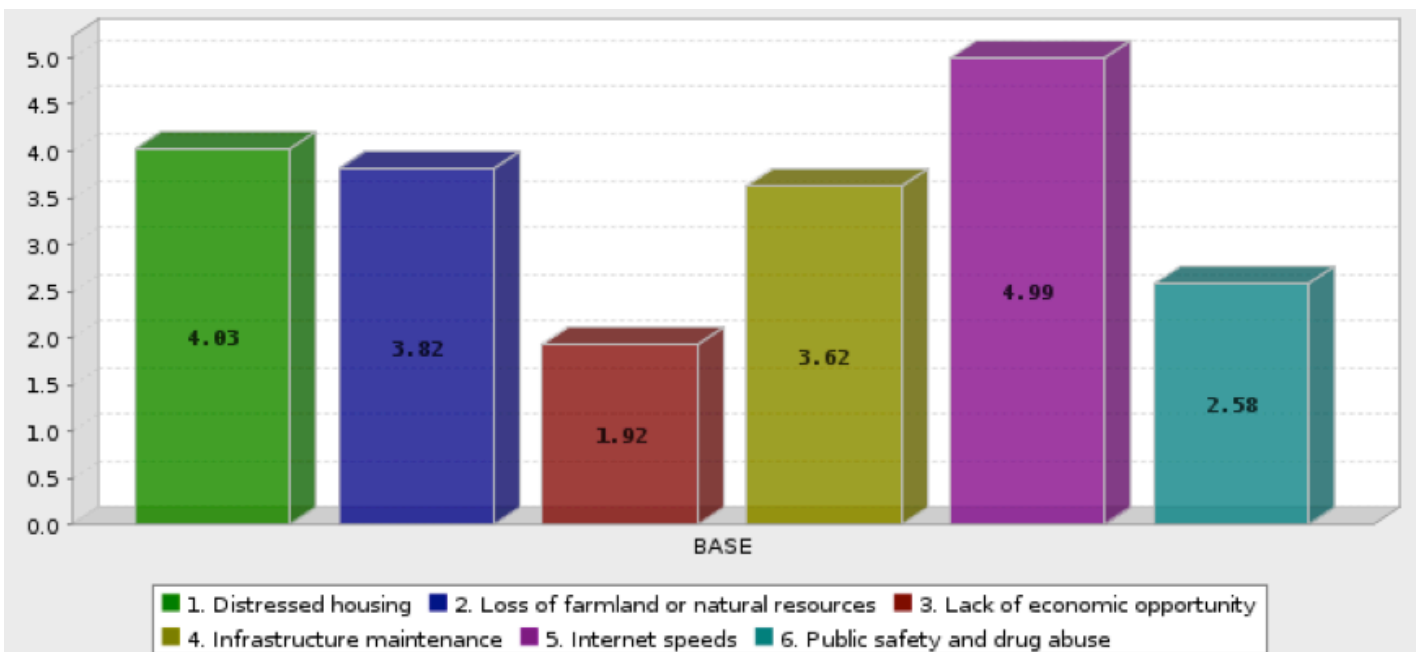
21. For each item mentioned in the previous question, please say whether you think it is something your county should dedicate resources to address:
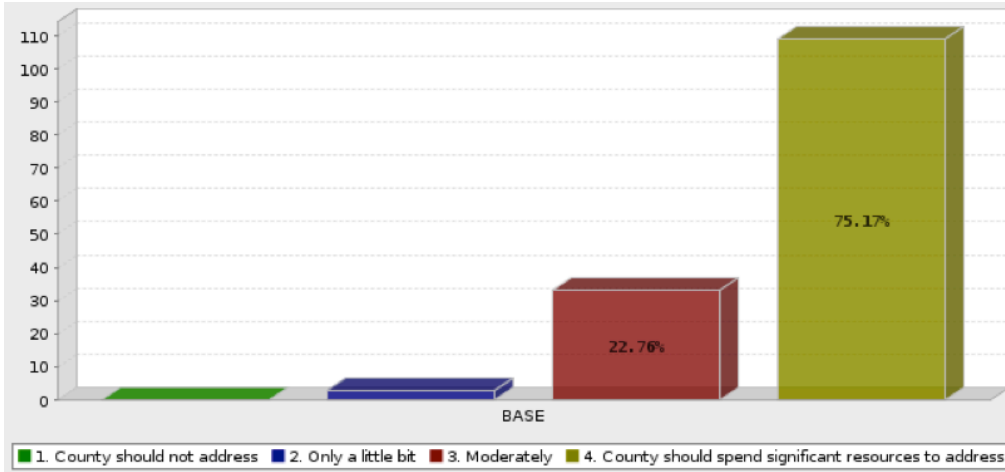
21-a. Distressed housing

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	County should not address	7	4.79%
2.	Only a little bit	55	37.67%
3.	Moderately	53	36.30%
4.	County should spend significant resources to address	31	21.23%
	Total	146	100%

21-b. Loss of farmland or natural resources
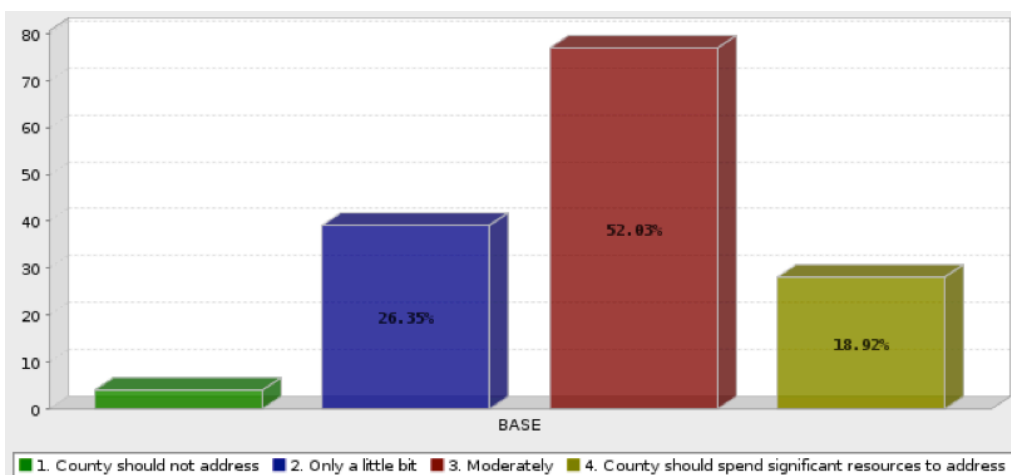
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	County should not address	4	2.70%
2.	Only a little bit	39	26.35%
3.	Moderately	77	52.03%
4.	County should spend significant resources to address	28	18.92%
	Total	148	100%

21-c. Lack of economic opportunity

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	County should not address	0	0.00%
2.	Only a little bit	3	2.07%
3.	Moderately	33	22.76%
4.	County should spend significant resources to address	109	75.17%
	Total	145	100%

21-d. Infrastructure maintenance
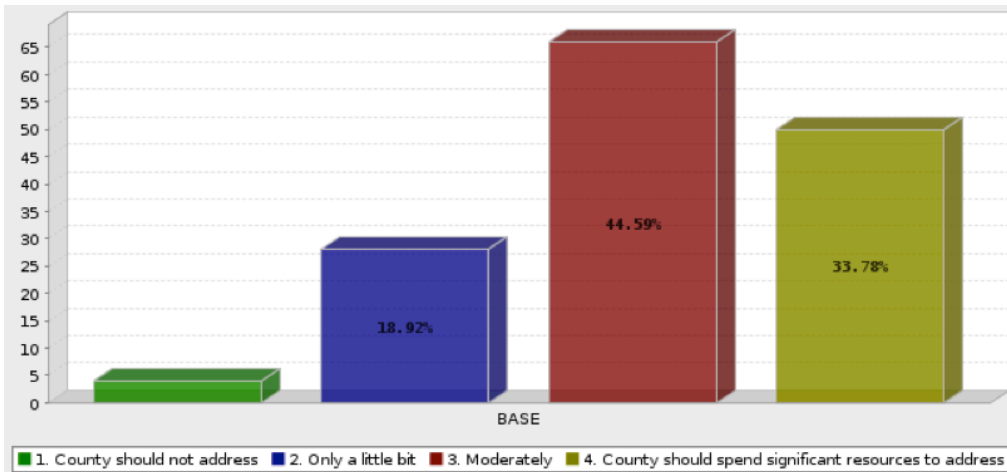
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	County should not address	4	2.70%
2.	Only a little bit	28	18.92%
3.	Moderately	66	44.59%
4.	County should spend significant resources to address	50	33.78%
	Total	148	100%

21-e. Internet speeds
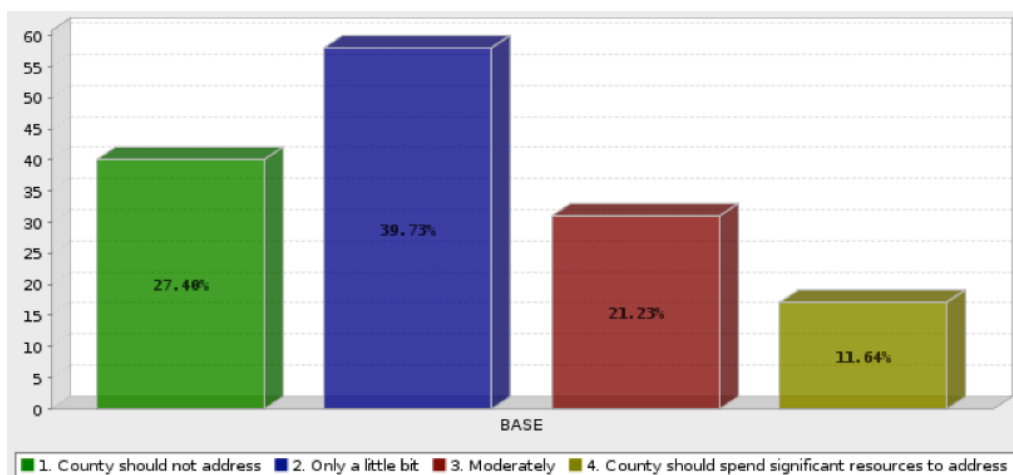
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	County should not address	40	27.40%
2.	Only a little bit	58	39.73%
3.	Moderately	31	21.23%
4.	County should spend significant resources to address	17	11.64%
	Total	146	100%

21-f. Public safety and drug abuse
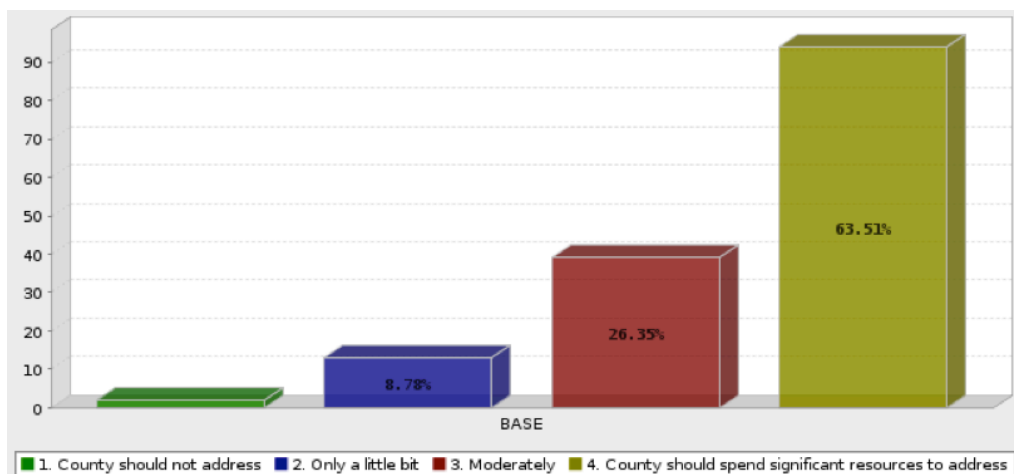
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	County should not address	2	1.35%
2.	Only a little bit	13	8.78%
3.	Moderately	39	26.35%
4.	County should spend significant resources to address	94	63.51%
	Total	148	100%

22. What planning concepts are most important to you?

Please rank (1-5, with 1 being most important) the following in order of interest:

Note: Scores represent averages of responses. Concepts considered most important have the lowest average scores.

	Score
Economics	1.76
Aesthetics	3.54
Environmental	2.90
Transportation	3.15
Outdoors / Recreation	3.65

23. If you were in charge of spending $5M over the next ten years to improve your county from an economic, social, or physical perspective and these were your options (including ones you wish to add), please allocate the amounts you think make most sense.

Spending Options	% of funding allocated
Fund the demolition of vacant and blighted properties	9.8%
Incentives for recent college graduates in the region to live in your county	9.1%
Incentives for existing businesses to expand	20.6%
Improvements in sidewalks, signage, bike lanes, recreational trails, or beautification of public spaces	13.0%
Incentives for existing home owners to upgrade their homes	8.0%
Incentives for renters living in your county to buy a home	3.8%
Funds to preserve and protect farmland	10.8%
Incentives for collaboration/coordination between local governments	4.3%
Expansion of drug abuse treatments programs	14.2%
Other	6.4%

24. Suppose that a $5M budget over ten years works out to about $5/month in either extra taxes for each household (or $60/year), or a cut from the current county budget of $500,000 per year to pay for these new things. To obtain the above selections, would you prefer...
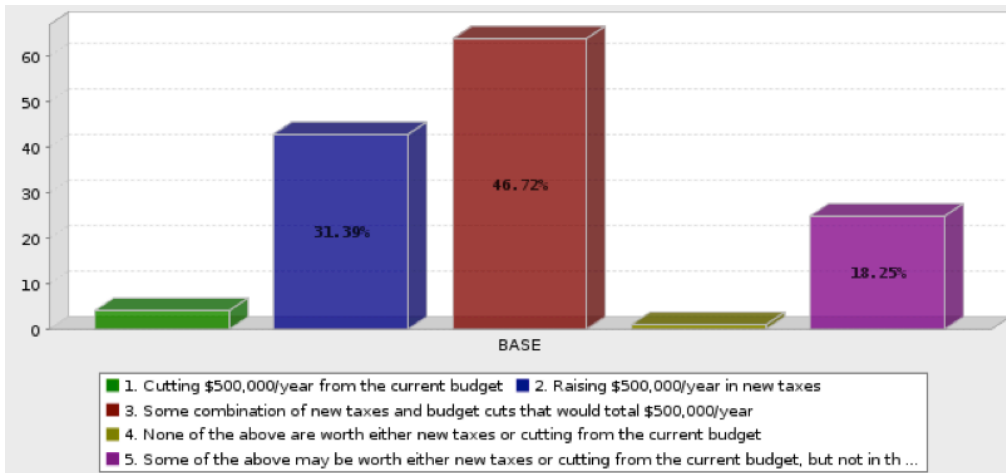
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Cutting $500,000/year from the current budget	4	2.92%
2.	Raising $500,000/year in new taxes	43	31.39%
3.	Some combination of new taxes and budget cuts that would total $500,000/year	64	46.72%
4.	None of the above are worth either new taxes or cutting from the current budget	1	0.73%
5.	Some of the above may be worth either new taxes or cutting from the current budget, but not in the order of $500,000	25	18.25%
	Total	146	100%

Question 25: Please describe any other issue(s) that you would like to add to the list of issues under Question 21. To what extent should your county devote resources to them?

Note: The responses to this open-ended question are presented below verbatim.

Investment in local leadership: training for local government leadership/employees; staffing of local offices (i.e. grant writer at borough level); compensation for elected officials (i.e. mayors) and/or adequate budget associated with office to accomplish vision; support for established organizations fulfilling critical roles in providing services, including quality of life (historic preservation, arts and culture, parks & rec). Adequate staffing will accomplish a lot of the above mentioned goals and provide additional employment opportunities. I would therefore rank it first.

Access to health care close to home.

Cooperation between local governments

Recreation.

County should spend only a little bit, but should mainly act as a facilitator and advocate. I believe that Huntingdon County's small grant program using Act 13 funds is an appropriate role for the County."

I would like to see the county fund infrastructure to make our county more bikable.

My county should devote significant resources to this end. "

Long term vision!! Economic viability.

Education about volunteering and giving back to the community and also supporting the local community centers to continue to develop our youth

Taxation of Recreational Marijuana would do wonders for our state's bottom line. Just listen to General DePasquale. Not only does it help the bottom line but it might assist with reducing opioid addiction. Let's face it Marijuana prohibition has failed and there is a black market that our government needs to reign in and tax!

access to public transportation, walking, or biking routes

Education

Recreations (children / Teens)"

Huntingdon county needs more job opportunities and well know restaurants in the area.

Lack of economic opportunity leads severe public safety and drug abuse issues in smaller rural communities, this is an area of concern.

The area suffers from an attitude crisis, that says in a self-fulfilling way, 'We can't (afford to) do anything about that.' We argue about small expenditures, hiding behind concern about the elderly and those on a fixed income, so we are unwilling to INVEST in anything toward our own betterment.

I believe you need to look at the overall social service opportunities in each regions as well. The drug addicted individuals and families that deal with the outcome of this have very little resources to get back on their feet and engage in finding help for the issues. The children of the counties are dealing with the outcomes of parents who use or family members. This makes it impossible for any of the above listed issues to be addressed. Without healthy individuals in the area we are not able to correct the infrastructure of the community, without jobs there will be more drug addicts because they have no other place to turn to look to be successful in the areas.

Encourage a cooperative effort to address excess government control of key natural resources. Example: Raystown Lake might be central PA's major potential resource for economic growth. Who 'owns' and controls it? The Federal government. This is an issue worth addressiing, instead of who gets a parcel here and there.

Recognizing that this region is Pennsylvania's portion of Appalachia is difficult for many.

And the #1 challenge ... transforming the mindset of people of this region in recognizing that until the grassroots get beyond the idea of 'preserving' what is now is contrary to developing and moving toward what might be.

In other words, until the region's citizens buy into the trade-off, there can be no real trade-off.

Some real phone, internet, and cable competition. NO HIGH SPEED INTERNET EXCEPT COMCAST. (run by Satan, worst customer service in this country)

New companies adding to our county for jobs to lower the amount of people on assistance.

As a native to the Huntingdon community, I really miss the downtown and am very pleased to see and hear of the efforts of Boomtown to revitalize the downtown. My partner and I love history and we are always pleased to see the efforts to preserve our lovely town. If I were retired from my job which requires a long commute, I would be more actively involved in some of these efforts but am very grateful to all for these accomplishments. i.e., the parks, the bike/walking paths, various events and improvements to the Portstown Park (June 16th), etc.

Economic vitality of small towns. Creating arts and culture opportunities. Facilitating entertainment and dining venues. Drawing in travel and tourist dollars.

drugs have ruined the communities and schools are terrible

Preservation of natural resources (like lakes,streams, rivers, forests)

Drug related issues may be linked to poverty and lack of jobs. Build infrastructure and offer work which will provide tax monies to further build economy and give incomes for poor families and other working people.

Sidewalks! The sidewalks are HORRIBLE for walking in downtown Huntingdon. They need redone to make it nicer for people to walk around and support local business.

Huntingdon County should have more shopping and restaurant/entertainment options available to its residents. Most of the people that I know have to leave the area for these things. Significant amounts of money are being lost that could stay in our county.

'BOX' STORES, SUCH AS WALMART, AND CHAIN 'RESTAURANTS,' SUCH AS MCDONALD'S DIMINISH A COMMUNITY'S INDIVIDUALITY, DESTROY FAMILY BUSINESS-CREATED WEALTH, AND CREATE ONLY MINDLESS, MINIMUM WAGE JOBS.

Build a partnership with Amtrak to increase service and extend service to State College

Nothing you can do about ignorance, provincialism, and aggressive stupidity. It affects all of the items on the list, and is intractable enough that I am not sure how you move forward short of importing a new population.

Stability of Health Care in community, variety and access to providers/specialties. More federal/state/local aid to first responders. Drug epidemic (opioid / narcotics) resources to addiction prevention and recovery, etc.

Adventure & Recreational Tourism& Trail connection. This would help generate Economic Opportunity.

Walkability needs to be improved. In a small town like Huntingdon, you should be able to walk and bike everywhere safely. There is no safe crossing to the hospital or to Portstown Park, and biking up to Walmart is dangerous.

Huntingdon County has become a recreational and retirement community with a very small industrial base.   Preserving a clean environment, which attracted these uses, has to be paramount.   Employment opportunities in artisan crafts and skills, education and health care should be the top priorities, not trying to attract traditional industries that abuse tax privileges and then leave the area.

Having neighbors keep their junk yards CLEANED UP & better yet, send said junk TO a real junk yard.

"Vision and more progressive government--high priority

Improvement to public education--high priority"

"Before anything will happen to enhance the area, the borough council and/or so called leaders of the community need to do their jobs and make things happen orderly for the entire Huntingdon county... The governing bodies in the community is not even functioning for the area.

substance abuse / rehab / family help

I think drugs are here to stay and many folks have little or no resource to help them   of my 3 children one had drug issues ... I had the resources and support to find him help AND WE GOT VERY LUCKY... I feel sorry for those without the resources"

We need to find someone to attract more big business to this region. We need the jobs!

Environmental impact that is financially feasible for area. I believe this would not only impact the world but help the residents see their place beyond their small town.

Our big industry is tourism. If we don't protect our environment, we lose the tourism. Amazing that some folks can't see that connection. It would also be great to bring some industrial jobs back to Huntingdon.

Young adult activities that DO NOT include bars or clubs

Public education in Huntingdon needs to be a priority.

Housing to encourage young professionals to choose to work in the area. For example, town homes. Non-low income or disability apartments.

Need jobs

Make the people that have a drug overdose pay for the narcan they receive and not be paid by my hard tax dollars then maybe they will learn.

Education!! There is no more important resource for the coming generation than a first-class education. The state of the public school system in the area is abysmal. We need to raise more money to hire the best educators, provide top-notch resources, and include more diverse curriculae. A recent issue has also arisen, which involves the construction of the Mariner East 2 pipeline project. The construction work is plaguing Raystown Lake, will soon tear through several southern counties, and disrupt our delicate and vital ecosystems. While several individuals and smaller groups have risen in protest of the construction locally, a larger access network could prove more success-ful in stopping this destruction to our backyard.

Things or activities for today's youths to have to do . instead of relying on drugs and alcohol.

Preserving and operating beautiful farmland and natural resources, ridge tops and recreation along with maintain-ing good infrastructure will attract and keep more people here. If taxes are fair and based on income for all busi-ness, tourist related and otherwise that will support and hopefully improve the public education while maintaining the rest of the infrastructure including high internet speeds, roads, sidewalks, bridges, bike trails and cross walks, pet parks, playgrounds, clean streams and lakes, which will entice more economic opportunities. The planning and zoning must come first, if we are to accomplish the preservation and attractiveness of anything. Also dark sky initiative with all lighting including any dusk to dawn lights needing to be recessed and shielded is also an attrac-tion to visitors and new residents. Dusk to dawn lights should be restricted not only for light pollution but because studies show that they interfere with night eating birds, owls, night hawks, whip-poor-wills and bats as well as certain insects such as lightning bugs or fire flies. How much money would it take to convert the current lighting to the recessed, shielded lighting in the region? Billboards should be eliminated or restricted to the small signs and single high. If billboards and unsightly signs are in the way, you can't any longer see beautiful scenery that draws people here.

Question 26: A plan for the future of your county would fail, in your view, if it neglected to…

Note: The responses to this open-ended question are presented below verbatim.

act on it, to invest in the recommendations, to take into account who/what the 'competition' may be.

listen to the opinions of this survey.

Provide support for job creation and thus the taxes to support our needs.

Preserve open space

get all the municipal officials on board, which is what is not happening now. municipal officials are standing by while the population ages and dies off without young people moving in. some small boro's can't find people to fill offices and do not have the money to keep infrastructure operating and maintained.

provide jobs while maintaining outdoor access to the environment and providing more winter mobility options

address economic development

Come up with opportunities and to attract and keep young, talented professionals our region. This includes a social scene, housing options, job opportunities for them and a spouse, safe childcare options etc.

Protect resources and the natural environment for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Keep Small businesses running

Improve the downtown business district, through new and existing businesses.

Take into account our natural environment

begin the difficult conversations in the hope of achieving progress

Address master plan of Raystown Lake and appropriate development -e.g. Rod Roberts

Incorporate the needs and vision of all members of the community. Also, if it neglected to have action items that measurably improve our community.

address the health of our natural resources

GET RID OF HOMELESS DO NOT SUPPORT

Bring new jobs (better paying) in the future. Also, affordable housing for renters according to income levels. Rents are way toO high for the amount of income our community makes in general.

Free itself from the past and look to the future. Have to address brain drain and youth migration from the area.

properly utilize finances

Support local community, increasing jobs and resources, providing support for our youth

Encourage tourism, realize that industry is dead, encourage healthy lifestyles.

Utilize available funding to help improve our community

Look at other tax revenue rather than just real estate and school taxes. it is an unfair burden to just homeowners when so many just rent.

include stakeholders and business or government officials with knowledge necessary to actually make change

Be creative, form collaborative working relationships with new leaders and organizations, support new business and industry and strengthen educational systems.

I feel we need focus our resources on the future of your county. Such as education, Transportation, recreations and environment.

Allow for change to accommodate new commercial ventures.

Work in collaboration with area municipalities, counties, etc. We do not see cooperation among the various local governments or with volunteer organizations all trying to accomplish many of the same things, i.e. Reinvision Huntingdon and the group (name escapes me) that helped to raise the funds to save the movie theatre.

figure out how to live within their means (Don't spend what you don't have). Putting the county deeper in debt will only drive people away from the county.

Change its stance on bringing more businesses in. More recreation into the area. Our community is slowly fading because young people move away because there is nothing here for them.

Focus development in existing centers and encouraged a model of ever more widely dispersed dwelling in larger tracts leading to the loss of the rural aesthetic and the potential for maintenance of rural economic activities.

Be progressive, proactive and think 'outside the box'. Retail is not what should be focused on for the economy and jobs

Deal with the drug and alcohol issues that are present in the county as well as work with the children who will be the future of the county making improvements to their lives and education.

address the drug overdose issue and address the affordability of college

Neglect the need for a variety of jobs requiring different levels of education and technical expertise.

Develop good paying jobs in the region

address drug addiction and public safety

open the can of worms about the fundamental choice we are faced with … preserving what is vs. pursuing what might be.

And the literal and figurative costs, consequences, benefits, rewards of such"

create incentives to bring businesses to the area

Maintain basic infrastructure and preserve natural resources.

The lack of new business, job opportunities. Huntingdon County traditionally is one of the top 3 counties in PA with the highest unemployment rate each month.

Emphasize the natural beauty and allure of the area.

if the drug problem isn't taken care of

See above. Keep leaving this to private business and economically disadvantaged areas like Huntingdon county will get left behind.

maintain the current energy of the folks who are making things happen; the county government needs to listen to the community and continue to support funds that may be available to continue the momentum.

Invest in the future

address wireless/internet/mobile communications infrastructure

Mt Union officials do not care about the town nor improving it

work to hold high moral standards and recognize the Christian foundation that promotes the care of all its citizens.

Consider the farmers who feed us

Our natural setting and resources are abused or neglected

consider the long years of economic lows, which have become the norm…

Create opportunities and TRAINING for low income families. It's terribly sad the things I see that parents of young children do not know or cannot do.

benefit the citizens living within the county. It is important to inform, teach and include citizens on decisions made for the county.

add more local job opportunities for the residents, address the drug problem in the county, and add more recreational (shopping/restaurants/entertainment) options.

RELY ON HUNTINGDON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO HAVE INFLUENCE OVER THE PLAN AS IT APPLIES TO HUNTINGDON COUNTY.

Connect to employment and cultural hubs (light rail, public transport) and let the back flow enhance our communities by diversifying population, ideas, opinions, and resources.

Economic growth. It has already been neglected. That is why our welfare system is so out of wack. Do something to help those of that do work.

Continue raising taxes.

"Return of Business & Industry investors. Education about Health Care.

Services for the aged and destitute.

Should these not continue to improve or continue to decline the community could continue to suffer and fail to thrive."

Address the fact that this area is built only for people with cars and boats.

Change our basic view of where we put our political resources and force, from traditional box industries to small enterprises, especially those which could use the empty industrial buildings, collectively.   Work to our existing strengths and they will come!

Deal with the drug problems.

Plan to keep/attract people under 55

Assist and do the work for the entire county and not just some of it.

address the drug issue...   everyone is going to be touched by it somehow

Encourage business

Look at increasing the available jobs to sustain the economy.

reduce environmental impact, promote pluralism, and consider long-term impacts (not just short-term)

Include environmental conservation initiatives or measures

do whatever it can to attract businesses and jobs.

See the broader picture... while our community is important in and of itself, it is only a part of a world-wide ecosystem. People need to see that their actions do have impact.

"protect the environment

focus on tourism

recruit some major employers"

Encourage the young adults to stay in the area long term

Improve economic and educational opportunities for citizens

Bring in new businesses and encourage young professionals to move to our area.

Start managing our tax dollars more wisely and stop giving people unnecessary raises.

Address leadership. It's all about lining one's pockets, not coming together to better the community.

Same as above. Consider large investment plans for education. Perform due diligence when investing.

Find a way to capitalize on the people visiting Raystown Lake.

Keep up to date with other cities. Our region is about a hundred years behind.

Accept changing demographics. As well as, continued to look to the past for answers instead of embracing modern ideas.

take consideration of the land and the people that owned it and how it affects those around it as well as how it would be represented to the people of the county.

Address economic growth

plan, zone and preserve BEFORE development of any sort proceeds. Protect the farms, mountain tops and wetlands, restrict lighting and signage and discourage fracking in dangerous or fragile areas. Make sure water and sewerage are safe and nonpolluting before development goes in. Townships should be required to participate in county planning, not just given the option.

Include all demographics.

Question 27: The best thing about your county or your community is...

Note: The responses to this open-ended question are presented below verbatim.

It's natural beauty and assets, including agriculture; Juniata College

most people are friendly.

Friendly people and living close to nature.

"The quality of life

Natural beauty

it's rural nature and relaxed living atmosphere.

Mix of beauty and recreational opportunities in a small town rural environment

public lands

People

Nature and friendly people

The natural beauty all around the whole region!

The small town atmosphere

Small town livig

Rural atmosphere and low traffic congestion

recreational opportunities, rural nature

Friendliness, younger generation getting involved.

The level of community involvement and interest in making our community better.

it is a rural community and many good people live here but is being overshadowed by the lack of good pay and the constant drug use.

I enjoy living in this community. I enjoy the safety, the people and the environment.

It's kind of hard to explain but when I have had certain family members visit they comment on how complete strangers say hello and everyone seems happy. haha"

Beautiful Rural America

Quality of life.

I like the small town feeling - I like knowing the people in my area that I leave in. You feel safe.

The sense of community is beautiful. The way we join together to raise money for a house fire or a sick neighbor, it's beautiful. We have some of the greatest people living right here!

It has a hometown feeling

The beauty of it. The sincerity of it. The hometown feel.

Abundance of Public Lands

The lake

It is a caring community

It is safe and everyone knows everyone, very friendly and helpful to one another.

Knowing your neighbor, beautiful scenery

recreational outdoor spaces

The value of having Juniata College in our community.

Country scenery / Recreation

Small town life.

Recreational opportunities

Love how much there is do in the area. Along with how the schools are more about the children then the population.

It is home, I have the country living and close enough to 'bustling life' if I want to go for the day/week.

Raystown Lake

Most of the town is safe. People are kind (for the most part).

For the most part it is a close knit community where everyone knows everyone.

I need two. These would be the natural amenities of the region, and peoples' readiness to help and support one another in times of crisis or need.

Natural beauty

The recreational areas and the way neighbors look out for one another in the quiet towns.

the community comes together and is bringing more culture to the area in the form of art shows, festivals, and art walks.

The renewed energy to bring people together and the individual efforts that continue to occur by community members that want to make things better in many ways.

Low cost of living

rural

Small town

So little has been done. The baseline for improvement is so low that any genuine vision and implementation could be monumental in gaining some momentum.

lake

rec opportunites

Relaxed atmosphere of living in a small community.

The people

Small rural town in Central PA with decent school systems. Great place to raise a family.

The abundance of parks and easy access to nature.

it's quiet and still fairly safe

Juniata College

the outdoors

The quietness of country, rural living and relative safety of that environment and of course the natural beauty of the area.

beauty

beautiful and rather safe

Juniata College

Being able to work in this county

The people and willingness to help each other.

County Commissioners work Collaboratively

The people that lived here.

location and the lake.

The people

It is a very pretty community for the most part.

The festivals, parades, and the feeling that people care about you especially when their is an emergency or tragic event, people come together to help.

access to river, forest, streams, lake

Pennsylvania holds generations of families when families may be better moving to an economically viable region, so recognize that family is important to us... Make industries an offer they can't refuse... bring the mountain to Mohammad.

The small town feel and Juniata College

It's rural, but not too far from bigger 'cities'.

that when in times of need, people pull together. Also, I like that overall I feel safe within my community.

the people

Outdoor recreational opportunities

It's quiet.

SMALL TOWN/RURAL COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT.

Friendly people

the increasing collaboration between businesses, entrepreneurs, the college, and the hospital

The atmosphere

Church Forums/collaborations with area agencies and each other

"The Beauty

The People

The Recreation"

The historic buildings and outdoor recreational opportunities.

The basic environment blend of town, village, rural and forested lands.

That it IS small, local, pretty loyal....

physical beauty

The potential to do better

The people who live here!

The close knit way that people work together.

small businesses

Slower pace in stunning natural area

Its natural beauty.

Seeing the impact you have around you.

the beautiful natural environment that surrounds us and the kind-hearted folks who live here. They may be quiet but they are very helpful.

Safety & beauty of the landscape

Juniata College

This is generally a safe community. The area is beautiful and offers many outdoor recreation activities.

Strong faith community

The people

Nature. Great open spaces with many recreational opportunities.

Local businesses, and coordination.

Hometown feel

Potential. Of the people socialism.

Juniata river

Friendly atmosphere is a beautiful part of the county

Seeing the sunrises and sunsets over Trough Creek Valley, Terrace Mountain and Raystown Lake, driving down Trough Creek Valley Pike, Rt. 829 and seeing the Juniata River wind from Huntingdon through Mill Creek to Mapleton Depot towards Mount Union, driving through Big Valley or Spruce Creek, walking Downtown Huntingdon and enjoying the parks along the river, the little shops and the great architecture of all the old buildings, smelling the sweet air, watching the wildlife when it's warm or in the snow, swimming in the lake or boating in our old boat, walking the railroad and riding the antique trolleys at Rockhill Furnace or the steam trains at the East Broad Top Railroad when they run, visiting the museums and the caverns, picnicking.

The efforts of locals to preserve what is here already, and to consider how to sustain it responsibly, while also exploiting it for its economic value. The choice of a few older well off people to privately over-profit from the turn over should be discouraged.

How did online survey respondents in each county allocate $5 million across ten given options? The following chart shows the percentage of resources allocated by county residents to each of the options. Options that ranked first, second, and third in each county are highlighted.

Spending Options	Bedford	Blair	Cambria	Fulton	Huntingdon	Somerset
Fund the demolition of vacant and blighted properties	6.6	11.8	15.2	0.8	9.8	8.7
Incentives for recent college graduates in the region to live in your county	10.6	8.8	11.5	4.5	9.1	11.4
Incentives for existing businesses to expand	22.2	14.6	18.8	18.0	20.6	20.9
Improvements in sidewalks, signage, bike lanes, recreational trails, or beautification of public spaces	10.6	19.9	12.3	9.8	13.0	11.9
Incentives for existing home owners to upgrade their homes	6.2	8.1	8.8	7.0	8.0	6.4
Incentives for renters living in your county to buy a home	2.5	4.0	3.3	3.2	3.8	2.6
Funds to preserve and protect farmland	11.9	8.9	4.5	20.0	10.8	8.3
Incentives for collaboration/coordination between local governments	6.1	6.4	5.5	5.2	4.3	6.8
Expansion of drug abuse treatments programs	15.8	12.6	13.7	15.5	14.2	16.6
Other	7.5	5.0	6.4	16.0	6.4	6.5

1st	2nd	3rd

Huntingdon County

ALLEGHENIES
AHEAD