



CITY OF MEADVILLE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



FINAL PLAN
JULY 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBER

Meadville, PA, July 17 2013

RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of Meadville,

That:

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code empowers municipalities in the Commonwealth to prepare a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, it further empowers municipalities to adopt a multi-municipal comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Conneaut Lake, the City of Meadville, and the Townships of Sadsbury and Vernon have previously jointly prepared and adopted the Central Crawford Regional (Multi-Municipal) Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Meadville has prepared an amendment to Central Crawford Regional (Multi-Municipal) Comprehensive Plan, known as the City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update, in an effort to modify the City's portion of the Plan with input from the Borough of Conneaut Lake and the Townships of Sadsbury and Vernon; and

WHEREAS, this amendment to the Regional Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code; and

WHEREAS, this amendment offers guidance for policies and explanatory text for such important issues as land use, housing, community facilities, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires that the adoption of a comprehensive plan is to be by a resolution, and passed by a majority vote of the City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT

1. The proposed amendment to the Central Crawford Regional Comprehensive Plan, which has been known as the City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update, is hereby adopted as an amendment to the Regional Comprehensive Plan.
2. The members of the City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee are to be commended for their many hours of work preparing the Comprehensive Plan Update.
3. The City Planning Commission is instructed to begin using the amendment, in addition to the Central Crawford Regional Comprehensive Plan for advice and policy guidance.

I, Andrew J. Walker , hereby certify that I am the duly appointed City Clerk of the City of Meadville, and the above Resolution was adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Meadville held on July 17, 2013 and that a minimum number of Councilmembers were present to represent a quorum.



City Clerk



CITY OF MEADVILLE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update was prepared with the assistance of many groups, organizations and individuals. In particular, the following persons should be recognized:

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

- Jim Budney, Meadville Planning Commission
- Lyle Mook, Meadville Planning Commission, Chair
- Courtenay Dodge, Meadville Planning Commission
- John Kellick, Meadville Planning Commission
- Mark Neff, Meadville Planning Commission
- Joe McDougal, Meadville Planning Commission
- Gary Johnson, Meadville Staff
- Rick Williams, Meadville Staff
- Andy Walker, Meadville Staff
- Janet Niedermeyer, Meadville Staff
- Councilman John Battaglia, Meadville City Council
- Jill Withey, Meadville Redevelopment Authority

Meadville City Council

- Mayor John Christopher Soff
- Councilmember LeRoy Stearns
- Councilmember Robert Langley
- Councilmember John Battaglia
- Councilmember Nancy Mangilo-Bittner

Funding

The Meadville Comprehensive Plan was financed (in part) by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development, Municipal Assistance Program.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction.....	Page 1.1
Chapter Two: Community Snapshot.....	Page 2.1
Chapter Three: Needs Assessment.....	Page 3.1
Chapter Four: Implementation Plan.....	Page 4.1
Appendices	
Appendix A: Stakeholder Invites and Summaries	
Appendix B: Public Meeting Summaries	
Appendix C: Action Item Ranking—Explanation and Results	
Appendix D: Medium and Low Priority Action Items	
Appendix E: References	



CITY OF MEADVILLE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

What Is A Comprehensive Plan?

Planning Authority

The legal authority to prepare a comprehensive plan is vested to county and local municipal authorities through the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Article III. In addition to granting the authority to prepare a comprehensive plan, this Article of the MPC also outlines the required items which must be addressed by the Plan. This includes land use, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, energy conservation, utilities and community facilities, parks and recreation, water supply, transportation, and housing, among others. If this sounds broad, that is because comprehensive planning by nature encompasses nearly every facet of a community's quality of life.

The Point of Planning

The crux of planning, and the point of a comprehensive plan, is all about giving a community the tools it will need in order to be able to adapt to change. Comprehensive planning should not be rigid and unwieldy but should be dynamic and innovative – the point of the planning process is about enabling the community to take advantage of current and future opportunities. The most important aspect of a comprehensive plan is its role as a tool to address the constant change and evolution of a community.

While Pennsylvania does not currently permit the enactment of comprehensive plans into law, the document is official in nature and should be used as a guide for municipal officials, including municipal boards and commissions, to use when making decisions about the development of Meadville. According to William I. Goodman, a well-known author on the subject of comprehensive planning, there are six basic requirements that the plan document should fulfill:

- The plan should be comprehensive.
- The plan should be long-range.
- The plan should be general.
- The plan should focus on physical development.
- The plan should relate physical design proposals to community goals and social and economic policies.
- The plan should be first a policy instrument, and only second a technical instrument.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

What all of this means is that planning should be “value- driven.” First and foremost a comprehensive plan at any level should reflect the values of those it is aiming to serve. The more technical aspects of planning should be addressed but should take a backseat to the over-arching goal of addressing questions concerning what aspects of the quality of life the community wishes to retain and enhance, what the future aspirations of the community look like, and what steps the community is willing to take to make this happen.

In today’s era of tight budgets, high unemployment, and heightened public uncertainty about the future, it is more vital than ever for communities such as Meadville to effectively understand and communicate their goals and priorities in order to strengthen their local economy and position themselves for prosperity. This Comprehensive Plan will contribute to and create a vibrant community with lasting value.

Local governments across the country are faced with limited budgets. The Comprehensive Plan can help illuminate what investments should be a priority and why, and can assist Meadville in reducing long-term costs and increasing efficiency across the board. Direct savings can include reduced capital savings, operations, and maintenance costs through strategic streamlining, partnerships, and better utilization of existing resources. Indirect savings on a broader scale include increased property values due to public improvements such as new or improved parks, trails, or open space, reduced travel times due to transportation enhancements, and new jobs as a result of strategic marketing.

Concrete examples of the wisdom of planning for the future abound across the country, and include the following examples:

Providence, RI: The state determined that it could save an estimated \$1.4 billion and preserve undeveloped agricultural lands over a 20-year period by planning for and building 20,000 housing units in existing urban areas. Savings included the cost of roads, schools, and utilities.

Salt Lake City, UT: By following the “Envision Utah” plan and keeping growth and development within a 125-mile square radius of the greater metropolitan area through the year 2050, the region will save approximately \$4.5 billion in transportation, water, sewer, and utility investments.

Tempe, AZ: A plan implemented during the last 25 years to both revitalize and preserve the historic character of Mill Avenue in downtown Tempe resulted in 3 million square feet of new retail, restaurant, office, and residential space; annual sales increased from \$12 million to \$160 million; and more than 9,000 jobs and 2 million annual visitors.

Austin, TX: The City of Austin is the leading member of a regional consortium awarded a \$3.7 million federal HUD-DOT-EPA partnership grant to develop a “Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.” Austin’s “return on investment” calculation and goal for its planned sustainable development projects is the creation of 6,000 new jobs.

(Source: American Planning Association)

While the previous examples show how good planning can benefit communities, state laws and regulations impact those benefits. In Pennsylvania the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) governs planning. In recent years, updates to the MPC have made it easier for communities to cooperate and plan together, but there are still 2,563 autonomous municipalities within the Commonwealth. This does present challenges that other states do not have to deal with when planning for a region.

The 1993 Comprehensive Plan

Nineteen years ago Meadville undertook the task of planning for its future. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan was an important one as it was the first to address Meadville's declining population, aging housing stock, and the twin issues of spurring new economic development in commercial and industrial areas and creating new job markets oriented away from the traditional industrial sector that Meadville and so much of the western Pennsylvania region traditionally revolved around. Now, nearly two decades later, Meadville is undertaking the process again.

Many may ask why a new plan is necessary. In the twenty years since the Plan was adopted, Meadville has seen many changes, from socio-economic shifts to physical changes in the landscape. The 1993 Comprehensive Plan has outlived its utility, and it is time to evaluate what has been accomplished in the interim and outline new strategies tailored to Meadville's needs and desires today and in the future.

In order to efficiently approach an update to Meadville's Comprehensive Plan, an examination of the Plan and its priorities must come first. Meadville undertook its last planning process in 1992-1993, and heavily involved both elected officials and citizens in the process. In addition to over-arching direction from Council, the City Planning Commission assisted in the Comprehensive Plan development as well as City staff and interns. Meadville even created a series of Citizens' Task Forces focused on important issues including Land Use; Economic Development; and Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities. An extensive history of the community was detailed in the Plan as well as important background information such as demographics and socio-economic trends, land use patterns, economic development activities, transportation projects, and many of the other topics that this Update will also focus upon. Ultimately, the Plan developed recommendations for each of the key elements central to any comprehensive plan. These were then distilled down to a core set of key projects that the City deemed to be priority. In order to establish a starting point for the new Comprehensive Plan, an overview of those priority projects and their status (as completed or incomplete) is listed below.

Key Projects Identified by the 1993 Plan

- *Land Use*
 - * Revise Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to reflect new land use goals
Status: Partly accomplished; significant revisions to the Zoning Ordinance were made in 1994 and ongoing minor revisions have occurred since then. Updates were made to the SALDO but were tabled.
 - * Expand the selected commercial and institutional areas and create transition areas to ease residential conversion pressure
Status: Accomplished; in the 1994 Zoning Update, the B-2: General Business District was changed to include primarily the North Street and Park Avenue corridors and the B-1 was changed to be primarily the Central Business District. Institutional areas for schools, the college, hospital and Wesbury were created and defined. Transitional districts were created to the east of the Diamond, between Park Avenue and North Street, between the General Business District and the college and between lower Park Avenue and the French Creek Parkway. The purpose of these Transitional Districts was to provide flexibility for the market to drive development.
 - * Create a County Historical Society / Museum complex near Diamond Park
Status: Accomplished in part; Historical Society opened up on Chestnut Street.
 - * Revise floodplain regulations to allow appropriate industrial or commercial development on unlimited basis
Status: Accomplished in part; not quite "unlimited" due to federal and state regulations.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- *Housing*
 - * Enable as many City residents as possible to become homeowners
Status: Not accomplished.
 - * Institute rental registration to assure each rental unit is safe, sanitary, and decent
Status: Not accomplished; rejected by Council and currently being revisited.
 - * Attempt to focus on remaining rehabilitation need areas
Status: Partially accomplished; created a target area, demolished, rehabilitated, and built new housing in this area.
 - * Institute an accelerated beautification program
Status: Not accomplished; lack of funding.
 - * Began property maintenance inspection program.
Status: Accomplished.
- *Economic Development*
 - * Pursue tourism development, especially tourism based on City's heritage, and shopping opportunities
Status: Partly accomplished; increasing marketing efforts, etc.
 - * Develop a central visitors' center and public restroom complex
Status: Not accomplished; lack of funding.
 - * Expand Market House concept into Market Alley
Status: Accomplished.
 - * Create additional retail sales space at Talon #7 plant
Status: Partly accomplished; sold to Vantage Health for corporate headquarters.
 - * Erect business directory signs at downtown parking lots
Status: Not accomplished.
 - * Review application to Enterprise Zone program
Status: Accomplished; an Enterprise Zone exists that includes a portion of the City along French Creek (industrial area). The zone is managed by the Redevelopment Authority.
 - * Create a permanent City liaison with business community
Status: Partly accomplished; no official City position has been created, but the Redevelopment Authority primarily fills this role, and an ombudsman also acts as a liaison between public and City.
- *Community Facilities and Utilities*
 - * Prepare a stormwater management plan to augment the Act 537 Plan
Status: Accomplished; the stormwater management ordinance was updated in 2011.
 - * Develop an inventory of all utility lines, suitable for inclusion in a comprehensive CAD system
Status: Not accomplished, although water and sewer lines have been largely included in the GIS system and the City is currently adding storm lines.
 - * Integrate parks into three overall systems with specialty parks
Status: Not accomplished; lack of funding.
 - * Construct a street tree inventory/ develop a management plan and replacement schedule
Status: Accomplished; a GIS-based street tree inventory was completed.

- * Construct a new central fire station in the downtown area
Status: Accomplished; the new fire station was built in the mid 1990s.
- * Purchase tub grinder to collect and use tree trimmings
Status: Not accomplished.
- *Transportation*
 - * Support completion of Meadville-Titusville Road to alleviate local traffic congestion
Status: Partly accomplished; PennDOT still in planning stages.
 - * Institute a comprehensive traffic flow and re-routing
Status: Partly accomplished; lack of funding limits project but have completed downtown parking study and completed several site-specific traffic studies for problem areas.
 - * Permit free 2-hour on-street parking near commercial areas of downtown
Status: Not accomplished.
 - * Prepare a new Airport Master Plan, investigating the feasibility of commercial commuter flights
Status: Not accomplished; sold Airport facilities.

As the list shows, Meadville has had a remarkable rate of dedication to accomplishing priority projects. Overall, the City accomplished or partly accomplished over 60 percent of the priority recommendations from the Plan.

It is worth noting, however, that in some cases projects were not accomplished due to lack of funding. Costs are rising and have been, even before the current economic recession, and will only continue to do so. However, in this current climate of belt-tightening, it is vital to remember that projects and activities such as improving housing stock are investments that will pay dividends. It is easy to neglect the interconnectivity between economic success and basic quality of life issues in a community. Economic development and housing are intrinsically linked, for instance; if a community's housing stock is not up to par, a company may be hesitant to locate there as they fear their workers will have no place to live. Creating a vibrant retail destination based on historic features is difficult without some investment in façade improvement programs, or historic preservation activities that will establish a heritage-based identity.

Guiding Principles

Because the Meadville Comprehensive Plan guides land-use issues and acts as a significant policy document for the City, it follows a set of "guiding principles." These principles are values around which the Plan is based and are important concepts that have been interwoven throughout the Plan's context. They are identified below.

Keystone Principles for Growth

On May 31, 2005, the Keystone Principles and Criteria for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation (Keystone Principles) were adopted by the Pennsylvania Economic Development Cabinet and developed by the Interagency Land Use Team, a working group of the Cabinet. The Keystone Principles are designed to be a coordinated interagency approach to fostering sustainable economic development and conservation of resources through Pennsylvania's investments in diverse communities.

- Redevelop First – funding preference to reuse and redevelop "brownfield" and previously developed sites in urban, suburban, and rural communities for economic activity that creates jobs, housing, mixed use development, and recreational assets

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

- Provide Efficient Infrastructure – “fix it first” – use and improve existing infrastructure; require private and public expansions of service to be consistent with approved comprehensive plans and implementing ordinances
- Concentrate Development – support infill and “greenfield” development that is compact, conserves land, and is integrated with existing or planned transportation, water and sewer services, and schools
- Increase Job Opportunities – invest in businesses that offer good paying, high quality jobs, and that are located near existing or planned water & sewer infrastructure, housing, existing workforce, and transportation access (highway or transit)
- Foster Sustainable Businesses – strengthen natural resource based businesses that use sustainable practices in energy production and use, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, recreation and tourism
- Restore and Enhance the Environment – conserve and restore environmentally sensitive lands and natural areas for ecological health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat
- Enhance Recreational and Heritage Resources – maintain and improve recreational and heritage assets and infrastructure
- Expand Housing Opportunities – support the construction and rehabilitation of housing of all types to meet the needs of people of all incomes and abilities
- Plan Regionally; Implement Locally – support multi-municipal, county and local government planning and implementation that has broad public input and support and is consistent with these principles
- Be Fair – support equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development

The Keystone Principles are designed to help measure the extent to which particular projects accomplish these goals. The Principles do not replace state agency program guidelines or criteria, but rather, at each agency’s discretion, they will either be integrated into existing program criteria (preferable) or used as additional, favorable considerations in the scoring or decision-making process. The Principles are designed to encourage multifaceted project development that will integrate programs and funding sources from a variety of state agencies into a comprehensive strategy to address issues affecting whole communities. Projects are to be evaluated with the recognition that rural, suburban, and urban areas have different characteristics and needs, and that what might work in an urban area might not work in a rural area (the “Be Fair” standard), (<http://www.newpa.com/default.aspx?id=435>).

The Keystone Principles have been used as general guidelines for the City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan process and should be continued to be utilized as important indicators as the City moves forward with implementation.

Smart Growth

Smart growth recognizes connections between development and quality of life and attempts to leverage new growth to improve the community. The features that distinguish smart growth in a community vary, but new smart growth is more town-centered, is transit and pedestrian oriented, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial, and retail uses. It also preserves open space and many other environmental amenities. While there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, successful communities tend to have one thing in common--a vision of where they want to go and of what things they value in their community--and their plans for development reflect these values. The following are principles of smart growth (<http://www.smartgrowth.org/default.asp>):

- Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Mix Land Uses
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design

State Water Plan

In recognition of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, Section 307 (iv) (b), the City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations to provide a reliable supply of water and recommends provisions aimed at adequately protecting water supply sources. These recommendations were developed in consideration of current and future water resources availability and its uses and limitations. The City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the Pennsylvania State Water and recognizes that:

Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.

Commercial agriculture production impacts water supply sources.

Summary of Other Plans

Although the Comprehensive Plan is often considered the “go-to” guide for a municipality, Meadville has also participated in a variety of other recent planning efforts, including several regional cooperative planning processes. They are summarized briefly below.

City of Meadville Business District Action Plan Update

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, Meadville also undertook a Business District Action Plan in 2007, which set forth some important strategies for re-energizing Meadville’s commercial core. The Plan was included as an element of the Central Crawford Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan, and examined market area demographics and regional retail economics to identify strategies to help Meadville maximize its economic potential. The Plan also examined physical development issues, including land use and zoning, streets and landscaping, and the need for gateway space (such as on the northwest corner of Arch and Water Streets). The Plan included a Five-Year Action Plan to help remediate the issues and take full advantage of the assets. These recommendations, and their status, are included below. The City is currently in the fifth year of the plan, and has completed over 41% of the recommendations.

Crawford County Comprehensive Plan Update

Crawford County is in the process of updating their comprehensive plan. The City of Meadville is coordinating their process with the County’s to ensure consistency.

Central Crawford Region Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan

This Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007 by Vernon Township, Sadsbury Township, Conneaut Lake Borough, and the City of Meadville. It started as an update by Vernon Township and later became regional in nature. Its goal was to identify unique opportunities for each community and pursue them jointly. The main goals developed for Meadville included assisting Meadville in retaining large institutions such as the hospital

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

and to develop spin-off services that would create taxable developments, as well as to encourage large scale industries to locate or enlarge their operations on brownfields or vacant tracts in the City. The Plan suggested a focus on two initiatives: revitalization of downtown and selective development of its remaining open areas for tax beneficial uses. Suggested future land uses included urban patterns and small-town residential / institutional.

Other recommendations included:

- Pursue Elm Street Program funding
- Re-use of the R-3 mobile home park areas
- Performance of a cursory housing review every four years to address code enforcement and housing needs
- Improvement of parks and recreation facilities
 - * New playground to service new housing development in the South Main, south Liberty, and the Linden Street area
 - * Repair the fountain at Diamond Park
 - * Landscape the park at Highland Avenue and Limber Road
 - * Explore the potential for the Ernst Trail
- Make the North Street Project a transportation priority
- Explore the need for a gateway at Arch Street from the French Creek Parkway
- Explore the need for more public space throughout the City
- Complete a thorough review of zoning to determine the appropriate nature of limited commercial development in the I-1 (Institutional Core) district

Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan: Crawford County

This Plan was completed and adopted in 2009 and examined opportunities for green space, natural habitat preservation, and recreational and open space opportunities in Crawford County. Recommendations specific to the City of Meadville included an analysis of the Ernst Trail. The existing section of the Ernst Trail is paved and runs approximately 5 miles from the Park Avenue Plaza in Vernon Township to Route 19. The remaining section proposed in this plan, runs from Route 19 another 6 miles to Conneaut Lake. The proposed section is still undeveloped, but is passable by hikers and mountain bikers. The trail route follows the former Meadville to Linesville Railroad corridor. The Plan recommends continued development of the trail and identifies Meadville as a possible trail town as part of its overall development of a countywide (and region-wide) trail and open space network system. The Plan also recommends the City conduct a pedestrian and bicycle feasibility study, and work with other municipalities to revitalize and reestablish the French Creek Water Trail. More broadly, the Plan identifies Meadville as part of the French Creek Greenway Corridor.

Contiguous Municipalities Statement

The MPC recognizes that comprehensive planning does not exist in a vacuum, and that multi-municipal planning efforts as well as individual planning efforts must take into account any simultaneous planning endeavors happening in a broader context. As such, it mandates the following be included:

A statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities, or a statement indicating measures which have been taken to provide buffers or other transitional devices between disparate uses, and a statement indicating that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is generally consistent with the objectives and plans of the county comprehensive plan. MPC Article III, Section 301(a)(5)

As part of this, the comprehensive planning efforts of neighboring municipalities were assessed and evaluated to ensure that the Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update is complementary to their goals. Meadville is surrounded by West Mead Township to the north, east and south, Woodcock Township to the north and Vernon Township to the west. As Vernon Township was part of the Central Crawford Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan efforts, they will not be reviewed here. However, both West Mead and Woodcock Townships have comprehensive land use strategies in place. The following is a brief summary of those plans.

Woodcock Township

Woodcock Township's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007. The Future Land Use Plan included: allowing for continued commercial development in Meadville proper, along Route 322 southwest of Meadville, and in nearby Erie; encouraging the use of holistic approaches to residential development such as controlling for density and lot averaging and focusing residential development from Saegertown to the Woodcock Reservoir; allowing for limited light industrial growth in the southwestern corner of the Township near Route 19 and existing rail routes; and conserving sensitive environmental lands including wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes over 25 percent.

West Mead Township

West Mead adopted their Comprehensive Plan in 2004. Priority projects recommended by the Plan include nearly two dozen policy action items, with top action items including revision of zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances, transportation improvement projects, and focusing on water and sewer extension projects. The Plan also included a Future Land Use strategy. Along Meadville's southern boundary, the West Mead Future Land Use Plan recommends high density residential uses such as townhouses, apartment buildings, and other types of multi-family residences. Along Meadville's eastern and northern boundary, the Future Land Use Plan recommends low-density residential development patterns. Low-density residential in the Plan is defined as those areas presently served by public water and sewer and already has the capacity in place to handle population increases. Lot sizes between 12,000 to 15,000 square feet are recommended, with those areas without sewers averaging between 20,000 to 25,000 square feet.

Interrelationship Statement

The synthesis of interrelated activities to resolve issues and problems is an important foundation to good community planning. In this regard, there are linkages among the elements, goals and recommendations of the Meadville Comprehensive Plan. All are related and should further the overall vision which is to maintain the character of the municipality while still allowing for complementary and orderly development.

How Do You Use the Plan?

Implementation is the key to a Comprehensive Plan's success. The City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update includes a clearly identified list of priority projects. For each of these projects, timelines for completion; responsible parties; and financial or human capital resources required to get the projects off the ground are included. Hence the final piece of this Plan can act as a "to-do" list for Meadville that clearly spells out what the community needs to do and when in order to achieve the community development objectives and the vision it worked so carefully to craft. The process does not stop there, however. Just as vital is an ongoing awareness and evaluation of the Plan's relevancy. As the 1993 Plan demonstrates, Meadville's socio-economic features can and will change over time, as will its physical landscape. Regularly evaluating what has been accomplished from the Plan, what is still relevant, and what is no longer applicable or should be amended is essential to ensuring that the Plan remains a living, useful document for all of Meadville. As such, several important ways that the Plan can be incorporated into normal City activities are outlined on the following pages.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ordinance Updates

Because comprehensive plans in Pennsylvania are not legally binding, the best way to ensure that the Future Land Use Plan and other development goals are accomplished is through ordinance updates. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning code (MPC) provides the legal framework for local governments to enact, revise, administer, and enforce zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations. These ordinances dictate the way a community grows and develops; zoning determines where certain uses can go and at what density, while subdivision and land development regulations control what the development looks like, its layout, and its impact on the land (e.g., landscaping standards, right-of-way widths for roads and utilities, etc.). Together, these two ordinances are the municipality's primary tools for managing the amount, character, intensity, and location of future development. Other ordinances can also be considered and should be made complementary to the Plan's goals. These include collaborative relationships with developers, design guidelines, plans for infrastructure improvements such as water and sewer extensions and upgrades, and transportation studies and ordinances. These should all be updated on a consistent basis to proactively steer new development to the appropriate locations outlined in the Comprehensive Plan Update. Through effective regulation, Meadville can achieve greater opportunities to thrive economically, encourage good development, and enhance the overall quality of life.

Review Development Plans and Other Projects

In addition to updating any pertinent ordinances to make them consistent with the Meadville Comprehensive Plan members of the Planning Commission should use the Plan as a yardstick for measuring the appropriateness of any new proposed development or redevelopment. Questions that Planning Commission members and municipal officials should ask include:

- Is the proposed development consistent with the Future Land Use Plan?
- Does the proposed development fit with the density and intended character of the surrounding area?
- Where and what type of landscaping is provided?
- How much traffic will be generated?
- How will the proposed development impact any neighboring sites?
- How will stormwater runoff be handled?
- How will this development affect the community or adjacent communities?
- Are there sidewalks, walkways, bike facilities, and other street furniture? Do these fit into an overall network or pattern of walkability and access?
- If the proposed development is in an historic area, does it fit with the prevailing architectural pattern and styles?
- Is signage adequate and appropriate for the setting?
- If commercial or industrial development, is it located in the designated growth areas? Are waste and dumpster areas effectively screened from view? Is lighting shielded from neighboring properties?

Annual Plan Review and Updates

The City of Meadville Planning Commission should prepare and submit an annual written report to Council and residents, summarizing this evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan, the past year's implementation activities, the upcoming planned implementation activities, and crucial issues that will, or may, impact the community. The following checklist can be used by the Commission to measure implementation efforts:

	Yes	No
<i>Development Review Checklist</i>		
Has the future investment areas map been reviewed to determine if updates are necessary?		
Have existing codes and ordinances been reviewed to determine their consistency with the Vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan?		
Are current codes and ordinances being enforced adequately to ensure their effectiveness?		
Have the Vision and Community Development Objectives been reviewed and updated, if necessary?		
Have the action items / recommendations been reviewed and re-prioritized, if necessary?		
<i>Implementation of Community Development Objectives</i>		
What projects have been implemented that expand "Economic development efforts to support existing businesses and increase new business opportunities?"		
What projects have been implemented that "Revitalize the Central Business District?"		
What projects have been implemented that "Provide a diverse mix of housing options?"		
What projects have been implemented that "Increase rehabilitation efforts and code enforcement?"		
What projects have been implemented that "Increase communications with local entities to establish beneficial partnerships?"		
What projects have been implemented that "Encourage a multi-modal transportation network?"		
What projects have been implemented that "Create additional opportunities to provide social and recreational options?"		
What projects have been implemented that "Ensure municipal policies and ordinances are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's Vision?"		

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



Geographic Setting

Meadville is located in Crawford County in northwestern Pennsylvania and serves as its county seat. It is approximately 40 miles south of Erie and encompasses an area of approximately 4.4 square miles. It is accessed primarily from other major metropolitan areas such as Pittsburgh and Erie via Interstate 79.



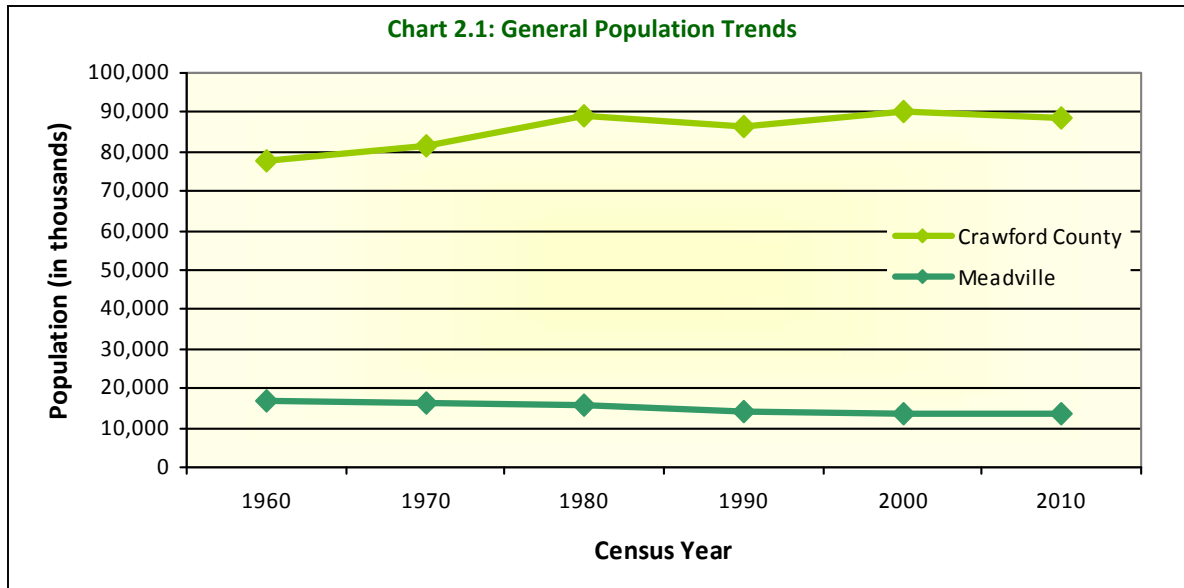
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Demographic Profile

note: Unless otherwise stated, data for this section was derived from the US Census Bureau, 2010 Census and the 2011 American Community Survey)

General Population Characteristics

As shown in Chart 2.1, Meadville's population as of the 2010 Census is 13,388, which continues the trend of decreasing population that has plagued the City since 1960. While the losses from decade to decade are not substantial, it is important to point out that Crawford County has not suffered similar losses. The County experienced population gains in 1970, 1980, and 2000, but had slight population losses in 1990 and 2010.



Racially, Meadville is 90.0 percent white, with 5.0 percent reporting as African-American, 1.1 percent Asian, and an additional 1.7 percent reporting as Latino or Hispanic. The City is more diverse than Crawford County as a whole, which reports less than 5.0 percent as anything other than white.

Social Characteristics

Chart 2.2 depicts Meadville's age breakdown as compared to Crawford County and Pennsylvania. The largest age group is the child-rearing group, which comprises those between the ages of 35 to 54 and encompasses much of the younger half of the "Baby Boomer" generation. This age group comprises 22.2 percent of Meadville's total population, which while lower than Crawford County's 27.3 percent and Pennsylvania's 28.0 percent, is still comparable. The child-rearing (along with child-bearing) age group is among the most desirable for a community due to its stability, high rates of home-ownership, and typically moderate to high income levels.

The age groups where Meadville diverges from County and State trends are the high school (ages 15 to 19) and post-secondary school (ages 20 to 24). In the case of the latter, 13.6 percent of Meadville's population is comprised of this age group, likely due to the presence of Allegheny College and Laurel Technical Institute (LTI), which is more than double the figure of Crawford County (6.1 percent) and Pennsylvania (6.9 percent). As mentioned, the high school group is also a higher percentage, with 10.7 percent of Meadville's population comprised of that group compared to 7.5 percent for the County and 7.1 percent for the state. This diversion represents a unique and important opportunity for Meadville to capitalize upon, as students coming to the area for college are not only a captive market for a downtown commercial district but also can be enticed to stay and remain as permanent population.

Chart 2.2: Age of Population

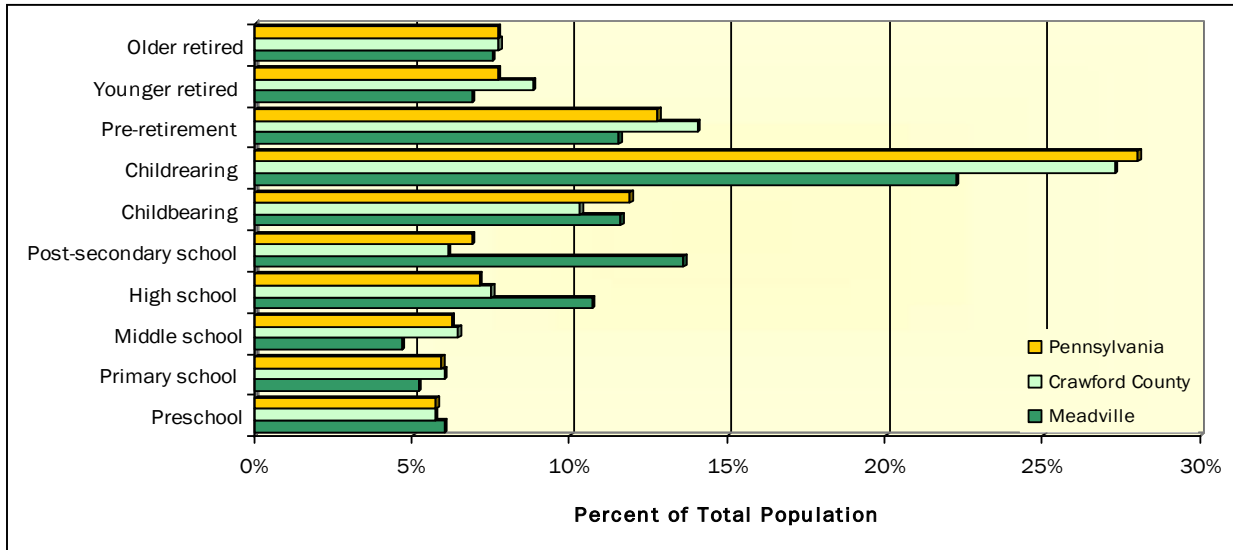


Table 2.1 illustrates households in Meadville as compared with Crawford County and Pennsylvania. Meadville is comprised of 52.0 percent family households, in comparison with the much higher family rates of 66.2 percent for Crawford County and 65.0 percent for Pennsylvania. This again is likely due to the presence of Allegheny College and the portion of the population which is comprised of students. However, it is also worth noting that Meadville has a higher percentage of households with a householder 65 years of age or older (14.9 percent) as compared to Crawford County (12.0 percent) and Pennsylvania (11.4 percent).

Table 2.1: Households			
	Meadville	Crawford County	Pennsylvania
Total households	5,462	35,028	5,018,904
Family households (as percent of total households)	52%	66.2%	65.0%
With own children under 18 years (as percent of total households)	23.8%	26.2%	26.9%
Householder 65 years or over	14.9%	12.0%	11.4%

Housing Characteristics

Housing tenure refers to the distinction between housing units that are occupied by their owners and those occupied by renters. Communities often prefer to have high percentages of their housing stock owner-occupied, as the common perception is that owners bring more stability, wealth, and better home maintenance to neighborhoods than renters. Table 2.2 depicts home ownership rates in Meadville as compared to Crawford County and Pennsylvania. As the data shows, Meadville has a much higher than average rental rate, with 57.2 percent of housing units renter-occupied and only 42.8 percent owner-occupied. This is in stark contrast to Crawford County's high owner-occupancy rate of 73.7 percent and Pennsylvania's similar rate of 69.6 percent.

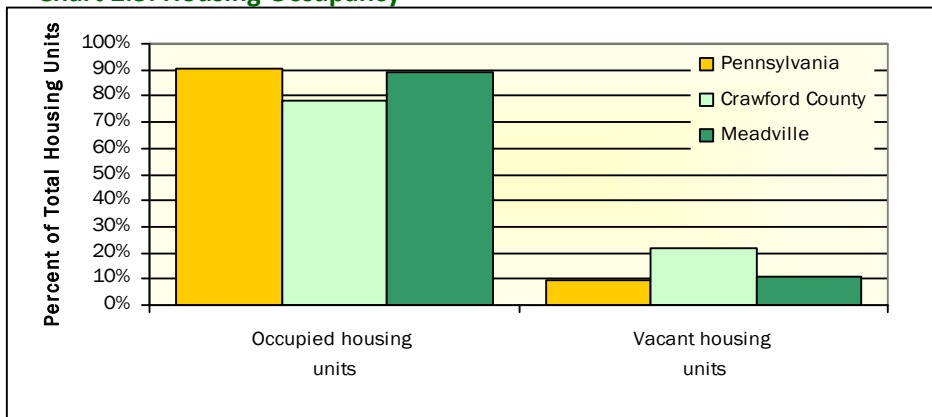
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Table 2.2: Tenure

Geography	Type of units	Number of units	Percent of total
Meadville	Owner-occupied housing units	2,340	42.8%
	Renter-occupied housing units	3,122	57.2%
Crawford County	Owner-occupied housing units	25,816	73.7%
	Renter-occupied housing units	9,212	26.3%
Pennsylvania	Owner-occupied housing units	3,491,722	69.6%
	Renter-occupied housing units	1,527,182	30.4%

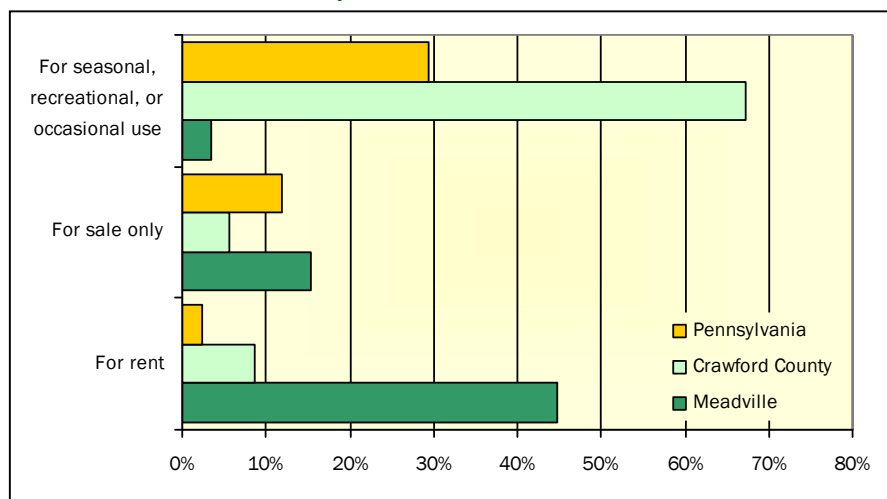
Occupancy is also an important part of the housing discussion. Chart 2.3 illustrates housing occupancy in Meadville as compared to Crawford County and Pennsylvania. Meadville has an occupancy rate of 89.0 percent with a corresponding vacancy rate of 11.0 percent, while Crawford's vacancy rate is slightly higher at 21.6 percent, and Pennsylvania's slightly lower at 9.9 percent.

Chart 2.3: Housing Occupancy



However, it should be noted here that Crawford County's vacancy rates are primarily due to seasonal and recreational housing, as Chart 2.4 shows.

Chart 2.4: Reason for Vacancy



In contrast, Meadville's vacancies are primarily rental properties (44.8 percent). This could indicate that the rental market in Meadville is oversaturated with too many units; alternatively, pricing might be too high or the style and size of the units may not be meeting the needs of residents. Likewise, 15.3 percent of the vacant units in Meadville are for sale (a much higher percentage than Crawford County's 5.7 percent but about closer to the state average of 11.8 percent).

The age of housing stock in a community is a vital clue in helping to assess its economic viability as well as its overall health and stability. Communities with significantly older housing stock can sometimes suffer from decreased home values and deteriorating neighborhoods due to the high expenses associated with continued upkeep and maintenance. On the other hand, when handled positively with proper incentives and historic preservation techniques, an older housing stock can become an important asset for a community, drawing in those who are attracted to a "traditional" neighborhood feeling and lifestyle. Over 76.0 percent of Meadville's housing stock was constructed before 1960, with 41.8 percent constructed before 1939, an impressive figure for a city of its size. This is contrast to Crawford County as a whole, where only 58.0 percent of its housing stock was constructed before 1960, and only 29.9 percent before 1939. In addition, only 6.3 percent of the total housing stock in Meadville has been built since 1990 (based on 2009 estimates). Since 2000, it is estimated that only 390 units have been built.

The age of the housing stock appears to not affect Meadville's median home values in a negative way, however. 2009 estimates show that the median home value for Meadville was \$93,100, which is comparable to Crawford County's median home value of \$95,100.

Economic Characteristics

According to 2011 Census estimates, 53.9 percent of Meadville's population over 16 years of age is in the labor force, compared with 63.2 percent for Pennsylvania and 58.0 percent for Crawford County. Furthermore, it is estimated that 47.3 percent of those are employed, with an estimated unemployment rate of 6.6 percent. Crawford County, on the other hand, has an estimated unemployment rate of 4.9 percent, while Pennsylvania's is estimated to be at 5.0 percent. Table 2.3 depicts occupational patterns among the three compared elements, and illustrates that Meadville's occupational patterns fall into similar County and state-wide trends. However, it is interesting to note that 23.0 percent of Meadville's workforce falls into the category of service occupations in comparison with 16.9 percent at the state level and 18.1 percent at the County level.

Table 2.3.: Occupational Patterns			
	Pennsylvania	Crawford County	Meadville
Management, professional, and related occupations	35.5%	30.0%	34.4%
Service occupations	16.9%	18.1%	23.0%
Sales and office occupations	25.0%	21.1%	24.4%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	8.7%	10.8%	8.1%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	13.8%	20.0%	10.1%

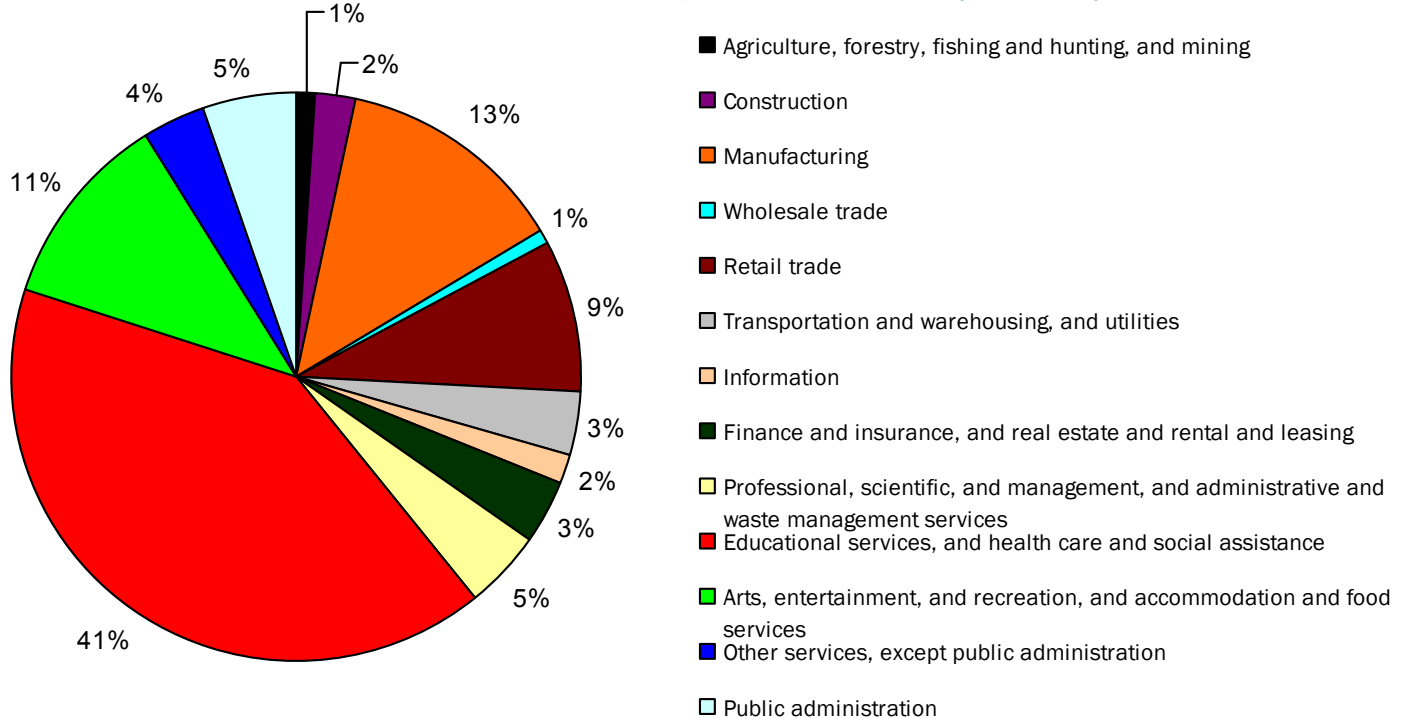
Chart 2.5 breaks this pattern down further by analyzing occupations in Meadville by industry. As can be expected, educational services and health care is the main industry for most workers in Meadville (39.8 percent).

Manufacturing is the second largest at 13.0 percent, with the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry sector next at 11.2 percent.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Most likely this high percentage of workers in the education and healthcare fields is not only reflective of overall historic shifting in the workplace market but also because of Allegheny College and Meadville Medical Center. As another reflection of this, it is also worth mentioning that Meadville's average travel time to work for its workers is only 14 minutes, which contrasts greatly with the state average of 25.7 minutes and the County average of 21.4; again, this is likely due to the presence of such major employers within the City limits and is an important asset for Meadville to market.

Chart 2.5: Meadville Occupational Patterns By Industry



In terms of income, Meadville's estimated 2011 median household income was \$29,167 as compared to Pennsylvania's \$51,651 and Crawford County's \$40,379. Table 2.4 breaks these earnings down by type. Although Meadville has a lower percentage of its population drawing retirement income (only 15.0 percent compared to 20.0 percent in Pennsylvania and 21.0 percent in the County), 7.6 percent of its population is on public assistance (cash) compared to the statewide rate of 4.7 percent and the County rate of 3.4 percent. This is concerning as it signifies that a larger portion of Meadville's population is struggling financially.

As would be expected, this translates into higher poverty levels, as the percentage of families in Meadville estimated to be below the poverty level in 2011 was 24.5 percent compared to Pennsylvania (8.8 percent) and Crawford County (12.6 percent). While much of this is likely due to current economic conditions, it is important to note that communities with higher levels of poverty have much different needs in terms of services provided, particularly community and municipal services.

Table 2.4 notes the types of income for the residents of Meadville. Meadville does have a lower percentage of total residents with earnings (69.4%) when compared to Pennsylvania and Crawford County (76.3% and 72.4% respectively).

Table 2.4.: Earnings

	Pennsylvania	Crawford County	Meadville
With earnings	76.3%	72.4%	69.4%
With Social Security income	31.8%	37.7%	38.0%
With Supplemental Security Income	4.8%	6.5%	10.1%
With public assistance income	3.4%	4.7%	7.6%
With retirement income	20.0%	21.0%	15.0%

Land Use Profile

Land use planning, in its most basic form, should address the simple questions of what, where, and how regarding land use and development within a given community. The Land Use Profile will look at four main elements:

- what is the historic development pattern of the City;
- what is the existing land use today;
- what are the development constraints; and finally,
- what are the land use controls in place now that regulate how land may be used in the City.

Historic Development

Meadville can trace its roots back to the beginnings of our nation, having first been settled in 1788. Meadville was incorporated in 1823 as a borough and later as a City in 1866. It was designated the Crawford County seat in 1880. Much of the lands north of Butler County to Lake Erie were part of what was called Donation Lands; other portions were part of what was called the Depreciation Lands. The Donation Lands were reserved as payment to Revolutionary War veterans for their service during the war. The Depreciation Lands were also used to pay soldiers, but their primary purpose was to act as payment of the certificates of currency given to the soldiers during the war. The Assembly assigned surveyors to divide the Donation and Depreciation Lands into rectangular numbered plots and “districts,” a feature unique to Pennsylvania at the time, but one that was commonly used in later years as the country expanded westward. Around 1785, the Assembly opened all unreserved land in this area to white settlers at a price of 80 cents an acre in 1,000-acre tracts.

It is surmised that David Mead and the nine settlers who came with him in 1788 to Crawford County and Meadville were drawn by the fertile agricultural land created by the confluence of the French and Cussewago Creeks. In addition, the land on which Meadville sits today was also compensation for land confiscated by the Pennsylvania government when the state took over previously held Connecticut parcels in the Wyoming Valley section of Northeast Pennsylvania. The area was also not far from Fort Franklin on the Allegheny River, an important early trading post.

Although the first decades of life on the frontier were not easy for the small town, Meadville quickly began to grow and develop. Perhaps the most important development in the City’s history was that of transportation, with routes linking it to larger markets. The Meadville-Waterford-Erie Turnpike was constructed in 1806 and was used for over thirty-five years until it was consolidated into the Susquehanna and Waterford Turnpike, which extended from the Susquehanna River in Clearfield County through Brookville, Clarion, Franklin, and Meadville to Erie. Another important early transit route was the Mercer and Meadville Turnpike which began in 1817 and is still commonly known to local residents as the Mercer Pike. Rail was also an important facet of Meadville’s development as the Atlantic and Great Western Railway of Pennsylvania (now the Erie Railroad) helped connect Meadville to outside markets in October of 1862. Meadville’s choice location on the rail line – approximately halfway between New York and Chicago – made it ideal for new manufacturing and commerce enterprises.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

In addition to becoming a bustling small city and economic driver for the region, Meadville also had an important hand in changing election history. Unhappy with the conventional nomination system, voters in Meadville (and Crawford County as a whole) met in 1842 to devise a new set of rules for nominating assemblymen and county officers. Their deliberations resulted in the direct primary method of nominating candidates; this method proved so popular it was quickly adopted nation-wide.

Other important and notable aspects of Meadville's history include its role as the "zipper" capital of the world due to the establishment of the Automatic Hook and Eye Company, brought to Meadville from Hoboken, New Jersey by Colonel Lewis Walker in 1913.

Today, Meadville is home to over 13,000 residents. Meadville serves as a hub for government, education, and healthcare in the region. City, county and state government offices are conveniently located in and around the downtown business district. The City is also an active center for business, industry, education, the arts, recreation, service and tourism. The historic Meadville Market House supplies locally grown produce and products all year round. Allegheny College, Precision Manufacturing Institute (PMI) and Laurel Technical Institute (LTI) are located within City limits. The Meadville Area Recreation Complex provides year round activities for all ages while the Academy Theatre, Meadville Community Theater (housed in the Oddfellows' Home on Allegheny College campus) and the Gardner Theater (located on the second floor of the Market House) showcase productions with local talent.

Existing Land Use

The current land use within the City of Meadville is shown on **Map 2.1: Existing Land Use**. The land use is not categorized at the parcel level; rather, the purpose of the map is to generally depict how the land within the City is being used. For purposes of the comprehensive plan, land is categorized into one of the following seven (7) categories:



Single-Family Residential

In Meadville, single-family residential structures range from smaller, traditional downtown-style homes to larger, newer homes.



Multi-Family Residential

Encompasses all land that is used for residential purposes designed to accommodate more than one family, which include duplexes, conversion-apartments, townhouses, apartment buildings/complexes, and similar uses. The City offers a wide variety of multi-family structures.



Commercial

Land used for commercial purposes, includes office buildings, retail services, professional/personal services, restaurants, gas stations, and other similar type uses. Most of the commercial uses within the City are concentrated within the downtown.



Industrial

This category includes all land that is used for industrial purposes, including warehouses, manufacturing facilities, and similar uses. Most of the industrial uses can be found along the railroad, US Route 6, and the southern portion of US Route 322.



Institutional

Encompasses all land that is used for institutional and public purposes, including schools, churches, hospitals, county and city buildings, and similar uses. While many of the institutional uses are scattered throughout the City, large institutions include Allegheny College, Wesbury United Methodist Community, Meadville Medical Center, and public schools. In addition, many institutional uses surround Diamond Park near the Crawford County Courthouse.



Parking

Land that is used to accommodate large parking facilities is included in this category, which may include outdoor lots and/or parking garages. Public parking areas within the downtown include Market Square Ramp (a six-level public garage), Market Street Ramp and Mill Run Ramp (for visitors and employees of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and rental), Robert Smith Memorial Lot (meters and rentals), Academy Theatre (meters), Park Avenue Central (meters/reserved for rental), Keystone View (meters/reserved), and Water Street/Mulberry Alley (private lot under the control of Ainsworth Pet Nutrition).



Recreation/Open Space

All land that is either undeveloped or used for public parks and recreation purposes is included in this category.

Planning Regions

For purposes of the Comprehensive Plan Update, the City was divided into four (4) planning regions (see **Map 2.2: Planning Regions**). These regions were used to help identify priority issues and needs that are facing the individual regions rather than citywide.

Central Planning Region

The Central Planning Region is roughly bounded by US Route 19 to the west, Allegheny College to the north, Liberty Street/State Street to the east, and the City boundary to the south. This region is primarily characterized by the downtown and older, historic areas of the City. Historic sites listed on the National Register within this region include:

- Meadville Downtown Historic District (roughly bounded by Chancery Lane, Mulberry Street, Walnut Street, and Chestnut Street)
- Baldwin-Reynolds House (Terrace Street)
- Bentley Hall (Allegheny College Campus)
- Independent Congregational Church (Chestnut Street)
- Dr. Mosier Office (Terrace Street)
- Roueche House (Park Avenue)
- Ruter Hall (Allegheny College Campus)

Commercial/Industrial Businesses

- The Business District is the “heart” of Meadville. This district includes many of the downtown businesses along Park Avenue, Main Street, Chestnut Street, and Water Street along with the Downtown Mall.
 - * The Business District Action Plan (BDAP) was adopted by City Council and was included in the previous Central Crawford Regional Comprehensive Plan. Since the adoption of the BDAP, the City has taken several implementation steps including the following:
 - ≈ Applied for Main Street funding

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

- ≈ Led the redevelopment process for the Erie Bank Building
 - ≈ Added street furniture to the Downtown Mall Water Street entrance
 - ≈ Drafted updated zoning language for the I-1, B-1, and B-2 zoning districts
- * The City has completed the Market Alley Pedestrian Walkway, which features a pedestrian bridge over Mill Run including sidewalks, curb ramps, brick paving, lighting, and planter boxes.
- * Meadville Market House is Pennsylvania's oldest market house in continual use. Residents and visitors can go there to purchase produce and other products.
- The second major commercial area is the Park Avenue Corridor, between the end of the Business District at Arch Street and US Route 322. This corridor is characterized as more of suburban commercial development, with larger lots, increased front yard setbacks, and individual parking lots and access.
- Major employers within this region include:
 - * Ainsworth Pet Nutrition (Corporate Headquarters)
 - * Allegheny College
 - * C&J Industries
 - * Channellock Inc.
 - * Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Department of Public Welfare, Department of Health, Department of Environmental Protection, Careerlink, and the Northwest Workforce Investment Board)
 - * Meadville Medical Center
 - * Universal Well Services
 - * Seco/Warwick Corporation
 - * Vantage Healthcare Headquarters
- The Central Planning Region has experienced many major development projects over the past several years, including the following:
 - * C & J Industries addition
 - * CATA Headquarters
 - * CVS Pharmacy
 - * Erie Bank
 - * Family Video / Vocelli's Pizza
 - * Gonstead Chiropractic
 - * Kepler Condos, Townhouses, and Commercial Space
 - * Liberty House
 - * Market Square Parking Ramp
 - * North Village 1 and 2 Student Housing
 - * Northwest Savings Bank
 - * Parkside Commons
 - * Tim Horton's
 - * Vantage Headquarters
 - * Vukovich Center for Communications Arts
 - * Walgreens
 - * Willow Street Duplex (Crawford County Coalition on Housing Needs)

Institutional

- Academy Theatre is located on Chestnut Street in Meadville and is a center for the performing arts. It was presented to Meadville in 1885 by Ernest P. Hempstead and since the time of its inception has housed local productions as well as vaudeville shows and films. The theatre has been restored and now is home to various concerts and cultural events.

- Allegheny College, a liberal arts college with approximately 2,100 students on a 77-acre campus located just north of downtown Meadville. The college includes several buildings, an outdoor recreational complex, and nature reserve. The college is involved with the City in numerous community efforts. Perhaps the most significant is the I Heart Meadville Committee, which was formed to promote student involvement within downtown Meadville, encourage students on campus to retain a positive image of Meadville, and to work toward a positive relationship between community members and college students.
- Crawford Central School District includes students within central and south central Crawford County with a total attendance of approximately 4,150. There are a total of 300 teachers, 150 support staff, and 20 administrative staff employed by the district. The Central Planning Region includes the First and Second District Elementary Schools.
- Laurel Technical Institute (LTI) is a post-secondary vocational and technical educational facility. It offers degrees in administrative office technology, business, cosmetology, early childhood education, various sub-specialties of health care, and information technology. LTI recently re-located their campus to Parkside Commons, a former junior-senior high school that has been converted to a mixed residential-commercial facility on North Main Street.
- Meadville Medical Center (MMC) is comprised of two major facilities within the City; one is located on Liberty Street and the other on Grove Street. MMC is a licensed 249-bed facility with a staff of over 1,000 in 37 medical/surgical specialties. The Meadville Medical Center Liberty Street Facility is the former City Hospital and houses the acute care services including the Emergency Department; Intensive Care Unit; Surgery and Recovery; Maternity; Oncology Unit; Telemetry Unit; several Medical/Surgical Nursing Units including Pediatrics; and several ancillary services. In 1994, a new wing was opened which housed a new Emergency Department; Intensive Care Unit; Main Entrance and Phlebotomy area; expanded Surgery and Radiology Department and renovation to the Medical/Surgical Nursing Units. In 1996, the new Liberty Street Medical Arts Building was opened for expanded physician offices. Additional renovations occurred in 2007, with the opening of the Liberty Surgical Care Unit. In 2008, the Grove Street facility was expanded with a new ambulatory care center. Currently, construction has begun on a new women's diagnostic center at the Liberty Street Facility. The medical center also has a Dermatology Institute on North Main Street and a Community Health Center on Terrace Street.
- Meadville Public Library was founded in 1812 and is now part of the Crawford County Federated Library System. The library includes over 85,000 items. It has regular weekday hours and is also open on Saturdays. Programming options include a summer reading program, children's story hour, and other frequent social clubs and activities for both young and adult readers / library users.

Residential

- The primary residential area within the Central Planning Region is the recently designated Elm Street Neighborhood encompassing the area between the downtown Business District and Allegheny College. This neighborhood is plagued by 40% absentee ownership rates, 100 documented cases of disrepair, absentee landlords, and an average assessed value of \$21,075 (not counting the historic properties along Terrace Street). The City recently completed an Elm Street Plan for this neighborhood that identifies several strategies for improvements.
- The secondary residential area is found south of the Business District between Park Avenue and Liberty Street. The City's Redevelopment Authority has been working in this area over the past several years as its "target neighborhood," with many projects focusing on demolishing blighted structures and rebuilding new homes in their places. Recent projects include the Willow Street duplex and the Liberty House (a Housing Coalition project). Also included in this area is Elm Village public housing, which is a multi-family complex east of South Main Street.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Recreation and Open Space

- Parks and recreation areas within this region include the following:
 - * DeArment Park (public open space)
 - * Diamond Square – recent renovations include restoration of the Shippen Fountain in 2010-2011 through private donations that exceeded \$80,000; cleaning and upgrades of the Gazebo/Band Shell; and the planting of trees
 - * HP Way Park – recent renovations include the addition of new playground equipment and the planting of trees

Northern Planning Region

The Northern Planning Region encompasses all of the land north of Allegheny College to the City boundaries. This region is primarily characterized by larger lot residential areas and is home to the Wesbury United Methodist Retirement Community.

Commercial/Industrial Businesses

- Hailwood Golf Course is located off Park Avenue Extension in the northern part of the City. The golf course is open to the public and features 18 holes, a proshop, and a restaurant.
- Major employers within this region include the Wesbury United Methodist Retirement Community.
- Recent development projects in this region include:
 - * Chapel at Wesbury
 - * Villas at Wesbury
 - * Optical Filters (located west of US 19)
 - * Belco Tool (located west of US 19)
 - * Pasco Tool addition

Institutional

- Wesbury United Methodist Retirement Community encompasses 110 acres in northern Meadville. A not-for-profit corporation, Wesbury offers the following:
 - * Thoburn Village – 64 independent living villas and 16 apartments
 - * Cribbs Residential Center – personal care services for more than 100 residents
 - * Grace Health Center – a 210 bed skilled nursing facility with a memory support center, wound care program, and rehabilitative services
 - * Recently, the City issued a building permit to Wesbury for the continued renovation of Grace Health Center and the new construction of a Geriatric Wellness Assessment Center.
- Allegheny College Athletic Fields

Residential

- The majority of the Northern Planning Region is occupied by single-family residential homes. The layout of the housing plans in this region is characterized by winding roads, larger lots, increased front yard setbacks, and no sidewalks. There are several newer housing developments within this region, many of which offer large wooded lots.
- There are a few areas that offer multi-family housing. One is Golfview Manor, located across from Hailwood Golf Course off Park Avenue Extension, which is a townhouse community. Another is a multi-family public housing complex along Walker Drive, off Baldwin Street Extension.

Recreation and Open Space

There are no public parks or recreation areas located within the Northern Planning Region. However, there is a large amount of open space located between Baldwin Street and the Allegheny College Athletic Fields.

Eastern Planning Region

The Eastern Planning Region is roughly bounded by Liberty Street to the west and State Street to the north. This region is primarily characterized by mostly single-family residential neighborhoods as well as some institutional uses, such as the Meadville Area Junior/Senior High School, Crawford County Career and Technical Center, and Grove Street Hospital. The Judge Henry Shippen House, located on Chestnut Street, is the only listed site on the National Register of Historic Places within the region.

Commercial/Industrial Businesses

- The only real commercial area within this region is the former Talon Building, which is located between Arch Street and Pine Street, across from Cora Clark Park. The building is most recently a former business incubator that is now owned by Crawford County. Portions of the building have been demolished; however, building “A” is a historic building. Surrounded almost entirely by single-family residences, there is an orthopedic center on Arch Street.
- Major employers within this region include the Crawford Central School District, Meadville Medical Center, and the Grove Street facility.
- The Mill Run Community Pharmacy and the Kwik Fill are recent development projects. Also, the former Dick Hose Fire station has been renovated into offices for a private equity firm.

Institutional

- Crawford Central School District operates the Meadville Area Middle School and Senior High School within this region. The East End School is located within this region, but was closed after the 2011-2012 school year. Currently there are no plans for redevelopment of this building.
- Crawford County Career and Technical Center (CCCTC) is located next to the Middle School and Senior High School and offers both high school programs and adult programs. High school programs offered include automotive technology, carpentry, child care services, commercial art, computer and information sciences, cosmetology, diesel technology, drafting and design technology, electrical occupations, electronics technology, food services, health occupations, landscape and turfgrass management, precision machining, and welding. Adult programs offered include practical nursing program as well as online and adult evening courses in the fields of computer and business, medical, trades and self-improvement.
- Meadville Medical Center (MMC) Grove Street Facility is the former Spencer Hospital and houses the non-acute care services such as Mental Health Services; Drug and Alcohol Unit; Ambulatory Care Services; Transitional Care Unit; Rehab; Pain Clinic and other ancillary services including many outpatient services. In 2009, a new Surgery Center was opened.

Residential

- Many of the residential neighborhoods in this region are characterized by smaller lots with single-family homes. The Plateau is a nice residential neighborhood located in the southeast corner of the City.
- Multi-family neighborhoods can be found near the Grove Street Facility, with some senior housing in low-income areas, and Morgan Village (a public housing community off of Morgan Street).
- Hillcrest, located off Washington Street, is a community of 205 single-family homes and duplexes and was the nation’s first Federal Housing Authority (FHA) housing project. Constructed in 1936, Hillcrest is a rental community owned by Meadville Housing Corporation, which is a privately owned corporation formed in 1935.

Recreation and Open Space

- Parks and recreation areas within this region include the following:
 - * Cora Clark Park
 - * Elizabeth Park
 - * Huidekoper Park

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

- * Shadybrook Park
 - ≈ Upgrades in 2010 include a walking trail, lighting, an overlook deck, landscaping, new steps, stormwater retention ponds, a new roof on the picnic shelter.
- * The Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC) is a 47-acre recreation area located near the Junior/Senior High School within the City of Meadville and West Mead Township off of Thurston Road. The indoor ice arena is open from August to March. The arena includes locker rooms, rest rooms, skate rental, pro-shop, and snack bar. During April through July the arena is open for inline skating, craft shows, flea markets, concerts, parties, etc. The aquatic center includes a 25 meter by 25 yard six lane pool, which is heated in the fall, winter and spring. In the summer an outdoor pool is available and includes a water playground. The outdoor area includes volleyball courts, lounge chairs, snack bar, and eating area. Additional outdoor facilities include picnic areas, a skateboard park, nature/ski trail, tennis courts, baseball fields, and soccer fields. A master site plan was completed for MARC in June 2010, which includes a number of recommendations for improvements.

Western Planning Region

The Western Planning Region encompasses all of the land within the City west of US Route 19. This region is comprised of two main areas: the industrial area between French Creek and US Route 19 and the Fifth Ward, west of French Creek.

Commercial/Industrial Businesses

- The Bessemer Street Industrial Park is located along French Creek off Bessemer Street. This includes a Corporate Conference and Training Center located in the main Bessemer Building.
- Ainsworth warehousing / distribution facility is located in the Fifth Ward off Rogers Ferry Road.
- Major employers within this region include Tech Molded Plastics.
- The Meadville Area Sewer Authority's Sewage Treatment Plant is the most recent development project in this region, located off Water Street and US Route 19.
- Fifth Ward Business District, which includes an auto repair shop, a restaurant, a grocery store and other miscellaneous commercial uses.
- Former Third District Elementary School is home to a tool shop and miscellaneous other commercial activities
- Lincoln Metals, recycling facility on Mead Avenue
- Erie Bearings, 2013 addition

Institutional

- The Meadville Area Sewer Authority is located at 1320 Park Avenue.

Residential

- The Fifth Ward, an older village, is a mixture of residential and commercial uses and is characterized by small lots. This area is also home to Asbury Manor East and West, two mobile home parks. Many of the structures in the neighborhood are in need of renovation.

Recreation and Open Space

- Parks and recreation areas within this region include the following:
 - * Bicentennial Park
 - ≈ Recent upgrades include a new steel roof for the log cabin and renovations to the restrooms
 - * Lincoln Avenue (Fifth Ward) Playground

Development Constraints

Specific natural resources, environmentally significant areas, and water resources within the City of Meadville were examined to not only identify the development constraints in the City, but also to ensure that all future planning efforts take into consideration the effect of development on these areas (see **Map 2.3: Development Constraints**). As not much has changed in terms of development constraints from the recent comprehensive planning efforts, the following is a summary from those previous plans.

Topography

- Meadville's elevation varies about 400 feet, with steep slopes found only in a few sections.
- Steep slopes have not been a hindrance to development in the City and development pressure on the existing steep slopes is not high due to there being flat land available elsewhere.

Floodplains

- The French Creek Floodplain is the biggest development constraint within the City.
- The flood risk has been reduced through flood control projects including the Union City Reservoir, Woodcock Dam, Tamarack Lake, and Rainbow Lake; however, they have not eliminated the problem.
- The City permits new construction in the floodway using a credit system based on north-side building frontage that existed in 1959 that has since been demolished. This allows for extensive redevelopment in the floodplain that otherwise meets the requirements of the floodplain management ordinance.

Wetlands

- Wetlands can be found near French Creek, the Meadville Area Junior/Senior High School, and Wesbury.
- The City regulates development in wetland areas by not issuing a building permit until the developer has secured applicable state and federal permits.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

While an urban area, the City does retain some undeveloped open space, much of which is located within the City park system. Prior to the 1993 Comprehensive Plan, the City had retained a forestry consultant to develop a management plan for the forested tracts within the City Parks. At that time, the City had completed management plans for Cora Clark Park and the unnamed park on Liberty Street.

Energy Conservation

Over the years, the City of Meadville has taken measures towards implementing a number of sustainable initiatives, in order to reduce operating costs and efficiently use public tax dollars. These initiatives have allowed the City to minimize its environmental footprint and enhance the overall quality of life.

- City Building Energy Efficiency– improvements to the former City building were completed in 2011 through a PA DEP Conservation Works grant, which included new indoor/outdoor lighting and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. The combined improvements were expected to reduce electricity usage by 29% and natural gas usage by 30% within the first six months, resulting in \$23,000 annual savings. In addition, the City has completed detailed energy audits at each City-owned building.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Climate Change Action Plan – in partnership with Allegheny College and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), the City completed an inventory and action plan in 2010. The plan documents carbon dioxide emissions and details recommendations on how the City can further reduce its emissions within five years.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

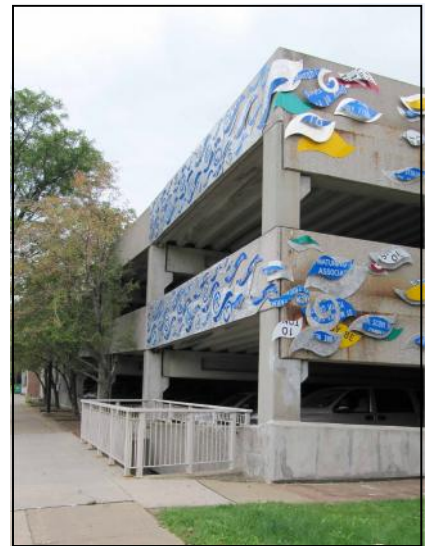
- Diamond Park Traffic Flow and Pedestrian Safety Improvements – in 2009, the City upgraded Diamond Park to replace outdated traffic signals with stop signs and installed pedestrian islands. In addition to improving safety and walkability, the renovations to Diamond Park reduced the idling time of stopped cars and eliminated the electricity needed to power traffic lights and signals.
- Biodiesel Production - Initially a collaboration with Allegheny College to study the feasibility of local bio-diesel production in 2007, it has resulted in year-round small-scale bio-fuel production in the City's Public Works Department garage. Implementing the recommendations of the feasibility study, the City invested in a small-scale production unit that converts used cooking oil from area restaurants and Allegheny College's cafeterias to clean bio-diesel that is blended with traditional diesel for use in City fleet vehicles. In the first two years of operation the City saved \$6,700 in fuel purchases and reduced the carbon emissions associated with the combustion of traditional diesel fuel. The City of Meadville's bio-diesel initiative has provided an inspiration for other municipalities who have interest in bio-diesel production as well.
- Allegheny College Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED) - The City of Meadville works closely with the CEED, which involves faculty and students in college-community partnerships that address local and regional sustainability issues. CEED's nationally recognized accomplishments stem from faculty-driven projects that begin as in-class concepts and exercises, and grow into hands-on activities combining Allegheny students with community partners to find solutions for real world problems. These partners include numerous regional agencies, government organizations, schools, businesses, and citizens' groups.
- Meadville PA: Not Your Run of the Mill Community - "Meadville PA: Not Your Run of the Mill Community" is an initiative that places Meadville's natural assets at the heart of community and economic development efforts. Mill Run, recognized as a "buried treasure" by citizens participating in a 2004 community planning meeting, is the primary focus of CEED's efforts. Mill Run, a tributary of French Creek, functioned as an industrial center during Meadville's first 100 years, brimming with busy mills and factories that had an undeniably positive economic impact for Meadville, but unfortunately negative environmental impacts. In fact, Mill Run had city gridlines superimposed on top of it, covering the creek under the business district years ago. Mill Run, which begins at Tamarack Lake and travels west to French Creek, is envisioned as a thread that will weave together a number of community and economic development projects that will transform Meadville into a model of economic, ecological and social sustainability. The following projects are part of the "Meadville: Not Your Run of the Mill Community" initiative:
 - * Environmental Assessment of Mill Run - In 2008, CEED faculty and students began working on an environmental assessment of the Mill Run Watershed. The assessment found that, from Tamarack Reservoir to Rainbow Reservoir, the waterway is impaired by various sources. This initiative is helping to guide the community towards improving the quality of Mill Run as an important environmental and community resource and as an aesthetic landscape in an urban setting.
 - * Shadybrook Park Restoration - Shadybrook Park, located on the banks of Mill Run at the foot of Rainbow Reservoir, had fallen victim to inattention and neighborhood neglect. Conveniently located near Meadville's middle-high school complex and sports facilities, Shadybrook Park presented a perfect opportunity to engage neighborhood stakeholders in its revitalization. Under CEED's leadership, the City of Meadville collaborated with Meadville Area Middle School, Meadville Area Senior High School, the Crawford County Career and Technical Center and interested citizens to renovate the park. Initial improvements began with environmentally themed murals painted on composting toilets. Further improvements included a new stormwater filtration system, landscaping, improved lighting, and an accessible trail and stairway connecting the park to South Morgan Street and Walnut Street. These improvements combined artistic and environmental efforts in order to

build a sense of “ownership” in the community surrounding the park.

- * **Market Alley** - In its original construction Market Alley was a traditional “service” alley that connected Park Avenue, now the main vehicular thoroughfare through downtown Meadville, and Market Street, home to Meadville’s historic Market House in the Central Business District. Market Alley was recognized years ago as an important link in the early conceptual planning of an Urban Pedestrian Walkway through downtown Meadville. Renovations, completed in the fall of 2011, boast a new pathway, underground electricity infrastructure and new period-style lighting. A major highlight to the project is a new footbridge over a “daylighted” section of Mill Run that treats pedestrians to the view and sounds of Mill Run. The pathway itself is comprised of blue pavers laid in an undulating pattern distinct from the typical red-brown brick of the alleyway, mimicking the flow of Mill Run through downtown. Across Park Avenue from Market Alley is a mural painted by local citizens and businesses under the direction of then Allegheny College student Berry Breene.
- * **Public Art** - In recent years downtown Meadville has come alive with the addition of several public art installations that enliven the pedestrian environment and enrich the community. The Market Alley mural, which was designed by Berry Breene (a 2007 graduate of Allegheny College) and painted by local citizens, is just one of several public art projects that adorn the walls or alleyways of downtown. The City-owned parking garage near the corner of Water and Arch Street streets flaunts blue and white waves constructed of old street signs that celebrate and highlight Mill Run which flows beneath the garage. Another mural, entitled “Park Theatre Memories” was installed in 2009 on the Clinton Court side of the former Park Theater building and depicts the theater’s heyday. The most recent project, installed in the fall of 2011, is “Blue Box Renaissance”, which was a project initiated by Devon Stout, in collaboration with Allegheny College’s Arts and Environment Initiative. The project was designed to celebrate the community and promote citizen engagement by installing 11 newspaper racks, which had been artistically redesigned, throughout downtown Meadville.



Market Alley Mural, Sustainable Meadville



CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Land Use Controls

Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance for Meadville is part of its codified ordinances. Originally enacted in 1955, the City has amended the ordinance several times, most recently in 1994. The current Ordinance divides the City into 12 zoning districts (see **Map 2.4: Zoning**), which are described in Table 2.5.

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

The City of Meadville also enforces a subdivision and land development ordinance, which has not been updated since the 1960's.

Transportation Network

Road Network

PennDOT uses a Functional Classification system to define the road network at the county level. County functional classification maps are available on PennDOT's website at www.dot.state.pa.us/Internet/Bureaus/pdPlanRes.nsf/infoBPRfunctionalclassmaps.

Interstates

The interstate system is the highest classification of arterial roads and streets, providing for the highest level of mobility and designed to accommodate large traffic volumes. While not in the City limits, Meadville is easily accessible from Interstate 79, which runs north to south.

Principal Arterial Highways

Principal arterials provide statewide or interstate travel to urbanized areas. In Meadville, the US Route 6/19/322 corridor (connecting the City to I-79) and the US 322 corridor are classified as principal arterials.

Minor Arterial Roadways

Minor arterials link cities, larger towns, and other traffic generators. Meadville is served by several minor arterials including US Route 6/19, SR 27/North Street/State Street, SR 77, Park Avenue and Baldwin Street.

Urban Collectors

Urban collectors connect populated areas to the arterial roadways. Meadville is served by many urban collectors including SR 86/Main Street, Park Avenue, Chestnut Street, Williamson Road, and Spring Street.

Other Modes of Transportation

Railroad

Norfolk Southern owns the railroad line through Meadville; however, it is operated by Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad, Inc. The line is classified as a local line haul/switching and terminal railroad. The line connects Meadville to Union City and Corry in Erie County to the north and to Franklin in the south. It also connects to the Class 1 Norfolk Southern Railway just south of Meadville (ftp://ftp.dot.state.pa.us/public/pdf/BPR_pdf_files/MAPS/Statewide/parail.PDF).

Public Transportation

The Crawford Area Transportation Authority (CATA) provides bus service in Meadville and to portions of Vernon Township. Regular routes are offered six days a week (Monday through Saturday) and shared ride services are also available.

Trails and Greenways

The Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan was completed and adopted in 2009 and examined opportunities for green space, natural habitat preservation, and recreational and open space opportunities in Crawford County. Recommendations specific to the City of Meadville included an analysis of the Ernst Trail. The existing section of the Ernst Trail is paved and runs approximately 5 miles from the Park Avenue Plaza in Meadville to Route 19. The remaining section proposed in this plan, runs from Route 19 another 6 miles to Conneaut Lake. The proposed section is still undeveloped, but is passable by hikers and mountain bikers. The trail route follows the former Meadville to Linesville Railroad corridor. The Plan recommends continued development of the trail and identifies Meadville as a possible trail town as part of its overall development of a countywide (and region-wide) trail and open space network system. The Plan also recommends the City conduct and adopt a pedestrian and bicycle feasibility study, and work with other municipalities to revitalize and reestablish the French Creek Water Trail. More broadly, the Plan identifies Meadville as part of the French Creek Greenway Corridor. Other trails within the City can be found within the City Parks.

Planned Transportation Projects

The Northwest Commission is the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) for an eight-county region in Northwest Pennsylvania, including Crawford County. As such, the Northwest Commission is responsible for establishing priority transportation needs for the region and directing funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a fiscally constrained four-year budgeting tool that directs federal and state transportation funding and is updated biannually. A project must appear on the TIP before it can receive federal or state financial support.

The federal funding year 2011 is the most current Northwest TIP, which lists the following projects in the city of Meadville:

- SR 27/North Street Connector – this project includes traffic signal upgrades, radii improvements, signage and drainage improvements, and a new roadway for SR 27/North Street. This project is slated for construction funding during fiscal years 2011-2013. Total project cost for 2011-2014 is \$8,168,000.
- Mead Avenue Bridge Replacement – this project includes the replacement of the Mead Avenue Bridge over French Creek. This project is slated for construction funding during fiscal years 2013-2014 and into the next four year cycle. Total project cost for 2011-2014 is \$8,230,000.

Administration & Services

Municipal Services

The following departments comprise the City's core municipal service functions:

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Public Works / Parks and Recreation
- Parking

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

- Zoning and Building/Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement
- City Treasurer
- Receiver of Taxes
- City Clerk
- Payroll
- City Manager
- Health Office
- Finance Department

City Administration

The City of Meadville is a third class city with an optional charter/council-manager form of government. The manager is appointed by City Council, who runs the day-to-day operations of the City. There are four council members that serve four year terms, as well as a Mayor. The City Clerk's office provides the Council with staff support. Council meetings are held twice a month in Council Chambers. Council also holds work sessions as needed.

The City millage in 2013 for property taxes was set at 20.42. Currently over 40 percent of property in the City is tax exempt, which is a very high number for a municipality. This is due to the fact that the City is the Crawford County seat; therefore many government offices are located within its boundaries. The City is also home to Allegheny College and Meadville Medical Center, both of which have tax exempt status. However, both facilities make a gift to the City. In 2012, the college and medical center pledged \$40,000 and \$75,000 respectively. In 2013, the colleges' pledge increased to \$65,000, while the medical center remained at \$75,000.

The City has several board and commissions, as shown on Table 2.6 whose members are appointed by City Council.

Table 2.5: Zoning Districts within the City of Meadville

Zoning District	Purpose	Permitted Uses
R-1 Single-Family Residential	Foster single-family residences on individual lots. Other uses will be permitted where they do not adversely affect the integrity of single-family houses	Single-family dwellings; public parks; essential services, accessory uses and buildings, family day care homes, home-based businesses
R-2 Multiple-Family Residential	Facilitate flexibility in housing types. A wide variety of housing types are permitted.	Single-family dwellings; two-family dwellings; multi-family dwellings; public and private schools; public parks; essential services; accessory uses and buildings; family day care homes; churches; student dwelling units; home-based businesses
R-3 Special Purpose Residential Note: This section may be removed with the next Zoning amendments.	Intended primarily for flexible housing options.	Single-family detached dwellings; parks; family day care homes; accessory uses and buildings; churches; public and private schools; home-based businesses
T-1 Transitional	Allows for flexibility among specified business and residential uses. Will allow neighborhoods with pressure for change to evolve with the lowest impact possible to all uses	Single-family residential; public and private schools; public parks; essential services; accessory uses and buildings; family day care homes; group day care homes; bed and breakfast; rooming houses; professional offices; home businesses; two-family dwellings; churches; multi-family dwellings; civic/cultural buildings; parking lots; personal care homes; medical / dental clinics; student dwelling units
I-1 Institutional Core	Safeguard the public spaces which form the historical heart of Meadville to provide sound stewardship for places which belong to all citizens.	Parks / playgrounds; public and private schools; churches; single family dwellings; two-family dwellings; professional offices; cultural/ civic uses; essential services; accessory uses and buildings; home based businesses
I-2 Institutional Medical	Foster and facilitate the medical and health care facilities which contribute to the local economy and well-being of the city's residents	Parks / playgrounds; bed and breakfast; home businesses; hospitals; health services; medical and dental clinics; health care facility; single family dwellings; two-family dwellings; accessory uses and buildings; essential services; group day care homes; family day care homes; parking lots / garages; personal care homes; professional offices; nursing homes; churches; public and private schools
I-3 Special Institutional	Provide a combination of housing and care needs to elderly persons in an institutional and retirement setting and provide for convenient services.	Single family dwellings; two-family dwellings; personal care homes; nursing homes; churches; essential services; accessory uses and buildings; family day care homes; group day care homes; multiple family dwellings; public and private schools; limited retail; drug stores; medical/dental clinics; gymnasiums
I-4 Educational Institutional	Further the goals of varied and exemplary education for local citizens at all ages and levels.	Day care (all types); public and private schools; dormitories; parks and playgrounds; civic/cultural buildings; single family dwellings; accessory uses and buildings; churches; essential services; parking lots; medical / dental clinics; professional offices; gymnasium; student dwelling units
B-1 Central Business	Foster a variety of retail and service business uses in a traditional downtown setting.	Financial institutions; retail business (NEC); personal services; restaurants; civic/cultural buildings; medical/dental clinics; parking garages and lots; public parks; health services; churches; private clubs and social halls; taverns / bars; bed and breakfast; public and private schools; theaters; essential services; accessory uses and buildings; inn; light repair services; gymnasium
B-2 General Business	Foster a variety of retail and service business uses in an auto-oriented setting.	Financial institutions; retail businesses (NEC); personal services; restaurants; professional offices; civic and cultural uses; medical and dental clinics; parking lots and garages; parks; health services; churches; laundry and dry cleaning; private clubs and social halls; taverns and bars; bed and breakfast; public and private schools; theaters; essential services; accessory buildings and uses; car washes; light repair services
B-3 Flexible Business	Provide a broad base of flexibility for small business corridors separated from the downtown or French Creek development corridor. Uses encouraged here especially contribute to the reuse of vacant or under-utilized buildings and properties.	Light manufacturing; laboratory ; parks; parking lots and garages; essential services; accessory buildings and uses; professional offices; medical and dental clinics; public utility buildings; churches; public and private schools
EDC Economic Development Corridor	This district is established to encourage the location and expansion of large-scale highway-dependent businesses through the corridor of the French Creek Parkway	Light manufacturing; commercial bakeries; commercial laundries; laboratory/research facilities; rental services and equipment; agricultural services; shopping centers; retail businesses (NEC); parks; laundry and dry cleaning; parking lots and garages; essential services; accessory buildings and uses; light repair services; car washes; gymnasium; commercial recreation; medical and dental clinics; civic/cultural buildings; professional offices; health services; professional services; financial institutions; restaurants; churches; public and private schools

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Table 2.6: Boards and Commissions in the City of Meadville

Name	Members	Term	Purpose
Beautification Committee	7 members	3 years	Examines aesthetic issues and selects the Homer A. Thornton Award winners for properties that have made significant beautification improvements. The board also administers the Eells Trust to enhance the right of ways and public properties.
Board of Health	Meadville City Council		Responsible for all health issues in the City. The Health Officer is the agent for the Board of Health.
Civil Service Commission	3 members	4 years	Ensures the maintenance of a personnel system for City employment.
Codes Appeal Board	3 members; 3 alternates	3 years	Listens to appeals of orders issued by the Code Official of construction and property maintenance codes
Housing Authority	5 members	5 years	Provides public housing assistance programs for William Gill Village, Holland Towers, Elmwood Villages, and Morgan Villages.
Market House Authority	7 members	5 years	Responsible for operations, management, and promotion of the Meadville Market House. The market master is in charge of the daily operations.
Meadville Area Recreation Authority	12 members	5 years	Includes members from the City of Meadville and West Mead and Vernon Townships who are responsible for directing the operations, management, maintenance, and promotion. An Executive Director is in charge of the daily operations.
Meadville Redevelopment Authority	5 members	5 years	Promotes the redevelopment of abandoned or unused sites or structures. Staff administers the CDBG program.
Meadville Area Sewer Authority	5 members	5 years	Includes members from Meadville and West Mead Township. Responsible for sanitary sewer service in Meadville and parts of West Mead and Vernon Townships.
Meadville Area Water Authority	7 members	5 years	Responsible for overseeing the public water supply delivery system. American Water Services manages the day to day operations of the system.
Planning and Zoning Commission	7 members	4 years	Makes recommendations to Council on subdivision requests, zoning amendments, and other planning issues. They also are in charge of developing the Comprehensive Plan, Parks Master Plan, or Zoning Ordinance.
Shade Tree Commission	5 members	5 years	Determines how the Shade Tree budget will be allocated. The budget is for planting, removing, and trimming street trees. Other programs include a Street Tree Inventory, Treasured Tree Program, and the annual Arbor Day Ceremony. The commission also utilizes the Memorial Tree Fund in addition to their budget.
Streetscape Review Committee	5 members	5 years	Consists of a member of the Planning Commission, member of Shade Tree Commission, member of the Beautification Committee and two members of the community at large. Reviews the aesthetic aspect of construction projects.
Zoning Hearing Board	5 members, 3 alternates	3 years	Hears appeals, variances, and special exception requests of the zoning ordinance.

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT



At its core, the Comprehensive Plan seeks to answer the question, what does the community want? It is important to remember that a Comprehensive Plan belongs not just to the elected officials who will be in charge of implementing it, or to the Steering Committee who helped develop it, but to the larger community as a whole. It is to be a reflection of the City and meant to provide recommendations to address the needs facing the community that threaten the vitality of its future. One of the first exercises completed was to ask the community to identify what they see as their community's assets and challenges.

Assets are typically those elements that contribute to the quality of life. They help create a distinct sense of place and can be used as a foundation on which to build. Assets can also act as major attractions for visitors or potential new residents. Assets are those qualities that you want to see maintained, protected, and used as catalysts for future planning. The following were identified for Meadville:

- Educational institutions (Allegheny College, Crawford Central Area School District, Crawford County Career, Precision Manufacturing Institute, Laurel Technical Institute, and Technology Center)
- Downtown Meadville (Park Avenue, Downtown Mall, Market House)
- The Diamond
- Home to major employers (Channellock Inc., Tech Tool, C&J Industries, etc.)
- Streetscape improvements
- Community facilities (Crawford County Courthouse, City Hall, Meadville Medical Center, Meadville Public Library)
- Public art program (murals, local artists)
- Ongoing redevelopment and building reuse
- Natural resources (French Creek)
- Vibrant neighborhoods and sound housing stock
- Parks and recreation (MARC, Bicentennial Park)

Challenges are the opposite of assets. They can negatively influence a resident or visitor's experience in a community or pose a threat to a community's future. Challenges are those things that you want to pay special attention to in the plan. Challenges may or may not have an obvious solution, but it is important to identify them regardless of their complexity. The following were identified for Meadville:

- Aesthetics and appearance of corridors and sites
- Code violations and property maintenance
- High percentage of tax exempt property
- Vacant commercial buildings
- Road and transportation network maintenance
- Park maintenance



CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Public Participation

The most effective Comprehensive Plans are driven by real issues. Therefore, this section will include the overall Vision of the City of Meadville and a summary of priority issues and identified assets and challenges. The Needs Assessment is a culmination of input received from the public involvement process and will help set the stage for the Action Plan.

Public involvement is key to any planning process. Without hearing the concerns of the residents of Meadville, the planning process can not realize its full potential. The public involvement process was transparent and inclusive from the beginning. Residents and stakeholders were asked what they liked about their community, what they would change, and if they wanted to be involved. When the public is involved from the beginning, they are more likely to be invested throughout the entire process. Hopefully this type of public involvement will leave the City with not only a plan for action but a community that is ready and willing to implement the plan.

The following is a summary of the types of public outreach activities utilized as part of the planning process:

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee met regularly to help guide the process, identify key stakeholders, review plan documents, and prioritize needs and recommendations. The committee consisted of the city planning commission, city staff, city council, and the Meadville Redevelopment Authority (a full list of committee members is located on the Acknowledgements page at the beginning of this plan).

Focus Groups

A total of four meetings were held with two stakeholder groups to specifically discuss identified issues and related recommendations. The initial meeting was used to discuss the issues, their relevance to the City and / or particular neighborhood and preliminary ways they could be addressed. Recommendations were then presented for discussion at a follow up meeting. Attendees at the second meeting were also asked to rank the recommendations in terms of priority. The two focus group meetings that were held were housing, and economic development. A list of those invited to the focus group meetings as well as meeting summaries can be found in **Appendix A**.

Youth Workshop

The Youth Workshop consisted of nine students from Meadville Area Senior High School. The participants were a mix of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The students participated in three different exercises. The first exercise asked students to list their favorite place to live, why they want to live there, and how it is similar to Meadville. The second exercise consisted of the students drawing a map of Meadville that included all the places that are important to them, that they visit or have special meaning. On the map they were also asked to identify places that are attractive and those that are unattractive. The third exercise focused on identifying improvements within the City of Meadville. A summary of the meeting as well as a list of attendees can be found in **Appendix A**.

Allegheny College Students

Committee members (along with the project consultant) spent a half day at the Student Union on the campus of Allegheny College in order to gather feedback from students regarding what they felt were Meadville's strengths and issues that should be addressed in the plan. Students were also given the opportunity to complete an online survey regarding these items as well.

Stakeholder Interviews

In order to gather information for the community snapshot as well as further determine needs and opportunities key stakeholders were contacted either through a mailed survey or a face-to-face interview. The local knowledge of these stakeholders enabled them to provide valuable insight into the planning process. The stakeholders included municipal service providers such as police, fire, water and sewer, the library, public works, etc. and leaders of major institutions within the City such as Allegheny College, Meadville Medical Center, Wesbury, Crawford County, and the Crawford Central School District. A full list of the stakeholders who participated in the process is located in **Appendix A**.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are crucial in gaining insight into how residents, business owners, and others feel about their community. In order to gain as much input as possible, two public meetings were held for the Comprehensive Plan. A summary of both public meetings can be found in **Appendix B**.

Public Meeting #1

At the beginning of the process an open house was held to introduce the Comprehensive Plan update to the public. The meeting was designed to gather information from those living and working in Meadville regarding the City's major assets, challenges and opportunities. The information gathered at this meeting helped in formulating the issues that were used to build the Comprehensive Plan. Meeting attendees were also asked to complete a survey regarding what they liked most about Meadville and what they felt were the biggest issues or obstacles facing the City. Approximately 116 people attended the open house.

Public Meeting #2

A final open house was held near the end of the process, after the recommendations were drafted. This meeting provided an opportunity for residents to visit various stations to prioritize recommendations. Meeting attendees were given money and were asked to spend their money on the recommendations that they felt were a priority for the City. They could spend all of their money on one recommendation or spread it out among several different recommendations. Meeting attendees were also given the opportunity to rank action items through a paper or online survey (the online survey was made available to anyone, even if they did not attend the meeting). Approximately 25 people attended the open house.

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Meadville 2025

The primary goal of a vision statement is to provide a focus for the community and something to strive for. A vision statement should satisfy (at least) the following three purposes:

- City Boards, Commissions and staff will use it to provide guidance in determining the priority and degree of evaluation of potential projects.
- City employees will be guided in the provision of quality municipal services.
- Most importantly, the Council, its advisory bodies and the community-as-a-whole will proceed with a common understanding of the quality of life values or themes that will shape our community for years to come. With that in mind, the following was created to guide Meadville over the next ten years.

CITY OF MEADVILLE VISION STATEMENT

In the year 2025, the City of Meadville will continue to be recognized for its integrity, productivity and prosperity; demonstrating how sound planning leads to a vibrant future.

Integrity...a City of municipal officials and community leaders who work closely with their citizens to ensure the highest quality of life in terms of municipal services, recreational opportunities, housing choices, and economic development.

Productivity... a City that is a County Seat, home to major employers and facilities such as Allegheny College and Meadville Medical Center and thriving industrial and business communities; making it the center of employment for the surrounding region.

Prosperity...a City of innovation which offers arts and culture, institutions of learning and higher education, active and passive parks and recreation, a flourishing downtown center, unique residential neighborhoods, and entrepreneurs and small business owners; creating a strong and welcoming sense of place for residents and visitors.

Community Development Objectives

Building upon the vision, a set of community development objectives (CDO) were established for the Comprehensive Plan. For each CDO, assets and challenges were identified, providing a baseline from which to develop recommendations.

The City of Meadville is fortunate to be home to a wide variety of business and industry sectors, major institutions, county and regional facilities, social and recreational opportunities and affordable housing stock. Any plan to improve conditions in the City needs to begin by identifying the assets.

After identifying the assets, the next step is to document the issues that face the community along with any potential challenges or obstacles to attracting new opportunities.

CDO #1: EXPAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES AND INCREASING NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S TAX BASE.

Asset = Quality of Life

One of the first things most people say they like about living or working in Meadville is that the quality of life is fantastic. The city is a center for arts and culture, has a vibrant downtown business district, home to a nationally known institution of higher education, healthy neighborhoods, and great municipal services.

Asset = Location

Meadville is easily accessible via Interstate 79 and US Route 322, served by rail, and located within two hours of metropolitan areas such as Erie, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Buffalo as well as Niagara Falls and Toronto.

Asset = Major Employers

Of the top 50 employers in Crawford County, 17 are either located in or have a presence in the City, including:

- #1 Meadville Medical Center
- #2 State Government (DPW, DEP, DOH)
- #3 Crawford County (courthouse)
- #4 Crawford Central School District
- #7 Allegheny College
- #8 Channellock Inc.
- #12 Wesbury United Methodist Retirement Community
- #17 Ainsworth Pet Nutrition
- #19 C&J Industries



Asset = Organizations/Resources

An advantage that Meadville has over many similar-sized cities is the presence of many economic development organizations. This provides an organizational capacity to attract new business and industry, retain existing, and address needs and make improvements. The following organizations operate within the region:

- Meadville-Western Crawford County Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Progress Alliance of Crawford County
- Allegheny College's Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED)
- The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Meadville
- Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission
- Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Northwest Office
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Gannon University, Meadville Office

Asset = Programs

The presence of these economic development agencies also provides the ability to offer incentives and programs that can help increase economic activity. The following programs are offered within the City:

- LERTA – available citywide for commercial properties that increase their assessed value by 25% or greater
- Enterprise Zone – low interest loans for properties within the boundary of the zone
- Revolving Loan Fund – available through the Redevelopment Authority, for commercial businesses in the City
- Crawford County Industrial Development Authority – low interest loans

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Challenge = Marketing

One common issue that was discussed throughout the planning process was the need for additional marketing. Residents, in general, did not feel that they were fully aware of what is happening in the City. Offering additional events and programs was also mentioned as a need or challenge.

Challenge = Capitalize on the Student Market

Approximately 40 students at Allegheny College were surveyed regarding their opinions on downtown Meadville.

- 80% of the students visit downtown on at least a weekly basis
- Most go there for either shopping or restaurants
- Additional retail opportunities would attract the students more
- Incentives such as student discounts would encourage them to go downtown more
- Email was identified as the best way to advertise events, followed by Facebook

Challenge = Signage

Existing signage needs to be improved and additional signage is needed. For example, there are no signs detailing the National Register Historic District in downtown Meadville.

Challenge = Funding

One of the major challenges facing developers, business owners and entrepreneurs is the lack of funding. While this is not unique to Meadville, it is something that needs to be noted. The lack of asset based or prospective loans as well as the banks' reluctance to loan money to entrepreneurial type businesses makes it very difficult to get a business started.

Challenge = Lack of Skilled Workers

Several specialty companies have noted that finding skilled workers in the local area is a challenge.

Challenge = Housing

While there are very nice neighborhoods located within the City, there are a number of streets and neighborhoods where the housing stock presents a significant challenge. This is due to a number of reasons, including age of the housing stock and absentee landlords who do not take care of their property. The costs of existing alternative living choices such as upper story residential apartments in the downtown are cost prohibitive for most people, especially younger workers. Recommendations for this issue will be covered under CDO #4.



CDO #2: REVITALIZE THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BY ADDRESSING AESTHETICS, PARKING AND VACANT/ UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES.

The City's Central Business District is roughly bounded by North Street, Main Street, Arch Street, and Route 19/ French Creek Parkway.



Asset = Business District Action Plan Implementation (BDAP)

The BDAP was adopted by City Council and updated in 2007 as part of the Central Crawford Regional Comprehensive Plan. Since the adoption of the BDAP, the City has taken several implementation steps including the following:

- Applied for Main Street funding
- Led the redevelopment process for the Erie Bank Building
- Added street furniture to the Downtown Mall Water Street entrance
- Drafted updated zoning language for the I-1, B-1, and B-2 zoning districts
- Completed the Market Alley Pedestrian Walkway, which features a pedestrian bridge over Mill Run including sidewalks, curb ramps, brick paving, lighting, and planter boxes

Asset = Recent Redevelopment Projects

Over the past few years, there have been several development/re-use projects within the Central Business District.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Town Homes on Walnut Street and Center Street | • @ The Bank Building | • Robert Smith Parking Lot |
| • Kepler Building | • Commercial condos on Market Street | • Voodoo Brewery |
| • Erie Bank | • Founders House | • Market Alley |
| • DEP Building and Parking Ramp | • Armory Building | |

Asset = Streetscape Improvements

The 2007 BDAP included conceptual renderings of targeted streetscape improvement areas. Targeted areas identified include Water Street, North Main Street, North Street, and Park Avenue.

The City of Meadville recently completed small streetscape improvements along Park Avenue including lighting, sidewalks, cement intersections, Cherry Alley, brick and curbing. As development projects occur, more improvements will be made.

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Challenge = Need a “theme” for downtown

Many cities and towns have unique themes that are capitalized upon in the appearance of their downtowns. For example, Hershey PA has streetlights shaped like Hershey kisses.

The 2007 BDAP recommended that the City create a logo or branding that can be used throughout the downtown to create a thematic design. It can be used on streetscape banners, gateways, and public art. The City’s tree logo is an example that could be used in a design.



Conceptual plan for North Main Street at Loomis (source: 2007 BDAP)

Challenge = Appearance of Gateways

Gateways are entryways into a community or downtown that welcome residents and visitors.

A gateway should not just identify the place, but should reflect the local identity or theme and include signing to direct people to what lies ahead. The 2007 BDAP recommended improving the Arch Street gateway, which is the main entrance into the business district from Route 19 / French Creek Parkway. In addition, the plan notes that Water Street is a continuation of that gateway, which lacks in pedestrian friendliness. Water Street is lined with the Downtown Mall on one side and similar windowless brick buildings on the other.

Challenge = Lack of Parking

Parking is a problem in almost every community. Whether it is lack of parking, high parking costs, or the location of parking lots and garages, it is almost always a complaint amongst residents and merchants. In Meadville, the issue among residents appears to be not enough parking in the immediate downtown retail core. The Downtown Meadville Parking Study completed by Desman Associates in 2008 does show that there is enough parking, so the issue may be location or lack of signage.

The 2007 BDAP recommended a kiosk sign and additional wayfinding signs throughout the downtown to direct people to the public parking locations.

Challenge = Vacant storefronts/buildings

One of the biggest challenges facing the downtown of Meadville is the prevalence of vacant storefronts and buildings. The following list identifies structures or areas with vacancies that are in need of renovation or redevelopment:

- Lincoln Avenue – vacant commercial buildings
- 257 Chestnut Street – Eldred Building
- Former Sandy’s European Marketplace building/ gas station
- State Street – vacant commercial
- Water Street – former Humphreys dry cleaner

CDO #3: PROVIDE A DIVERSE MIX OF HOUSING OPTIONS THAT WILL APPEAL TO ALL RESIDENTS.

The City of Meadville has been gradually losing population since 1960. One of the overall goals is to attract new residents to live in Meadville by showcasing all that the City has to offer. A big part of attracting new residents is offering the types of housing choices that people today find desirable.

Asset = Safe Community

Meadville is a safe community. According to City-data.com, Meadville had a crime index of 139.6 in 2010, compared to 347.4 for Erie and 311.4 for the United States (higher numbers mean more crime). In addition, the majority of crime in Meadville is property crime rather than violent crime. Of all serious crimes, thefts comprised the majority (78%), while burglaries (16%), assaults (3%), and other crimes comprised the remainder.



Asset = College Town

Home to Allegheny College, Meadville is a college town. College towns offer a different way of life than cities or towns of a similar size. They are typically vibrant and full of creative energy and culture.

College towns also attract retirees. In fact, Joseph M. Lubow wrote a book titled “Choose a College Town for Retirement” in 1999 that discussed the many benefits of moving to a college town. He provided the following standards for how to choose a college town:

- The town had to be a distinct community.
- There had to be at least one college or university that could be seen as a major focus of community life.
- There had to be a hospital, preferably a medical center serving a region.
- There had to be a cultural center, which could be the college itself.
- There had to be parks or open space and recreational areas.
- There had to be a senior center or programs for seniors.
- At least one college in the town had to offer educational opportunities to adults, preferably to seniors in particular.
- A government, chamber of commerce, college, church or other organization had to hold events that brought the community out of their homes to interact together. This could be a street fair, concerts in the park, historical celebrations or any other form of recreation.
- There needed to be a cultural life. It could take the form of museums, music performances, theatre arts, or dance, and the groups or performances should have a student/faculty or community component.
- The town's location should be beautiful, the streets pleasant to walk, and the people friendly.

Meadville meets all of the above standards and offers a wonderful opportunity to retirees looking for a small college town in northwestern Pennsylvania. Meadville is also fortunate to be home to Wesbury Retirement Community.

Asset = Low Cost of Living

Meadville offers affordable living in a small city. Estimated housing values in 2009 were \$96,624 compared to \$164,700 for Pennsylvania. The average selling price of homes in 2010 and 2011 was around \$80,000 (www.city-data.com/Meadville-Pennsylvania.html). Property taxes are low, with the median tax of \$2,109 in 2012.

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Asset = Location

As stated earlier, Meadville is easily accessible via Interstate 79 and US Route 322 and located within two hours of Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Buffalo and Canada. People living in Meadville can easily access the larger metropolitan markets; however, they can live in a small city in a rural setting. Therefore, Meadville offers the best of both worlds.

Asset = Existing Organizations

Similar to the Economic Development Organizations, the City has access to a number of organizations specializing in Housing. As part of the Comprehensive Plan process, these organizations along with local developers, landlords and real estate agents were invited to participate in a series of focus groups to help identify issues and related recommendations regarding housing in Meadville. This group expressed an interest in continuing the meetings after the plan is complete to keep the dialogue going and to help address some of the housing issues.

Challenge = Gaps in Housing Choices

During the planning process several focus groups were held with housing professionals (real estate agents, developers, etc.) who identified several types of housing choices that they felt Meadville is lacking. Some of these gaps are a result of the age of the housing stock; however it is something that will need to be addressed in order to attract new residents into the community.

- Executive housing – residential options for executives / upper income professionals working at the large industrial businesses, the hospital and the college, among others.
- Middle class rentals – single family rental options for young residents who may not want or be able to buy a home, also options for families experiencing foreclosures who still want to live in a single family home and not an apartment.
- Good quality rentals – the overall quality of a lot of rental units is considered poor.
- First floor units (for people with mobility issues) – residential options for people who are older or who may have some mobility issue.
- Affordable upper story housing in Downtown Meadville – while there are some housing options in the Downtown, most are too expensive for younger workers or middle class residents and renovations are often difficult due to code requirements and constraints
- Mixed income developments – residential developments that offer both market rate and subsidized or affordable options.

Challenge = Lack of Funding

Similar to other topics, public funding for residential development is scarce. Residential projects are going to have to be driven by private investment.

Challenge = Lack of data

Data on housing needs and the types of people that are experiencing difficulty finding housing are not readily available according to housing professionals. It is difficult for them to predict or meet needs when they are not sure of the entire problem.

Challenge = Closing of Neighborhood Schools

Due to cuts in funding and decreasing enrollment numbers, the school district has been forced to close neighborhood schools. Most recently, the East End School was closed after the 2011-2012 school year. Neighborhood schools that can be walked to are an asset for a community in terms of attracting families.

CDO #4: INCREASE REHABILITATION EFFORTS AND CODE ENFORCEMENT IN TARGETED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

Within Meadville, the housing stock is much older than that of its rural counterparts. As a result, a priority of the City's is to focus on rehabilitation efforts as well as code enforcement in various neighborhoods.

Asset = City Code Enforcement Office

Meadville employs two part time code inspectors who are responsible for exterior code enforcement, while six fire department captains and lieutenants handle interior code enforcement as part of their overall duties. The code enforcement office administers property maintenance codes, the Uniform Construction Code (UCC), fire code (through annual inspections of commercial properties), zoning, inspections of retail food facilities and inspections of bed and breakfast/rooming houses. The office also houses plumbers.

Asset = Meadville Redevelopment Authority

The Meadville Redevelopment Authority is responsible for promoting the redevelopment of abandoned or underused sites and administers the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) in the city. The Redevelopment Authority, in cooperation with City Administration, has identified the South Main Street as a target area for CDBG and slum and blight monies. In the last several years, the Redevelopment Authority has partnered with other housing and government agencies, primarily in the areas of acquisition, demolition and grants administration, on renovation and construction of housing units for low- to moderate-income residents. Among these projects are:

- The duplex on Willow and South Main streets (new construction)
- Willow Street—a few houses (renovations)
- Liberty House (new construction)

Asset = Elm Street Plan

The City did complete an Elm Street Plan in 2011. While there is no additional state funding at this time to implement the plan, the City does have the recommendations in place and can look for alternate funding to take the plan forward.

Challenge = Age of Housing Stock

One challenge that faces almost every city and town is the age of the housing stock. Cities and towns have older homes than their suburban counterparts. Over 76% of the homes in Meadville were constructed prior to 1960, with over 40% before 1939. Older homes, while offering character and charm, often cause homeowners to pay higher costs for heating and cooling and overall maintenance. This can sometimes discourage prospective buyers and cause homes to be vacant longer and fall into a state of disrepair.

However, 52 new single-family housing units were constructed in Meadville since 2000, at an average cost between \$110,000 and \$160,000. This figure is higher than cities of a similar size and composition (compared to 44 in Washington, PA).

Challenge = Property Maintenance

Property maintenance issues plague many communities, particularly in areas with older housing. Poor property maintenance can detract from the overall appearance of a neighborhood and/or community, even if the actual housing



CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

stock is sound and well maintained. Issues identified in some Meadville neighborhoods include:

- Shopping carts
- Parking on lawns
- Garbage cans left out
- Condition of sidewalks (maintenance and missing sections)

Interviews with the City Code Enforcement Office revealed that the biggest issues regarding code enforcement include the following:

- High grass
- Snow removal on sidewalks
- Sidewalk maintenance
- Poor exterior maintenance such as gutters, fascia, peeling paint, rotting wood, etc.
- Interior living conditions such as plumbing, sanitation, and lack of heat or water.

Challenge = High Rental Population

Over half of all occupied housing units in Meadville are occupied by renters (57%); however, it is not a large result of being a college town. Allegheny College requires all underclassmen to live on campus; only seniors are permitted to live off campus (approximately 500 students). While not all renters are an issue, the high rental population causes concern regarding lack of pride or ownership in the community.

Challenge = Absentee Landlords

In communities with high rental populations, absentee landlords can become an issue. Oftentimes, this leads to property maintenance issues, structural neglect, and other concerns. Residents in Meadville identified the large number of absentee landlords as being a concern, particularly when combined with the high rental population. Interviews with the City's Code Enforcement Department stated that the general upkeep of vacant properties is an issue related to absentee landlords, including lawn care, snow removal, exterior maintenance, structural issues, broken windows, and an increased frequency of landlord-tenant problems.

Challenge = Not a good Return on Investment for developers to buy and renovate single family homes

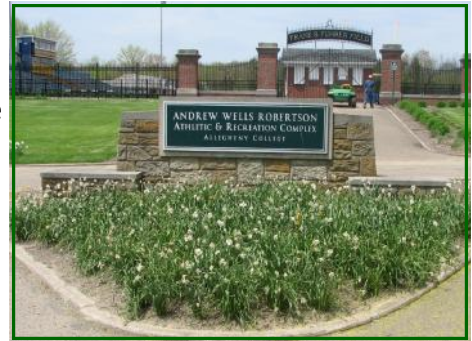
There are a number of single family homes that are in a state of disrepair that could be purchased and rehabbed, either for rent or sale. Discussions with developers revealed, however, that the cost of the purchase and rehab is so high that they would not be able to recoup their costs let alone make a profit on these types of properties.

CDO #5: INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL ENTITIES SUCH AS CRAWFORD COUNTY, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE, MEADVILLE MEDICAL CENTER, WESBURY, ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, LOCAL FOR-PROFITS AND OTHERS TO ESTABLISH MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS.

Asset = Allegheny College

Allegheny College is a tremendous asset to the City from a number of different perspectives. The college provides additional people living in the City (both students and faculty) as well as visiting friends, parents, etc. The students also volunteer in the community and partner with MMC and the school district on an intern program.

There are challenges as well, however, because they are tax exempt and the City feels that the students and families do not regularly visit their retail businesses in the downtown. The college does provide a yearly stipend to the City in lieu of taxes. Most recently for 2013 their pledge was \$65,000.



Asset = Meadville Medical Center

The Meadville Medical Center (MMC) offers world class quality services delivered conveniently to local residents at many locations. MMC provides inpatient and outpatient medical services; surgery; therapeutic services; emergency and urgent care in addition to numerous physicians' offices and health clinics. Recent projects include renovating 766 Liberty Street to open a new low income dental clinic and the renovation of a North Main Street building into a Dermatology Institute. MMC employs approximately 1,300 fulltime staff and utilizes approximately 300 volunteers. Priorities for the next ten years include addressing government funding cuts, training/retraining key staff, and matching facilities and services to continue meeting the community's needs. Currently MMC meets on a monthly basis with the College, the School District and the City to discuss issues and partnerships that are needed and/or beneficial. They also provide a voluntary gift to the City as well as free physicals to City staff.

Asset = County Seat

Due to the fact that Meadville is the Crawford County Seat, there are many people that come in to the City to work and use services. This provides the City with additional people on a daily basis who can patronize the City's businesses.

Asset = Wesbury

For over 90 years, Wesbury has been providing quality care and services to retirees. This is a great asset to Meadville, especially in terms of attracting additional people to live in the community. The presence of Wesbury and Allegheny College could help to make Meadville a destination for retirees.



Asset = Meadville Public Library

The Meadville Public Library serves approximately 600 to 900 people per day. They employ 11 full time and 15 part time staff and utilize approximately 15-20 volunteers per month. The Library partners with Crawford County Federated Library System and provides IT and electronic services to the 11 member libraries. They have also partnered with the United Way, Crawford Central School District, the Chamber of Commerce, and Allegheny College in the past. Issues facing the Library over the next ten years include:

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Lack of parking – the Diamond area offers limited parking for short-time users
- Funding – state funding cuts threaten the viability of the Library in the future
- Aging facility – need to adapt a 20th century library to meet 21st century needs

Challenge = County may move facilities out of Diamond Square

The County is considering moving some of its functions out of Diamond Square into the Talon Building on Pine Street. This will affect the City on a number of levels including local retail and restaurant businesses.

Challenge = Large number of tax exempt organizations in the City

While having institutions like Allegheny College, Wesbury and MMC in the City and being the County Seat are assets, there are also challenges associated with these. The first is that much of the property owned by these entities is tax exempt, which poses a financial challenge for the City. However, several do provide stipends (see the Allegheny College asset). Secondly, with so many organizations operating in the City it is often difficult to know what each is doing and how various programs may fit together because each have separate missions and funding sources. This is difficult for the public to understand, especially when several seem to have the same goals.

Challenge = Lack of current assessment

The last countywide property assessment was completed in the 1960s and no new assessment is currently planned. This is an issue in that properties are undervalued and the county / city is not receiving adequate taxes based on current value.

Challenge = Formal partnerships with surrounding municipalities

While there are informal agreements with various City departments, including mutual aid agreements for fire service, there are no formal or cost sharing agreements. This is something that the City would like to explore, but has had difficulty in obtaining cooperation with surrounding municipalities.

Challenge = Expanding the services of the Council of Governments

Meadville does belong to the French Creek Council of Governments (COG). This COG is made up of representatives from the City; the Crawford County Commissioners; Crawford Central School District; the townships of Woodcock, West Mead, East Mead, Sadsbury, Cambridge and Vernon; Meadville Area Water Authority and others. While the COG does meet on a quarterly basis, it does not have a paid staff and funding is limited. The basic functions include sharing equipment and costs of buying supplies.

CDO #6: ENCOURAGE A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT INCORPORATES UPGRADES TO TRANSPORTATION ROUTES, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS.

Asset = Ernst Trail

The existing section of the Ernst Trail is paved and runs approximately 5 miles from the Park Avenue Plaza in Meadville to Route 19. The remaining section proposed in this plan, runs from Route 19 another 6 miles to Conneaut Lake. The proposed section is still undeveloped, but is passable by hikers and mountain bikers. The trail route follows the former Meadville to Linesville Railroad corridor. The French Creek Recreational Trail group plans to extend the Ernst Trail an additional distance approximately 2 miles west to Bailey Road in Vernon Township by the spring of 2013 and is exploring options to bring the trail into the City near Bicentennial Park.

Asset = Sidewalk Network

Meadville is served by a sidewalk network throughout the majority of the City, with the exception of the Northern Planning Region.

The condition and maintenance of some sidewalks does present a challenge, however. Most of the intersections currently have ADA-compliant curb ramps and all will be compliant by 2016.



Asset= Crawford Area Transportation Authority (CATA)

Meadville is fortunate to have a public transit agency serving its population. CATA provides bus service as well as door-to-door transportation options.

Challenge = Connect Allegheny College to Downtown

One of the main challenges identified with regards to transportation is a lack of a bicycle and/or pedestrian connection between Allegheny College and the downtown. Approximately 40 students at Allegheny College were surveyed, part of which asked about connectivity between the College and the downtown. The responses include the following:

- Bike riding is difficult with no bike lanes
- A trail connecting campus to the downtown would be ideal, particularly something more scenic than either North Main Street or Park Avenue
- Connect Diamond Park to the Ernst Trail via a bike lane

Challenge = Increase Pedestrian and Bicycle Opportunities

With an ever-increasing focus on pedestrian and bicycle connections, Meadville is looking to identify opportunities to establish enhanced connections not only within the City, but to the larger region. The following opportunities were noted as possibilities:

- Connect Woodcock, Tamarack, Log Cabin, Market House, Shadybrook Park and college with trails
- Connect Ernst Trail to Downtown Meadville and MARC
- Connect French Creek Trail to Ernst – would provide good mobility around town
- Bike lanes needed on North Main, Park Avenue, Water Street and Chestnut Street
- Bike racks installed in or around the Water Street parking deck (to help with connecting the Ernst Trail into downtown when the alignment comes into the City)
- Curb and sidewalk repair on East Street south of Fairmont Avenue
- Need a safer way for college students to get to the trail system
- Add more bridges and other features to trails

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Challenge = Road Maintenance

The City's Public Works Department is responsible for 52.6 miles of local roads to maintain and has 12 full time and 2 part time staff. Issues and concerns of the Public Works Department include:

- Need to establish a road maintenance paving cycle
- Replace the Grove Street Bridge
- Address deteriorated roads
- Realign the intersection of Doughty Road and North Main Street
- Realign the intersection of Water and Willow Streets to address poor alignment and poor sight distance
- Complete a comprehensive traffic study for the City



Other concerns cited by the residents include brick streets, which are a nice historic amenity but many are in need of repair, and dilapidated streets such as Doughty Road.

Challenge = Increase and Advertise Public Transportation Routes

Meadville is served by Crawford Area Transportation Authority (CATA), which offers fixed bus service. Interviews with CATA representatives stated that they would like to utilize the Northwest Planning Commission and the Transportation Advisory Committee more to coordinate regional transportation as well as offer more frequent service later in the evenings. Their biggest obstacle that prevents them from expanding service is funding.

Additionally, several stakeholders noted that the lack of information regarding bus routes and times presents challenge for people trying to use the system.

CDO #7: CREATE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

Asset = Abundance of City Parks

Meadville is home to ten public parks as well as the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC). The parks range from active to passive recreation.

Asset = Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC)

The Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC) is an important community facility. The City of Meadville along with Vernon and West Mead Townships and the Crawford Central School District contribute to its annual budget. The future of the School District funding for MARC is in doubt, however as it struggles to balance its finances. The complex includes an indoor ice arena, aquatic center, and various outdoor facilities. It is located within both the City of Meadville and West Mead Township off of Thurston Road and has a total of 47 acres.



Challenge = Provide Neighborhood Parks

While there are a number of City Parks, not all of the neighborhoods in Meadville are adequately served. The Central Planning Region is home to three parks; the Northern Planning Region is not served by any public parks; the Eastern Planning Region offers five parks plus MARC; and the Western Planning Region includes two parks. The types of park vary as well. Some parks offer playground equipment or fields and some offer open space and trails.

Challenge = Need More Variety of Recreation Facilities

A common complaint amongst high school students is “there is nothing to do.” While the City certainly offers many parks, it may consider providing a wider variety of recreation facilities and equipment. Residents, including high school students, identified the following types of recreation facilities as being needed:

- Dog park
- Fitness trails
- Larger picnic shelters
- Activities/facilities for all seasons

Challenge = Provide More Public Space in the Downtown

The 2007 BDAP Plan recommended that the City develop more public spaces in the downtown for events, passive recreation, or just areas for people to gather. The plan identified key areas to develop public outdoor space as the Water Street entrance to the Downtown Mall, the Market House Square, Mill Run, and the site for the downtown transit facility, which is now complete. Currently there has been public space created outside the Downtown Mall with a bench.



Downtown Bench: Source, 2007 BDAP

Challenge = Need More Recreation Programs

In previous years, the City offered summer programming at the parks, but lack of participation and funding has forced the City to cut those programs. In addition to lack of programming at the parks, there is also a general lack of community events. A related issue is that of marketing. Even when there are programs or events, residents do not always know when and where they are happening.

Challenge = Park Maintenance and administration

The City previously had a park and recreation board as well as staff dedicated to park maintenance. Currently there is no active board and the maintenance of parks and streets are shared by Public Works.

CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CDO #8: ENSURE ALL MUNICIPAL POLICIES AND ORDINANCES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN'S VISION.

Asset = City Government

Meadville has a very active City Government including both elected and appointed officials. The City Council recognized the need to update the Comprehensive Plan and budgeted for that and the City Planning Commission meets regularly once a month to discuss planning needs and issues in the City.

Asset = City Police Department

Meadville provides police protection for 4.5 square miles. They employ 21 full-time staff and provide a school safety officer and crossing guards. Interviews with the chief of police revealed that the most pressing needs facing the department include providing enough manpower to do the job, continuing with the dispatch, and upkeep of the vehicles and equipment.

Asset = City Fire Department

Meadville also provides fire protection for 4.5 square miles. The department provides mutual aid for surrounding departments as needed; however, there are no written agreements. They do not partner with other departments or municipalities to share equipment or staff. Interviews with the fire chief revealed the top three priority issues facing the department over the next ten years as follows:

- Personnel – appropriate staffing level to respond to emergencies
- Funding – a method to generate revenue to aid in sustaining the department at the proper staffing level
- Code enforcement – fire code violations of rental properties

Asset = FEMA Credits

The FEMA credits available to the City are a very important asset. This is due to the fact that the credits allow developers to develop in flood plain areas more easily and with less expense. Without the credits approximately 1/5 of the City would be effectively unbuildable.

Challenge = Improve Aging Infrastructure

The Meadville Area Water Authority stated that their facilities are over 100 years old and they are experiencing lower revenues due to a declining population. They are forced to increase rates due to lower consumption in order to fund capital improvement projects. Their top three priorities for the next ten years include to replace Highland Reservoir with two 2.5 million gallon concrete storage tanks; replace the clear well; and the ongoing replacement of the aging distribution system.

The Meadville Area Sewer Authority stated that their most pressing issue is addressing inflow and infiltration problems.

Challenge = Outdated Ordinances – Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)

The City has recently updated the zoning ordinance with several amendments. The SALDO is very outdated and the City primarily uses the Zoning Ordinance for land developments.

Challenge = Stormwater Management and flooding

The City is fortunate in that the Allegheny College Center for Economic and Environmental Development (CEED) is located in its boundaries. CEED offers an excellent partnership opportunity for the City in regards to stormwater management and other environmentally friendly and sustainability projects. They have partnered together previously to restore Mill Run and Shadybrook Park. There are still issues with flooding in the City, especially in the Fifth Ward that need to be addressed, however.

Unfortunately Meadville, like many older municipalities has infrastructure that is 50-100 years old and has outlasted its useful life. In addition, new regulations from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, which are currently unfunded, add to the burden on the City in terms of stormwater management. The City established a stormwater management fee in 2012 to address this issue. The fee is paid by all property owners in Meadville based on how much impervious surface a property owner has (single family households pay a flat fee). Impervious surfaces are areas such as parking lots, roofs, driveways or sidewalks that do not allow water to pass through. Funds collected from this fee will go towards specific projects within the city to improve stormwater management.

Challenge = City Staff Retirements

The City currently has a number of administrative staff who are nearing retirement age. This presents a problem if they retire around the same time without knowledgeable staff to replace them.

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



The most important part of a Comprehensive Plan is the implementation plan, which is a prioritized list of recommendations and associated responsible parties, potential partners, cost estimates, and a list of potential funding sources. The implementation plan is a guide that should be used by City Council as they plan future development, growth and other initiatives. The implementation plan is organized as follows:

Priority—High, Medium, Low

The recommendations within the Comprehensive Plan were ranked by Steering Committee members and other stakeholders during the process. The public provided input as well at the final open house meeting and a survey (a description of the public ranking can be found in Appendix C). These rankings, along with the professional opinion of the consulting team, were combined to determine the final ranking. It is important to note that while each recommendation has a ranking, if an opportunity arises or funding becomes available for a lower ranking project, City officials should take advantage of those opportunities.

- ☒ High Priority—items that should be implemented within the next 1-3 years; as funding permits.
- ☒ Medium Priority—items that should be implemented within the next 4-7 years.
- ☒ Low Priority—items that should be implemented within the next 8-10 years.

For high priority items the following information is also provided:

Implementing Party

The organization that should be leading implementation. In many cases it is the City; however, where possible, specific departments or organizations were identified.

Potential Partners

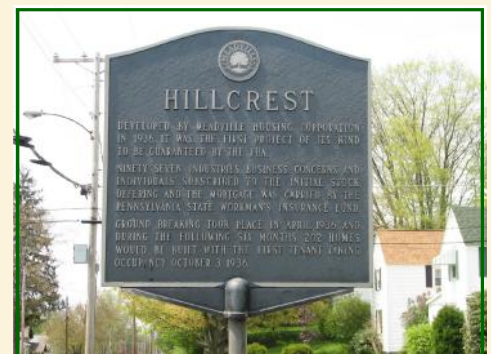
To assist with implementation, partners were identified where possible. Partners may provide technical assistance, volunteer hours or funding.

Cost Estimates

When appropriate, cost estimates for specific projects are provided.

Funding Sources

Any potential funding source is provided with the recommendations.



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

As mentioned earlier, through the work with the Steering Committee, key stakeholders, and the public, the action items (or recommendations) were ranked in terms of priority. The high priority action items were presented at the final public meeting on October 30, 2012. Attendees at that meeting were given “money” to spend on their high priority items.

The following are the top five items that came out of that meeting:

TOP 5 PRIORITIES FROM PUBLIC MEETING

1. *Provide incentives to the owners of identified vacant and / or underutilized sites to revitalize their properties*
2. *Develop and coordinate a Main Street Model Program for the Central Business District*
3. *Work with the Redevelopment Authority and local developers to acquire homes in need of renovation or demolition*
4. *Form a task force comprised of City, County, major institutional and business leaders to help implement the Comprehensive Plan*
5. *Continue Efforts to enhance the Downtown Streetscape*

Elected and appointed officials should use the input received during the final public meeting as well as throughout the entire planning process as a guide for when pursuing new projects and deciding an implementation schedule for items identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

The following pages outline the High Priority Action Items for the Comprehensive Plan as a whole. These are the projects that should be pursued first as the Comprehensive Plan moves into implementation. Appendix D includes the Medium to Low Priority Action Items that should be pursued as time and resources allow. The Meadville Comprehensive Plan will only be useful if it is implemented, evaluated and updated on a regular basis. For this to occur, it is recommended that the City Planning Commission perform an annual review of the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, make modifications to address changes occurring in the City. There is a checklist described in Chapter One that should be used by the Planning Commission to track the progress and success of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to using the checklist, the Planning Commission should prepare an annual report for City Council summarizing the year’s evaluation, the implementation activities, the upcoming planned activities and any issues or obstacles that may impact the community or the implementation.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #1: EXPAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESS AND INCREASING NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S TAX BASE

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Provide incentives to the owners of identified vacant and underutilized sites to revitalize their properties

Description:

There are many properties and sites within Meadville that are either vacant or underutilized (Economic Investment Zones have been identified on **Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas**). These sites are located in the Central Business District as well as other locations throughout the City. Many times owners of these properties are unable to develop or redevelop them due to lack of resources, especially funding. The City could provide much needed assistance to willing property owners by directing them to technical assistance and funding partners.

The Redevelopment Authority offers a revolving loan fund, which could be used as a basis for jump starting this program. Currently the loan fund is not very large and is only used for a small number of projects. Additional funds could be sought through partnerships with local banks, large employers and other institutions within the City. For example, the Main Street Committee in the City of Washington, PA has successfully worked with local banks to develop a revolving loan fund for development within its downtown area.

Once the fund is developed applications could be sought through networking with local property owners to apply for this funding to rehabilitate or redevelop their property. Guidelines should be developed by the City and the Redevelopment Authority for the application that would give applicants clear direction in terms of the types of projects they could apply for, the length of the loan and any other stipulations in terms of job creation, etc.

Other guidance that the City could provide to interested property owners could include technical assistance. This could include directing property owners to City, County, State or other departments that could provide advice for developing their properties. An example could include Keystone C.O.R.E. Services, which is a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center and whose mission is to act as a redevelopment partner for the reclamation and rehabilitation of blighted and deteriorated properties in which the private sector has not reinvested or redeveloped in areas where they are invited to come in and partner with local redevelopment agencies.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville Redevelopment Authority

Potential Partners: Crawford County, Keystone C.O.R.E. Services, local banks and employers (for the revolving loan fund)

Cost: Staff time; Additional funding if the City participates in the revolving loan fund



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #1: EXPAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESS AND INCREASING NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S TAX BASE

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Develop and coordinate a Main Street Model Program



Description:

Meadville has an active downtown with surrounding residential and institutional land uses (especially since it is home to Allegheny College, Meadville Medical Center and the County Seat of Crawford County). While the state program for Main Streets is no longer funding a Main Street manager, there are still resources available and the structure outlined is one that Meadville can use to strengthen and build upon its downtown core (Main Street District identified on **Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas**). The City should designate a Main Street committee made up of volunteers from the local business community and work with the Meadville Redevelopment Authority to assign a

staff person to oversee the activities (a staff person is necessary in order to receive funds from the state). The committee would meet monthly. Their focus areas could include:

- Develop a three dimensional marketing program with a theme for Downtown
 - ⇒ Residents
 - * Implement a Shop Meadville Program (ex. Shop Arlington - <http://shoparlington.org/>) or a cash mob (www.cashmob.com) - encourage people to shop locally
 - ⇒ College Students
 - * Encourage businesses to offer discounts to students at Allegheny College on certain days
 - * Partner with the College to submit articles in the College Newspaper/e-mail blast
 - * Use social media (i.e. Twitter and / or Facebook) to market events
 - ⇒ Visitors
 - * Work with local business to create tourist packages
 - * Promote downtown businesses/attractions at festivals/events in the region
- Encourage local businesses to participate in discount programs such as Groupon
- Hold monthly events—First Friday events, Arts Festival, Holiday events
- Network with other Main Street programs on how to plan successful events
- Regularly update the City's website and create brochures to include current information
- Construct kiosks at key locations that offer a map of downtown Meadville and local attractions
- Host downtown clean up days—Sponsor events along Main Street to reward volunteers
- Utilize vacant storefronts for displays to advertise local events, development opportunities, etc.
 - ⇒ (examples: <http://novacancyproject.wordpress.com>, www.cudc.kent.edu)
- Implement a façade improvement program with Design Guidelines
- Develop a business retention strategy—Survey businesses annually to identify needs

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager should be the lead in identifying a staff person

Potential Partners: Local business community, Meadville Redevelopment Authority, Crawford County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: PA DCED, Keystone Communities Program (<http://www.newpa.com/community/community-housing-and-development/keystone-communities>)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #2: REVITALIZE THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BY ADDRESSING AESTHETICS, PARKING AND VACANT/UNDERUTILIZED STRUCTURES

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Revisit the Business District Action Plan to implement existing projects and update as necessary

Description:

In 2007 the City updated their Business District Action Plan (BDAP) which outlined a five year strategy to address priorities for revitalizing the central business district in Meadville (Main Street District identified on **Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas**). This is the fifth year of that plan, and while many of the recommendations / strategies have been implemented (discussed in Chapter 2), there are still some that should still be addressed such as:

- Developing gateways
- Reevaluating public space needs
- Wayfinding signage project
- Shared elevator feasibility project to facilitate second story development

The City should also begin the process of the next five year plan. It is imperative that they continue to prepare and implement these plans to keep the revitalization of the central business district at the forefront. The Main Street program (discussed in a previous action) could be integral in completing this update.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager

Potential Partners: Main Street Community (if created)

Cost: \$20,000—\$25,000

Potential Funding Sources: PA Department of Community and Economic Development—Municipal Assistance Program (<http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/municipal-assistance-program>)



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #2: REVITALIZE THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BY ADDRESSING AESTHETICS, PARKING AND VACANT/UNDERUTILIZED STRUCTURES

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Continue efforts to enhance the Central Business District streetscape



Description:

Enhancing the aesthetics of the Central Business District (CBD) through streetscape improvement projects was a priority of the City's latest Business District Action Plan (BDAP), which was discussed previously. By enhancing and extending these improvements, the City will receive many benefits including improving the overall look and feel of the CBD as well as improving the walkability of the area. Through the planning process, many people voiced concerns over lack of parking in certain areas and / or the cost of parking in the CBD. By improving the streetscapes people may not be as reluctant to park in the fringe areas of downtown and walk to the various downtown destinations making the parking issue less important.

Efforts have been made on a development by development basis to complete these streetscape enhancements. This type of activity should be continued and incorporated into all new development or redevelopment projects in the CBD. The streetscape enhancements should include lighting, street furniture, sidewalk repairs, crosswalk improvements and plantings.

As noted in the BDAP, a comprehensive streetscape plan probably will not yield benefits to offset the costs, but these improvements can be made as new development and redevelopment occurs in the CBD (including road projects like the North Street project for example). While these projects will happen in phases, care should be taken to ensure that they are consistent with each other and the overall look and feel of the CBD. The City's Streetscape Committee should review all streetscape plans that are submitted with the development plans.

The City may also want to consider participating in the America in Bloom program. This is a national program designed to

promote beautification and community pride (www.americaainbloom.org). There is a cost to participate (between \$750 and \$1,000). A local example of a community that participated in the program is North East, PA located outside of Erie.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—Streetscape Committee

Potential Partners: Developers, PennDOT, County

Cost: Dependent on project

Potential Funding Sources: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) - <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/about/what-we-do/MAP-21/Map21.aspx>, Local Developers (as they develop property)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #3: PROVIDE A DIVERSE MIX OF HOUSING THAT APPEALS TO ALL RESIDENTS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Create a round table to discuss housing issues and potential opportunities

Description:

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, a housing focus group was established. This focus group was made up of housing professionals, real estate agents, landlords, developers, and members from the banking community. During the focus group sessions, the attendees felt it was important for them to continue to meet to discuss issues that were facing residents (both current and potential, market as well as subsidized and home owner versus renters) and potential solutions. An initial topic of discussion should include the available programs (grants, loans, etc.) that are available to the City, County and the non-profit community that are not being fully explored at this time. During the Comprehensive Planning process, it was discussed that it has been several years since federal grants and programs have been explored by the City and County for housing assistance. Tapping these sources should be a priority to assist local home owners with needed upgrades to their homes, especially in the current economy when they may not be able to afford even basic improvements.

The list of focus group invitees should be used as a basis for a Housing Round Table which should continue to meet on a regular basis. The meetings should be held at least semi-annually or quarterly and should be hosted by the City. An annual report of this group should be submitted to City Council.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Council

Potential Partners: Round Table invitees (See Appendix A)

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: N/A



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #3: PROVIDE A DIVERSE MIX OF HOUSING THAT APPEALS TO ALL RESIDENTS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Work with the College and Medical Center on their mortgage assistance programs



Description:

During the Comprehensive Plan process various stakeholders were consulted to get input into the plan. Meetings with Allegheny College as well as Meadville Medical Center revealed an interest in encouraging employees of their respective institutions to live in the City of Meadville.

The College indicated that they had a Mortgage Assistance Program already in the works and the Medical Center discussed their interest in participating in such a program. The particulars of the College's program are still being worked out, but it would basically be available to existing employees of the college. The program would provide down payment assistance (or other financial assistance) to the employee to purchase a home within a certain radius of the college (Elm Street Neighborhood—See **Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas**). Some additional benefits included in the program may include the college co-signing on a mortgage loan and forgiving half of the loan if the employee stays in the property for seven years as well as a guaranteed buy-back option by the College. This type of program would greatly enhance the housing stock around the College, which would benefit the College as well as the City.

While these programs would be led by the College and the Medical Center, the City can keep in contact with both entities to assist with finding available properties, helping new residents understand local ordinances or regulations, etc. If these programs become successful, the City may want to approach other large employers to determine if there is interest from

others in participating in similar programs.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager

Potential Partners: Allegheny College, Meadville Medical Center

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: N/A

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #4: INCREASE REHABILITATION EFFORTS AND CODE ENFORCEMENT IN TARGETED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Work with local developers to purchase homes in need of renovation or demolition

Description:

There are many residential properties within the City of Meadville that are in need of renovation or demolition. Often times, the property owners do not have the means to make the necessary repairs or refuse to do so. The Meadville Redevelopment Authority currently purchases homes when the opportunity arises and demolishes those that are beyond repair.

Demolitions are an expensive and lengthy process, however. By working with the City and possibly local developers the Redevelopment Authority can develop a prioritized list (which can be linked to a GIS map that can be easily updated) of properties that should be purchased (Housing Investment Zones have been identified on **Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas** as a starting point). This list can be further refined to determine which properties can be renovated and resold and which properties should be demolished. Prioritizing areas also provides the ability to revitalize whole neighborhoods and blocks rather than completing projects in a piecemeal fashion, which provides no real comprehensive benefit to the City. This does not mean that the Redevelopment Authority or the City should not demolish individual properties that are dangerous to the health or welfare to its residents on a case by case basis.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville Redevelopment Authority

Potential Partners: City of Meadville, local developers

Cost: Dependent on property

Potential Funding Sources: CDBG funds for demolition



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #4: INCREASE REHABILITATION EFFORTS AND CODE ENFORCEMENT IN TARGETED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Establish a loan or grant program for home renovations



Description:

There are many property owners within the City of Meadville who would benefit from assistance with home renovations. There are several ways that the City could provide assistance. One way would be to work with local institutions and businesses to develop a revolving loan fund that could be accessed by employees of those institutions and businesses to complete home renovations. A list of guidelines should be developed that would outline the types of renovations that can be funded through the program along with an application form for interested property owners to complete. These guidelines could be made available online as well as through the participating institutions, businesses and the City. Local banks should also be approached to be partners in the fund.

Another option is for the City to partner with others such as the County to apply for state and federal funds to assist owners with upkeep of their property. These programs, such as HOME or the Homeowner Choice Programs (through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency respectively), can be distributed to low-income residents within the City for home rehabilitation efforts. In discussions held throughout the Comprehensive Plan process, it was noted that it has been several years since the County or City has applied for federal housing assistance. Identifying these programs and developing a plan for submitting applications should be on the agenda for the meetings that are recommended in the Action Item noted on page 4.12.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville Redevelopment Authority

Potential Partners: City of Meadville, Housing Coalition, Local businesses

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development—HOME program (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/programs/home), Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency—Homeownership Choice Programs (<http://www.phfa.org/hsgresources/hcp.aspx>)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #5: INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH ENTITIES SUCH AS CRAWFORD COUNTY, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE, MEADVILLE MEDICAL CENTER, ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, LOCAL FOR-PROFITS AND OTHERS TO ESTABLISH MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Form a task force, comprised of City, County, major institutions and employers

Description:

In order for any comprehensive plan to be successful, significant capacity needs to exist for implementation. The City does have an excellent staff, council and planning commission, but they all have additional tasks that they must complete on a day to day basis. In order to provide some assistance with implementation, the City should appoint a task force of local individuals who will commit to guiding the plan's implementation. There are successful examples of this in other municipalities such as Lowell, MA, where they created a Task Force for implementation, Johnstown, PA created "Lift Johnstown (www.lift-johnstown.com)" and more locally in Washington, PA where a Leadership Group was formed to help implement the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.

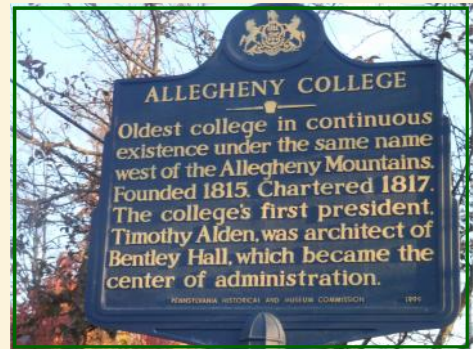
This group should be appointed by the Mayor or City Council and should include City Staff (preferably the Manager or Assistant Manager); Meadville Redevelopment Authority; leaders of local intuitions such as Allegheny College, Meadville Medical Center, Wesbury; Crawford County staff; Meadville Tribune; Crawford Central School District. The committee should meet regularly (once a month or once a quarter) and discuss items that need to be implemented in the Comprehensive Plan. Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined for each of the committee members (a chair should be appointed) and everyone should be held accountable for their tasks. This will help greatly in the success of the Comprehensive Plan in the capacity building alone.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—Mayor or Council

Potential Partners: Major institutions, businesses owners, Meadville Tribune, Crawford County, Crawford Central School District

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: N/A



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #5: INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH ENTITIES SUCH AS CRAWFORD COUNTY, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE, MEADVILLE MEDICAL CENTER, ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES, LOCAL FOR-PROFITS AND OTHERS TO ESTABLISH MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Designate a staff person to meet regularly with Crawford County Planning staff to discuss issues specific to Meadville



Description:

The City of Meadville is the County seat of Crawford County and therefore is in a unique situation regarding partnership opportunities between the City and County. Due to the fact that County offices are located in the City and what each does greatly affects the other, regular meetings between the City Planning Commission and County Planning Staff should occur to discuss issues common to both. These meetings should occur on a monthly or quarterly basis and are especially timely since the City is adopting this Comprehensive Plan update and the County (as of the printing of this document) was in the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan as well.

A number of topics should be covered at these meetings, but items of particular importance at least in the near terms should include:

- Impacts of the gas industry on the County and how Meadville can position itself to take advantage of the benefits—the Marcellus Shale Coalition has a website (<http://www.marcellusonmainstreet.org>) that can help communities market themselves to this industry. There are benefits from serving workers (in terms of retail and services) as well as providing office space for the gas companies. Williamsport, PA is an example of a County Seat, with a main street, hotels, office space, etc. that has taken advantage of the oil and gas drilling happening elsewhere in the County.
- Revitalization of the Central Business District (and the relocation of City and County facilities)
- Central Crawford School District

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—Planning Commission

Potential Partners: Crawford County

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: N/A

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #6: ENCOURAGE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT INCORPORATES UPGRADES TO TRANSPORTATION ROUTES, PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS AND PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Implement a sidewalk improvement plan

Description:

The City of Meadville is fortunate in that it has an extensive sidewalk network, which allows its residents, workers, and others to travel on foot throughout the City. Over time, however, the sidewalks have become worn and in need of repair. Property owners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of sidewalks in front of their property, but the City could put a plan in place for sidewalk improvements. This plan could include financial incentives, but in place of that (if funds are not available) the sidewalk network should be mapped to identify priority areas for replacements and missing connections (as the network is not fully complete). The plan should be comprised of three parts:

- *The Sidewalk Improvement Policy:* details the purpose, goals and requirements of the sidewalk improvement program. This policy also includes the criteria used to prioritize sidewalk projects.
 - * Criteria can include: walking routes to schools, accident history, pedestrian traffic volume, connectivity, constructability, and condition of sidewalk
- *Sidewalk Improvement Program:* scores potential sidewalk projects based on the specific criteria listed in the Sidewalk Improvement Policy.
- *The Existing and Future Sidewalks Map:* shows where the city's potential sidewalk projects will fit with the existing sidewalks throughout the city.

The City could utilize an intern to map the conditions of the sidewalk network and identify problem areas. The City does have a sidewalk policy in place, however, enforcement is an issue. A sidewalk improvement plan could help identify key problem areas for the City to target enforcement.

An additional item that could help with enforcement is allowing residents to log complaints online as well as providing a phone number on the website for people to call.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager

Potential Partners: Public Works, Allegheny College—Environmental Studies Department

Cost: Staff time (if consultant is hired to assist, approximately \$10,000—\$15,000)

Potential Funding Sources: N/A



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #6: ENCOURAGE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT INCORPORATES UPGRADES TO TRANSPORTATION ROUTES, PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS AND PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Work with the French Creek Trails committee to bring the Ernst Trail into Meadville



Description:

Amenities such as trails, are huge assets anywhere, but especially in urban areas. Being able to provide walkability is so important. This is especially true in Meadville because of the existing natural amenities such as French Creek. Currently the Ernst Trail is located just outside of the City of Meadville, being able to connect into the trail would greatly benefit the City as well as trail users.

The French Creek Trails committee would like to bring the trail into the City and is currently working on plans to do so. The City should support this effort and assist the trail committee with whatever they may need. Meetings are being scheduled between the City and Seco Warwick Inc, the property owner that allows the City to use an easement on their property to get emergency vehicles over a bridge that crosses Mill Run on the western side of the French Creek Parkway, to extend that easement, which expires in January of 2013. The City would like the French Creek Trails committee to be a part of that meeting as well to determine if the easement across the bridge could be used by trail users.

Currently the conceptual plans are to bring the trail in to the City by crossing the Mercer Street Bridge and follow local roads into Bicentennial Park where a trail head could be constructed (See **Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas**). Once in the City, additional connections could be made to other attractions such as the Meadville Area Recreation Complex, Allegheny College, and the Central Business District, just to name a few.

Responsible Party: French Creek Trails Committee

Potential Partners: City of Meadville, Seco Warwick Inc.

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: N/A

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #7: CREATE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Develop a Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan

Description:

There is an extensive network of park and recreation facilities within the City of Meadville (See **Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas**). These areas provide a great asset for those living, working and visiting the City. However, over time, lack of funding and other resources has caused a large number of the recreation facilities to fall into decline. Because the City has such a large number of facilities, the best way to catalogue the needs and prioritize the upgrades and projects, is to complete a Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has funds in place to help communities create these plans, and then also has funds to help with the implementation projects.

By hiring a consultant (with a certified Park and Recreation Practitioner on the team) to complete this plan, the City will have a blueprint in place to begin tackling its recreation needs. This is especially important since the City will likely be losing HP Way Park due to the replacement of the reservoir and it has been a long time since a comprehensive look has been taken at the maintenance needs for a number of the parks, including Huidekoper Park. The plan will also look at facilities such as the Meadville Area Recreation Complex (MARC). MARC is a great asset for the City, and the region, but unfortunately funding shortages may force the facility to cease some of the operations if additional funds are not found. The plan can help identify potential partners for this facility as well. In addition to facilities, the plan will explore options for trail connections, program opportunities and areas appropriate for open space.

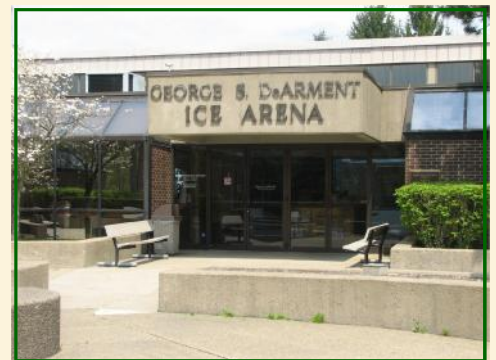
If the City can find willing participants from some of its neighboring communities to complete a multi-municipal recreation plan (which would make sense since a lot of the facilities, including MARC, are used on a regional basis), the application for funding assistance would be much stronger.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager

Potential Partners: Adjacent municipalities

Cost: \$40,000-\$45,000 (could increase depending on number of municipalities participating)

Potential Funding Sources: Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources—Community Conservation Partnerships Program (http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/ucmprd1/groups/public/documents/document/D_001230.pdf)



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #7: CREATE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Create a parks maintenance plan



Description:

The City of Meadville needs to put in place a maintenance plan for the park facilities. A plan such as this is designed to eliminate major issues before they arise. The Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan, discussed previously will help define this, but in the interim the parks are in need of a long term maintenance plan. This formal plan will help to reduce liability risks and assist in the coordination of planning for recreation projects.

To prepare a successful maintenance plan, the City should complete the following tasks as recommended by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR):

- Involve all employees to get their support.
 - Inventory the resources.
 - Develop a standard for each resource, which is a short description of what the resource should look like when the maintenance is complete. Standards can include specifics such as grass cutting heights and frequency.
 - List tasks to perform so that the resources are maintained up to standards. The tasks should be described in enough detail so that anyone would know how to perform them.
 - Determine the amount of time it takes to do each task.
 - Decide how often each task needs to be done. The frequency will determine the quality and cost of maintenance.
 - Divide the tasks up to develop a schedule for each staff person. This will be adjusted in the future if the staff is increased.
- Implement and monitor the work schedules so adjustments can be made as needed. Have staff track how long it takes to complete each task and then monitor the quality.

Two other aspects of the maintenance plan involve a replacement schedule for equipment and proper record keeping. Regular inspections of equipment will maximize the efficiency and help prevent accidents and unwarranted breakdowns. Good record keeping practices will help to justify any budget requests.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager, Public Works

Potential Partners: N/A

Cost: Staff Time

Potential Funding Sources: N/A

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #8: ENSURE ALL MUNICIPAL POLICIES AND ORDINANCES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Update the Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives

Description:

The City recently underwent amendments to its zoning ordinance and in large part the ordinance is consistent with the goals, objectives and vision of this Comprehensive Plan. However, there are a few minor tweaks that can be made to bring the ordinance into full consistency. The Zoning Ordinance refers to Community Development Objectives. These objectives should be updated to be consistent with the ones developed for the Comprehensive Plan which include:

- Expand economic development efforts by supporting existing businesses and increasing new business opportunities to strengthen the City's tax base.
- Revitalize the central business district by addressing aesthetics, parking and vacant/underutilized structures.
- Provide diverse mix of housing options that will appeal to all residents.
- Increase rehabilitation efforts and code enforcement in targeted residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure all municipal policies and ordinances are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's vision.
- Increase communication with local and regional entities such as Crawford County, Allegheny College, Meadville Medical Center, surrounding municipalities and others to establish mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Encourage a multi-modal transportation network that incorporates upgrades to transportation routes, public transportation options and pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- Create additional opportunities to provide social and recreational options for residents and visitors.

The definitions in the Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed as well to ensure that they are consistent with the most recent amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code as well as include updated language from other state statutes such as the Fair Housing Act.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager, Zoning Officer

Potential Partners: N/A

Cost: Staff time

Potential Funding Sources: N/A



CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE #8: ENSURE ALL MUNICIPAL POLICIES AND ORDINANCES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION

HIGH PRIORITY ACTION ITEM: Update the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to meet state requirements



Description:

The City's existing SALDO is very old and outdated. It has not been significantly updated since its adoption in the 1960s. Therefore, a comprehensive re-write is needed to bring the document into compliance with state regulations. The City is fortunate in that a model SALDO was created as part of the multi-municipal comprehensive planning effort that Meadville was part of in 2007. This model ordinance should be used as a basis for a complete update to the City's SALDO. In addition to the model ordinance, the City can consult other organizations such as Growing Greener (<http://www.greenerprospects.com/PDFs/Growing%20Greener%20Version%202.pdf>) for model ordinance language for SALDOs especially in terms of conserving recreation land and open space.

Responsible Party: City of Meadville—City Manager, Zoning Officer

Potential Partners: City Council

Cost: Staff time (funding to hire a consultant or help offset the internal cost could be sought from DCED see below)

Potential Funding Sources: Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development—Municipal Assistance Program (<http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/municipal-assistance-program>)



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WOODCOCK

- Legend**
- Municipal Boundary
 - City of Meadville
 - Limited Access Highway
 - State Road
 - Local Road
 - Railroad
 - Waterway
 - Parcel
 - Existing Land Use**
 - Single Family
 - Mixed Use
 - Multi Family
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Institutional
 - Recreation/Open Space
 - Parking

0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000
Feet



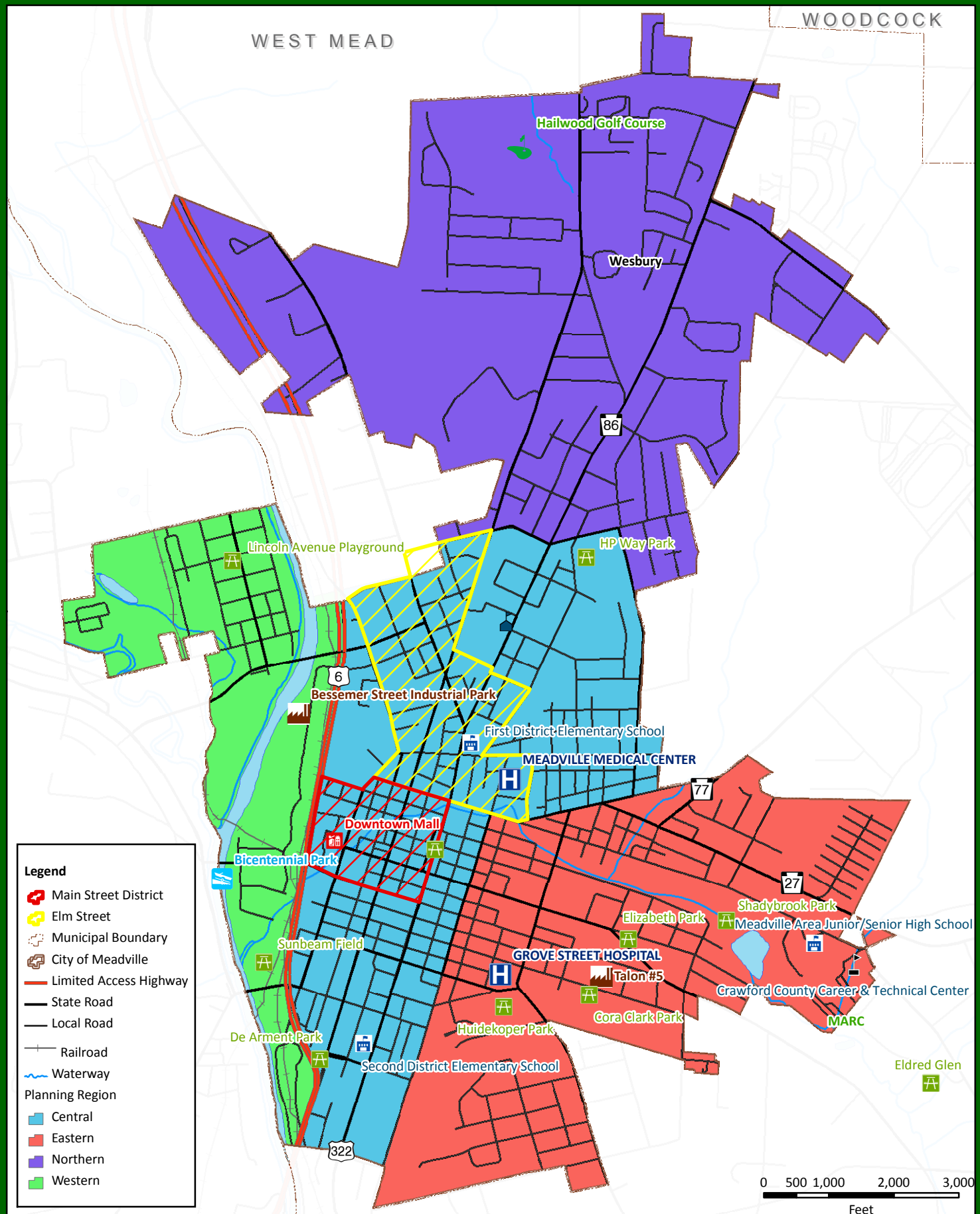
Data Sources: City of Meadville,
Crawford County GIS, PennDOT, PASDA

Map 2.1: Existing Land Use
City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Crawford County, PA

Mackin Engineering Company

RIDC Park West
117 Industry Drive
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15275
(412) 788-0472





Data Sources: City of Meadville,
Crawford County GIS, PennDOT, PASDA

Map 2.2: Planning Regions

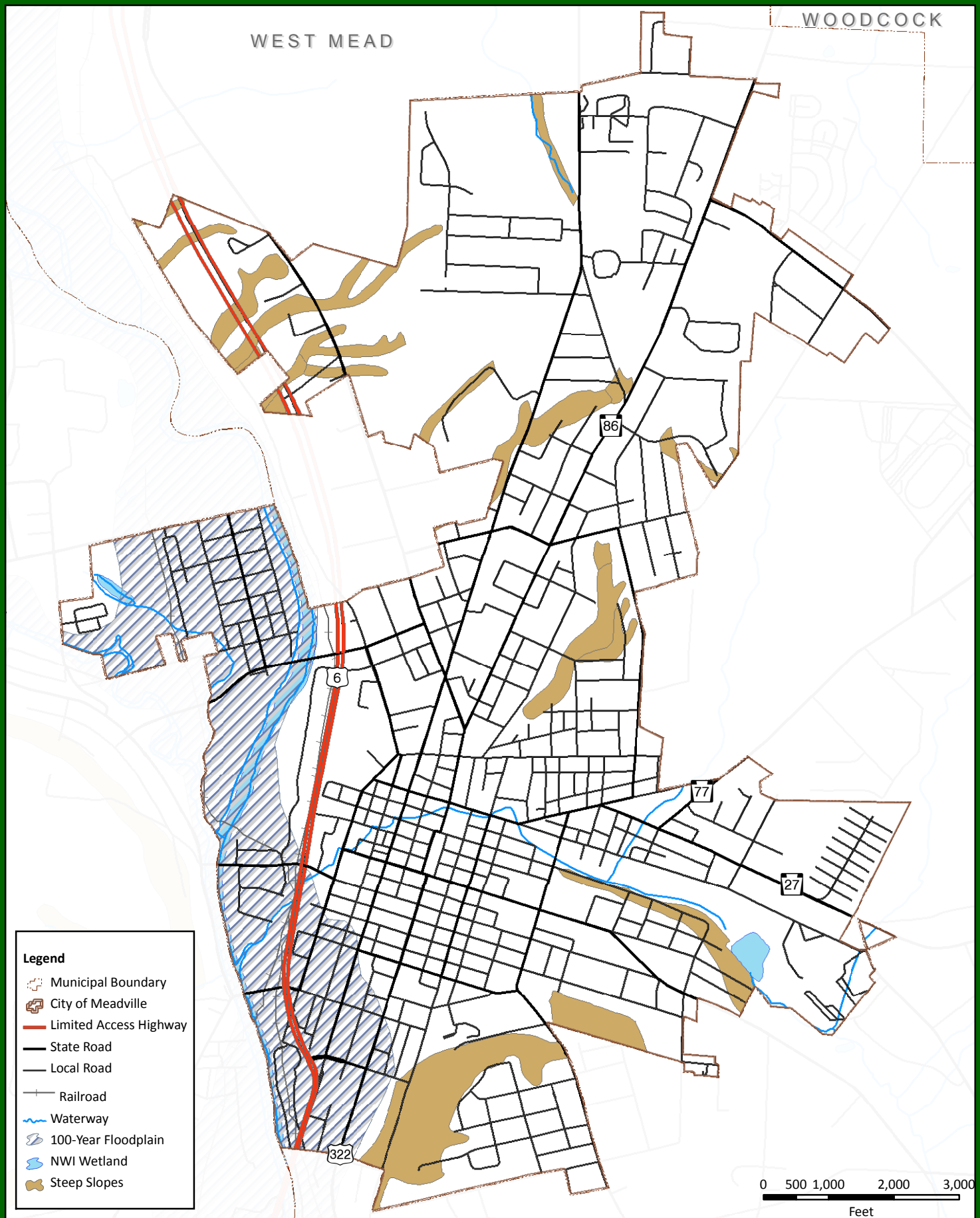
City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

Crawford County, PA

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RIDC Park West
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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15275
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Data Sources: City of Meadville,
Crawford County GIS, PennDOT, PASDA

Map 2.3: Development Constraints

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

Crawford County, PA

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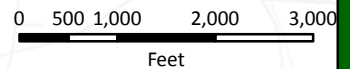
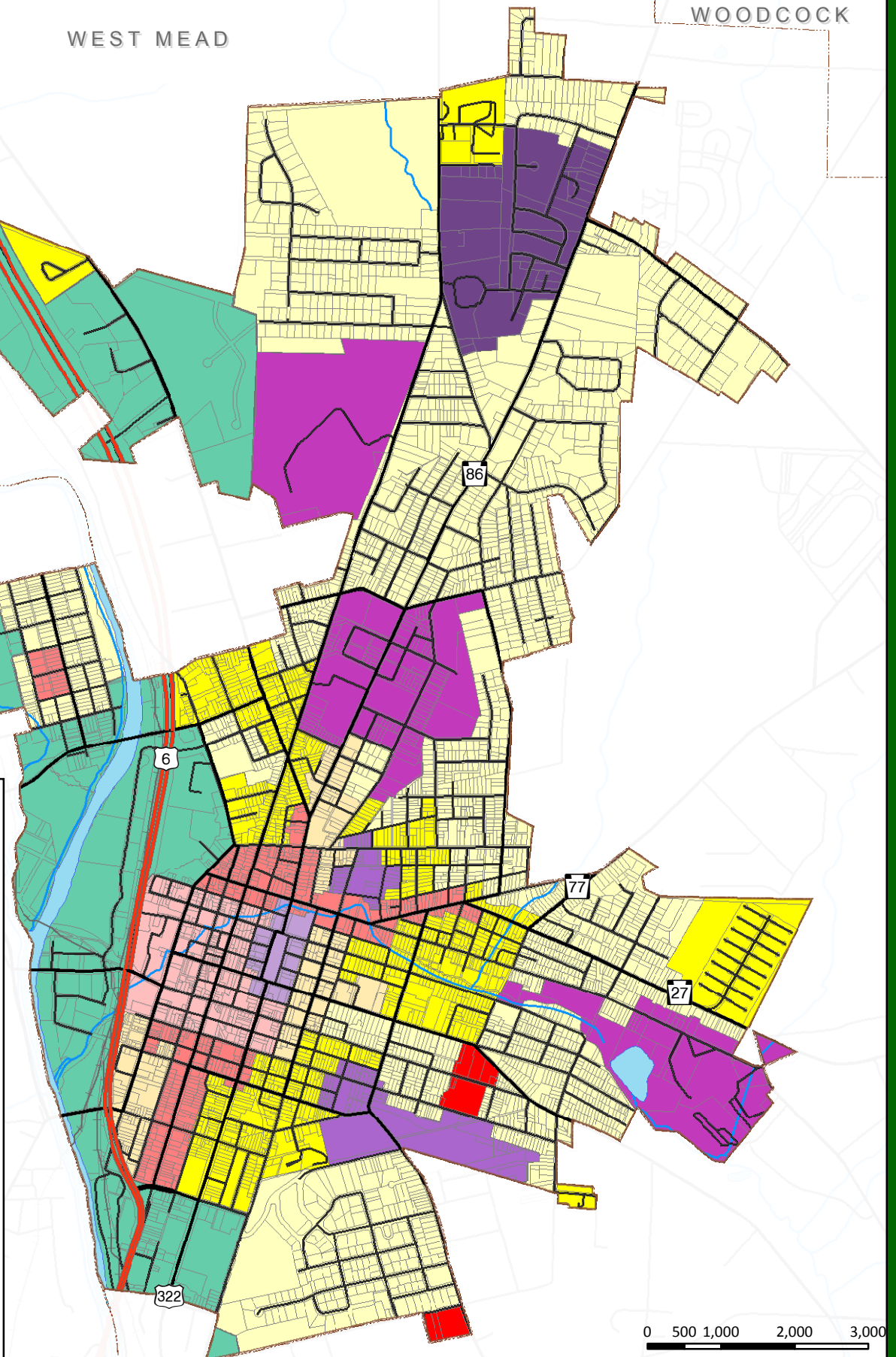


WEST MEAD

WOODCOCK

Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- City of Meadville
- Limited Access Highway
- State Road
- Local Road
- Railroad
- Waterway
- Parcel
- Zoning District**
- R-1
- R-2
- R-3
- T-1
- B-1
- B-2
- B-3
- EDC
- I-1
- I-2
- I-3
- I-4

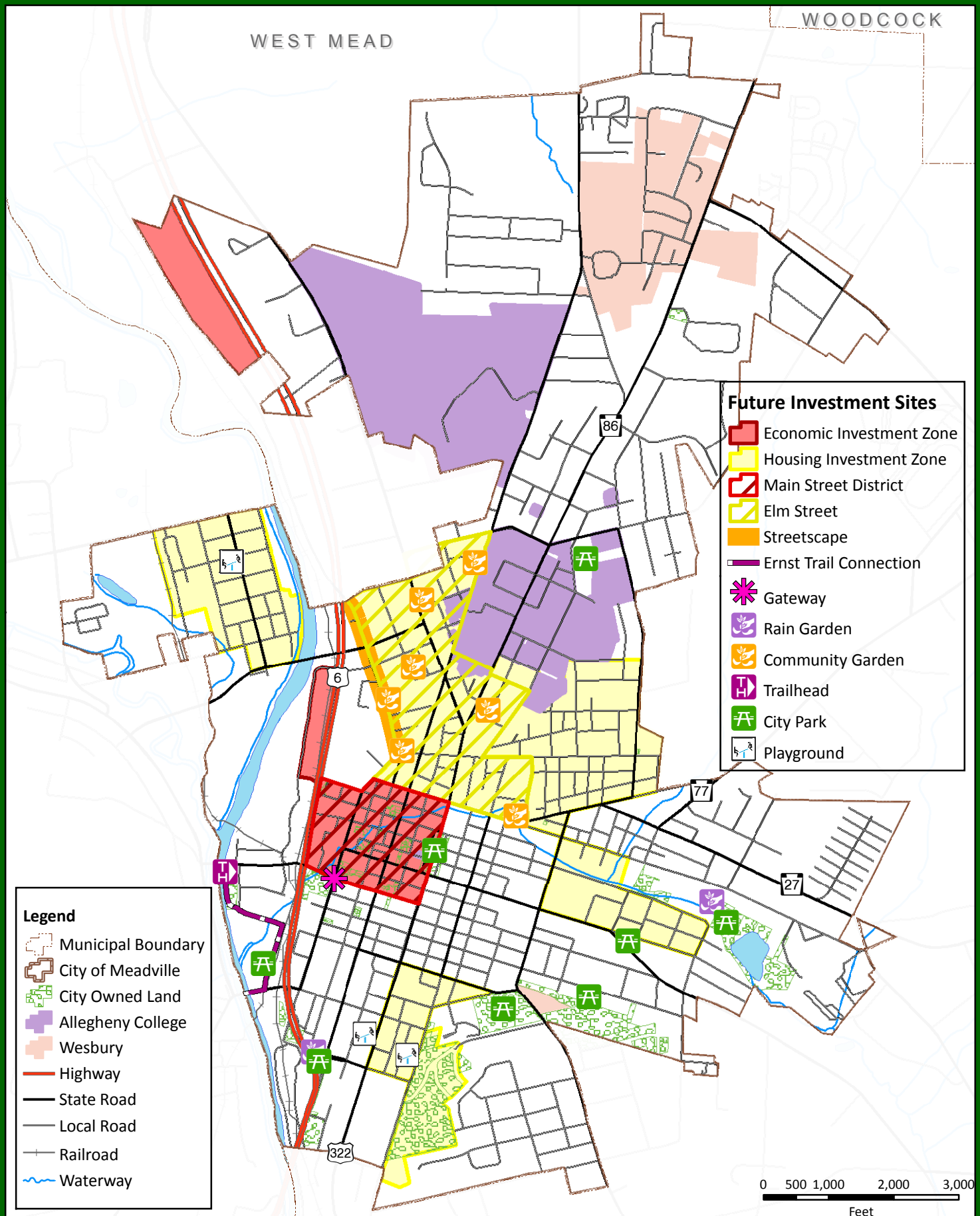


Map 2.4: Zoning Districts
City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Crawford County, PA

Data Sources: City of Meadville,
 Crawford County GIS, PennDOT, PASDA

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 RIDC Park West
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 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15275
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Map 4.1: Future Investment Areas
City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Crawford County, PA

Mackin Engineering Company

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15275
(412) 788-0472



Data Sources: City of Meadville,
Crawford County GIS, PennDOT, PASDA



APPENDIX A

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

Stakeholders Invite List

Economic Development Focus Group

Developers

- Tom Kennedy

Employers/manufacturers

- Roger Willis or John Stansfield of Universal Well Service
- Elliot Haverlack at Ainsworth Pet Nutrition
- William DeArment, President of Channellock Tools
- Dennis Frampton, C&J Industries (also member of RDA board)

Economic Progress Alliance

- Mark Turner, executive director

Chamber of commerce

- Kathleen Bishop, president of Meadville Area Chamber of Commerce

RDA

- Jill Withey, Redevelopment Authority
- Board members

Tourist promotion

Juanita Hampton, Crawford County Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Business Owners

- Rob Smith, president of Acutec, city resident, former planning commission member, business owner and Allegheny College trustee
- Jay Verno, Hagan Business Machines and civic volunteer
- Richard Friedberg, former Mayor and owner of Friedberg Stamps
- Pat Emig, owner of Emig's Bicycle Shop
- Joe Mazzone, Downtown Mall manager
- Ed Fine - owns @ the Bank indoor shopping center downtown
- Cindy DeMarco – owner of Julian's restaurant

Housing Focus Group

Landlords

- CJ Morgante
- Geryll Zehr
- Christy and Ruth Mast
- Randy Kinkaid
- Dr. Greg Griffith

Developers

- Travaglini Enterprises

Wesbury Retirement Community

- Don Clawson, President

Real Estate Agents

- Linda Peters, ERA Richmond
- Andy Bacallao, Kress Real Estate
- Terry Wygle, Coldwell Banker

CHAPS

- Lynn McUmbur

Meadville Housing Authority

- Bill Thomas

Women's Services

- Bruce Harlan

Center for Family Services

- Linda Bennett

HANDS, Inc.

- Chuck Scalise

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

Stakeholders Invite List

Allegheny College

- Dr. Mark Neff, Ph.D.

Juniper Village

- Mandy Maruska

Crawford County

- Arlene Rodriguez

Stakeholder Surveys

- Meadville City Police
- Meadville Fire Department
- Meadville Area Ambulance Service
- Meadville Water Authority
- Meadville Sewer Authority
- Meadville Public Works
- Crawford Area Transportation Authority
- Crawford County Historical Society
- Meadville Public Library
- Meadville Medical Center
- Vantage Medical Services
- Meadville Area Recreation Complex
- Crawford County Office of Emergency Services
- Meadville Zoning / Code Enforcement

Stakeholder Interviews

- Allegheny College
- Meadville Medical Center
- Wesbury Retirement Community
- Crawford Central School District
- Crawford County Planning Office

Youth Focus Group

- Lauren Mullen
- Victoria Soff
- Nicole Groves
- Sara Fischer
- Hannah Jimenez
- Logan Mears
- Cole Finton
- Aaron Crecraft
- Zach Longstreth

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Economic Development Focus Group Summary
March 27, 2012

WHY DID YOU LOCATE IN MEADVILLE (BUSINESS OWNERS)

- Family business
- Competitors were not in the area
- Good Community
- High Quality of Life

WHAT IS CURRENTLY WORKING

- Nice people
- Allegheny College Students would like to stay
- Tourism is up
- Niche market for small manufacturing

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

- Need a “Theme” for downtown
- Signage needs to be improved
 - No Historic Signs
 - Not a lot of signs from the interstate
- Parking – people won’t park and walk
- High number of vacancies
- Loans
 - No asset based or perspective loans
 - Banks will not lend to entrepreneurial type businesses
- Not enough skilled workers
 - Existing businesses have trouble recruiting people to this area
- Absentee landlords / code enforcement
- Too much negative press
- 2nd floor living space downtown
- Electric service to Market Alley
- Gateways need to be improved (i.e. Arch Street)

WHAT CAN BE DONE

- Target areas within downtown for one year to focus investment
- Put nice living spaces downtown – increase people on the street
- Economic Development Point Person
- Tax incentive packages for new businesses
- Improve promotion and marketing
- Utilize vacant storefronts for displays
- Gather data on why businesses fail
- Work with local institutions to increase revolving loan fund

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Economic Development Focus Group Summary
September 26, 2012

Meeting attendees were asked to rank the existing action items in terms of priority. They were also asked if anything was missing from the Action Items.

WHAT OTHER ACTION ITEMS ARE MISSING

- Capitalize on the Oil and Gas Industry
 - Retail and Services for workers
 - Office Space for Companies

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Housing Focus Group Summary
April 5, 2012

WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF MEADVILLE (FOR HOME BUYERS)

- Safe community
- College community
- Affordable
- Centrally located (close to Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Cleveland)

HOUSING GAPS

- Executive housing
- Middle class rentals (Single-Family Homes)
- Good quality rentals (housing stock is not in good condition generally)
- First Floor Units (for People with Mobility Issues)
- Not a lot of units for families with vouchers
- Affordable upper story housing in Downtown Meadville
- Mixed income developments

HOUSING ISSUES

- Property maintenance (some pockets of bad housing, but it hurts the whole block or neighborhood)
 - Grocery carts
 - Parking on lawns
 - Garbage cans left out
- Lack of accountability for renters
- Absentee landlords
- Age of housing (heating / cooling costs in rentals especially)
- Accessibility and senior amenities lacking in facilities
- Not a good Return on Investment for landlords to buy and renovate single family homes
- Public transportation is lacking
- Lack of data on housing issues
 - Need to understand the true needs before anything can be done
- Funding is becoming scarce
 - Private investment is going to have to drive these projects
 - No additional money for administrative costs – who is going to do this?
- City has a high rental rate
- Aging population
- Potential closing of East End School (neighborhood school)
- Condition of sidewalks
 - Maintenance
 - Missing connections

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Housing Focus Group Summary
April 5, 2012

WHAT CAN BE DONE

- Assistance for Property Owners for Renovations
- Incentives for housing investors / developers (LERTA)
- Increase enforcement (codes and police)
- Continue meeting with the Focus Group
 - County hasn't applied for HOME funds in a few years
- Need to target areas to get started
- Research new funding programs or partners (Habitat for Humanity)
- Attract workers (Hospital, College, etc.) to live in City – incentives, down payment assistance
- Programs for homeowners regarding safety (fire hazards, etc.)
- Get the banking community involved
- Develop cooperative living arrangements
- Identify volunteers to help with property maintenance, community cleanups, etc.

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

Housing Focus Group Summary

September 24, 2012

Meeting attendees were asked to rank the existing action items in terms of priority. They were also asked if anything was missing from the Action Items.

WHAT OTHER ACTION ITEMS ARE MISSING

- City and County have not been applying for state and federal grants that can be used for housing assistance (i.e. HOME) – need to start doing this again.
- MARC should be a focus of the plan – they are losing funding because the school district cannot continue to contribute after the current school year. This is a big asset for the City (especially for attracting new residents).

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Youth Focus Group Summary
April 24, 2012

Nine (9) students participated in the focus group (see sign in sheet). Students completed three (3) activities:

- **Favorite Place to Live** - If you could live in any city/town what would it be, why, what similarities (if any) does this place have with Meadville
- **Map of Meadville** - Draw a map of Meadville, include places you like and places you avoid
- **Planning Exercise** - Identify areas on a map of Meadville that need improvement and / or places where new development should happen

FAVORITE PLACE TO LIVE

- Frisco, TX – brother lives there and I like the size and convenience – both Meadville and Frisco are small cities where people know each other
- Somewhere slightly rural, but within distance to a town (ideally by a lake) – nice to have woods – would choose to live in Meadville
- Dillsburg, PA – my hometown, community events, no crime, good schools, friendly neighbors – small city like Meadville, family friendly and easy to get around
- Orlando, FL – job opportunities in the hospitality industry and good weather – not very similar to Meadville, no amusement parks here (except Conneaut Lake and it is run down). Bringing a park to Meadville would create jobs.
- Central North Carolina (Raleigh, Charlotte, etc.) – love the state, my family travels there every summer for vacation, warm weather – restaurants are similar to Meadville and some of the same climate
- Somewhere with a warm climate (Florida), like private or rural places with a lot of space – privacy, recreation, good education, friendly people, laid back climate / social – Meadville has a few areas for recreation but not enough, Meadville is definitely laid back with friendly people, education is medium
- Sea Isle City, NJ – vacationed here since I was young and it is very beautiful and relaxing, brings my family together, I enjoy the beaches and ocean – Both are small areas with local businesses, but Sea Isle has more to offer since it is on a beach.
- A place with a well organized, clean and welcoming environment – I would feel taken care of by a city that is organized, safe and welcoming – Meadville is a very clean and welcoming town.
- Small town in the south – a small town is big enough to have options but not too large and filled with crime, people seem more friendly in a small town, I would go south because of the climate; pace of life; family lifestyle and mannerisms associated with the south – the small town aspect is similar to Meadville and it has the potential to have the family lifestyle and mannerisms of the south.

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Youth Focus Group Summary
April 24, 2012

MAPPING EXERCISE



- Places you go - Attractive / nice places
 - Allegheny College (5) – historic and attractive
 - Downtown (need to revamp) – Mickey's (3), Academy (2), Theater / Movies (4), Whole Darn Thing (5), ARC
 - Diamond (6) – Fountain – hard to get around
 - Hospital (4)
 - MASH (7)
 - My house, family's houses (2)
 - Market House (3)
 - Allegro Dance – Arts (3)
 - Hanks (3)
 - Julians
 - Christine's Boutique
 - St. Brigid's
 - Jack's Pharmacy (2)
 - @ the Bank
 - Chinese Food
 - Tanning
 - Family Video (3)
 - Family owned businesses
 - Quick Fill
 - Tops (3)
 - MARC (2)
 - Town Tavern
 - High Tech Comp.
 - Body Firm
 - Little Caesar's
 - ICC (3)
 - H&F
 - Taco Bell
 - Downtown Mall
 - KFC
 - Country-Fair (2)
 - Wendy's
 - The Plateau
 - Eddie's (2)
 - Churches (3)
 - Tim Horton's
 - Pizza Hut
 - Vernon Township retail and entertainment (2)

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update
Youth Focus Group Summary
April 24, 2012

- Places you avoid - Unattractive / need to be fixed
 - Residential
 - Country-Fair
 - Old Junior High
 - Recreation
 - Downtown Mall (3) – nothing here
 - Parks
 - Bridges
 - “sketchy”
 - Domino’s (Willow St.)
 - Sketchy area south of College
 - The projects by Second District
 - Hospital – unattractive
 - Sewer plant – bad first impression
 - Houses around MASH
 - Roads and houses in “downtown” Meadville – unattractive, potholes

PLANNING EXERCISE



- What Meadville needs
 - Little shops – no more chain restaurants
 - Better advertising
 - More events / programs – movie night, festivals, picnics in the park
 - Better maintenance at parks
 - Kohl’s / Target at the old Country Market
 - Recreation center (East End school?)
 - Revolving Store
 - Local Team museum
 - Incorporate all the schools with the town – city tours
 - Dog parks
 - Cheap organic food place
 - Recreation – bike trail, roller rink, skating rink
 - Open mic lounge / music store
 - Better landscaping

APPENDIX B

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

CONNECTIONS STATION

TRAILS

- Connect Woodcock, Tamarack, Log Cabin, Market House, Shadybrook Park and college with trails
- Connect Ernst Trail to Downtown Meadville and MARC
- Add more bridges and other features to trails
- Connect French Creek Trail to Ernst – would provide good mobility around town
- Need a safer way for college students to get to the trail system

PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLISTS

- Curb and sidewalk repair on East Street
- Bike lanes needed on North Main, Park Avenue, and Chestnut Street
- Provide amenities to increase number of people walking and biking

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

- Transportation needed for offenders on work release
- Convert the temporary bridge near Bicentennial Park to a covered bridge – nice attraction
- Develop parks with different features and equipment
 - Trails with fitness amenities
 - Make them accessible all year round
 - Build larger picnic shelters – generate more money
 - Educational institutions could partner with recreation
- Develop markets in town for specialty businesses (like the Market House)
- Uncover Mill Run

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

COMMUNITY FACILITIES STATION

TAXES / REVENUE

- Need county-wide property reassessment that fairly values city / downtown properties
- Replace property tax with sales tax
- Taxes are too high
- Utilize user fees (police, fire, stormwater, etc.) to raise revenues

PARTNERSHIPS

- Need City and County cooperation
- Need more regionalization of services and equipment (police, fire, ambulance) –county system
- Concern about the expense of renovating the Armory – What is the cost?
- Need one sewer and water authority for Vernon, West Mead and Meadville
- Merge municipalities
- Strengthen COG (do they have one now?)

SERVICES

- Need better street lighting on North Main at College
- Offer mid-block parking
- Stream City Council meetings online for people to view for free
- Need to catalog all infrastructure (condition, location, etc.)

RECREATION / TRAIL

- MARC should have ice all year round
- MARC should run all city and regional parks
- Add wellness center for adults at MARC
- Promote YMCA and programs
- Extend trail from Bicentennial Park to AVTEX

AESTHETICS

- Increase the public art throughout the City
- Lower taxes to incentivize use of vacant buildings
- Get rid of shopping carts that are left throughout town
- Put window displays in vacant downtown buildings (utilize college students for displays)

MARKETING / PROMOTION

- Form a committee to try and attract business and industry to the City
- Need to sell the Comprehensive Plan – marketing is important

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

- Challenges - 534 tax exempt parcels in City (42.5%), \$277,220,882 assessed value
- Need bike racks around town
- What is the City doing about the homeless population
- Footbridge over Mill Run at Hollister Alley

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

WESTERN PLANNING REGION STATION

ACCESS / TRANSPORTATION

- Access to the 5th Ward is problematic
- There is a need for a bus shelter along Rogers Ferry Road near the Mobile Home Park
- Mead Avenue Bridge should be a priority
- The bridge to the 5th Ward does not have regular sidewalk maintenance (especially in winter) – issue for walking and biking

RECREATION / TRAIL

- Need trail head at Bicentennial Park for the Ernst Trail - need to connect need to connect the High School, College and other sites to parks, downtown, etc.
- Potential trail development along French Creek (or old Railroad corridor) to link to Vernon Township's trail system
- Bicentennial Park should be upgraded with playground equipment, additional pavilions and walking trail
- Fix the boat launch
- Need to re-open playground on Lincoln Avenue
- Need to re-open Waterworks Park (possibly as a fenced in dog park)
- Recycling Center off Bessemer Street should be relocated and the site used for open space or recreation

STORMWATER

- Storm drainage is an issue on Lincoln Avenue in the 5th Ward
- Site identified for Railway Museum along Bessemer Street – Concerned about cost to fix stormwater issues

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Need to clean up blight in the 5th Ward and offer incentives for redevelopment
- Potential development site at the old school in the 5th Ward
- Need to re-open convenience store in 5th Ward – serve residents and people using the ball fields in Vernon Township

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

- There is potential for a covered bridge over French Creek – historic attraction
- 5th Ward has a lot of opportunity for Community Gardens in vacant or underutilized sites
- Knotweed issues along perimeter of Sunbeam Field – if addressed, a great place to plant shade trees – issue with ownership

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

CENTRAL PLANNING REGION STATION

ACCESS / TRANSPORTATION

- Parking at the Diamond is a challenge – need a parking garage
- Change four way stops to two way on South Main – improve traffic flow
- CATA should complete a study on a new line (AM / PM) from Saegertown to Bessemer Street to Downtown to Channellock to Ainsworth to Conneaut Lake
 - Help to alleviate parking in the Downtown
 - Get people to park and ride
- Make Allegheny Street one-way “down” and Prospect Street one way “up”
- CATA bus shelters – replace shelters at Downtown Mall and build new shelters where needed
- Eliminate meters downtown
- Increase parking options on lower Chestnut Street
 - Offer an angled parking lot on Chestnut Street - parking fee concerns (many people do not go downtown because of the parking issues and cost, offer incentives to buy monthly parking pass (i.e. lower fines, lower rates, etc.)
- Brooks Hall (Allegheny College) – deliveries to loading dock often block one lane of traffic on Park Avenue, which is a safety concern
- Increase enforcement of sidewalk maintenance

RECREATION / TRAIL

- Create a fenced in dog park in HP Way Park

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Create incentives for small businesses to locate downtown / in the city
- Need another Farmer’s Market – in Downtown Mall or the Diamond
- Increase business presence on Park Avenue between Baldwin and Reynolds
- Need higher density – fewer surface parking lots
- Need a vital after hours business district
- Eldred Building on Chestnut Street – get the owner (Economic Progress Alliance) to develop the first floor commercial space - It has been left vacant for over a decade
- Develop Sandy’s European Market and Penn Plaza
- Need more businesses – business breeds business
 - Car dealers

MARKETING

- Seek Route 6 Heritage Community designation – The Route 6 corridor, which includes Meadville, has been designated as the state’s 12th Heritage Park
- Create a program to install matching awnings in the central business district to shield shoppers from the weather

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

- Need more downtown events (i.e. Erie) – block party, bike shows, couple’s night, Amish, fall festival, ice sculpting
- Need signage for Historic District along I-79, key gateways, and locally
- Include tourism in the plan
- Work with bars to promote specials
- Create a business registry – help communicate with businesses, discuss issues like parking, provide a directory for citizens – could expand countywide
- Need to market Meadville as the “hub” of the region (Center City) – think of ourselves as important
- Need to benchmark other successful cities similar to Meadville
 - Girard Main Street program
- Need to encourage / promote walking in the downtown – create an environment where people want to walk, window shop, etc.
- Shed the “sleepy town” image

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

- Need more affordable senior housing and more independent living options
- Need upper story development (residential)
- Housing blight
- Add Carr Hall to renovations
- Need to offer public incentives to commercial landlords to lease their space – structured rent
- Market Alley renovations are complete, but new electrical service for Chestnut Street businesses has not been facilitated. (Need to figure out where the project is stuck—is it a Penelec utility issue? A City funding issue? An engineering issue?)
- Need façade improvements
- Raise local funds to hire a full time downtown manager
- Evaluate if CBD Zoning should be extended to north side of North Street
- Smock Bridge - Sidewalks need attention and the barrier should be higher
- Need to improve second story windows on Chestnut Street
- Rooftop playground in First District Elementary School (PTA has been raising funds to build a new playground at the school)

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

NORTHERN PLANNING REGION STATION

ACCESS / TRANSPORTATION

- Need a direct connection from the Northern region west to parkway
 - Allegheny Street is used to get there now – one option would be to remove on street parking
- Prospect and Allegheny Streets get congested
- Sidewalks need maintenance / attention
 - East Street, Park Avenue, College Avenue
 - Enforce sidewalk maintenance ordinance – especially in winter

RECREATION

- Need a playground in the Northern region

STORMWATER

- Direct stormwater to French Creek from Northern region – downtown gets overrun

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

- Community is great – walkable
- Need to be prepared for the gas industry
 - Do not want to become Williamsport – need to control development
- Wesbury needs a small grocery store – adding to Grace Nursing Center
- Many homes are for sale in the Northern region – concerned about property values decreasing

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

EASTERN PLANNING REGION STATION

ACCESS / TRANSPORTATION

- Sidewalk curb needs to be rebuilt on East Street – including the retaining wall
- Parking issues on lower Walnut (Diamond to Liberty)
- There should be a footbridge to allow pedestrians to cross Mill Run where it crosses Hollister Street, which is closed at Mill Run

RECREATION

- Return basketball courts at Shadybrook Park
- Need to re-open restroom at Huidekoper
- Need better recreation facilities at Morgan Village
- Offer a large dog park at Cora Clark Park and maintain the park better

STORMWATER

- Stormwater management for Neason Run

AESTHETICS

- Code enforcement is generally a problem
 - Especially Walnut Street
- Need sponsored gateways
- Need to remove the blight
- Deal with shopping carts
- Community garden at Cora Clark Park

OTHER / MISCELLANEOUS

- Some attendees felt that the City should advocate to keep East End School open, others felt it should be closed and re-used as something different
- Do not re-zone the East End area - Keep East End School open and instead close Second District School because it can be used for more purposes under the zoning
- Need to harness talent from Allegheny College, not the money
- Need more community style, low income housing
- Allow retail at Talon 5 – has parking
- Contests for City marketing ideas
- Provide dumpsters in a specified place on a periodic basis to allow residents to dispose of their large items without having the expense of the \$20 large item tag
- Encourage College and Medical Center employees to live in the city

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

January 17, 2012 - Public Meeting

116 people signed in

EXIT SURVEY RESULTS – 56 COMPLETED

QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

- Attract Additional Businesses
- Parking
- Improve the Central Business District

QUESTION 2: WHAT SHOULD THE CITY FOCUS ON IN TERMS OF IMPROVING THE HOUSING STOCK?

- Property Maintenance

QUESTION 3: WHAT ONE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SHOULD THE CITY FOCUS ON?

- Attracting new businesses while retaining existing

QUESTION 4: WHAT ONE TRANSPORTATION PROJECT SHOULD THE CITY FOCUS ON?

- Mead Avenue Bridge

QUESTION 5: WHAT ONE PARKS AND RECREATION PROJECT SHOULD THE CITY FOCUS ON?

- Park / Facility Maintenance

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT TONIGHT'S MEETING?

Newspaper Article	48
Poster	3
Meeting	4
Flyer	3
E-mail	17
Other	6 (friend/neighbor, radio, phone call, church)

City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update

October 30, 2012 - Public Meeting

25 people signed in

MEETING AGENDA

- The meeting was held in an open house format from 3-5 PM and 7-9 PM
- Meeting attendees were given \$10,000 of “Meadville Money” and were asked to spend the money on their highest priority action items. The action items were the ones that were ranked as highest priority by the Steering Committee, City Council and Focus Group attendees.
- Attendees could spend all their money on one action item or spread it out among various items.
- The following are the results:
 - Provide incentives to the owners of identified vacant and/or underutilized sites to revitalize their properties - \$33,000
 - Develop and coordinate a Main Street Model Program for the Central Business District - \$25,000
 - Work with the Redevelopment Authority & local developers to acquire homes in need of renovation or demolition - \$22,000
 - Form a Task Force, comprised of the City, County, major institutional and business leaders - \$22,000
 - Continue efforts to enhance the downtown’s streetscape - \$19,000
 - Update the Zoning Ordinance to implement the City’s vision and to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goals and objectives - \$14,000
 - Revisit the Business District Action Plan to implement existing projects and update as necessary - \$12,000
 - Implement a sidewalk improvement plan - \$11,000
 - Develop a Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan - \$11,000
 - Work with the French Creek Recreational Trails Committee to bring the Ernst Trail into Meadville - \$11,000
 - Designate a staff person to meet regularly with Crawford County Planning Staff to discuss issues specific to Meadville - \$10,000
 - Create a parks maintenance plan - \$9,000
 - Create a housing roundtable to discuss housing issues and potential opportunities - \$8,000
 - Work with CATA to provide their schedules at all bus stops and other locations throughout town - \$8,000
 - Update the City’s Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to meet state requirements - \$8,000
 - Work with the Water Authority on their top three priorities - \$7,000

APPENDIX C

Steering Committee members and other stakeholders (including invitees to our Economic Development and Housing Focus Groups) were asked to rank the Action Items based on two qualifiers, Need and Success:

Need

- Rate which recommendation you feel is the highest need for each Community Development Objective. This recommendation would get the most points.
- For example under CDO 1 there are two recommendations so 2 points would be assigned to the recommendation that you feel is the highest need and 1 point for the lowest need.
- The point value under each CDO will change based on the number of recommendations.
- For example CDO 2 has six recommendations so 6 would be the highest need, 5 the next highest need and so on. Once again, 1 would be the lowest need.

Success is different. Please assign a number to each recommendation based on the following point system (You could rate all the recommendations as 4's or all as 1's or have a mixture of points):

- 4 points- the project can be completed (there are no real obstacles to implementation-money, politics, etc)
- 3 points- the project has a great likelihood to succeed
- 2 points- the project has some chance to succeed
- 1 point- the project is most likely NOT to succeed (this could be due to politics, money, public opinion, etc)

The Action Items that were ranked as a high need as well as having a high likelihood of success were taken to the final public meeting where the attendees were provided with \$10,000 of “Meadville Money”. They were asked to spend their money on the Action Items they felt were most important to the City. The attendees could spend all their money on one item or spread it out over various items.

The public was also given the opportunity (at the final public meeting as well as through an online survey) to rank all the Action Items in terms of priority.

The rankings from all the exercises were compiled and analyzed to determine the high, medium and low priorities for the Meadville Comprehensive Plan.

	RANK
CDO #1: EXPAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES AND INCREASING NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S TAX BASE	
Provide incentives to the owners of identified vacant and/or underutilized sites to revitalize their properties	1.6
Develop and coordinate a main Street Model Program for the CBD	1.4
CDO#2: REVITALIZE THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BY ADDRESSING AESTHETICS, PARKING AND VACANT/UNDERTUTILIZED STRUCTURES	
Revisit the BDAP to implement existing projects and update as necessary	4.5
Continue efforts to enhance the downtown's streetscape	4.3
Implement the Diamond Park Improvement Plan	3.4
Develop gateway at the Arch Street exit off of the French Creek Parkway (Proposed Gateway on Future Investment Sites Map)	3.2
Designate one point person for parking within the City staff	2.9
Determine the feasibility for a Historic Review Board for the Downtown Historic District	2.8
CDO#3: PROVIDE A DIVERSE MIX OF HOUSING OPTIONS THAT APPEAL TO ALL RESIDENTS	
Create a housing roundtable (utilize the Housing Focus Group as a start) to discuss housing issues and potential opportunities	5.7
Work with the College and the Medical Center on their mortgage assistance programs	5.5
Work with the School District on their redevelopment efforts to reuse neighborhood schools that have been closed (i.e. East End)	5.3
Work with local organizations that provide housing services to develop a database of existing housing opportunities and needs	5.0
Utilize the information provided on the web (in previous action) to create "Welcome to Meadville" packets for new residents	3.9
Offer incentives for upper story housing in the CBD	3.9
Provide a "Why live in Meadville" page on the City's website	3.8
Undertake a market assessment to determine viability of utilizing the City owned property (located on hillside along Liberty Street) for mixed income multi-family housing	3.4

	RANK
CDO#4: INCREASE REHABILITATION EFFORTS AND CODE ENFORCEMENT IN TARGETED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS	
Work with the Redevelopment Authority and local developers to purchase homes in need of renovation or demolition	4.9
Establish a loan or grant program for homeowners for renovations	4.6
Create a Property Maintenance Committee that can work with property owners in violation to determine suitable solutions	4.5
Work with City solicitor to utilize provisions in Act 90 of 2010	4.0
Increase staff to enforce Property Maintenance Codes	3.9
Determine the feasibility of enacting a Rental Ordinance	3.7
Create Neighborhood Block Watch Programs throughout the City	2.3
CDO#5: INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH ENTITIES SUCH AS CRAWFORD COUNTY, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE, MEADVILLE MEDICAL CENTER, ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES AND OTHERS TO ESTABLISH MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS	
Form a Task Force, comprised of the City, County, major institutional and business leaders	3.1
Designate a staff person to meet regularly with Crawford County Planning Staff to discuss issues specific to Meadville	2.6
Hold regular meetings with supervisors, council representatives, planning staff, etc. with surrounding municipalities to discuss issues that are common across municipal boundaries	2.5
Continue involvement in French Creek COG	1.9
CDO#6: ENCOURAGE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT INCORPORATES UPGRADES TO TRANSPORTATION ROUTES, PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS AND PED AND BIKE CONNECTIONS	
Implement a sidewalk improvement plan	5.5
the Ernst Trail into Meadville (Proposed Ernst Trail Connection on Future Investment Sites Map)	5.3
Work with CATA to provide their schedules at all bus stops and other locations throughout town	5.2
major population centers (i.e. College, Medical Center, CBD, etc.)	4.7
Provide bike racks throughout the City (partnership between City, Business Owners, CATA, etc.)	4.4
Establish a priority system for road / paving projects	4.3
Prepare a Streetscape Plan for Terrace Street (Proposed Streetscape on Future Investment Sites Map)	4.1
Work with the Police Department regarding greater enforcement of speed limits	3.2

	RANK
CDO#7: CREATE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS	
Develop a Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan	7.1
Create a parks maintenance plan	6.6
Continue to work with local media outlets on achieving monthly	6.5
Work with Allegheny College and the school district to develop a formal policy for public use of their recreation facilities	6.0
Reactivate Park and Recreation Board	5.5
Create additional green / public space throughout the City	5.3
Improve maintenance at Huidekoper Park	5.0
Identify new location for HP Way Park (in case the existing park is lost due to the new water tanks that will be installed)	4.8
Install kiosk with a map of the trail system at Cora Clark Park	4.4
Develop environmental theme for Bicentennial Park	4.3
CDO#8: ENSURE ALL MUNICIPAL POLICIES AND ORDINANCES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION	
Update the Zoning Ordinance to implement the City's vision and to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives	4.7
Update the City's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to	3.8
Work with the Water Authority on their top three priorities	3.7
Develop rain gardens in targeted areas throughout the City to help address flooding issues	3.3
Create an employee retention / replacement schedule	3.2
Develop a rain barrel program for residents to help address flooding issues	2.5

APPENDIX D



City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Recommendations

CDO #1: EXPAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES AND CREATING NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S TAX BASE

Both of the Action Items for this Community Development Objective ranked as High Priority. Therefore there are no Medium or Low priority items.

CDO #2: REVITALIZE THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BY ADDRESSING AESTHETICS, PARKING AND VACANT / UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES

Medium Priority Action Items

Action: Implement the Diamond Park Improvement Plan

- New benches, New trash receptacles, Fundraising campaign

Action: Develop gateway at the Arch Street exit off of the French Creek Parkway (Proposed Gateway on Future Investment Sites Map)

- Consistent with any theme developed for the City

Low Priority Action Items

Action: Designate a point person for parking within the city staff

- Keep track of available parking , condition of parking, revenues, and staff
- Develop a program that publicizes existing parking areas in the CBD
 - ⇒ Smart phone applications, Online map, Maps on kiosks as they are implemented in the City

Action: Determine the feasibility for a Historic Review Board for the Downtown Historic District

- Flexible Design Guidelines, Assistance with development, Install signs for the Historic District



City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Recommendations

CDO #3: PROVIDE A DIVERSE MIX OF HOUSING OPTIONS THAT WILL APPEAL TO ALL RESIDENTS

Medium Priority Action Items

Action: Work with the School District on their redevelopment efforts to reuse neighborhood schools that have been closed (i.e. East End)

- Possible uses = Apartments, Adult education programs, Community meeting space, Indoor recreation

Action: Work with local housing organizations to develop a database of existing housing opportunities and needs

- County agencies should house the database, Data should be obtained from state, county and local agencies

Low Priority Action Items

Action: Offer incentives for upper story housing in the Central Business District (CBD)

- Shared parking, Tax incentives, Reduced permit fees

Action: Utilize the information provided on the web (discussed in action item below) to create “Welcome to Meadville” packets for new residents

- Provide to major employers for their employees who move to Meadville, real estate agencies, etc.

Action: Provide a “Why live in Meadville” page on the City’s website

- List assets (low cost of living, available housing stock, downtown business district, college town, medical center)
- List available resources with contact information (city, non-profit and private)

Action: Undertake a market assessment to determine viability of utilizing the City owned property (located on hillside along Liberty Street) for mixed income multi-family housing

- Condos, Townhomes, etc. (example, Crawford Square in Pittsburgh)

CDO #4: INCREASE REHABILITATION EFFORTS AND CODE ENFORCEMENT IN TARGETED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Medium Priority Action Items

Action: Create a Property Maintenance Committee that can work with property owners in violation to determine suitable solutions

- Example—Fairlawn Borough, NJ (www.fairlawn.org)

Action: Work with City solicitor to utilize provisions in Act 90 of 2010 which allows a community to:

- File court actions against owners of properties with serious code violations resulting in judgments against the owners’ assets, not just liens against the buildings.
- Provide for out-of-state owners of deteriorated property to be extradited for prosecution.
- Deny applications for municipal permits if the applicant is delinquent on taxes, or if the applicant owns property that is in serious violation of codes and has taken no substantial action.

Low Priority Action Items

Action: Increase staff to enforce Property Maintenance Codes

Action: Determine the feasibility of enacting a Rental Ordinance

Action: Create Neighborhood Block Watch Programs throughout the City—address nuisance issues (noise, pets, etc.)



City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Recommendations

CDO #5: INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH ENTITIES SUCH AS CRAWFORD COUNTY, ALLEGHENY COLLEGE, MEADVILLE MEDICAL CENTER, ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES AND OTHERS TO ESTABLISH MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Medium Priority Action Items

Action: Hold quarterly meetings with supervisors, council representatives, planning staff, etc. with surrounding municipalities to discuss issues that are common across municipal boundaries

- Meadville Mayor should lead and host the meetings, members of Meadville Council and Planning Commission should also attend the meetings
- Explore cost sharing partnerships
- Discuss successes and challenges of operating the municipalities

Low Priority Action Items

Action: Continue involvement in French Creek Council of Governments

- Bring ideas learned at quarterly meetings discussed in previous Action item

CDO #6: ENCOURAGE A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT INCORPORATES UPGRADES TO TRANSPORTATION ROUTES, PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS AND PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIONS

Medium Priority Action Items

Action: Work with CATA to provide their schedules at all bus stops and other locations throughout town

- Provide on kiosks as they are developed
- Create a mobile app that allows users to download maps on their smart phones

Action: Complete a Citywide trail study to identify connections between major population centers (i.e. College, Medical Center, Central Business District (CBD), residential neighborhoods, etc.)

- Identify on road/sidewalk routes
- Install signs for WalkWorks program

Action: Provide bike racks throughout the City (partnership between City, Business Owners, CATA, etc.)

- At major retail centers—downtown mall, grocery stores, Meadville Market House
- Recreational areas—parks, MARC
- Educational areas—schools, library

Action: Establish a priority system for road / paving projects

- Track road paving through GIS mapping programs

Low Priority Action Items

Action: Prepare a Streetscape Plan for Terrace Street

- Hire consultant (Engineer, Landscape Architect, etc.)
- Identify pedestrian friendly improvements
- Coordinate to be consistent with streetscape improvements in the CBD

Action: Work with the Police Department regarding greater enforcement of speed limits

- Consider lowering speed limit to 25 mph in residential areas



City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Recommendations

CDO #7: CREATE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

Medium Priority Action Items

Action: Continue to work with local media outlets on achieving monthly coverage/exposure of what's happening in Meadville

- Planned events, activities, programs, and developments

Action: Work with Allegheny College and the school district to develop a formal policy for public use of their recreation facilities

- Playgrounds, trails, etc.

Action: Reactivate Park and Recreation Board

- Host monthly rotating events in the parks (i.e. Farmer's Market, Movie Night, Saturday Picnics)
- Host summer programs (Provide survey through school district to determine what programs to offer)
- Partner with School District and College to provide student friendly events and assist with advertising

Action: Create additional green / public space throughout the City

- Focus on areas within the Central Business District (CBD) and the Elm Street neighborhood
- Partner with developers as development occurs

Action: Improve maintenance at Huidekoper Park

- Pavilion roof, Courts—tennis and basketball, Parking

Low Priority Action Items

Action: Identify new location for HP Way Park (due to the fact the existing park will be lost when the reservoir is replaced)

Action: Install kiosk with a map of the trail system at Cora Clark Park

Action: Develop environmental theme for Bicentennial Park

- Play equipment, Trail head

CDO #8: ENSURE ALL MUNICIPAL POLICIES AND ORDINANCES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION

Medium Priority Action Items

Action: Work with the Water Authority on their top three priorities

- Replace Highland Reservoir, Replace clear well, Ongoing replacement of aging distribution system

Action: Develop rain gardens in targeted areas throughout the City to help address flooding issues

Action: Create an employee retention / replacement schedule

- Determine retirement schedules for existing staff, Advertise for replacement staff prior to retirements

Low Priority Action Items

Action: Develop a rain barrel program for residents to help address flooding issues

- Target residents in Fifth Ward due to flooding issues in that area

APPENDIX E



City of Meadville Comprehensive Plan Update References

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