

MOUNT UNION BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Draft Plan: **SEPTEMBER 23 2024**



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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MUNICIPAL BUILDING

MT. UNION
BORO
NIGHT DROP

MOUNT
COMMUNITY
LIBRARY
814-542-4572

I.

INTRODUCTION

Insert Resolution



USING THE PLAN

What is this document?

Authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), a community's Comprehensive Plan lays out strategies for the nature, pace and location of physical development as well as plans for future economic and social conditions.

In short, a Comprehensive Plan is:

- An educational tool for understanding current conditions, issues, and opportunities.
- An assessment and prioritization of needs.
- A statement of the optimally desirable vision of future growth and development.
- A public policy guide to community decision-making adopted by the governing body.

Unlike traditional Comprehensive Plans of the past, which studied topics in isolation (housing, transportation, etc.), Mount Union's updated plan is organized to address priority community issues. In keeping with the implementable plan model promoted by Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the plan frames key issues within the context of all of the planning topics it covers.

What the document contains

This document outlines Mount Union's envisioned future and presents a comprehensive playbook of projects and strategies designed to actualize the Borough's vision. Serving as a crucial decision-making resource, the plan will guide elected and appointed officials in shaping the Borough's development. The Steering Committee for the project played a vital role in collecting input, identifying key issues, and formulating effective strategies to tackle them.

The **Context and Principles** section encompasses demographic data derived from the 2020 Census, an overview of the planning process, and the plan's vision, goals, and guiding principles.

Four **Focus Areas** were identified as specific targets: Downtown/ Business Development, Community Resources, Infrastructure, and Blighted Properties/Building Rehabilitation. Within this section, priority action steps for each Focus Area are outlined.

The **Implementation Tools** offers detailed insights into how the Borough can implement the plan, including information on partners, costs, and potential funding sources for prioritized action steps.

Appendices contain supplemental information for the plan, such as additional provisions from the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Executive Summary from the Market Analysis Report, and a summary of public outreach efforts.

PLANNING PROCESS

Borough elected and appointed officials, community stakeholders, and the general public collaborated on the revision of the Comprehensive Plan, with support from Mackin Engineering & Consultants. The project commenced in early 2023. A kick-off meeting with the Steering Committee, appointed by the Borough, marked the project's initiation, involving background research, mapping, and demographic trend analysis.

During the summer and fall of 2023, community outreach activities unfolded, encompassing the identification of community stakeholders, the release of an online survey, and the organization of a public open house to gather initial input from the general public. The consultant team, in conjunction with the Steering Committee, identified key areas of focus, established a vision and goals, and formulated action items for these focal points. Subsequently, a second public meeting was held to present and receive feedback on the action items.

The planning process culminated in the fall of 2024 with a public plan review, a public hearing, and the official adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.





II.

CONTEXT & PRINCIPLES

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

According to the United States Census Bureau, the population of Mount Union Borough in 2020 was 2,308 people. This represents a slight decrease from the population recorded in the 2010 census, which was 2,447 people.

Population patterns in Mount Union reflected rapid decline in the years following the Borough's peak in the 1950's. After its high point, Mount Union's population decreased by 50.7%.

SUMMARY



POPULATION: **2,308**



LAND AREA: **1.24 SQ. MILES**

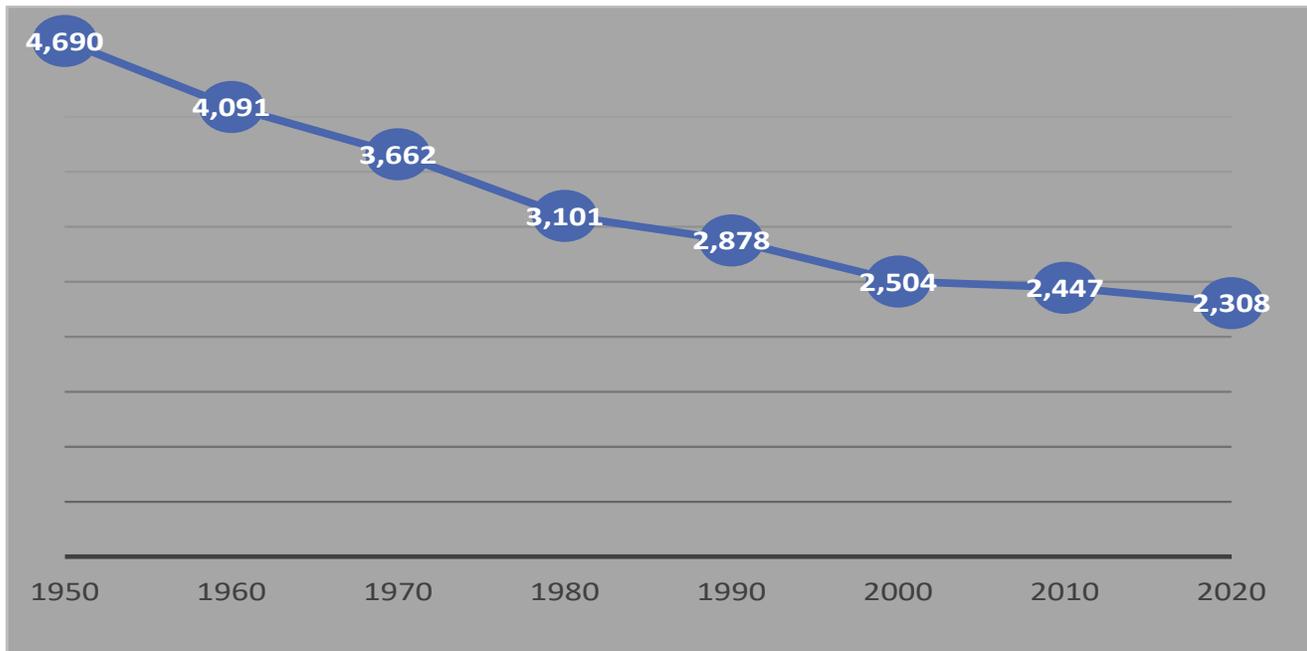


HOUSEHOLDS: **896**



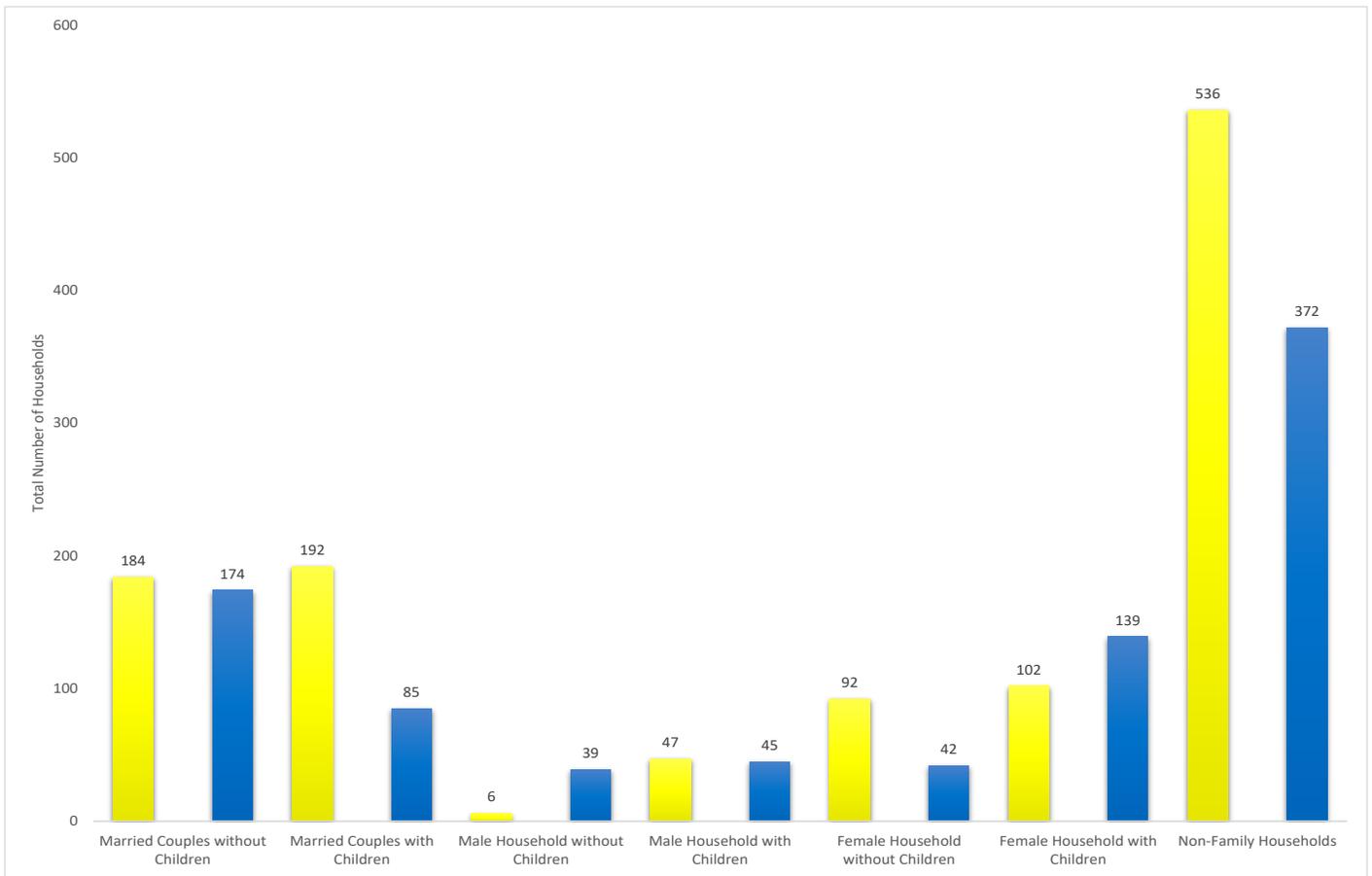
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: **\$38,382**

BOROUGH POPULATION



HOUSEHOLD TYPE

Over the past decade, household populations have decreased, leading to significant changes in household types. Most of the housing types have decreased over the past decade, with the exception of male households without children and female households with children. **Notably, non-family households, encompassing non-related individuals cohabiting and those living alone, decreased by 181 households.**



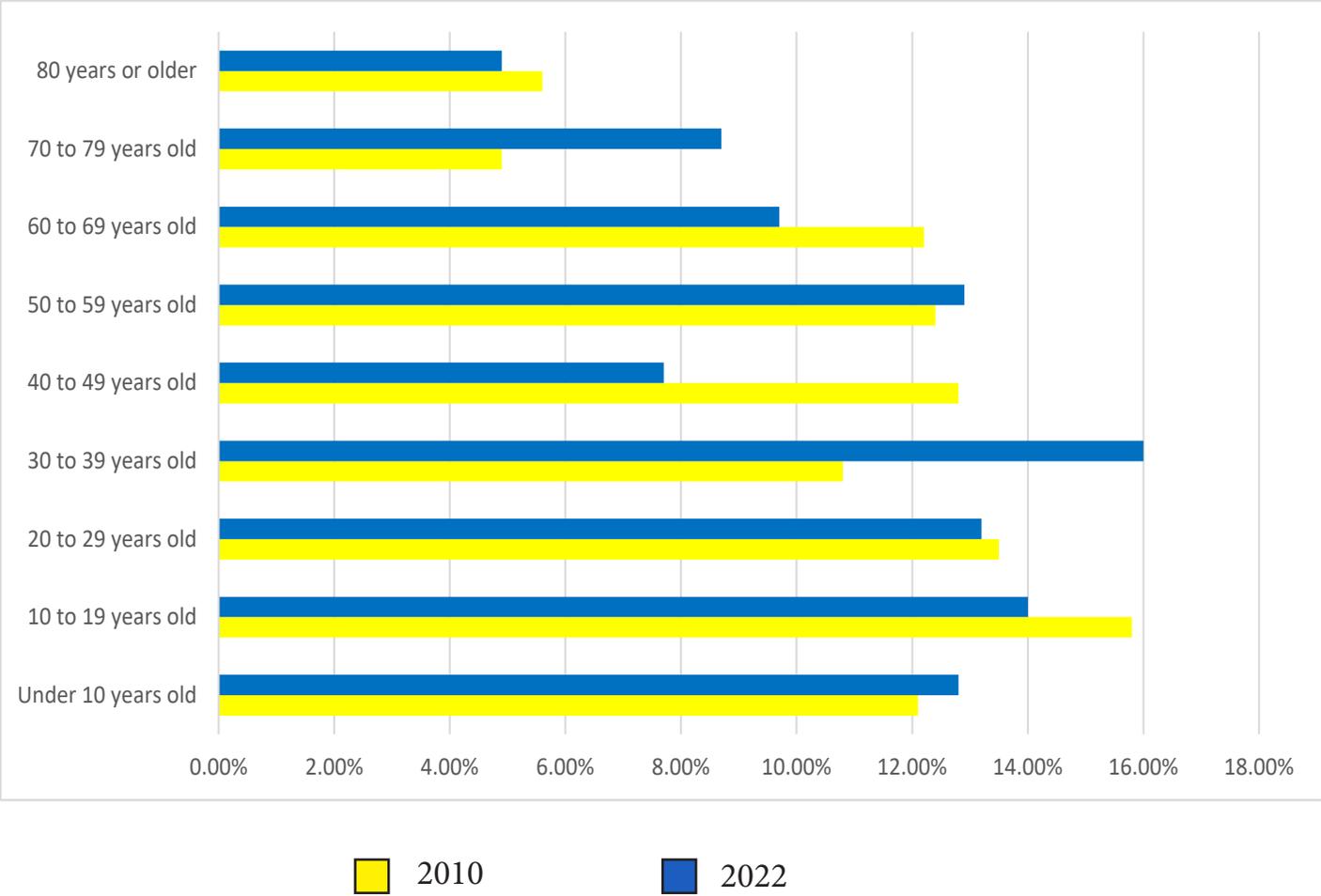
2010

2022

AGE

Over the past decade, Mount Union has experienced changes in its age distribution, particularly noticeable when analyzing age groups within a nine-year range. The most significant surge in age distribution occurred in the 30 to 39 years old category, with a 5.2% increase. Additionally, there was a noteworthy decrease in the age group of 40 to 49 years old, which had a 5.0% decline.

Furthermore, the median age in Mount Union decreased from 39 in 2010 to 34.8 in 2022, **signaling a shift towards a younger demographic among residents.**



EMPLOYMENT

The provided diagram depicts the daily influx and outflow of individuals commuting to work in and around Mount Union. According to the diagram, a considerable amount of Borough residents (769 individuals) work outside of Mount Union, while (551) people reside outside the Borough and commute to work within Mount Union. A smaller portion (108 individuals) both reside and work within the Borough.

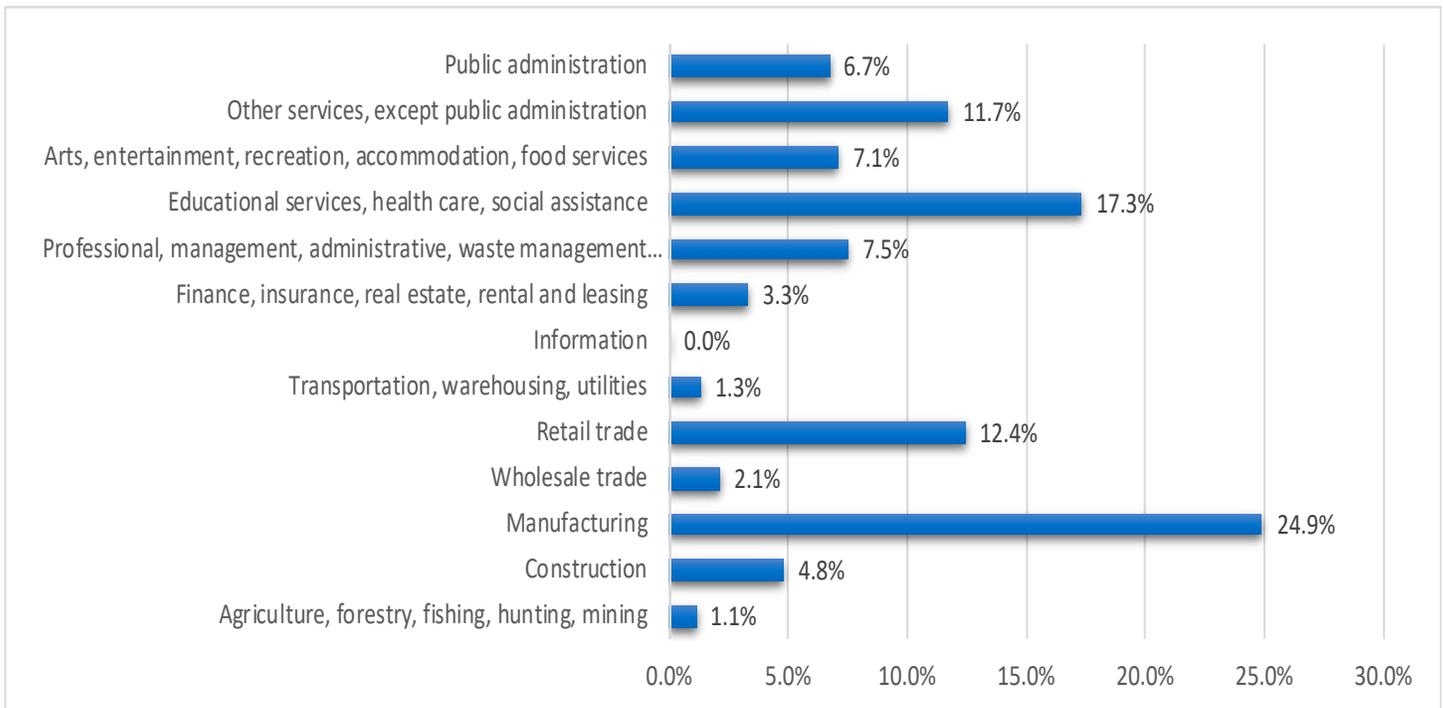
The census estimates that Mount Union employed **626 people in 2020, more than 2/3 (80.4%) of which had earnings less than \$40,000/year.**

In terms of education, 88.9% of Mount Union’s workforce, aged 25 and older, have at least a high school diploma and 10% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. This is similar to Huntington County for high school diplomas (89.9%) but much lower for bachelor’s degrees or higher (17.5%).



INDUSTRY

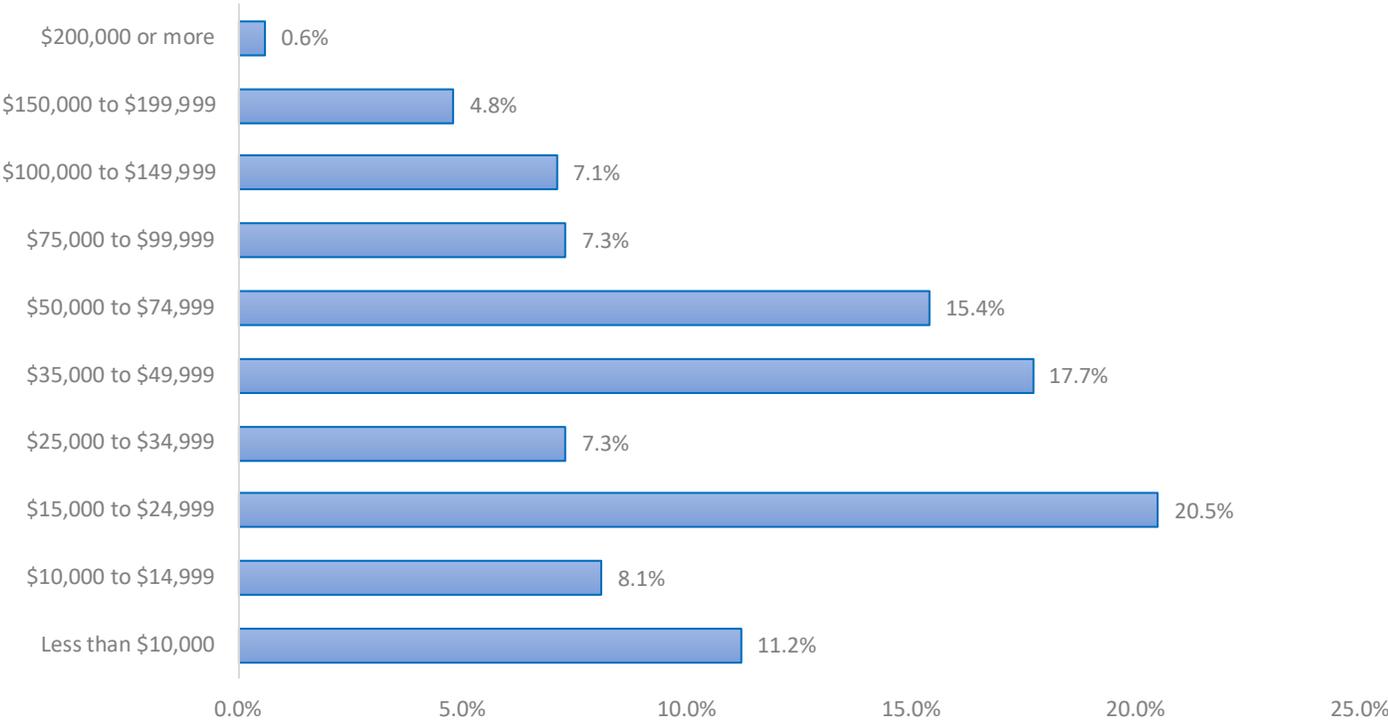
The industries in which Mount Union workers were employed varied significantly by category. According to the 2022 Census Estimates, out of 840 employed individuals aged 16 and older, the **largest portion worked in Manufacturing (24.9%)**. Other prominent industries included **Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance (17.3%)**, as well as **Retail Trade (12.4%)**.



INCOME

The majority of household incomes in Mount Union fall below 34,999 per year, as shown below. An additional 39.8% of households made less than \$25,000, and only 12.5% make more than \$100,000.

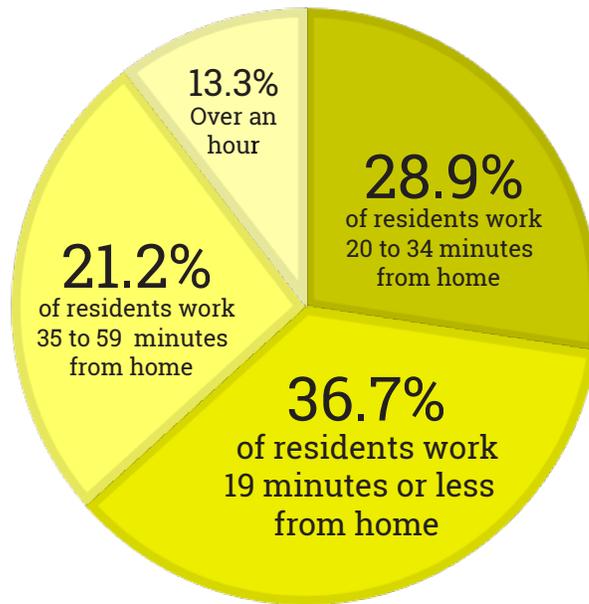
The median income across Mount Union households was \$38,382 in 2022, **which is much lower than the Huntington County's median of \$61,300.**



COMMUTE

Mount Union workers scatter to a variety of destinations across the region. Almost one quarter of workers remain in Huntington County (21%), while others also travel to other counties such as Mifflin and Centre Counties for work.

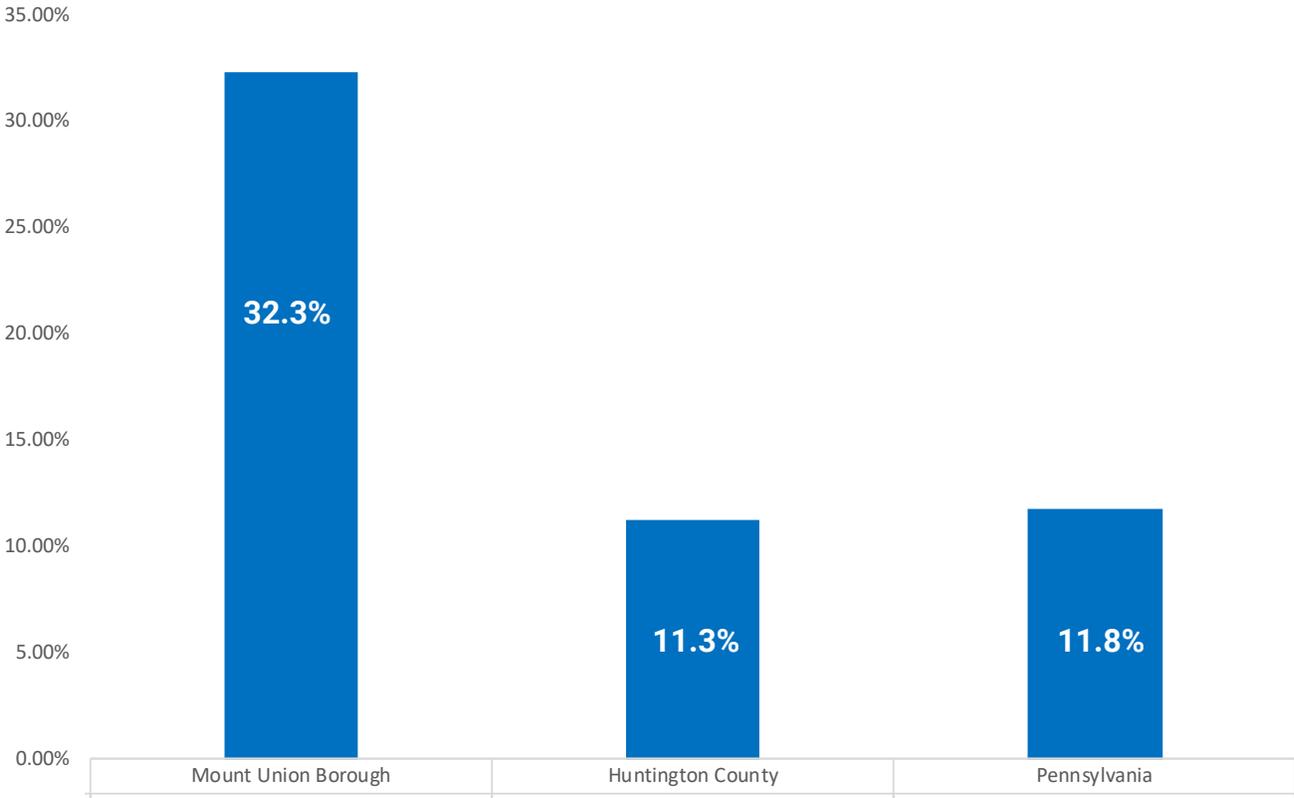
Commuting is relatively quick for the **65.6% of Mount Union workers who travel less than 34 minutes from work to home.**



POVERTY

Poverty levels have witnessed a substantial increase of 9.4% over the past decade, climbing from 22.7% in 2010 to 32.3% in 2022.

Census data reveals that when comparing Mount Union’s poverty rates, the Borough stands notably **higher than Huntington County (11.3%) and in Pennsylvania (11.8%).**



HOUSING UNITS

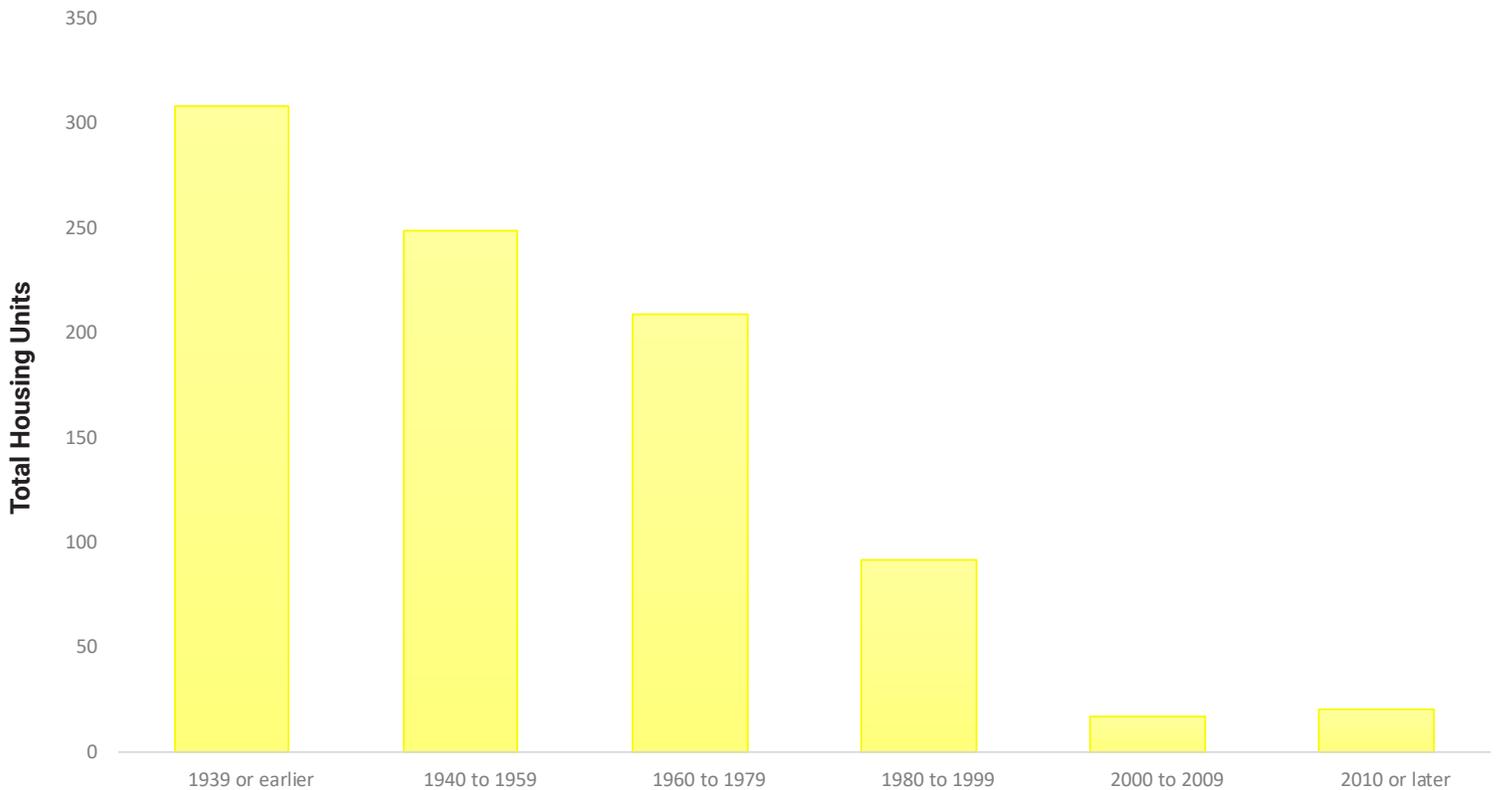
The Census Bureau counted 1,208 total housing units in Mount Union in 2020, compared to 1,262 in 2010, a net loss of 54 homes. This includes new units in single-family or multi-unit configurations minus any units lost to demolition, abandonment or conversion.

As the graph below illustrates, the housing market in Mount Union was at its highest peak from 1939 and earlier with a gradual descent that continues into today.



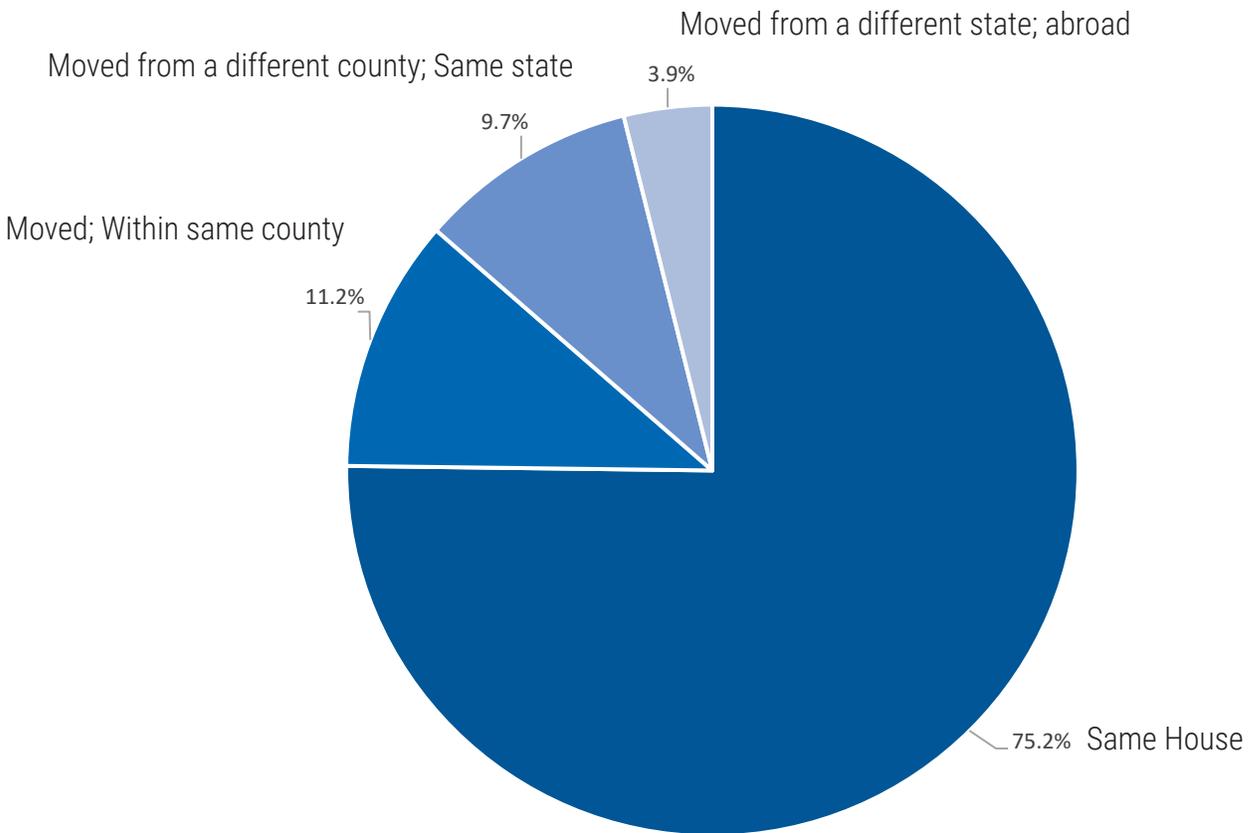
Mount Union's homes are **50.2%** renter-occupied.

This has increased from 2010, when the rate was approximately 48.8%.



MOBILITY

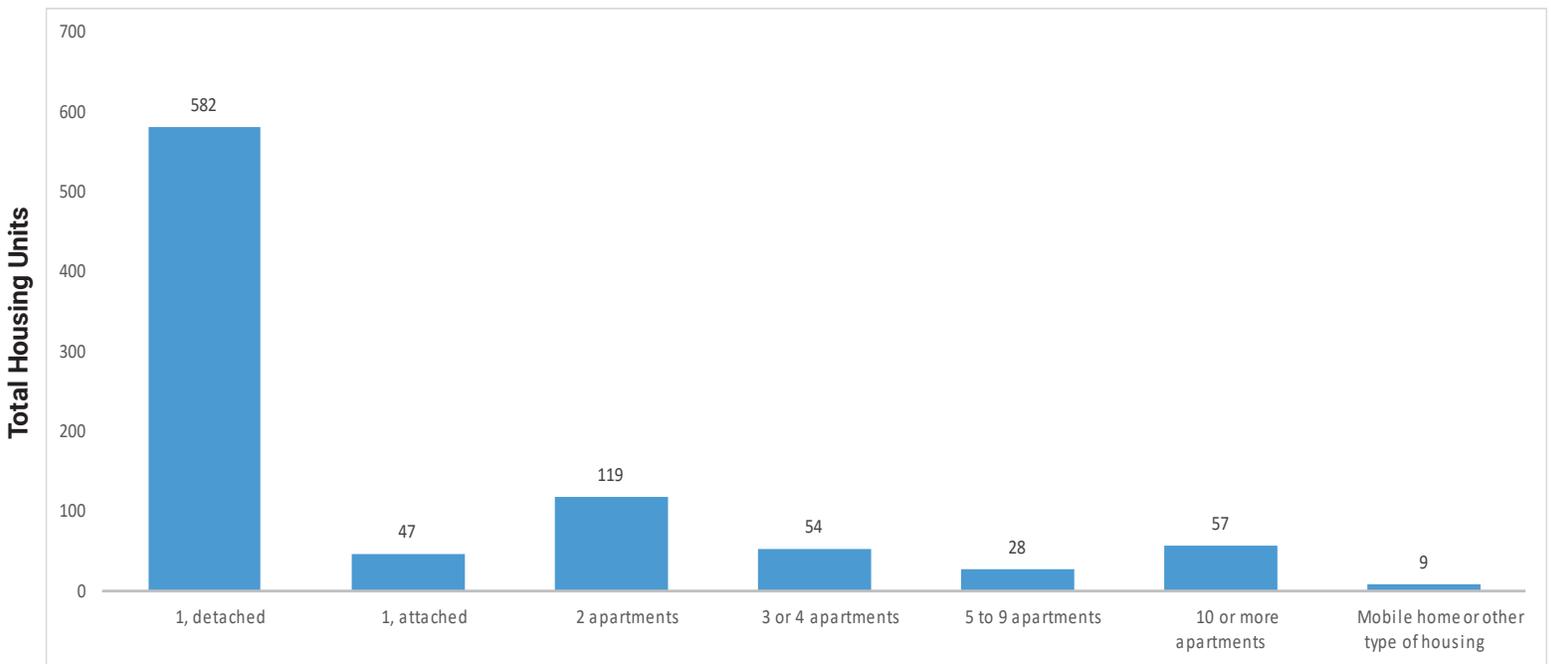
The residential stability of Mount Union is reflected in the fact that 79.2% of residents remained in their homes in 2022. In that same year, 11.1% relocated from other areas within Huntingdon County, and 9.7% moved in from a different county. The rate of residents staying in the same home is **notably lower than the corresponding figure for Huntingdon County, which stood at 89.8%**.



HOUSING TYPE AND OCCUPANCY

Most of the residences in Mount Union Borough **consist of single-family detached structures, which comprise 65% of the housing stock**. The next prevalent type is two-apartment units, accounting for 13.3% of homes. Other housing categories include structures with 10 or more apartments (6.4%), three or four apartments (6%), and so forth.

According to the Census, Mount Union Borough recorded 178 vacant homes. Vacancy in this context encompasses homes available for rent, for sale, or those that have been rented or sold but not yet occupied. Other reasons for homes being classified as vacant include seasonal, recreational, occasional use, and the “other” category, which often aligns with abandonment.

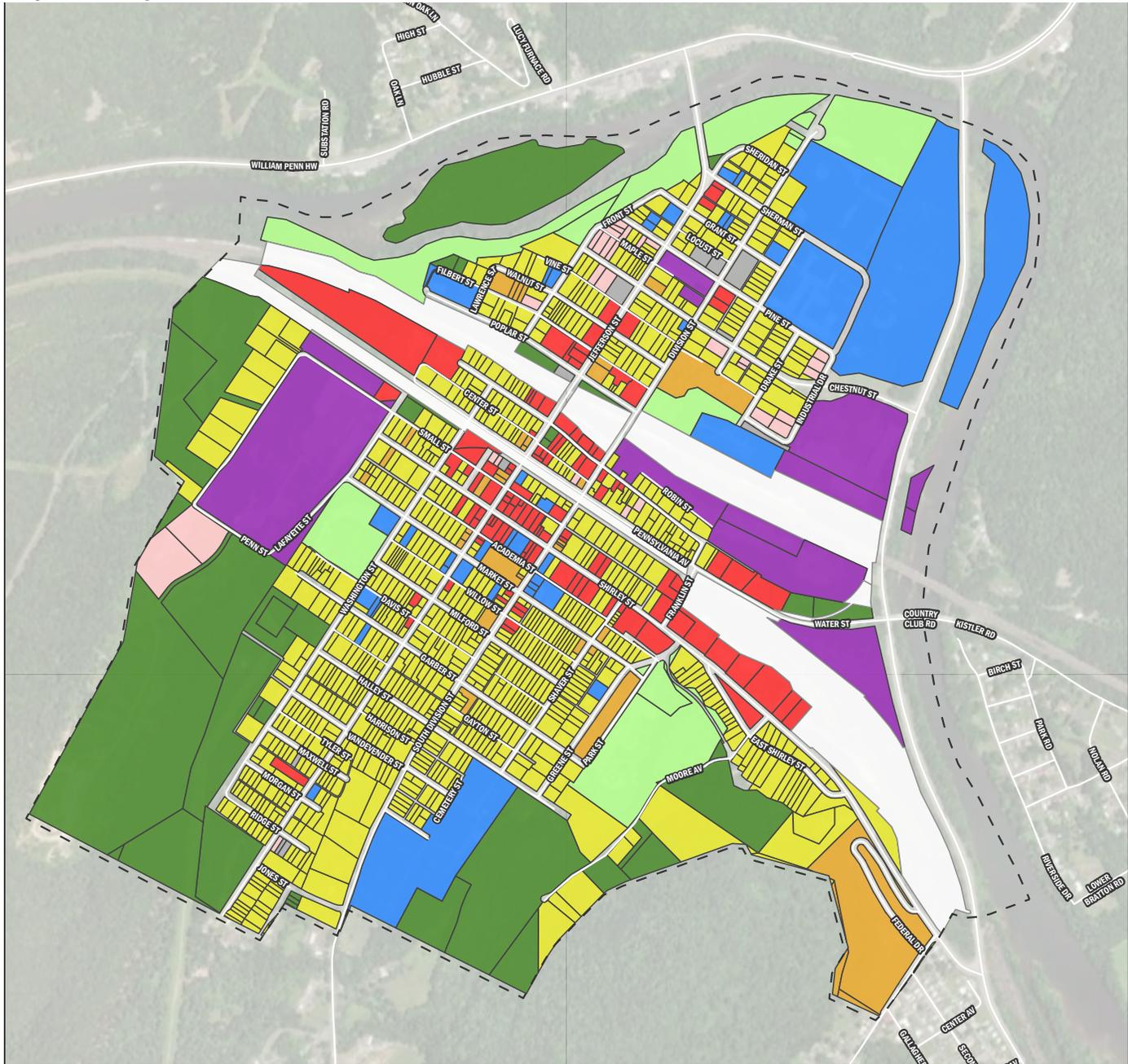


EXISTING LAND USE

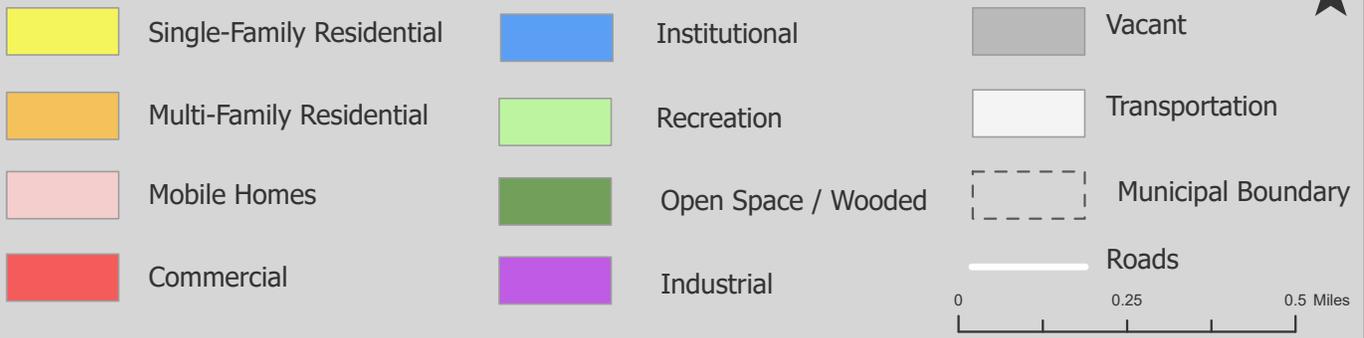
The existing land use inventory for Mount Union Borough was created using land cover data from Huntingdon County. The Mount Union mapping was refined and updated based on field views and meetings with the Borough staff and the steering committee. Below is a breakdown of land uses along with the percentage each category covers:

- **Residential (27.8%):** Applies to residential areas including single-family, two-family or multi-family.
- **Mobile Homes (1.59%):** Applies to areas featuring residential areas with mobile home-style housing.
- **Commercial (5.71%):** Applies to commercial areas and uses including the downtown, shopping centers, businesses, etc.
- **Institutional (12.14%):** Applies to the major stand-alone civic, governmental, religious, and community sites.
- **Recreation (7.97%):** Applies to properties designated for recreational purposes, including parks, sports facilities, camps, trails, etc.
- **Open Space/Wooded (26.78%):** Applies to both the major intact forests and the fragmented stands of woodlands within or adjacent to the Borough.
- **Industrial (9.41%):** Applies to properties where manufacturing or heavy industry occurs.
- **Vacant (0.52%):** Applies to areas devoid of built structures or comprising of empty lots.
- **Transportation (4.46%):** Applies to the area encompassing the railroad tracks.

Map 1: Existing Land Use



Land Use



VISION, GOALS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Presented below is the vision for the future of Mount Union, created from public input gathered throughout the planning process. This vision states the community's aspirations and objectives, and serves as the guiding force for the goals and actions outlined in the plan. It establishes a strategic benchmark or "test" for future projects. Additionally, the plan designates four key areas of focus, with the goals for each outlined beneath the vision.

Building upon our small-town atmosphere and natural historic beauty we are committed to ensuring a healthy quality of life for all of our residents by:

- ***Engaging strong, qualified leadership and collaborating with community partners***
- ***Building upon superior recreational, cultural, and historical experiences***
- ***Offering high quality and diverse residential options***
- ***Retaining existing and welcoming new local businesses***
- ***Properly maintaining and upgrading community infrastructure as well as providing exemplary public safety and code enforcement services***

GOALS FOR FOCUS AREAS:

DOWNTOWN/ BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Borough is dedicated to enhancing downtown amenities to provide a thriving Main Street and fostering business development throughout the area, aiming to revitalize the urban core and promote economic growth, community vibrancy, and an improved quality of life for both residents and visitors.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Borough aims to enhance and expand its assets to establish itself as a desirable living environment, offering a wide array of community, historical, cultural, and recreational amenities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Borough is dedicated to ensuring the safety and reliability of its infrastructure, aiming to create a resilient and supportive environment for all of its residents.

BLIGHTED PROPERTIES/BUILDING REHABILITATION

The Borough is committed to bolstering the vitality of our community through the reinforcement of blight-related initiatives and the encouragement of rehabilitation efforts for structures and homes.

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III.
Focus Areas

PRIORITY ISSUES:

Actionable plans concentrate on addressing the most crucial issues or needs within a community, rather than attempting to tackle every aspect separately. Through the planning process, it became apparent that Mount Union had four focal points crucial for constructing the plan (listed below). Consequently, the recommendations formulated for the plan are organized within these designated focus areas. Several recommendations were identified as 'high priority' during the planning process and are marked with a 'High Priority Goal' icon in the following sections. For further details on each recommendation, refer to Section IV: Implementation Plan.

The four identified focus areas are:



DOWNTOWN/ BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



COMMUNITY RESOURCES



INFRASTRUCTURE



BLIGHTED PROPERTIES/BUILDING REHABILITATION

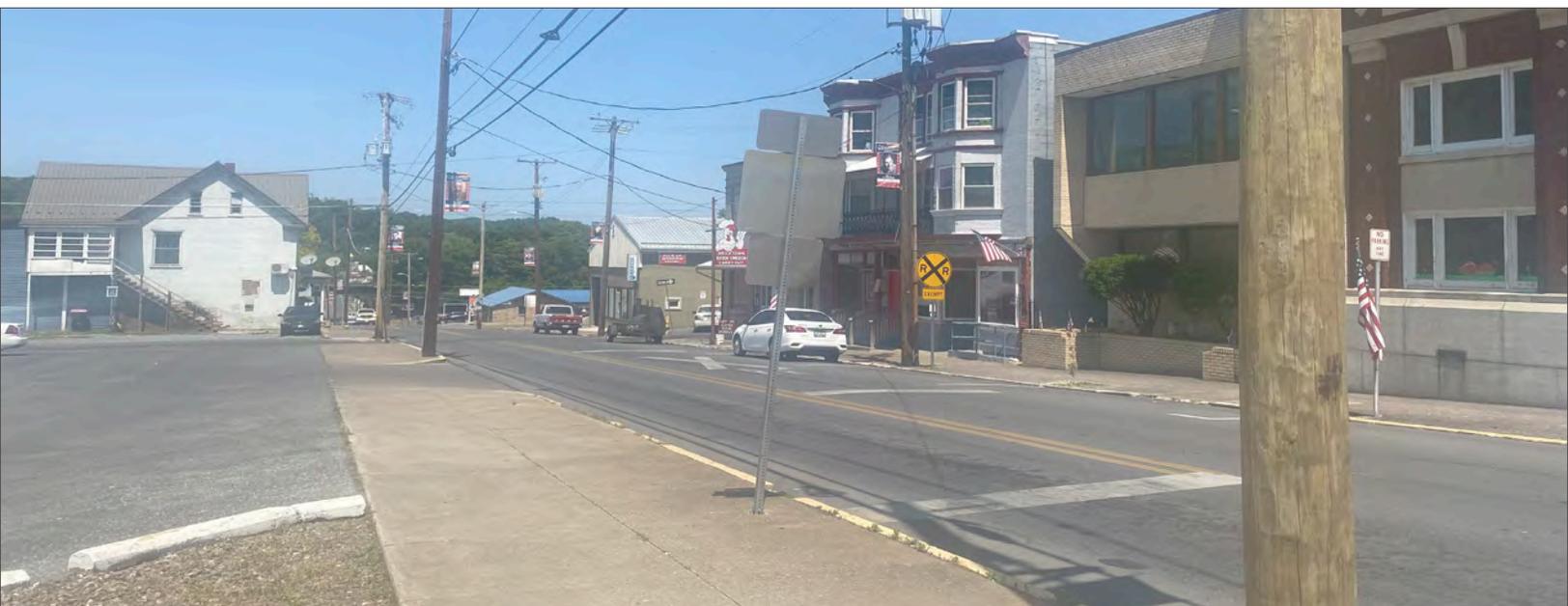
DOWNTOWN/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The Borough is deeply committed to the revitalization and enhancement of downtown amenities, with the primary goal of cultivating a vibrant Main Street and fostering widespread business development. This dedication stems from a collective vision to breathe new life into the urban core, propelling economic growth and fostering a sense of community pride. By prioritizing this area, the Borough aims to not only improve business development but also enrich the overall quality of life for both its residents and visitors alike.

With a focus on revitalization, the Borough recognizes the pivotal role that downtown areas play as the heart of the community. By investing in the enhancement of downtown amenities, the Borough hopes to create a dynamic and welcoming environment that attracts businesses, residents, and tourists alike. This strategic approach can create a ripple effect of economic development, cultural richness, and social connectivity, ultimately positioning the Borough as a center of progress within the region.

As a companion piece to the Comprehensive Plan, a Market Report was prepared by 4ward Planning to highlight existing market conditions and provide high level recommendations to attract and retain businesses (many of which are included in the recommendations of this plan). The Executive Summary from this report can be found in the Appendices.



Streetview Mount Union

Key Recommendation 1: Market Downtown Mount Union Assets.

During the comprehensive planning process, community leaders and residents identified various needs and concerns regarding downtown and business development in Mount Union.

- Drawing businesses to the area proves challenging, particularly attracting restaurants and retail establishments to the downtown core.
- Vacant and deteriorating properties present a challenge, compounded by difficulties in enforcing building codes and the high cost of renovations due to the age of buildings.
- With limited public and private resources in a small community, the absence of a “Main Street Manager” further complicates revitalization efforts compared to larger municipalities.

There’s a shared belief that there’s untapped potential in marketing the downtown area, particularly in highlighting its unique, place-based experience. A more coordinated promotional effort is seen as essential to marketing downtown.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Partner with the Mount Union and Huntingdon County Chambers of Commerce to upgrade and actively market the downtown and participate in regional business activities.
- Expand business offerings, including coordination with Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I) and Juniata College’s Sill Business Center, which assist with regional business creation, retention and/or expansion, and promote entrepreneurial thought and action.
- Target remote workers (those who do not need to live next to where they work) by promoting the low cost of living, local recreational assets, and small-town atmosphere.
- Retain and expand tourism offerings to capture regional visitor spending. Engage with local museums; railways; senior centers; and camping, fishing, hunting, and lodging sites; and collaborate with the Huntingdon County Visitor’s Bureau (HCVB).
- Create and market an inventory of vacant and for-sale properties, utilizing it as a tool for attracting potential occupants and investors to the downtown area.
- Consider developing a theme and/or logo for the Borough to be used in marketing and promotion efforts.

Key Recommendation 2: Collaborate with the Juniata River Blueprint Community (JRBC).

The JRBC employs one paid staff member who leads and coordinates with staff from the Huntingdon County Planning Department. As a nonprofit Blueprint Organization established by the FHL Bank in Pittsburgh, the JRBC operates similarly to a Main Street Program, although it has its unique structure. The organization receives oversight and support from the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, like other Main Street programs. The group, made up of volunteers, meets monthly to discuss various projects and initiatives. Their discussions often focus on endeavors observed in other communities or ideas members wish to implement. Utilizing the JRBC as a resource to boost business growth in downtown is crucial for revitalizing the area.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Collaborate with the JRBC to incorporate a more focused approach on enhancing downtown & economic development by developing a subcommittee focusing on Main Street.
- Work with both existing and prospective businesses to conduct a thorough needs assessment.
- Organize networking or business development events aimed at fostering connections and collaboration within the local business community. These events could include workshops, seminars, or networking mixers designed to facilitate meaningful interactions, knowledge sharing, and relationship building among entrepreneurs, business owners, and stakeholders.
- Increase volunteerism interest and opportunities.



Mount Union Boat Launch



Mount Union Area Community Garden

Key Recommendation 3: Explore Redevelopment Opportunities.

Many redevelopment opportunities are available in the Borough, especially with vacant buildings and storefronts. Pinpointing key sites for focused redevelopment is crucial to utilize these opportunities efficiently. This revitalization is significant as it injects vitality into the community, enhances the area's appearance, draws in businesses and tourists, generates employment, and stimulates the local economy. Strategically targeting redevelopment sites enables optimal resource allocation, amplifying the impact of revitalization endeavors and fostering overall growth and prosperity within the borough.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Collaborate with local property owners to identify key underutilized or vacant sites.
 - Identify key underutilized or vacant sites throughout the Borough, such as the former sewing factory (seen below), former brickyard, and former banks/businesses for targeted redevelopment efforts.



Vacant Sewing Factory

Key Recommendation 4: Implement Alternative Parking Strategies.

During the planning process, community members have voiced concerns about the significant parking issues throughout the Borough. To tackle this pressing challenge, it's imperative to undertake a thorough examination of various parking strategies aimed at optimizing available space and mitigating congestion. The Borough recently passed a parking ordinance that increases fees for parking violations, which could help solve some of the parking issues. Exploring a range of parking solutions is essential to effectively manage parking demand, improve traffic flow, and enhance overall accessibility within the Borough.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

Implement parking strategies such as:

- Conduct a formal parking study.
- Identify potential sites for the addition or rental of parking lots within the Borough, considering factors such as proximity to downtown, parks, and areas of high demand.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of enforcing mechanisms for parking, including signage, enforcement personnel, and potential penalties for violations.
- Conduct a financial feasibility study to evaluate the costs associated with constructing and operating a parking garage.
- Review current zoning regulations for parking to ensure adequate spaces.



Mount Union Downtown

Key Recommendation 5: Promote the Mount Union Historic District.

Mount Union's profound sense of identity and pride stems from its deep-rooted history and vibrant culture, regarded as one of the Borough's major assets by its community members. Recognizing the significance of preserving and promoting this heritage, the enhancement and promotion of Mount Union's historic district emerge as pivotal endeavors for the community's well-being and prosperity. Serving as more than just a collection of aged structures, the historic district embodies the collective memories, traditions, and legacies of generations past, fostering a profound connection among residents and visitors alike.

A heritage tourism economic strategy refers to a deliberate approach taken by destinations or communities to leverage their cultural, historical, and natural heritage as a means of driving economic development and promoting tourism. Such a strategy involves the development and implementation of initiatives and policies to attract visitors, create tourism infrastructure, preserve heritage sites, and stimulate the local economy.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop a heritage tourism economic strategy (partnering with other heritage tourism communities within the region).
- Enhance tourism offerings and provide unique recreational opportunities in Mount Union such as installing rail riders along designated railway tracks, creating digital platforms or multimedia experiences, etc.
- Engage with East Broad Top (EBT) Railroad leadership to return the EBT to the narrow-gauge tracks along Pennsylvania Avenue.



Key Insight

Heritage and History based recreation is consistently ranked among the top three favorite outdoor activities in Pennsylvania, as highlighted in the Pennsylvania Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Key Recommendation 6: Develop a Small Business Microloan Program.

Mount Union Borough is a small community with a rich history and a vibrant culture, that faces the ongoing challenge of fostering economic growth and stability. The Borough's small businesses, which form the backbone of its local economy, often encounter significant barriers when seeking financial support. To address this critical need, the Borough should develop a small business microloan program. This initiative would provide essential financial resources to small enterprises, enabling them to expand, innovate, and contribute more effectively to the local economy. By researching and identifying grants from federal, state, and private sources dedicated to economic development and small business support, the borough can secure the necessary funds to sustain this program.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop and offer a small business microloan:
 - Research and identify grants available from federal, state, and private sources that are dedicated to economic development and small business support. Prepare and submit grant applications to secure necessary funds for the microloan program.
 - Establish partnerships with local banks, credit unions, community development financial institutions, and other organizations to create a robust funding pool. Leverage these partnerships to provide additional resources and expertise in managing and disbursing microloans to local businesses.



NAPA Autoparts (Repurpose of Bank Property)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Introduction

The community of Mount Union stressed the significance of enriching and broadening its community assets to enhance the overall quality of life. It's essential for the Borough's future development to provide a diverse array of historical, cultural, and recreational amenities. Investing in facilities such as parks, historic institutions, and recreational areas not only offers residents opportunities for leisure, socialization, and personal development but also enhances the Borough's appeal to potential residents, leading to population growth, economic progress, and increased property values.

Additionally, tourism generated by these attractions contributes to the local economy and helps preserve the Borough's unique identity. Investment in shared spaces and cultural activities fosters community cohesion, promoting a sense of belonging and resilience. Providing access to recreational facilities encourages physical activity, while cultural experiences positively impact mental health, contributing to overall well-being. The Borough aims to enhance and expand its assets to establish itself as a desirable living environment, offering a wide array of community, historical, cultural, and recreational amenities.



Riverside Park Playground

Key Recommendation 1: Expand and Diversify Opportunities and Programming for Youth and Teens.

The community consistently identified a desire for better relations with the school district and the need to develop additional activities for children and teens in the Borough. Providing a range of activities for youth is vital for personal growth and development, allowing them to explore interests, gain new skills, and bolster confidence. This involvement also plays a crucial role in preventing risky behaviors like substance abuse or violence, thus contributing to a safer environment. Furthermore, diverse programs facilitate social connections among peers, fostering a sense of belonging and essential peer support which has been linked to improved academic performance by accommodating various learning styles and interests.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Enhance the partnership and cooperation between the Borough, the Mount Union Area School District (MUASD) and Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC) to better address shared goals and ensure a more cohesive approach to community development and educational initiatives.
- Establish a non-profit organization dedicated to providing engaging activities for younger children and teens, with a focus on fostering character development and personal growth.
- Formulate partnerships and collaborations with existing organizations, including churches, the school district, and surrounding entities, to foster mutual support and collective impact.



Mount Union School District

Key Recommendation 2: Increase Police Visibility and Patrol Coverage.

Boosting police visibility and patrol coverage across the Borough yields numerous advantages for both public safety and community welfare. The mere presence of law enforcement acts as a deterrent to criminal activities, thus reducing the occurrence of unlawful behavior and a decrease in crime rates. Strengthened patrols also ensure prompt responses to emergencies, and encourage positive interactions with community members, fostering trust and collaboration essential for effective crime prevention measures.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Assess current police visibility and patrol coverage in different areas of the Borough to identify gaps and areas requiring improvement and then increase police presence in these areas.
- Proactively engage in the recruitment of additional police personnel and retention of current officers and evaluate existing training protocols to pinpoint opportunities for enhancement.
- Increase the level of communication between police and Borough Council.



Mount Union Police

Key Recommendation 3: Promote Community Engagement Through Various Events/Activities.

Throughout the planning process, prioritizing a variety of community events emerged as crucial interest for the Borough's future. The key to fostering community pride and unity lies in organizing diverse events, from festivals to community days, which become even more impactful through partnerships with local businesses, churches, and other community stakeholders. This collaborative effort serve as perfect occasions for residents to embrace and celebrate their local culture, history, and achievements, enhancing a sense of belonging and community pride.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Organize a community day to cultivate community pride through partnerships with local businesses, churches, and other community organizations.
- Promote community involvement and strengthen bonds by expanding and diversifying the range of community events, catering to a broader audience. This could encompass a variety of gatherings, including ethnic food festivals, cultural performances, heritage celebrations, senior events, and beyond.



Fall Pepper Fest

Key Recommendation 4: Fight Poverty Issues and Homelessness.

The residents of Mount Union Borough have endured significant challenges following the decline of the industries that once drove its economy. With 28.7% of the population living below the poverty line, homelessness has become a pressing issue. It is essential to allocate resources to address this problem, not only as a moral obligation but also to safeguard public health, ensure safety, promote social cohesion, and stabilize the economy. By offering support and services to those experiencing homelessness, the Borough can foster a more resilient and inclusive community for all residents.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Allocate resources to address homelessness within the Borough, ensuring access to essential services, providing temporary housing options, and creating support programs for individuals in need.



Key Insight

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) administers Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds supporting homeless services and facilities statewide, prioritizing non-entitlement municipalities. From 2011 to 2013, ESG funds were allocated to 36 rapid rehousing programs, 13 homeless prevention programs, 27 shelters, and one outreach program.

The Center for Community Action is already utilizing these programs and funds and should continue their efforts in allocating resources to combat poverty and homelessness.

Key Recommendation 5: Enhance Relationships with Secondary Education Institutions.

Forging strategic partnerships with educational institutions like Penn Highlands Community College and Juniata College is crucial for the Borough. These partnerships grant access to a range of valuable resources, including faculty expertise, facilities, and funding opportunities, which can be utilized to bolster educational initiatives such as hosting classes, workshops, and seminars. Collaborating with these institutions also facilitates the dissemination of educational awareness campaigns, informing residents about various educational pathways and fostering a culture of continuous learning and skill development.

The purpose is to provide opportunities and awareness for secondary education for both students and adults. These collaborations will enhance the quality of life for Borough residents by offering accessible and enriching educational experiences that empower individuals to pursue their aspirations and contribute positively to society.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Partner with Penn Highlands Community College and Juniata College to facilitate the integration of secondary education awareness and resources within the Borough.
- Utilize these partnerships to create initiatives such as offering classes, coordinating events, and facilitating accessible educational opportunities for residents.



Juniata College



Penn Highlands Community College

Key Recommendation 6: Emphasize the Historical Significance of the Borough.

Throughout the planning process, one of the Borough's most significant assets has been its history and heritage. The people and their history are integral to the community, emphasizing the importance of preserving their heritage. Supporting the Bricktown Museum and the Historical Society's endeavors to educate both residents and visitors about the Borough's history is crucial for the community.

Highlighting the significance of history nurtures residents' sense of identity and belonging, fostering pride in their community's heritage and strengthening connections with their past. Educating visitors enhances their experiences and attracts tourism, thereby bolstering the local economy. Preserving the Borough's history safeguards its cultural heritage for future generations, offering insights into past challenges and successes. Supporting these initiatives ensures that the Borough's rich history is valued, celebrated, and passed on to future generations, promoting cultural preservation, community pride, tourism, and social cohesion.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Support efforts of the Bricktown Museum and Historical Society to educate residents and visitors on the importance of the Borough's history.
- Organize guided tours led by knowledgeable volunteers or historians to showcase significant historical sites and landmarks throughout the Borough.
- Host community events, such as historical reenactments, lectures, or storytelling sessions, in partnership with the Museum and Historical Society to engage residents of all ages in learning about the Borough's history.
- Expand the presence of historical markers throughout the community to commemorate its vibrant historical heritage and aid in promoting the area.

Key Recommendation 7: Strengthen Connections with the Library.

The library, recognized as a significant community asset, appears to be underutilized despite its diverse offerings. Alongside traditional resources like books, magazines, and DVD rentals, it offers free WiFi, access to eight computers, and affordable copying services. In terms of programs, there are numerous opportunities for children, including preschool story hours, summer programs, a reading incentive program, and initiatives like Blankets and Books, which provide essentials for young learners. Moreover, partnerships with local Headstart programs facilitate early exposure to the library. Festive events such as Read-A-Treat during Halloween add to the library's appeal for children.

For students, the library serves as a venue for completing community service requirements and hosts collaborations with Juniata College. Adults can participate in the Bricktown Book Club, attend author talks, and utilize meeting spaces. Plans to transform the teen room into an Art Center indicate a commitment to catering to diverse interests. Furthermore, the library provides podcasting equipment for patrons and offers spaces for group meetings and testing purposes. These services benefit not only Mount Union Borough but also the broader region.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Assist with promoting and marketing the library to educate residents and visitors on their diverse resources and assets to enhance community engagement.



Mount Union Community Library

Key Recommendation 8: Expand Borough Staff to Provide Additional Resources.

Expanding Borough staff to provide additional resources is imperative for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of Borough operations. To achieve this goal, the Borough must devise a comprehensive strategy that includes targeted recruitment efforts to attract qualified candidates, comprehensive training programs to equip staff with the skills they need, and leadership development initiatives to prepare existing and future staff members for advanced roles. Additionally, hiring a Borough Manager to oversee and manage the Borough is essential. A Borough Manager can provide experienced leadership, streamline operations, and implement strategic initiatives that drive the Borough's progress. This combination of expanding staff and appointing a dedicated Borough Manager will create a more robust, responsive, and efficient municipal government.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop a meaningful job description along with a compensation package, and work with state and local partners to effectively market and recruit qualified candidates for a Borough Manager position.
- Collaborate with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to explore grant opportunities aimed at strengthening municipal capacities, specifically seeking funding support for the recruitment of a Borough Manager.
 - Through the Strategic Management Planning Program (STMP), DCED will fund a manager for three years at 75% of salary the first year, 50% the second and 25% the third. In addition to salary, the STMP program will assist with benefits as well.
 - Other programs offered by DCED to assist with municipal government include:
 - Municipal Assistance Program (MAP): MAP offers financial and technical assistance to municipalities for various projects.
 - Keystone Communities Program: This program offers funding for projects that support community and economic development, including workforce development initiatives that may involve hiring managerial staff.
- Utilize the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) which offers resources, training, and technical assistance to boroughs, including guidance on funding opportunities and best practices for hiring Borough Managers.

Key Recommendation 9: Identify Opportunities for a Designated Space to Serve as an Art Center.

Identifying opportunities for a designated space to serve as an art center holds profound importance for Mount Union's cultural enrichment, community cohesion, and economic vitality. Such a center would not only provide a hub for artistic expression and creative exploration but also serve as a focal point for cultural engagement and education within the community. By offering a dedicated space for artists to showcase their talents, collaborate on projects, and interact with the public, Mount Union can cultivate a vibrant arts scene that fosters innovation, diversity, and inclusivity.

Furthermore, an art center can play a pivotal role in revitalizing underutilized spaces and contributing to the overall aesthetic appeal of the Borough. By repurposing vacant buildings or lots into vibrant cultural hubs, Mount Union can breathe new life into its urban landscape, transforming neglected areas into dynamic community assets that attract residents, visitors, and businesses alike. As such, identifying opportunities for a designated art space aligns with Mount Union's vision for sustainable development, cultural preservation, and the promotion of arts and culture as drivers of community prosperity and well-being.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Research potential locations within the Borough that could serve as an art center, considering factors such as accessibility, space requirements, and zoning regulations.
- Reach out to local community organizations, schools, or other entities to explore potential partnerships or shared space arrangements for the art center.



Key Insight

The JRBC has created the PA Ave Wall Mural Committee which convenes regularly, dedicated to its objective of installing a community mural along the concrete segment of the PA Ave Wall. This committee is actively engaged in fundraising endeavors, welcoming donations to cover the mural's expenses. This committee would be a great asset in identifying opportunities for art installations.

Key Recommendation 10: Increase Walkability and Create a Pedestrian Friendly Environment.

Promoting pedestrian-friendly environments benefits community health by encouraging physical activity and combatting sedentary lifestyles, while also enhancing safety with well-designed routes. Pedestrian-friendly routes, complete with well-lit walkways and crossings, enhance safety for all, especially vulnerable groups like children, seniors, and visitors. Enhanced connectivity between essential assets ensures inclusivity and accessibility for everyone, regardless of mobility challenges.

Additionally, pedestrian-friendly environments spur economic growth, attract tourists, and preserve cultural heritage, fostering a prosperous and vibrant community. Overall, prioritizing pedestrian infrastructure creates a community where residents can live, work, and enjoy leisure activities comfortably and safely, promoting a healthier, more sustainable way of life.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

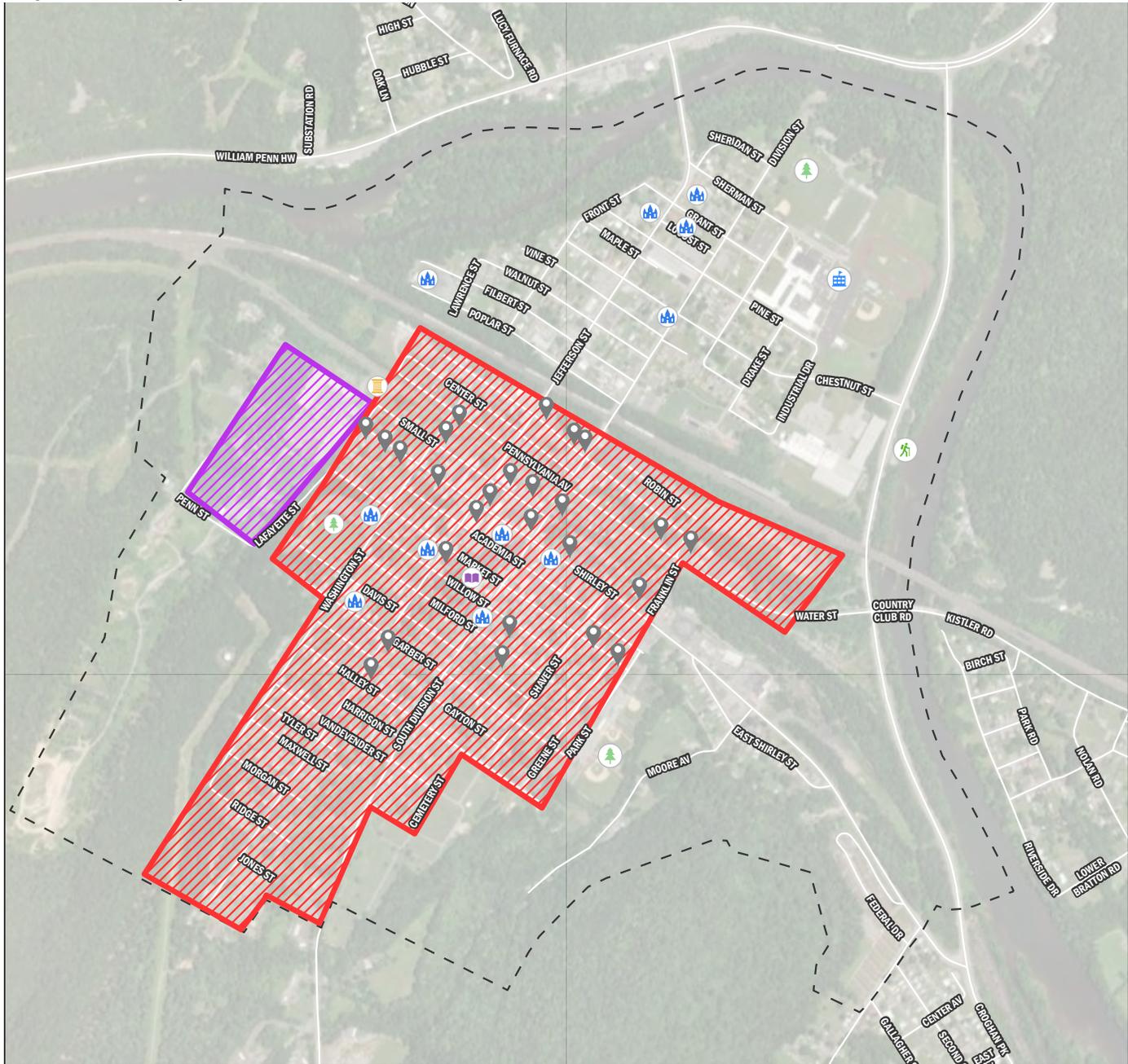
- Enhance connectivity between key assets, such as the Bricktown Museum and Borough parks, as well as the school, senior center, and the historical district.
- Implement better signage and wayfinding systems to improve pedestrian safety and ensure a cohesive and accessible community.
- Implement traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety for pedestrians, such as speed humps, raised crosswalks, or pedestrian islands at busy intersections



Key Insight

The Huntingdon County Active Transportation Plan identifies Mount Union as a priority area for sidewalk improvements, wayfinding and direction signage, and walking/biking routes. The plan also highlights the completion of the September 11th National Memorial Trail – Segment 19 to enhance connections in Mount Union and link Alexandria, Huntingdon, and Mount Union.

Map 2: Community Resources



Historic Resources

-  National Historic District
-  Historic Refractory Brick Complex
-  Bricktown Museum
-  Historical Markers

Community Facilities

-  Mount Union High School
-  Library
-  Religious Institutions
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Roads

Recreation

-  Parks
-  Riverwalk Entrance



Key Recommendation 11: Complete a Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Throughout the planning process, there was a significant focus on enhancing parks and recreation. Recreation plays a vital role in community well-being, fostering physical, mental, and social health through access to green spaces and leisure activities. This not only improves residents' quality of life by offering opportunities for relaxation and cultural engagement but also boosts the community's attractiveness as a place to live. Furthermore, a well-developed park and recreation system has economic benefits, drawing tourists and bolstering the local economy. These facilities promote health and fitness by encouraging physical activity and reducing sedentary lifestyles. The community has expressed interest in various improvements and updates, including:

- Enhancements to Riverside Park, particularly improved water access.
- Renovations to tennis courts and sports facilities.
- Addition of courts for pickleball and basketball.
- Installation of lighting and security cameras.
- Incorporation of ADA accessibility features.
- Installation of new fences.
- Development of bicycle trails.
- Addition of a splash pad.
- Updates to the riverwalk area.
- Installation of public restrooms.
- Improvements to trail systems, including the 9/11 Trail and Greenway Trail.
- Identification of underutilized buildings for repurposing into a community center.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop a scope of work and apply for funding for a Borough Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Map 3: Recreation Sites & Trails



Recreation & Trails



Key Recommendation 12: Review Borough Ordinance Regulations.

For Mount Union Borough, reviewing and updating zoning ordinances to ensure they are easier to understand and enforce is crucial for several reasons. Clear and comprehensible zoning regulations help both residents and businesses navigate and comply with local laws more effectively, which reduces confusion and potential disputes. Simplified ordinances streamline the permitting process, encouraging business growth and development by making it easier for entrepreneurs to establish and expand their operations. Moreover, enforceable regulations ensure consistent application, which maintains fairness and order within the community, ultimately fostering a stable and attractive environment for both residents and investors.

Updating the borough's online codification is equally important. An up-to-date and accessible online code helps residents, developers, and municipal staff quickly find and understand current regulations, which improves transparency and trust in local governance. This accessibility is especially important in the digital age, where quick and reliable information is expected. Together, these measures promote a balanced approach to growth, environmental stewardship, and community well-being.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Update the Borough's online codification with recent ordinance updates and any additional changes.
- Adopt ordinances related to Subdivision and Land Development and Stormwater Management (drafts underway).
- Review and update Borough Zoning Ordinance Regulations to ensure consistency with Comprehensive Plan.
 - Assess permitted uses, dimensional requirements, signage regulations, parking provisions, and design guidelines to ensure they align with the goal of promoting business growth while maintaining community aesthetics and functionality.
 - Ensure regulations are consistent with recent amendments to state and federal laws and are easy to understand and enforce.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction

The Borough is dedicated to ensuring the safety and reliability of its infrastructure, recognizing that a strong foundation is crucial for a thriving community. By focusing on maintaining and improving essential services such as roads, water supply, sewage systems, and public facilities, the Borough aims to create an environment where residents feel secure and supported. Investing in infrastructure not only enhances the quality of life for current residents but also attracts new businesses and families, contributing to the overall growth and prosperity of the area.

Furthermore, the Borough's commitment to infrastructure resilience is essential in adapting to changing conditions and unforeseen challenges. By prioritizing modern and sustainable practices, the Borough can mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, climate change, and other potential disruptions. This proactive approach ensures that the community remains robust and adaptable, providing a stable and supportive environment for all its residents. Through continuous efforts to upgrade and safeguard its infrastructure, the Borough demonstrates its dedication to fostering a safe, reliable, and resilient community for generations to come.



Updates to Mount Union's Water System

Key Recommendation 1: Initiate a Sidewalk Audit Program.

This type of program ensures a thorough assessment of the current state of sidewalks, identifying areas needing repair or improvement to enhance pedestrian safety. Ultimately, sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner, not the Borough, but improving sidewalk conditions, promotes walkability; encourages residents to engage in healthier, more active lifestyles; and reduces reliance on vehicles. Additionally, a well-maintained pedestrian infrastructure contributes to the overall aesthetic and accessibility of the community, making it more attractive to visitors and potential new residents. This program should prioritize areas with high pedestrian traffic, including school zones, parks, and commercial areas.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop educational materials on Borough and resident responsibilities for sidewalk maintenance.
- Create a priority list for repairing and maintaining broken and missing sidewalks and coordinate with property owners in high priority areas.
- Ensure that all existing sidewalks and future repair and construction projects comply with ADA to promote inclusivity and accessibility.



Senior Lots

Key Recommendation 2: Prioritize Tree Removal, Pruning, and Replacements.

The Borough is committed to maintaining a healthy and aesthetically pleasing urban environment by formulating a strategic action plan that prioritizes tree removal, pruning, and replacement initiatives. Similar to sidewalks, tree maintenance is the property owner's responsibility. However, the Borough aims to assist by providing awareness and resources to help with tree removal and replacement.

This plan aims to address the critical need for managing aging or hazardous trees, ensuring public safety, and enhancing the overall beauty and ecological health of the community. By systematically removing and replacing trees that pose risks, and conducting regular pruning to promote tree health and growth, the Borough demonstrates its dedication to sustainable urban forestry practices. This initiative not only preserves the community's natural landscape but also improves air quality, provides shade, and supports local wildlife, contributing to a vibrant and resilient environment for all residents.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Formulate a strategic action plan prioritizing tree removal, pruning, and replacement initiatives according to predetermined criteria.
- Inform residents about the Borough's assistance with tree removal and the significance of regular tree pruning.
- Collaborate with Interfaith Power and Light and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to potentially replace trees that have been damaged or removed.



Key Insight

PA Plants Native! is a program of Pennsylvania interfaith Power & Light in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. It is part of the 10 Million Trees for PA project which has a goal to plant 10 million trees in Pennsylvania by 2025. In this way, the program seeks to empower ordinary people to take action to heal our planet by building community, providing access to native trees, and encouraging volunteerism.

In the Summer of 2024, PA Interfaith Power & Light volunteers distributed over 16,000 trees in Pennsylvania and they are currently planning a "Fall Tree Planting Program".

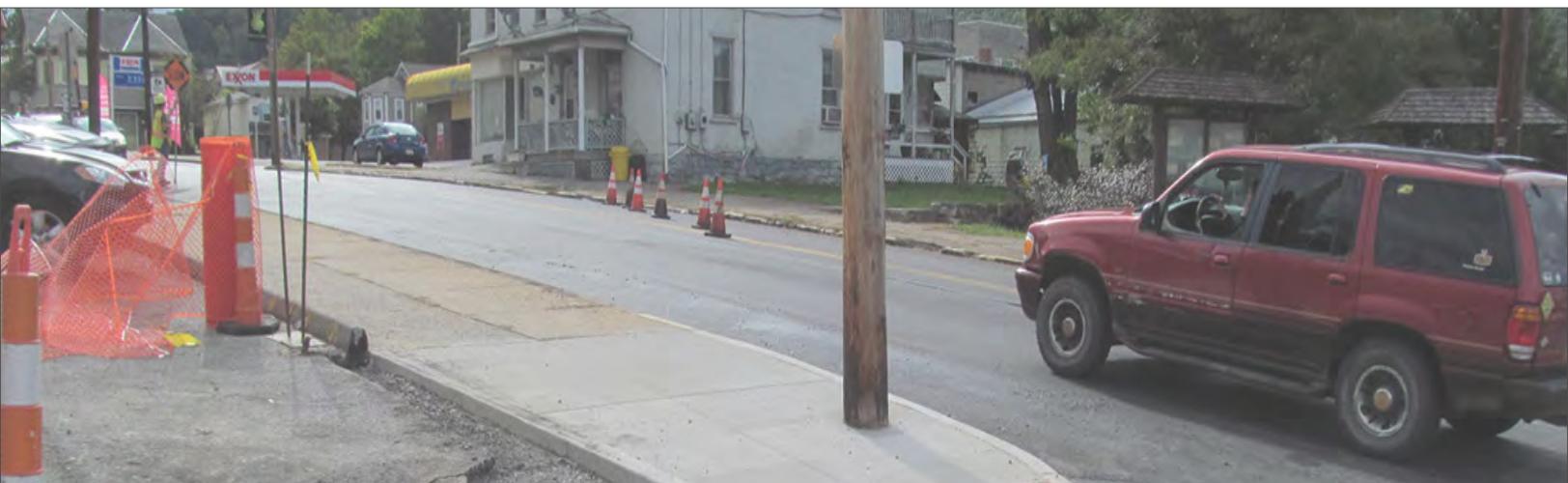
Key Recommendation 3: Develop a Road Maintenance Plan.

Developing a comprehensive Maintenance Plan is essential for Mount Union Borough to ensure the longevity and efficiency of its infrastructure. By analyzing current maintenance practices and needs, and creating an inventory of streets, the Borough can accurately assess the condition of its roads, drains, and other public spaces. This systematic approach allows for the identification of areas requiring immediate attention, as well as the planning of long-term maintenance schedules. Such an inventory serves as a critical tool in understanding the scope of work needed and allocating resources effectively, ensuring that all parts of the Borough are well-maintained and safe for residents and visitors alike.

Creating maintenance guidelines with specific timeframes for tasks like paving and cleaning each street further enhances the Borough’s ability to manage its infrastructure proactively. By establishing clear schedules, the Borough can ensure regular upkeep, preventing minor issues from escalating into major problems. This strategic planning not only optimizes the use of financial resources but also enhances the quality of life for residents by providing safer, cleaner, and more aesthetically pleasing public spaces.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop a Maintenance Plan (including streets, drains, mowings) which would include:
 - Analyzing current maintenance practices/needs and an inventory of streets.
 - Developing maintenance guidelines with timeframes for each street regarding paving, cleaning, etc.
 - Prioritizing projects for placement in the Borough’s annual budget.



Key Recommendation 4: Conduct an Inventory of Streetlights.

By assessing the current distribution of streetlights, the Borough can identify unnecessary or redundant fixtures to reduce energy consumption, minimize light pollution, and save the Borough money. Strategic placement of streetlights in areas where illumination is most needed, such as high-traffic intersections, pedestrian crossings, and crime-prone areas, improves visibility and enhances public safety during nighttime hours. Moreover, this initiative aligns with sustainable practices, ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently while maintaining a well-lit and secure environment for residents and visitors alike.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Conduct an inventory of streetlights and eliminate those that are deemed unnecessary to mitigate excessive light pollution and save on resources.
- Explore the implementation of a “pole tax,” where each property owner contributes a small fee to support electricity and maintenance costs associated with street lighting infrastructure.



Key Insight

The Department of Environmental Protection has a “Regional Pooled Municipal Street Lighting Program” which leverages the collective purchasing and decision-making power of municipalities. This opens the door to key implementation tools, lowers costs, builds confidence in decision-making, and ultimately can allow municipalities to accomplish projects that they may not have been able to accomplish on their own.

Key Recommendation 5: Modernize the Borough's Water and Sewer Systems.

Modernizing the Borough's water and sewer systems is crucial for ensuring the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of essential services for Mount Union and its surrounding areas. The Mount Union Borough Public Water System serves not only the entire Borough but also extends to parts of four municipalities across two counties: Kistler Borough, Newton-Hamilton Borough, Shirley Township, and Wayne Township. This extensive coverage underscores the importance of upgrading these systems to meet current and future demands. With the recent approval of a D.E.P. bulk water station, the borough is poised to enhance its capacity to deliver reliable water services. Modernizing these systems will not only improve water quality and service reliability but also support the growth and health of the broader community by ensuring robust infrastructure that can withstand the challenges of the future.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Collaborate with strategic partners to renovate and modernize the Borough's water and sewer systems, ensuring they meet current standards and future demands.
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of current stormwater challenges within the Borough, encompassing areas susceptible to flooding, drainage issues, erosion, and water quality considerations. For instance, prioritizing the restoration of the headwall near the old brickyard on Penn Street due to erosion signifies a critical concern necessitating funding.
- Monitor and maintain the natural riparian buffers.

Key Recommendation 6: Implement Comprehensive Streetscape Guidelines.

Well-planned streetscapes not only beautify the surroundings but also create functional and accessible spaces that encourage residents and visitors alike to interact with and enjoy their community. Thoughtful design can include elements such as ample seating, greenery, pedestrian-friendly pathways, and art installations, all of which contribute to a more inviting and enjoyable environment. This approach fosters social interaction, supports local businesses, and encourages outdoor activities, making the Borough a more vibrant and dynamic place to live and visit.

This initiative not only improves aesthetic appeal but also contributes to the overall quality of life in the Borough, fostering a sense of pride and belonging among its residents. Attractive and well-maintained public spaces can lead to increased property values, lower crime rates, and better mental health for residents. By investing in high-quality streetscape design, the Borough demonstrates its commitment to creating a sustainable and inclusive community. Examples of streetscape design guidelines can be found on the next page.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Foster thoughtful design and ongoing maintenance of public spaces, encompassing sidewalks, street furniture, lighting, landscaping, and public art, to enhance urban livability and community engagement.



Downtown Mount Union

Sample Streetscape Design Guidelines

Sample design guidelines to consider for a Streetscape Guidelines are included below.

Reduce or eliminate setbacks

In walkable downtown areas, buildings are commonly required to be set at a build-to line, with exceptions for specified architectural elements, in order to create a cohesive street wall and sense of space. A consistent setback and continuity of building height would help reinforce this effect in a Downtown Mount Union

Complete Streets

Refers to streets designed to accommodate a variety of users (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, etc.), including people of all ages and those with disabilities. The specific design of complete streets varies according to the community setting (i.e. rural, urban, suburban) and the type of road. Typical elements of complete streets include: sidewalks, bike lanes or wide shoulders, painted crosswalks and pedestrian signals and traffic-calming measures.

Parking Minimums

Many communities set no minimum requirements for downtown off-street parking, allowing market demand to dictate the necessary amount. Another option is to permit developers to leave some required parking spaces as unpaved green space unless it is later determined that they need to be constructed (which, in practice, is rarely the case).

Context Sensitive Design

An approach to transportation infrastructure that preserves or enhances an area's scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources and reflects community needs and priorities. Typical elements of context sensitive design include: Natural features such as street trees, rain gardens, hanging flower baskets, and planter boxes. Street furniture that meets people's needs while enhancing community aesthetics such as benches, recycling bins, kiosks, bike racks, and newspaper containers. Signage such as banners hanging from light poles.

Envision landscaping and lighting

Design standards should include specific provisions for the type and placement of amenities such as street furniture, landscaping and lighting in the downtown.

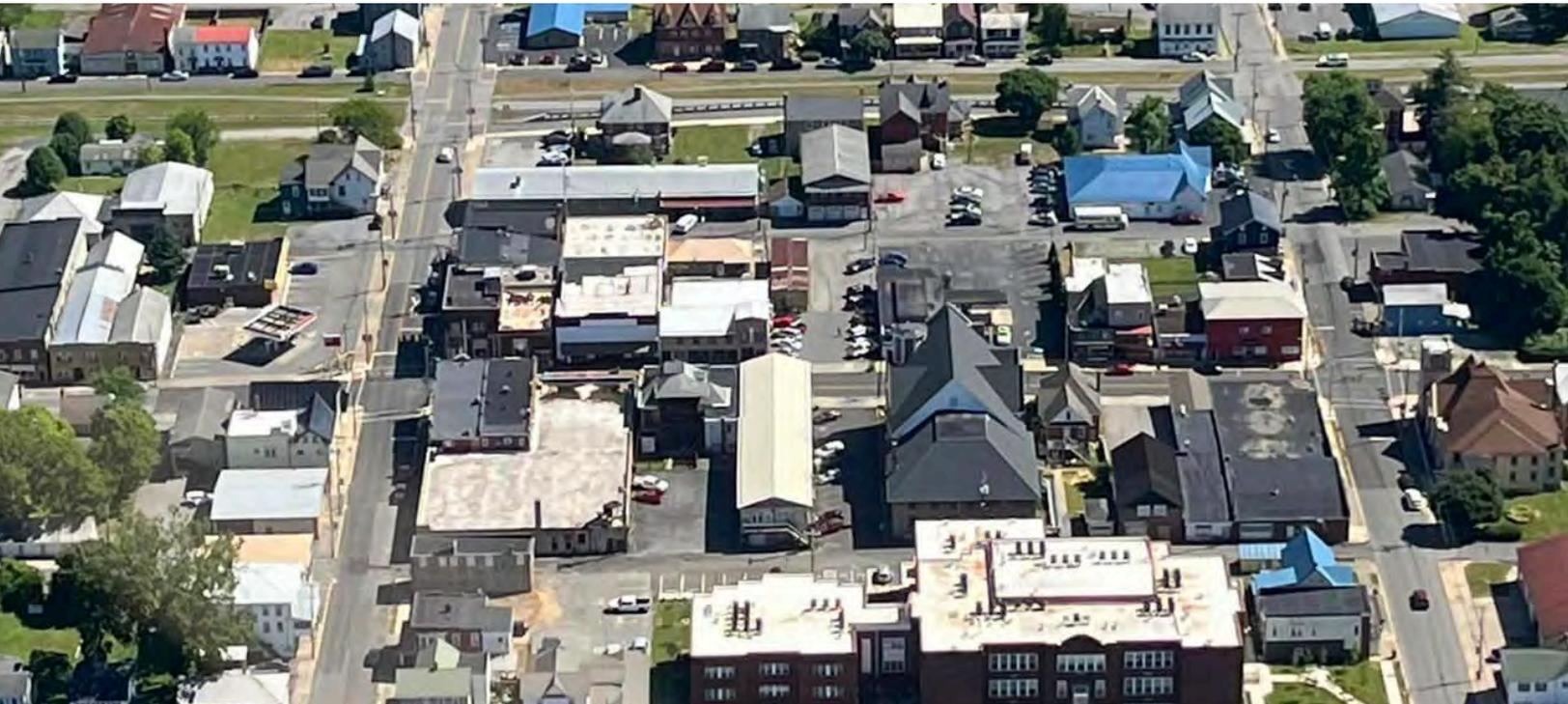


BLIGHTED PROPERTIES, BUILDING REHABILITATION

Introduction

In commitment to the prosperity and vibrancy of the community, the Borough recognizes the pivotal role that addressing blight-related issues plays in fostering a thriving environment for all residents. As such, the Borough has pledged to prioritize blight-related initiatives aimed at revitalizing neighborhoods and rejuvenating the architectural landscape of the town. By proactively engaging in efforts to combat blight, the Borough seeks to not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of our streets but also to bolster property values, promote community pride, and attract new investments.

Understanding the significance of preserving the architectural heritage while adapting to the evolving needs of our residents, the Borough stands firm in its commitment to providing resources, guidance, and encouragement to property owners seeking to revitalize aging or neglected buildings. Through strategic rehabilitation efforts, the Borough aims to breathe new life into historic structures, promote sustainable development practices, and create a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere that reflects the rich tapestry of our community's history and culture.



Mount Union Aerial

Key Recommendation 1: Develop a Blighted Homes/ Structure Inventory.

Blighted and abandoned properties often become magnets for criminal activities, posing significant safety risks to residents. By identifying and cataloging these structures, local authorities can prioritize their demolition, rehabilitation, or repurposing, thereby reducing hazards and improving the overall quality of life in the community. This proactive approach ensures that the Borough remains a safe and attractive place for its residents, fostering a sense of pride and stability.

Another key purpose of creating this inventory is to stimulate economic development and enhance property values in Mount Union. Blighted properties can significantly detract from the aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods, discouraging investment and lowering property values. By systematically identifying and addressing these structures, the town can create opportunities for new development and revitalization projects. This process not only attracts new businesses and residents but also increases the tax base, providing additional revenue for community improvements. In turn, this revitalization effort can lead to a more vibrant and prosperous community, encouraging long-term growth and sustainability.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Target areas of improvement through a blighted homes/structure inventory.
 - Define criteria for identifying blighted homes and structures within the borough, considering factors such as structural integrity, occupancy status, code violations, and visual deterioration.
 - Organize site surveys and assessments to systematically catalog blighted homes and structures across the Borough.



Key Insight

The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania advises municipalities to use property inventories to identify current or potential blight. They offer additional resources and standards to aid municipalities in building their inventories. Data collected from surveying properties can be integrated with other data sources and mapping technology to create a comprehensive view of blight within a municipality. This complete picture allows municipalities to determine the most suitable approach to addressing blight and provides a baseline for measuring progress in its elimination.

Key Recommendation 2: Adopt a Vacancy Ordinance.

Vacant buildings can become sites for vandalism, pose fire hazards, and deteriorate rapidly, affecting the safety and security of the surrounding community. By implementing a registration system, the Borough can maintain up-to-date information on vacant properties, monitor their condition, and ensure that owners are taking necessary measures to secure and maintain them. This proactive approach helps to mitigate potential risks, protects neighboring properties, and enhances the overall safety and well-being of residents.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Create a regulatory framework within the Borough to identify and monitor vacant buildings, fostering accountability among property owners, and facilitating proactive measures to tackle vacancy-related issues.
- Determine the types of properties to be covered by the ordinance, such as residential, commercial, or industrial, and establish thresholds for defining vacancies.
- Consult with legal counsel to review the draft ordinance for compliance with state and local laws, constitutional rights, and potential challenges.



Residential Portion of Mount Union

Key Recommendation 3: Develop a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program.

Many homes in the area are in disrepair or lack essential modern amenities, which can negatively impact residents' quality of life and safety. By offering low-interest or forgivable loans for home rehabilitation, the program can help homeowners make necessary improvements such as repairing structural issues, updating plumbing and electrical systems, and improving energy efficiency. This not only ensures safer and more comfortable living conditions but also helps preserve the town's housing stock and maintain neighborhood aesthetics.

Creating a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program can also stimulate economic growth and promote community stability. Improved housing conditions can increase property values, thereby enhancing the overall economic vitality of Mount Union. As property values rise, so does the local tax base, providing additional revenue for public services and infrastructure improvements. Moreover, well-maintained homes contribute to neighborhood pride and stability, reducing turnover rates, and fostering a sense of community.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop and create a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program by initiating collaboration efforts with the Huntingdon County Planning and Development Department and The Center for Community Action.



Key Insight

An example Mount Union can follow could include the Center for Community Action's Housing Rehabilitation Program which is an owner-occupied home rehabilitation program that provides minor and major repairs to homes in order to bring the home up to HUD's Section 8 housing standards for health and safety. This is not to remodel your home, but to make it a safe home. Some examples of rehabilitation measures include, but are not limited to, servicing roof, siding, windows, accessibility, plumbing, electrical and more.

Key Recommendation 4: Establish a Rental Registration Program.

Absentee and lackluster landlords often fail to address maintenance issues promptly, leading to deteriorating housing conditions and potential health hazards for tenants. Through a registration program, the Borough can conduct regular inspections and promptly address code violations. This proactive approach helps ensure that rental properties meet health and safety standards, providing tenants with secure and well-maintained homes. Additionally, it empowers tenants by providing a clear channel for reporting issues and seeking recourse, fostering a fairer and more supportive rental market.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Establish a rental registration program to promote transparency, accountability, and improved living conditions within the rental housing market.
- Develop educational materials and resources to inform landlords, tenants, etc. about the provisions and requirements of the rental registration program.



Green Street Village

Key Recommendation 5: Strengthen and Update the Enforcement of Property Maintenance Codes.

Code enforcement is a critical issue in the Borough that requires attention throughout the planning process. Keeping community standards current and reflective of present-day needs and conditions is essential as building technologies, environmental factors, and societal expectations evolve. Revising outdated or ineffective codes can address gaps and ambiguities in regulations, enhancing residents' safety, health, and overall quality of life. This proactive approach helps prevent property deterioration, promotes aesthetic uniformity, and can increase property values, contributing to a more vibrant and desirable community.

Effective enforcement mechanisms are crucial for maintaining property conditions and preventing broader social and economic issues such as decreased property values, increased crime rates, and reduced community morale. Holding property owners accountable reduces blight and decay, demonstrating the Borough's commitment to a high standard of living, attracting new residents and businesses, and fostering community pride. The creation of a dedicated organization to combat blight and deterioration can streamline collaboration among stakeholders, implement comprehensive strategies, and ensure sustained attention to blight issues, ultimately enhancing the Borough's appearance and livability.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing property maintenance codes and regulations to identify areas for improvement, updates, and clarification.
- Strengthen and update the enforcement of the property maintenance codes to hold property owners accountable for maintaining their properties in compliance with established standards.
- Establish an organization (blight task force) that can coordinate efforts, share resources, and develop targeted solutions for addressing blight.



Key Insight

The Housing Alliance has several publications and other resources that provide a comprehensive approach to combating blight specific to Pennsylvania's state laws and the enabling legislation given to its municipalities. Several publications that could assist Mount Union's task force include:

- From Blight to Bright
- We Can Do This! A Five-Step, Fast-Track Blight Plan
- QUICK GUIDE: New Tools to Address Blight and Abandonment

Key Recommendation 6: Collaborate with the County to Bolster a Statewide Demolition Initiative.

Utilizing fees on deed recordings can help create a dedicated funding stream specifically for addressing blighted properties, enabling the Borough to undertake necessary repairs, renovations, and demolitions without relying solely on limited municipal budgets or state funding. By leveraging these fees, the Borough can more effectively combat property deterioration, support community revitalization projects, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents. This approach not only helps address immediate blight issues but also ensures sustainable funding for ongoing property maintenance and improvement initiatives.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Work with Huntingdon County to institute fees on deed recordings, as outlined in Act 137 of 1992 and Act 152 of 2016, to provide financial backing for rehabilitation and demolition efforts.



Residential

Key Recommendation 7: Provide Resources to Prevent Blight and Promote Adaptive Reuse of Blighted Properties.

Blight has become a significant issue throughout the Borough, making it essential to provide residents and businesses with proactive resources to prevent its spread. Educational programs, financial assistance, and access to maintenance tools empower residents to take care of their properties before issues become severe. Resources like workshops on property upkeep, grants or low-interest loans for home repairs, and community clean-up initiatives help maintain properties and prevent costly reactive measures. Active involvement in neighborhood upkeep fosters community pride, enhances social cohesion, safety, and overall quality of life.

Promoting the adaptive reuse of blighted and vacant properties is crucial for revitalizing neighborhoods and maximizing the value of existing structures. Repurposing properties for new functions, such as converting old warehouses into residential lofts or transforming abandoned schools into community centers, can rejuvenate deteriorating areas, reduce the negative impacts of blight, and preserve historical architecture. Adaptive reuse fosters sustainability, encourages creative solutions to property challenges, and contributes to a more vibrant and resilient urban landscape. Continuous education and support help the Borough build a strong foundation for preventing blight and ensuring a brighter future.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Provide technical assistance, zoning incentives, and flexibility to support the conversion of vacant buildings into new uses such as housing, commercial space, etc.
- Simplify zoning laws and building codes to facilitate the conversion of vacant and blighted properties, making it easier for projects to receive necessary approvals and permits.
- Create educational materials, such as brochures, flyers, and online resources, to inform residents about property maintenance best practices, blight prevention strategies, and local regulations.
- Organize workshops or training sessions on property management and blight prevention topics.
- Partner with financial institutions, JRBC, and Huntingdon County to leverage funding and resources for eligible residents to address blight-related issues, undertake property improvements, and make necessary repairs.

Key Recommendation 8: Organize a “Litter Awareness Campaign”.

A Litter Awareness Campaign educates residents about the negative impacts of littering, encourages responsible disposal of waste, and fosters a culture of cleanliness. By raising awareness and involving community members in cleanup efforts, the campaign can significantly reduce litter, enhance the aesthetic appeal of public spaces, and prevent environmental pollution. Additionally, a cleaner environment can deter further littering, boost local morale, and make the Borough more attractive to visitors and potential new residents, contributing to overall community well-being and economic vitality.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Launch community-wide clean-up days.
 - Provide education to community members to raise awareness and increase participation.
- Recruit volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, including individuals, families, school groups, youth organizations, businesses, and civic associations, to participate in clean-up activities.
- Identify target locations and public spaces in need of cleaning and beautification, such as parks, streets, riverfronts, trails, vacant lots, and community gardens.



Veteran Memorial

Key Recommendation 9: Establish a Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Mount Union has an established Historic District that covers about one-third of the Borough (see Map 2) and has been identified as a vital asset to the community. Developing a Historic Preservation Ordinance creates legal frameworks to protect historically significant structures and districts from alteration or demolition, thereby preserving their historical value for future generations. This not only maintains the character and identity of the community but also fosters a sense of pride among residents. Additionally, historic preservation can stimulate economic growth by attracting tourism, increasing property values, and encouraging investment in renovation and restoration projects. Ultimately, a well-crafted ordinance helps ensure that the historical legacy of the community is honored and sustained, contributing to its long-term cultural and economic vitality.

The Borough should take a proactive approach to:

- Develop criteria and procedures for ongoing designation of historic properties or districts, considering factors such as age, architectural significance, historical significance, integrity of design, and cultural significance.
- Establish a transparent and inclusive nomination process, allowing for public input and expert evaluation of potential historic resources.



Key Insight

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission offers a range of resources for adopting historic preservation ordinances. They provide guidance on historic preservation planning, the creation of historic overlay districts, and design guidelines. Additionally, they offer tools and resources specifically for Historical Architectural Review Boards (HARBs) and Historical Commissions.

OUR CHURCHES WELCOME YOU

 <p>GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH</p> <p>310 W Poplar St Worship Service 10 AM Sunday (814) 542-3461 gracemu.net</p>	<p>New Life Fellowship</p>  <p>14286 Croghan Pike, Mount Union Sunday Mornings @ 10am newlifemu.org</p>	<p>THE wesleyan CHURCH™</p>  <p>MOUNT UNION WESLEYAN CHURCH 608 SOUTH JEFFERSON STREET WORSHIP SERVICE 10:40 AM SUNDAY (814) 542-4025 MUWESLEYAN.COM</p>	 <p>Mount Union First Assembly of God</p> <p>First Assembly of God 602 N Jefferson St Worship service: Sunday @ 10:30 AM Phone: (814) 542-4779 Facebook: Mount Union First Assembly of God Email: Pastor@muafg.com, muafg@muafg.net</p>
 <p>FIRST UNITED METHODIST</p> <p>Share the Love Preach the Word Make Disciples of Jesus Christ</p> <p>15 West Shirley Street, Mount Union Sunday Mornings Contemporary Service, 8 am Traditional Service, 10:45 am Sunday School, 9:30 am</p>	 <p>PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)</p> <p>Corner of Shirley & Division Sts. Morning worship: Sunday 10:40 AM All welcome</p>	<p>St. Luke Lutheran Church</p>  <p>100 South Jefferson Street 814-542-8250</p>	 <p>Pentecostal Freedom Church</p> <p>Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 AM 14779 Croghan Pike Mt. Union, PA</p>
<p>Bethel A.M.E. Church</p>  <p>Servants: 11:30 am Sunday 8:30 pm Thursday (814) 542-2380 18 W. Grand St.</p> <p>ONE BLOCK MAKE A LEFT</p>	<p>Mount Hope Missionsary Baptist Church</p>  <p>The Love We Hope in our hearts for the world... Sunday School @ 9:30 am Worship Service @ 10:00 am Bible Study @ 7:00 pm Wednesdays (814) 542-9077 Corner of Division & Chestnut Streets Mount Union</p>	<p>St. Catherine Catholic Church</p>  <p>Mass Times: Sundays, 10 am Sundays, 9 am Wednesdays, 8 am</p> <p>323 West Market Street, Mount Union (814) 542-4382</p>	

IV.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GENERAL ACTION STEPS

Overall Implementation

Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require continued commitment from the Borough, specifically the following:

- Assign a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of the Plan. They would not be responsible to initiate tasks, but to coordinate with Borough Council and Staff as well as other stakeholders to help carry them out.

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee should:

- Submit priority implementation projects to Borough Council and staff for consideration and support.
- Support Borough Council and staff to secure funding for projects and initiatives through lobbying local/state/federal officials and agencies.
- Annually evaluate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, documenting actions taken during the past year, and make recommendations to the Council of modifications to the Comprehensive Plan. Append the annual update to the Plan document to create an ongoing record of progress.
- Update the Zoning Ordinance to achieve consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Matrix

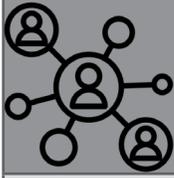
The Implementation Matrix outlines all the priority recommendations with the supporting information for each. This is to allow easy access to all the action items in one place.



Focus Area: Downtown / Economic Development

Key Recommendations:	Partners	Funding Sources	Timeframe
Market Downtown Mount Union Assets.	Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce, Mount Union Chamber, Juanita College's Sill Business Center, HCVB, JRBC, SAP&DC	DCED, CDBG, PHMC_SHPO, HCB&I	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Collaborate with the Juniata River Blueprint Community.	JRBC	DCED, CDBG,	Short Term (1-3 years)
Explore Redevelopment Opportunities.	Local Property Owners, East Broad Top Railroad Representatives, Huntingdon County.	DCED, CDBG	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Implement Alternative Parking Strategies.	Local Businesses, PennDOT	PennDOT	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Promote the Mount Union Historic District.	Mount Union Historical Society, Bricktown Museum, HCVB, JRBC, EBT Foundation Inc	DCED, DCNR, HCB&I, PHMC_SHPO	Short Term (1-3 years)
Develop a Small Business Microloan Program.	Local Businesses, Local Banks, Credit Unions, Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce	DCED, HCB&I, SBA, CDFIs	Long Term (5+ years)

Key: PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED), Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Council on the Arts (PCA), PA Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC_SHPO), Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I), Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau (HCVB), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Juniata River Blueprint Community (JRBC), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB), Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC)



Focus Area: **Community Resources**

Key Recommendations:	Partners	Funding Sources	Timeframe
Expand and Diversify Opportunities and Programming for Youth and Teens.	School District, Local Churches, Regional Municipalities, HCC&TC, Local Youth-Serving Organizations	DCNR, PRPS, PDE, DCED	Short Term (1-3 years)
Increase Police Visibility and Patrol Coverage.	Police Department	N/A	Short Term (1-3 years)
Promote Community Engagement Through Various Events/Activities.	Local Businesses, Churches, School District, HCVB, Huntingdon County, JRBC	DCED, CDBG, PCA, PPA, HCVB	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Fight Poverty Issues and Homelessness.	Local Homeless Shelters and Service Providers, Community Action, Huntingdon County	DCED, DHS	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Enhance Relationships with Secondary Education Institutions.	Penn Highlands Community College, Juniata College	N/A	Short Term (1-3 years)
Emphasize the Historical Significance of the Borough.	Mount Union Historical Society, Bricktown Museum, HCVB, JRBC	DCED, HCB&I, SBA, CDFIs	Short Term (1-3 years)
Strengthen Connections with the Library.	Mount Union Library	N/A	Short Term (1-3 years)

Key: PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED), Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Council on the Arts (PCA), PA Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC_SHPO), Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I), Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau (HCVB), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Juniata River Blueprint Community (JRBC), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB), Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC)



Focus Area: **Community Resources**

Key Recommendations:	Partners	Funding Sources	Timeframe
Expand Borough Staff to Provide Additional Resources.	DCED	DCED, STMP, PSAB	Short Term (1-3 years)
Identify Opportunities for a Designated Space to Serve as an Art Center.	School District, Local Property Owners, Artisans, JRBC	PPA, PCA, PHMC_SHPO, HCVB	Long Term (5+ years)
Increase Walkability and Create a Pedestrian Friendly Environment.	Huntingdon County, PennDOT, SAP&DC	DCNR, PRPS, PennDOT, DCED	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Complete a Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.	Huntingdon County, DCNR, SAP&DC	DCNR	Short Term (1-3 years)
Review Borough Ordinance Regulations to Ensure Consistency with Comprehensive Plan.	Huntingdon County, Local Residents	DCED, CDBG	Short Term (1-3 years)

Key: PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED), Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Council on the Arts (PCA), PA Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC_SHPO), Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I), Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau (HCVB), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Juniata River Blueprint Community (JRBC), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB), Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC)



Focus Area: Infrastructure

Key Recommendations:	Partners	Funding Sources	Timeframe
Initiate a Sidewalk Audit Program.	PennDOT, Huntingdon County	PennDOT	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Prioritize Tree Removal, Pruning, and Replacements.	Interfaith Power and Light, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Conservation District, Local Schools and Universitie	PA Plants Native, DCNR, PA Urban and Community Forestry Program, TreeVitalize Program, DEP	Short Term (1-3 years)
Develop a Maintenance Plan (including streets, drains, mowings).	PennDOT, Regional Municipalities and Public Works Departments, SAP&DC	N/A	Short Term (1-3 years)
Conduct an Inventory of Streetlights.	Interfaith Power and Light, Huntingdon County	PUC, DEP	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Modernize the Borough's Water and Sewer Systems.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC	DCED, PUC, CDBG	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Implement Comprehensive Streetscape Guidelines.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC,	DCED	Long Term (5+ years)

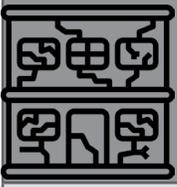
Key: PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED), Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Council on the Arts (PCA), PA Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC_SHPO), Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I), Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau (HCVB), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Juniata River Blueprint Community (JRBC), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB), Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC)



Focus Area: **Blighted Properties, Building Rehabilitation**

Key Recommendations:	Partners	Funding Sources	Timeframe
Develop a Blighted Homes/Structure Inventory.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC, Habitat for Humanity, Real Estate and Property Management Firms	N/A	Short Term (1-3 years)
Adopt a Vacancy Ordinance.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC, Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce, Local Law Offices	DCED, CDBG	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Develop a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program.	Huntingdon County, Center for Community Action, SAP&DC, Local Banks and Credit Unions	DCED, CDBG, CDFIs	Long Term (5+ years)
Establish a Rental Registration Program.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC	N/A	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Strengthen and Update the Enforcement of Property Maintenance Codes.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC, Regional Municipalities, JRBC	DCED, CDBG, CDFIs	Short Term (1-3 years)

Key: PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED), Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Council on the Arts (PCA), PA Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC_SHPO), Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I), Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau (HCVB), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Juniata River Blueprint Community (JRBC), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB), Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC)



Focus Area: **Blighted Properties, Building Rehabilitation**

Key Recommendations:	Partners	Funding Sources	Timeframe
Collaborate with the County to Bolster a Statewide Demolition Initiative.	Huntingdon County	N/A	Short Term (1-3 years)
Provide Resources to Prevent Blight and Promote Adaptive Reuse of Blighted Properties.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC, JRBC, Local Property Owners, Developers, Local Banks, Credit Unions	DCED, CDBG, PHMC_SHPO, CDFIs, PPA	Medium Term (3-5 years)
Organize a "Litter Awareness Campaign".	School District, Youth Organizations, Local Businesses, Residents, JRBC	N/A	Short Term (1-3 years)
Establish a Historic Preservation Ordinance.	Huntingdon County, SAP&DC, Mount Union Historical Society	DCED, PHMC_SHPO	Medium Term (3-5 years)

Key: PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED), Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR), PA Council on the Arts (PCA), PA Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC_SHPO), Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I), Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau (HCVB), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Juniata River Blueprint Community (JRBC), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB), Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC)



V.

APPENDICES

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

This section includes themes and language incorporated into Mount Union's plan to comply with Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The Code was the primary framework for the plan's formulation, and its process was designed to satisfy and exceed MPC requirements.

Adjacent communities

As per Article III, Section 301 (5) of the MPC, the relationship of the existing and proposed development in Mount Union should be analyzed in relation to the existing and proposed development in adjacent communities and the region. The planning process for the Borough involved providing a copy of the draft plan to all adjacent communities surrounding Mount Union as well as to Huntingdon County and the Mount Union Area School District.

Interrelationship

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 action items of the Mount Union Comprehensive Plan. All are related and should further the overall vision of the plan.

State water plan

In recognition of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, Section 301 (b), the Mount Union Comprehensive Plan supports efforts to provide a reliable supply of water and provisions aimed at adequately protecting water supply sources. These should be developed in consideration of current and future water resources availability and its uses and limitations. The 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.

Public Outreach Summary

Multiple methods of outreach were utilized to obtain the most participation as possible from Borough residents, stakeholders and others. A summary of this outreach is included below:

Appointed Steering Committee

- The consultant team met with this committee on a regular basis to identify information for the plan, review plan documents, and assist with outreach efforts.

Stakeholders

- Various stakeholders identified by the Borough were interviewed. These individuals and organizations have a particular interest or expertise regarding the Borough. They included Borough staff, County representatives, community organizations such as the Juniata River Blueprint Community, the Mount Union Historical Society, the Library, the Bricktown Museum, School District and others.

Public Survey

- A public survey, to gather initial information for the plan, was released in the summer of 2023 and received 79 responses (summary of responses below).
 - A vast majority of people who completed the survey own a home in Mount Union (63%) while the rest rent, own a business, or utilize Mount Union's amenities including shopping, restaurants, attend church, etc.
 - Respondent's top strengths for the Borough included: "Housing Cost, Community Organizations, and Access to High-speed Internet" while the bottom weaknesses listed "Available Shopping/Retail, Public Transportation, Community Image, Parking, etc.."
 - A vast majority of Mount Union residents value the Borough's sense of community, friendly people, small town atmosphere and the natural scenic beauty.
 - Respondents had many concerns regarding blighted properties throughout the Borough, a lack of police presence, parking troubles, updates to infrastructure (water, sewage, streets, sidewalks), and restoring their community image.
 - Respondents also mentioned wanting to see things get accomplished by hiring a new Borough manager, increasing community engagement/involvement, downtown revitalization, and addressing the blight issues.

Public Meetings/Hearing

- An initial public meeting was held on September 19, 2023 to gather initial input on plan priorities and needs.
 - Top issues identified during the first public meeting included parking, updates to parks and recreation, infrastructure improvements, blight, and the need to hire a Borough Manager.
 - Major assets and opportunities included natural resources, historical heritage, the library, churches, building on regional tourism, supporting business development, marketing community facilities/assets, and creating community events and youth activities.
- A second public meeting was held on June 6, 2024, to gather input on the draft recommendations. During the meeting, attendees participated in a budget exercise where they ranked the recommendations based on the amount of funding they would allocate to each.
 - Recommendations that ranked the highest, as detailed in the priority focus areas chapter, included exploring redevelopment opportunities, increasing police coverage, providing additional community events, addressing homelessness and poverty, developing a maintenance plan, and creating an inventory of blighted structures.
- A public hearing was held on X date.

Funding Sources

A list of funding sources was identified during the implementation process and is provided in the implementation matrix. A brief summary of the funding sources is included below:

PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED)

- DCED funds a wide range of programs and initiatives aimed at supporting community and economic development within the state. Some of the areas DCED funds include: Community Development (CDBG), Business Development, Workforce Development, Local Government Support, Tourism and Cultural Resources, Infrastructure Development, and Energy and Environment.

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR)

- DCNR funds a wide range of projects focused on conservation, recreation, and natural resource management. Key areas of funding include the development and maintenance of parks, trails, and recreational facilities; land conservation; watershed protection and restoration; community conservation partnerships; forest and ecosystem management; heritage and nature tourism; and environmental education. DCNR's programs are designed to enhance public access to natural resources, promote sustainable land use, and improve environmental quality across Pennsylvania.

Council on the Arts (PCA)

- The PCA funds various programs to support arts and cultural activities across the state. Programs that are funded include general operating support for nonprofit arts organizations, arts education initiatives, grants for culturally specific arts projects, funding for community-based arts projects, support for smaller arts organizations, preservation of folk and traditional arts, and grants for small-scale arts projects. PCA also collaborates with regional partners to deliver arts services and advocacy. These programs aim to enhance access to the arts, support artists and organizations, and promote cultural diversity in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS)

- PRPS primarily focuses on supporting parks, recreation, and leisure services through advocacy, education, and professional development. While PRPS itself does not directly provide extensive funding, it plays a crucial role in facilitating access to various funding opportunities and resources for parks and recreation projects in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA)

- PPA is a regional regranting program of the PCA that increases access to the arts across the state. PPA distributes state arts funding through two main programs: Project Stream, which supports arts-related projects that engage the public, and Program Stream, which provides ongoing support to arts organizations. PPA collaborates with regional partners to administer grants, supports a wide range of arts activities, enhances local impact by reaching smaller communities, and provides resources to help grant recipients build capacity and sustain their operations.

Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission - State Historic Preservation Office (PHMC_SHPO)

- The PHMC-SHPO is dedicated to preserving Pennsylvania's historic and cultural resources. It manages the nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, administers preservation grants, reviews projects for compliance with preservation laws, and supports local preservation through the Certified Local Government program. PHMC-SHPO provides technical assistance, promotes heritage management, and engages the public through education and outreach. Its role is essential in safeguarding and enhancing the state's historic assets.

Huntingdon County Business and Industry (HCB&I)

- HCB&I promotes economic development and supports local businesses in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. Its key functions include fostering economic growth, providing business support and resources, and enhancing the local workforce through training and educational partnerships.

Huntingdon County Visitor's Bureau (HCVB)

- The HCVB promotes tourism in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania by marketing the area, providing visitor information, and supporting local events and attractions. It organizes and funds tourism-related projects, enhances visitor amenities, and collaborates with local partners to boost tourism and economic growth.

U.S Small Business Administration (SBA)

- The SBA supports small businesses through various funding programs, including the 7(a) Loan Program for general business needs, the CDC/504 Loan Program for major assets, and the Microloan Program for smaller capital requirements. While the SBA generally does not provide grants for business expansion, it funds research and development through the SBIR and STTR programs. Additionally, the SBA aids businesses in securing federal contracts through the 8(a) Business Development and HUBZone Programs.

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)

- CDFIs offer financial support to underserved communities through various funding areas. They provide loans for small business startups and expansions, affordable housing development and homebuyer assistance, and community facilities such as nonprofit centers and economic development projects. CDFIs also fund workforce development and educational programs to enhance job skills and offer financial literacy education to help individuals manage their finances and build credit.

Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center (HCC&TC)

- HCC&TC provides vocational and technical training to students and adults in Huntingdon County, PA. It offers career programs in various fields, leading to industry-recognized certifications. HCC&TC supports adult education and workforce development by providing training opportunities, collaborating with local businesses, and addressing skills gaps. It also offers career counseling, job placement assistance, and secures funding and partnerships to enhance its programs and facilities. HCC&TC is essential for equipping individuals with practical skills for successful careers and supporting their educational and professional growth.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

- The PDE funds various programs to enhance educational outcomes and support schools, students, and educators. This includes basic K-12 education funding, special education services, early childhood education, career and technical education, and higher education grants and scholarships. PDE also provides funding for school safety, technology integration, and educational improvement through tax credits. Additionally, it supports adult education programs such as GED preparation and literacy. Overall, PDE aims to improve educational quality and address diverse student needs across Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS)

- DHS funds programs designed to support individuals and families in need and enhance social services throughout the state. Key funding areas include public assistance programs like TANF and SNAP, health services such as Medicaid and CHIP, child welfare services including foster care and child protective services, and mental health and substance abuse programs. DHS also funds aging services, disability support, homeless assistance, early intervention for developmental delays, and community services addressing social and economic needs. Overall, DHS's funding aims to promote well-being, support vulnerable populations, and improve access to essential services.

Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB)

- The PSAB represents and supports boroughs across Pennsylvania by advocating at the state level for legislation affecting local governance, organizing educational events and providing resources for borough officials, and facilitating networking opportunities. PSAB also offers technical assistance, develops best practices and policies for effective borough management, and publishes updates to keep officials informed about relevant issues. Overall, PSAB plays a key role in supporting boroughs through advocacy, education, resources, and collaboration.

Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC)

- The PUC regulates public utilities to ensure reliable, safe, and fair services. It sets utility rates, enforces service standards, and handles licensing. The PUC addresses consumer complaints and provides educational resources. It funds energy efficiency programs, low-income assistance through programs like LIHEAP and the Universal Service Fund, and oversees infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the PUC conducts research and analysis to guide policy and decision-making. Its role includes promoting efficient service delivery and supporting energy conservation and consumer assistance initiatives.

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

- The DEP focuses on safeguarding the environment and public health. It regulates and oversees air and water quality, land management, and ensures compliance with environmental laws through permitting and enforcement. DEP funds a variety of programs, including environmental grants for clean water, pollution prevention, and habitat restoration; recycling and waste management initiatives; and water programs like the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, which provide financial assistance for infrastructure improvements. It also supports energy efficiency and alternative energy projects, environmental education, and conservation efforts such as watershed restoration and habitat protection. Overall, DEP's activities are aimed at enhancing environmental quality and promoting sustainable practices.

Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAP&DC)

- The SAP&DC is a regional organization dedicated to boosting economic development and improving quality of life in Pennsylvania's Southern Alleghenies. SAP&DC focuses on: Regional Planning and Development by Creating long-term growth plans and supporting economic initiatives to attract businesses and create jobs. Grant Management and Funding by assisting local entities with securing and managing grants for community and infrastructure projects. Technical Assistance by offering consulting services and training to help with project planning and implementation. Infrastructure and Community Development: Funding projects to enhance transportation, utilities, public facilities, and community revitalization. Programs funded by SAP&DC include support for business expansion, infrastructure improvements, environmental conservation, and regional planning efforts, all aimed at fostering development and improving life in the region.



Mount Union

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

August 4, 2023



ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE ANALYSIS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE OUTCOMES™

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE ANALYSIS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE OUTCOMES™

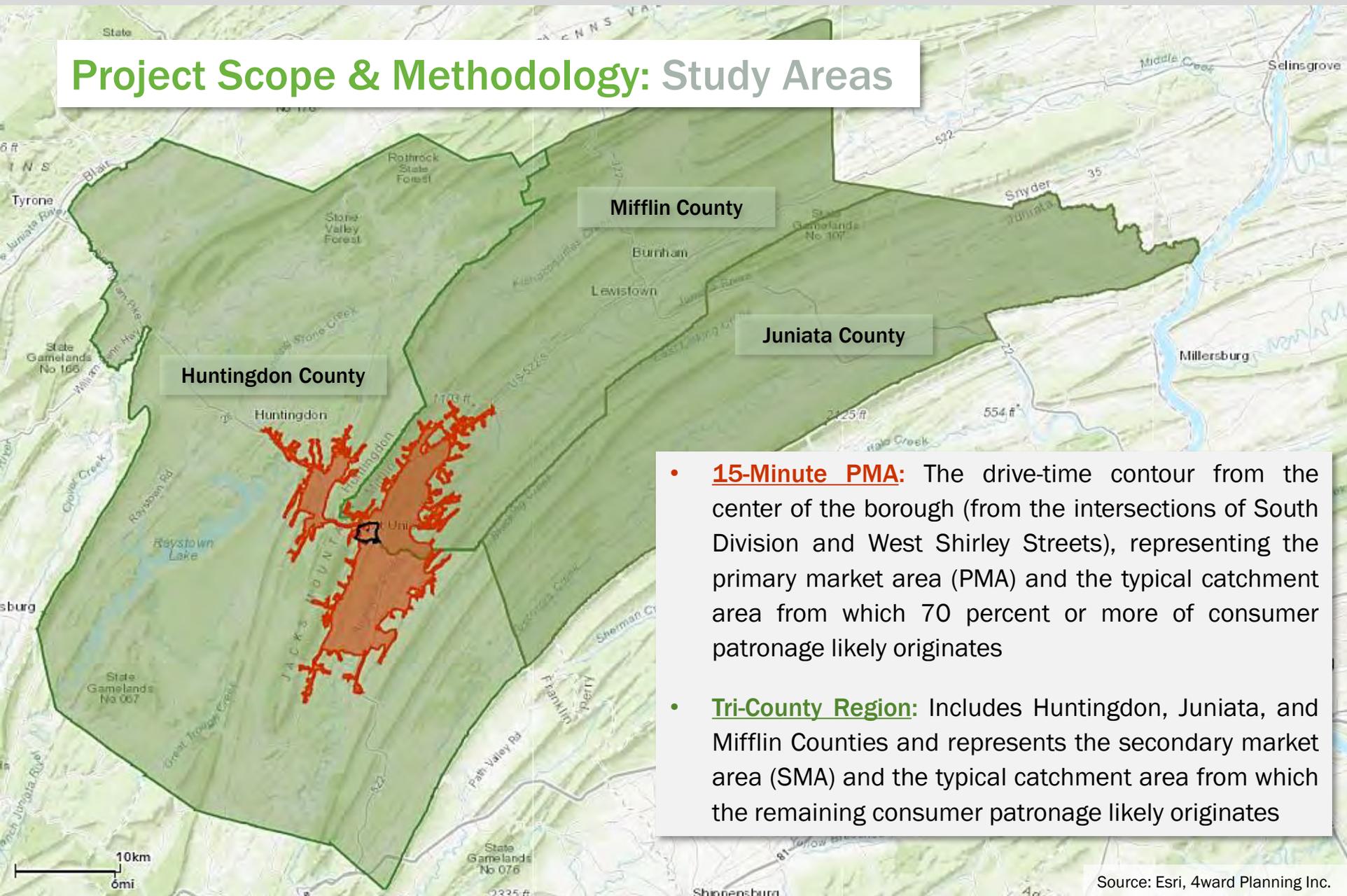


Project Scope & Methodology

In collaboration with Mackin Engineering, 4ward Planning is providing market and real estate analysis services in support of Mount Union Borough’s Comprehensive Plan Update. The market analysis is designed to provide a high-level review of all potential near-term private redevelopment opportunities within Mount Union (redevelopment which could occur within the next three to five years, based on projected market factors and supportive zoning). To gain firsthand perspective of residential and commercial real estate conditions and potential redevelopment opportunities, 4ward Planning performed a windshield tour of the borough and the surrounding area. Next, using a combination of published government data (U.S. Census Bureau) and proprietary analysis software (Esri Community Analyst), 4ward Planning conducted a high-level socio-economic analysis, examining the demographic characteristics of Mount Union Borough, the 15-minute primary market area (PMA), the Tri-County Region, and the state of Pennsylvania, for comparison purposes (more details are presented on the following page). Specifically, demographic trends associated with population, households, household growth, household income, population age, and educational attainment were analyzed. Demographic data is displayed for 2010, 2023 (estimated), and 2028 (projected). 4ward Planning also performed a high-level real estate supply/demand analysis for the local area to assist in identifying prospective residential and/or commercial development that could be market-receptive within the borough.



Project Scope & Methodology: Study Areas



- **15-Minute PMA:** The drive-time contour from the center of the borough (from the intersections of South Division and West Shirley Streets), representing the primary market area (PMA) and the typical catchment area from which 70 percent or more of consumer patronage likely originates
- **Tri-County Region:** Includes Huntingdon, Juniata, and Mifflin Counties and represents the secondary market area (SMA) and the typical catchment area from which the remaining consumer patronage likely originates

Market Opportunities: Regional Visitors

Expand business offerings to better capture regional visitor spending.

While there are outdoor recreational opportunities nearby (most notably hiking on Standing Stone Trail and fishing, canoeing, and kayaking on the Juniata River), the current offerings along Shirley Street do not reflect these opportunities (for example, there are not outdoor sporting goods or service businesses; there isn't a lodging business for seasonal outdoor recreational tourists; and dining options are extremely limited). Opportunities for economic revitalization should be focused on the vacant buildings along Shirley Street and targeted to regional tourism, given the relatively small year-round local population. Creating more robust tourism offerings could significantly contribute to local economic growth, as increased visitor spending on accommodations, dining, attractions, transportation, and other tourism-related services generates revenue and stimulates business activity. This, in turn, leads to job creation and the development of a more diverse range of employment opportunities across various sectors including hospitality, retail, transportation, and entertainment.

Promote the Mount Union Historic District as part of a heritage tourism economic strategy.

Furthermore, the Mount Union Historic District should also be promoted as part of a heritage tourism economic strategy (partnering with other heritage tourism communities within the region). A heritage tourism economic strategy refers to a deliberate approach taken by destinations or communities to leverage their cultural, historical, and natural heritage as a means of driving economic development and promoting tourism. Such a strategy involves the development and implementation of initiatives and policies to attract visitors, create tourism infrastructure, preserve heritage sites, and stimulate the local economy.

Market Opportunities: New Residents

Develop a marketing campaign targeted to remote workers.

Due to limited job opportunities, the borough and region have been subject to decades of out-migration of younger, working-age residents - resulting in an aging population. The pandemic accelerated the widespread adoption of remote work as a viable option for many industries and job roles. With the ability to work remotely, workers can choose where they live based on lifestyle preferences, cost of living, proximity to family, access to nature, and other personal factors. As a result, some smaller cities and towns have seen increased interest as remote work allows individuals to reside in areas with a more relaxed pace of life, stronger community connections, and lower costs of living. This has led to revitalization efforts in some smaller communities, as they attract remote workers seeking a change of lifestyle and sense of community. An influx of younger individuals and families could contribute to the borough's vibrancy and stimulate economic growth.

Given the area's natural amenities and relatively low cost of living (largely due to low housing costs), Mount Union could leverage the hybrid work movement to attract year-round remote workers looking to relocate from more expensive metro areas in search of a better work-life balance. The Borough could develop a marketing campaign highlighting its proximity to the Raystown Lake Recreation Area and other outdoor recreational opportunities (e.g., hiking on Standing Stone Trail; fishing, canoeing, and kayaking on the Juniata River), homeownership opportunities, local events, and recreational opportunities. The Borough could partner with local businesses including cafes, restaurants, and recreational facilities to create special offers or incentives specifically for remote workers (e.g., coworking spaces, loyalty programs). However, it is important that Mount Union has a robust and reliable high-speed internet infrastructure to support remote work.

Market Opportunities: New Residents (continued)

Address elements of blight and perceptions of crime.

Interviews with local real estate professionals suggest that while a relatively large inventory of older homes in Mount Union, particularly those with historical character, may be attractive to households looking for more affordable homeownership opportunities, existing blight in the surrounding community and perceptions of crime may dissuade a portion of prospective buyers and business owners from locating in the borough - also impacting potential tourism traffic.

Community blight, crime, and perceptions of crime are typically correlated and are, likewise, reduced by an increase in community engagement and pride. These challenges, while requiring time for remediation, can be addressed in a variety of ways. Separate public education campaigns targeting both blight and perceptions of crime in the borough could be an important first step in gaining community awareness, support, and engagement. These public education campaigns could include the creation of small, block-by-block, neighborhood clean-up initiatives – offering more immediate, tangible results.

Further, a robust code enforcement program, along with incentives for property owners to address blight (e.g., CDBG funding provided by Huntingdon County), will be a necessary step towards changing perceptions of properties in disrepair.