



DEINDUSTRIALIZED COMMUNITIES MARKET STUDY

Final Report

May 2022



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

Deindustrialized Communities Market Study
FINAL REPORT

May 2022



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Letter from the State Historic Preservation Office

31 May 2021

The Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) is a bureau within the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the commonwealth's official history agency. The PA SHPO manages all the commonwealth's historic preservation programs, one of which is participation in the Section 106 consultation process. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account effects of their undertakings on historic properties and to seek ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects.

In 2015 Shell Chemical Appalachia (Shell) required a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) to build a petrochemical plant in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. The permit triggered Section 106 consultation; because the plant construction necessitated demolition of several historic properties and archaeological resources, the Corps, Shell, PA SHPO, and local consulting parties developed an agreement to mitigate those losses.

This market analysis is one of several mitigation projects from the agreement. This study's purpose is to create implementable strategies to help smaller deindustrialized communities leverage their historic resources for economic development purposes using data from public outreach, market analysis, and research.

The PA SHPO has long recognized the need for this study. The late 1970's- early 1980's collapse of the region's century-old heavy industrial economy resulted in massive job loss, depopulation, decaying infrastructure, environmental degradation and reduced local government capacity to cope with these challenges. In the national consciousness, larger cities such as Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo were the face of the "Rust Belt" label. However, over the past decade, many of these larger post-industrial cities have forged comebacks, creating new opportunity through development of alternative economic development strategies.

Though, lost in that narrative is that tens of thousands of people living in smaller communities that continue to struggle with the effects of deindustrialization. For these smaller communities, the transition to new economic paradigms is an ongoing struggle.

The PA SHPO documented that many historic buildings built during industrial prosperity remain largely intact and are often underutilized economic assets for these communities. The thoughtful identification, stabilization, preservation, and marketing of historic buildings can provide economic opportunity and a foundation for further revitalization. Individually, these opportunities are not of the industrial scale that built these communities in the first place, but collectively they create immense potential and can fit into holistic 21st century strategies of community and economic development.

This study is the PA SHPO contribution in providing local governments and communities as well as regional and statewide partners with data and implementable tools to use historic properties as economic assets. The holistic integration of these tools with other community resources such as riverfront access, sustainable living spaces and the vast human capital these communities possess will help create a roadmap for long-term success. It is our hope that this regional study's strategies and recommendations will be a model for the commonwealth and will be replicated in other communities on how to successfully integrate historic preservation tactics into broader revitalization plans.



Andrea L. MacDonald, Director and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office

Study Team

The Deindustrialized Communities Market Study is a project of the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC).



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street, 2nd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation

Tom Wolf	Governor
Nancy Moses Andrea Lowery	PHMC Commission Chair PHMC Executive Director
Andrea MacDonald Elizabeth Rairigh William Callahan Shelby Splain	PA SHPO Director, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer PA SHPO Division Manager: Preservation Services PA SHPO Community Preservation Coordinator: Western Region PA SHPO Education and Special Initiatives Coordinator

Study Consultants

In 2021 PA SHPO selected a team of consultants led by AKRF Inc which included evolve environment::architecture (evolveEA).



332 North Shore Drive
Building 1B, Suite 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

www.akrf.com

John Neill
Lorianne DeFalco
Madeleine Helmer
Tom Batrone



evolve
environment::architecture

6020 Broad Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

www.evolveEA.com

Christine Mondor
Elijah Hughes
Ashley Cox
Nicole Catino
David Ge
Harisa Martinos

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Unless otherwise noted, photographs were taken by the AKRF and evolveEA team in February and March of 2022.

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Executive Summary

New Brighton, PA

Executive Summary

This report, commissioned by the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), investigates economic development and community revitalization opportunities in southwestern Pennsylvania communities that have experienced significant deindustrialization.

The study takes into account the marketability and use potential of historic properties within the two regions, which includes 12 communities in 3 counties. The study communities are located on the riverfront within the Monongahela River Valley and the Beaver and Ohio River Valley. The report identifies ways that these communities can leverage their older, historic commercial business districts, key historic buildings, and riverfront resources to advance economic development opportunities, and offers strategies to address identified challenges associated with this goal.

This report was informed by engagement with local and regional stakeholders and community members, through a public outreach process that included focus group sessions, public meetings, and individual interviews. Focus groups were comprised of local and regional leaders, historic preservation stakeholders, and economic development stakeholders.

The plan was developed in response to the construction of the Shell Appalachia ethane cracker plant located across the Ohio River from Beaver. Recognizing the historic significance of deindustrialized communities in the surrounding regions and the possible adverse effects of the plant, PA SHPO initiated the project, with assistance from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Shell Appalachia provided funding.

This report is the final phase of a multi-phased project. Previous work included a historic resources survey in select communities along the Monongahela and Ohio rivers, and the compilation of an annotated bibliography of past planning efforts in the two regions. The plan culminates in a “How to Implement this Plan” checklist meant for a wide audience to understand, reference, and implement.

The study explores the existing conditions in each of the regions and communities in terms of demographics and employment, historic resources, riverfront access, and flood risk, and identifies key historic buildings and projects that can be leveraged to strengthen commercial districts. The study also includes market demand analyses and answers regional, market-based questions regarding appropriate investment, development, and sustainability strategies utilizing older and historic buildings.

PA SHPO retained the AKRF and evolveEA consultant team to formulate the regional market study, as well as targeted community-specific recommendations. PA SHPO provided valuable assistance throughout the planning process.

This report is developed with the understanding that historic preservation is an engine of economic revitalization. As such, this report produced the following 13 key recommendations:

- Recommendation #1:** Focus on attracting talent, rather than attracting big business.
- Recommendation #2:** Prevent and address vacancy and neglect of older buildings.
- Recommendation #3:** Reduce local barriers to the preservation of historic properties.
- Recommendation #4:** Encourage collaboration between communities.
- Recommendation #5:** Develop a regional vision while retaining and promoting local identity.
- Recommendation #6:** Harness the rivers as a recreational and scenic resource, and an opportunity for connecting communities.
- Recommendation #7:** Bolster capacity for the communities that need it most.
- Recommendation #8:** Embrace grassroots efforts; keep it local, maintain community character, and include residents' voices in the process.
- Recommendation #9:** Do not be afraid to have big ideas, which can shift a community's mindset and build relationships among community stakeholders in the process.
- Recommendation #10:** Include residential uses in the commercial center, to create pedestrian traffic, economic activity, and put "eyes on street;" for busier downtowns, include residential uses on upper floors of existing buildings.
- Recommendation #11:** Adaptively reuse downtown historic buildings for retail, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment uses.
- Recommendation #12:** Adaptively reuse downtown historic buildings for office space, while preventing ground floor offices on a portion of the main street.
- Recommendation #13:** Support each community's industrial heritage and future industrial potential, while strengthening downtown economic revitalization.





Introduction



Rochester, PA

Introduction

This report, commissioned by the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO), investigates the economic development and community revitalization prospects in southwestern Pennsylvania communities that have experienced significant deindustrialization. The study takes into account the marketability and use potential of historic properties within the study area, which includes 12 communities in three counties. All communities in this study retain historic business cores and are located on the riverfront within the Monongahela River Valley and the Beaver and Ohio River Valley.

The report identifies ways that these communities can leverage their older, historic commercial business districts, key historic buildings, and riverfront resources to advance economic development opportunities and offers strategies to address identified challenges associated with this goal. Recognizing that each community has its own unique history—as well as its own unique set of challenges—the report offers targeted community-level recommendations. However, collectively the opportunities and challenges within these communities present a range of representative conditions that exist in many deindustrialized communities within southwestern Pennsylvania. In this respect and by design, the report also provides recommendations that are more broadly applicable to the regions' communities.

This report is the final phase of a multi-phased project. Previous work included a historic resources survey in select communities along the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers, and the compilation of an annotated bibliography. The project was funded by Shell Chemical Appalachia, LLC as part of mitigation for construction of a petrochemical complex in Beaver County along the Ohio River.

PA SHPO, with assistance from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, developed a programmatic agreement that required Shell to fund several projects that would have local, regional, and statewide benefits to mitigate the loss of historic and archaeological properties located within the project area.

The PA SHPO retained the AKRF and evolveEA consultant team to formulate both regional and community-specific recommendations within the framework of market, place, and identity:

Market

The study includes market demand analyses and highlights catalytic projects that encourage investment across the community and the region.

Place

The study explores the existing conditions in each of the regions and communities in terms of demographics and employment, historic resources, and flood risk, and identifies key historic buildings and projects that can be leveraged to strengthen commercial districts and discusses how historic buildings and sites can be catalytic in community and economic development.

Identity

The study highlights the historic and cultural legacy in these regions and communities and identifies key agencies and organizations that can act to implement the goals and recommendations.



HOT CLINIC

**JAY
SPORTS**

Ambridge, PA

The Challenges Faced by Deindustrialized Communities

Western Pennsylvania's river towns are at a crossroads between the industrial heritage of the past, the community fabric of the present, and the evolving demands of the future. In the 12 communities of this study (see Figure 1), the structures of the main streets reflect a network of resource flows that no longer exist. At their peak, these communities were closed-loop industrial economies whereby raw materials came in, refined and manufactured materials went out, and factory wages supported a fully contained commercial economy with pharmacies, general stores, barbers, schools, and all of the mainstays of small-town life. Jobs were plentiful and local. Needs were met by small neighborhood businesses. Each main street had everything that the community needed to survive. The river towns were individual and complete communities and the unique identities that they built with industry in the last century endure within the people who live there today. Communities were supported by the immense industrial economy that surrounded them, whether or not they were home to a major industrial employer.

Today those resource flows no longer exist. Factories have closed and the manufacturing that remains no longer employs the volume of labor that made the old economy function. Jobs largely exist outside of the community and highways bypass many community downtowns. Retail and services have relocated to strip malls and office parks where they are able to tap into the sprawling post-industrial landscape of exurban development. Large-scale population loss and a concurrent loss of tax base no longer supports the outdated and largely unnecessary infrastructure.

Despite these economic shifts, the legacies of the river towns persist. The river town identities are strong, durable, and compelling even without the industry that made those identities possible. The surviving physical infrastructure is dense and walkable, and the surviving buildings offer fertile ground for entrepreneurship and new investment. As the suburbs and exurbs age, river towns offer something for residents and businesses that can't be replicated: community, history, and a strong sense of place.

The study included 8 communities in the Ohio River and Beaver River area and 4 communities along the Monongahela River, each of which has historical assets along a main street corridor and throughout the community.

The intent of the study is to answer regional, market-based questions regarding appropriate investment, development, and sustainability strategies utilizing older and historic buildings. The study includes the following major tasks:

- Review of Background Planning Documents
- Demographic a Workforce Assessment
- Market Demand Analysis
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Identification of Key Historic Buildings and Potential Future Uses
- Key Research Questions

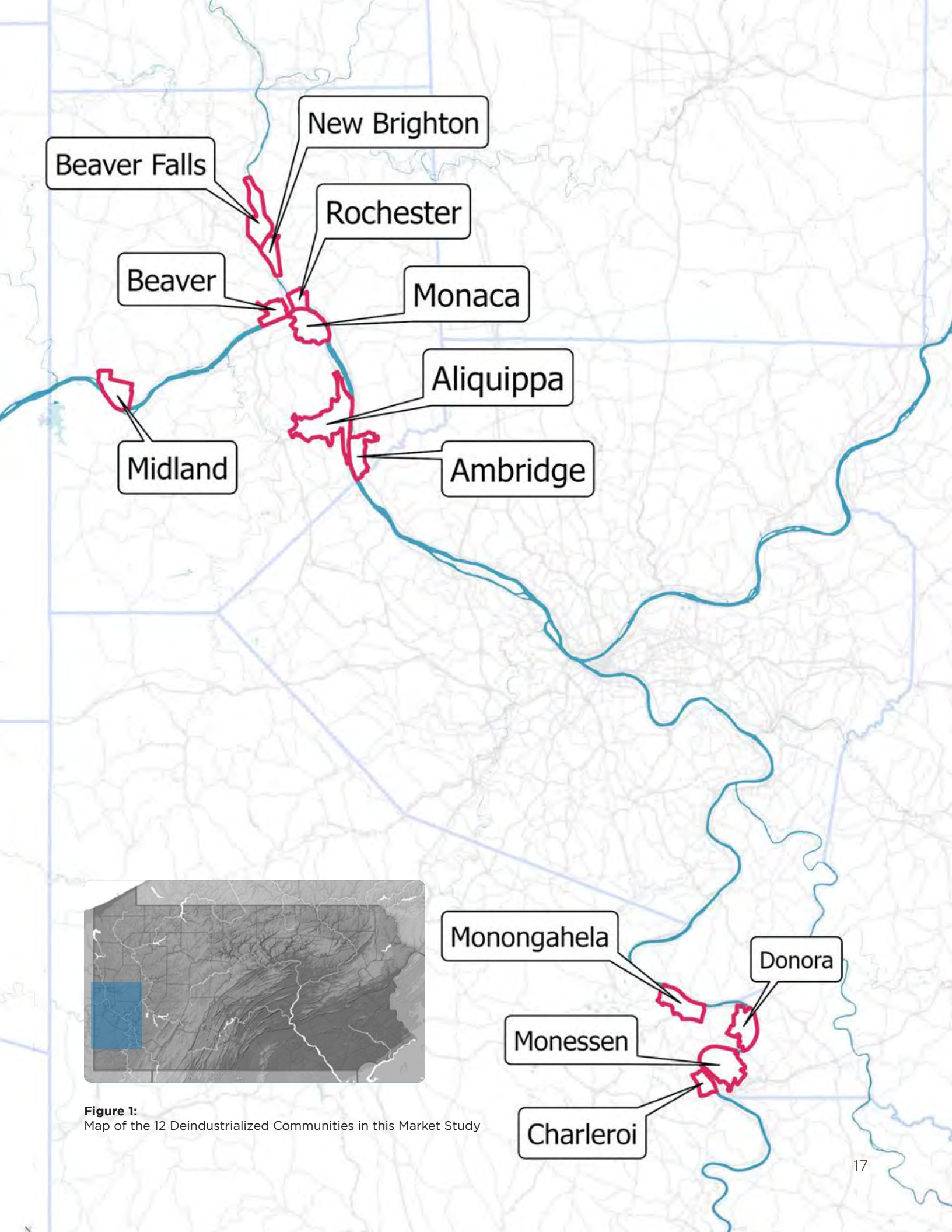


Figure 1:
Map of the 12 Deindustrialized Communities in this Market Study

The Competitive Advantage of Historic Buildings

This report is developed with the understanding that historic preservation is an engine of economic revitalization. The historic downtown of each community in this study serves as a valuable existing asset that can be harnessed for regional economic growth. Historic buildings and districts define a community's identity, reflect a shared cultural heritage, provide spaces that are authentic and unique, and ensure that a community controls its creative narrative. Historic buildings are also valuable assets, available for adaptive reuse and occupation, and as anchors to future development.

Place-based investments are proven tools for achieving economic revitalization. Enrichments to a sense of place, including strengthening community assets and improving locally owned small businesses on the commercial corridor, is a strategic economic development plan for downtowns. These efforts are even more effective when they foster social environments that are vibrant, cohesive, and reflectiveⁱ. Successful place-based investment strategies introduce programming and activities that animate the public realm; create and enhance spaces that promote social interaction and trust among community members; and include design elements that reflect a community's unique history and culture. Historic preservation is such a tool.

Downtowns that offer a high quality-of-life, public amenities, and activities can serve as catalysts for increased local economic development, by attracting a diverse population of new residents and visitors, strengthening customer bases for local businesses, and providing a reliable workforce needed to attract and retain employersⁱⁱ.

Historic preservation is often thought of as being in conflict with economic development, whereas in reality historic preservation has proven to be an effective tool for economic growthⁱⁱⁱ. Historic preservation and economic development go hand in hand. Historic preservation is a vehicle of revitalization, by contributing to tourism, reinforcing a sense of place, providing natural business incubators for small enterprises, and offering a source of affordable housing.

Historic buildings are unique, reflecting a community's history and identity. This individuality is attractive to occupants and visitors, and serves as an attractive setting for cultural programming, special events, and retail and entertainment spaces. As economist Donovan Rypkema writes, product differentiation is a known method for attracting investment^{iv}. By preserving and enhancing the commercial corridors, public spaces and landmarks that are unique to a place, a community differentiates itself from others and in turn attracts attention and investment. Likewise, by promoting the community history that these historic buildings represent, the built environment that represents these major themes will be advocated for and preserved.

Existing older buildings can be incubators for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Older buildings can provide cheap and readily available spaces for small business operations, in comparison to new construction. Often these existing buildings are lower-cost options in central locations, where business owners can easily set up operations and participate in a community of other enterprises.

i: Brookings Institution. April 15, 2021. To Recover from COVID-19, downtowns must adapt. Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/to-recover-from-covid-19-downtowns-must-adapt/>.

ii: NYS Downtown Revitalization Initiative. July 2021. "Downtown Revitalization Initiative Guidebook."

iii: Rypkema, Donovan. 1999. "Culture, Historic Preservation and Economic Development in the 21st Century." Paper Submitted To The Leadership Conference On Conservancy And Development. Available at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/china/DRPAP.html>.

iv: Rypkema, Donovan. 1999. "Culture, Historic Preservation and Economic Development in the 21st Century." Paper Submitted To The Leadership Conference On Conservancy And Development. Available at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/china/DRPAP.html>.

As economist Donovan Rypkema writes:

"I cannot identify a single example of sustained success in downtown revitalization where historic preservation wasn't a key component (but) examples of expensive failures in downtown revitalization have nearly all (demolished) historic buildings."

Historic buildings serve as a vehicle for economic growth by offering the following qualities:

- Reflect product differentiation
- Most effective venue for cultural goods and services
- Natural business incubator for small enterprises
- Opportunities for tourism
- Range of opportunities and scales: from one small building to district-wide
- Historic preservation reinforces the five senses of quality communities: Sense of Place, Sense of Identity, Sense of Evolution, Sense of Ownership, and Sense of Community

Rypkema, Donovan. Principle, Place Economics—Keynote address 2010 Pennsylvania Downtown Center Annual Conference, Lancaster PA

Rypkema, Donovan. 1999. "Culture, Historic Preservation and Economic Development in the 21st Century." Paper Submitted to The Leadership Conference On Conservancy And Development. Available at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/china/DRPAP.html>.



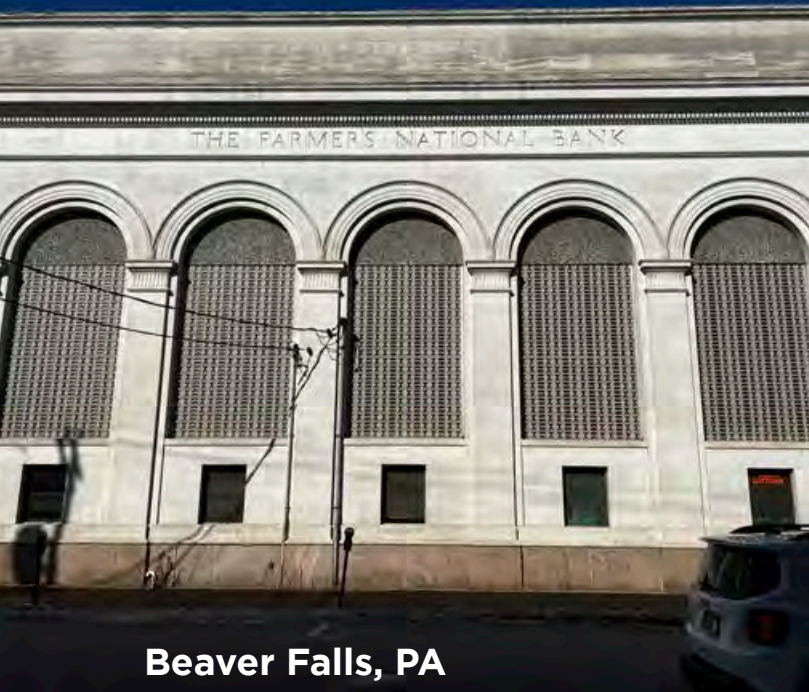
Charleroi, PA



New Brighton, PA



Rochester, PA



Beaver Falls, PA

Historic property investments can be achieved at every scale. Façade improvements and minor repairs are immediate contributions to the public realm. Large-scale rehabilitation projects have widespread impacts and can be performed in parallel with smaller targeted improvements. Collectively, at a block or neighborhood scale, these projects lead to immediate improvements in quality of life, serve as inspiration for more investment, and celebrate a community's past while reshaping the narrative it shares for its future.

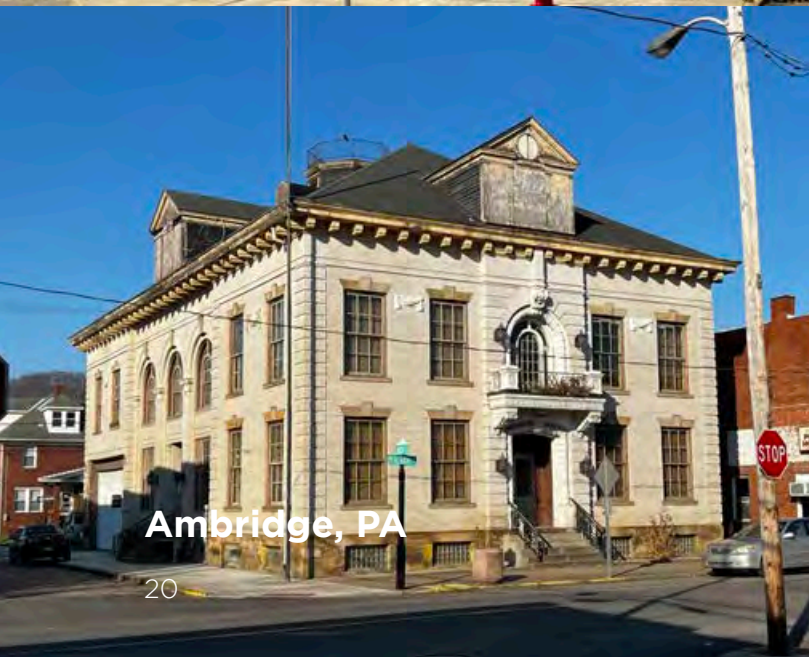
Barriers to Historic Property Investment

Investors in historic properties are often confronted with a common set of cultural, physical, and economic barriers. The regulations governing the built environment, such as building use, occupancy rates, setbacks, and parking, were developed with new buildings in mind. The historic built environment does not conform well with these rules. For example, historic downtown buildings often occupy an entire lot, making it difficult for them to comply with off-street parking requirements. Historic downtowns were also built to house a mix of uses, which does not comply with the segregated uses of traditional zoning codes.

Physical barriers include compliance with codes, such as those regulating building, energy, and floodplainsⁱ. These codes are important as they ensure the health and safety of occupants, however a potential historic building owner or small-scale developer may be intimidated by a time-consuming and complex review process. By ensuring that these codes are appropriate for historic buildings and that the review process is clearly defined, the historic building development process can become more predictable and transparent. Economic challenges also pose a substantial barrier to historic property investment. Historic property developers and owners may find it challenging to secure loans from traditional banks in an area that has a weak real estate market. Adaptive reuse projects are often unique projects, and do not conform to the predictable formulas that lenders prefer. In addition, small-scale developers may not qualify for some tax incentives or may have difficulty navigating the process of understanding and accessing incentive programs.



Donora, PA



Ambridge, PA

ⁱ: National Trust for Historic Preservation. Untapped Potential: Strategies for Revitalization and Reuse. October 2017

“Old Economy” vs. “New Economy”

Deindustrialized communities were built upon an “Old Economy” framework. With rapid globalization of the economy, there has been a paradigm shift to a “New Economy” approach to economic development. The table below was created by the Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University to compare the Old and New Economies:

Key Features of the Old Economy	Key Features of the New Economy
Inexpensive place to do business was key.	Being rich in talent and ideas is key.
A high-quality physical environment was a luxury, which stood in the way of attracting cost-conscious businesses.	Physical and cultural amenities are key in attracting knowledge workers.
Success = fixed competitive advantage in some resource or skill. The labor force was skills-dependent.	Success = organizations and individuals with the ability to learn and adapt.
Economic development was government-led. Large government means good services.	Bold partnerships with business, government, and nonprofit sectors lead change.
Industrial sector (manufacturing) focus.	Sector diversity is desired, and clustering of related sectors is targeted.
Fossil-fuel-dependent manufacturing.	Communications-dependent, but energy-smart.
People followed jobs.	Talented, well-educated people choose location first, then look for or create a job.
Location mattered (especially relative to transportation and raw materials)	Quality places with high quality of life matter more.
Dirty, ugly, or poor quality environments were common outcomes that did not prevent growth.	Clean, green environments, and proximity to open space and quality recreational opportunities are critical.
Connection to global opportunities was not essential.	Connection to emerging global opportunities is critical.

Source: Adelaja, S., Y.G. Hailu, M. Abdulla, C. McKeown, B. Cainin, M. Gibson, and K. McDonald. (2009). Chasing the Past or Investing in Our Future: Placemaking for Prosperity in the New Economy. Report# LPR-2009-NE-03, Land Policy Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Public Outreach Process

The market study explores ways in which communities can leverage their older, historic commercial business districts and key historic buildings as part of an overall economic development strategy for each region. Integral to this process was the solicitation and incorporation of feedback from the community and stakeholders about the challenges and opportunities for redevelopment.

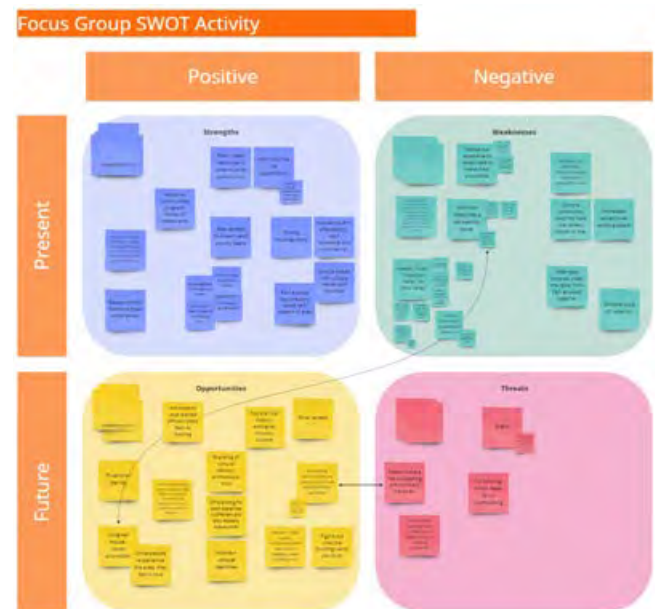
As part of this effort, PA SHPO and its consultant team undertook a robust public engagement strategy including stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and online engagement. One of the key components of this strategy included four virtual focus group sessions with key stakeholders generally belonging to the following four categories:

- Beaver & Ohio River Valley (14 March 2022)
- Monongahela River Valley (15 March 2022)
- Historic Preservation (15 March 2022)
- Economic Development and Planning (17 March 2022)

Some of the participants included the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Center for Local Government Services, Rivers of Steel, Mon Valley Alliance, Monongahela Main Street, National Road Heritage Corridor, Redevelopment Authority of Westmoreland, Washington County Planning Dept. Old Economy Village State Historic Site National Landmark, Ambridge Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) & Ambridge Historic District Economic Development Corporation, Beaver County Regional COG, and RiverWise. There were roughly 25 attendees at each focus group session. At each focus group, key research questions were presented and participants were encouraged to engage in a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis using Miro—a visual collaboration platform that allows comments to be captured in real time.

In addition to the focus group meetings, public input for this report was also provided in two public meetings, stakeholder interviews, and via StoryMap, an online public engagement platform. The public meetings were held virtually on March 16 and 17 2022. These public meetings included a short presentation on the project, an overview of the historic, environmental, and economic context, and an introduction to the project StoryMap—an online community engagement tool that integrates maps, text, photos, and an opportunity for the community to provide feedback to the project team about pertinent issues and opportunities. Focus group participants were encouraged to share the public meeting dates with their organizations and constituents. Attendees included focus group participants, residents, community preservationists, and government agencies. One of the central themes that was discussed was how communities could work together to realize a collective vision, but also how individual communities can be a role model for other communities.

Important themes that emerged from the focus group conversations are described on the facing page.



Focus group conversations were facilitated online with virtual post-it notes in a platform called Miro. Participants were able to record their thoughts and organize them into four quadrants: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Main Themes: Beaver & Ohio Valley Focus Group

- Beaver County has existing programs in place to support investment in downtowns.
- Grassroots local investment is strong and there are strong signs of entrepreneurship in these communities.
- Lack of code enforcement allows absentee landlords' properties to fall into disrepair.
- Compliance with building codes can be challenging.
- Beaver County communities in this study benefit from belonging to the same county.

Main Themes: Economic Development and Planning Focus Group

- Advocates and planners should include elected officials in their projects to build collaborative relationships and to advocate for allocation of state funds.
- There is opportunity for greater collaboration amongst communities to achieve regional planning and economic development and to promote the community heritage that is so important to the people who live here.
- There is a growing inequity between communities/entities who can navigate regulatory and financing challenges versus those who cannot.
- State agencies and programs could bolster capacity for the communities that need it most.
- There is uncertainty about the zoning and development process in some communities, as well as financial challenges to redevelopment, particularly with respect to older, historic buildings.
- Emphasis on elevating regional and local identity should be important to this study.

Main Themes: Monongahela Valley Focus Group

- Donora has a largely intact downtown with architectural significance but many of the buildings are vacant. Second-floor spaces are frequently vacant in all four communities.
- The downtown to riverfront connection is an opportunity for improvement.
- Being split between two counties can present challenges for coordination between the communities.
- Cultivating a regional Mid-Mon Valley identity, while celebrating what makes each community unique, is an opportunity to change perceptions of these communities.
- Communities with successful main streets can serve as models for other communities.

Main Themes: Historic Preservation Focus Group

- Communities from throughout the region with established historic districts can serve as an example for other communities to follow.
- In the Beaver and Ohio River Valley region, both Beaver and Ambridge have local historic districts designated by ordinance in addition to historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- None of the communities in the Monongahela River Valley region have locally-listed districts but Charleroi has an extensive National Register of Historic Places-listed district.
- If stabilizing investments aren't made soon, some buildings could deteriorate beyond repair.
- Communities should coordinate regionally to steer investment toward historic downtowns.
- In some places, in order to increase vitality, local regulations can be used to manage or limit certain uses (such as first-floor office use) within downtown or to disincentivize vacancy.

Organization of this Report

This report is organized as follows:



Chapter 1: Study Communities

This chapter establishes the context of each community, by describing the history and general land use pattern of the communities' commercial corridors, identifying the existing historic buildings in the business cores, highlighting key demographic and economic conditions that may impact future growth, and briefly presenting the riverfront amenities and existing flood risks.



Chapter 2: Planning Context

This chapter provides background on planning activities in the regions and municipalities, including the identification of local agencies and organizations who are supporting economic development and community preservation, and ongoing key projects in the regions that may be elevated to support economic growth and activity. This section includes an analysis of the stated goals and objectives of existing planning documents, and an assessment of current municipal regulations that incentivize and support the reuse and preservation of older buildings in the business cores.



Chapter 3: Market Analysis

This chapter evaluates the different market segments to understand the role of historic buildings in the redevelopment process, including the housing, retail and entertainment market, the commercial office market, the industrial market, and the market for community facilities and open space and recreation.



Chapter 4: Key Opportunities

This chapter provides a site location analysis and potential uses and catalytic projects for the commercial corridors, an identification of key historic buildings in each of the 12 communities that may be catalytic projects along the business corridor, and district design recommendations.



Chapter 5: Recommendations

This chapter completes the report with a summary of the key findings and recommendations and suggested implementation strategies that can be taken to achieve the goals.

See the “How to Implement this Plan” checklist at the end of Chapter 5.

This report would not be possible without the feedback provided by the community and stakeholders; summaries of the stakeholder and community meetings are included as Appendix A. Additional appendices contain Land Use and Flood Risk maps of each community, as well as additional data used to produce this report.



Beaver Falls, PA





Chapter 1

Study Communities

Monaca, PA

1.1 Introduction

The process of identifying opportunities and challenges starts by gaining an understanding of the communities' social, economic, and physical conditions. This study assesses the following 12 communities: Charleroi Borough, Donora Borough, the City of Monessen, and the City of Monongahela, located in Washington and Westmoreland Counties; and the City of Aliquippa, Ambridge Borough, Beaver Borough, the City of Beaver Falls, Midland Borough, Monaca Borough, New Brighton Borough, and Rochester Borough located within Beaver County.

For the purposes of this report, the 12 communities identified are grouped into two regions: 1) the Monongahela River Valley, which comprises of Charleroi Borough, Donora Borough, the City of Monessen, and the City of Monongahela; and 2) the Beaver and Ohio River Valley which comprises the City of Aliquippa, Ambridge Borough, Beaver Borough, the City of Beaver Falls, Midland Borough, Monaca Borough, New Brighton Borough, and Rochester Borough. The study communities are former industrial river towns with populations under 10,000, and with relatively intact main street corridors. The towns are connected by their proximity to one another and their shared industrial heritage.

The community summaries in this chapter describe the commercial corridors that the focus of this study. Each profile identifies historic buildings within the commercial core, key demographic and employment conditions, and the relationship of the community to its riverfront, including public access points at the waterfront and the existing flooding vulnerability.

Historic Resources

The identified historic resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) and properties determined eligible for listing in the National Register (as shown in the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) cultural resources online database, PA-SHARE), as well as those properties recommended as National Register-eligible by recent historic resource survey efforts.

The key historic buildings in this study are buildings that meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects are eligible for the National Register if they are less than 50 years of age (unless shown to have achieved exceptional significance), if they possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

1. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history (Criterion A); or
2. Are associated with significant people (Criterion B); or
3. Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C); or
4. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D).

A historic resources survey in the two regions was conducted in October 2020 for PA SHPO, prepared by ASC Group, Inc. The survey took place in the following six communities: Donora Borough, Monongahela City, Beaver Falls City, Monaca Borough, New Brighton Borough, and Rochester Borough. The primary focus of the survey was the identification of potentially eligible properties or districts in the downtown commercial cores of the study communities; the secondary objective was to include industrial properties. The remaining six communities were not surveyed due to the availability of relatively new data regarding historic properties in those communities.

The results of this survey are included in the community summaries below, labeled in the historic resources table as “recommended eligible by 2020 survey”. The historic resources tables also include a list of historic resources identified by the public for survey. For communities not included in the ASC surveys, this report identifies “recommended eligible” historic resources by referencing other historic resources survey materials available in PA-SHARE.

Demographics and Employment

Each community profile includes key demographic and employment data from the U.S. Census Bureau, including population, household income and poverty, unemployment, and top industry sectors^{i, ii, iii}. See Appendix B for Community Profile tables that provide expanded demographic and employment data for each community and each region.

i: OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2019), All Jobs, Work Area Profile, 2019.

ii: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019 Five-Year Estimates.

iii: OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2019), All Jobs, Distance/Direction Analysis, 2019. Skrabbeck, Quentin R. *The World's Richest Neighborhood: How Pittsburgh's East Enders Forged American Industry*. (Algora Publishing: New York, 2010).

Riverfront Access and Flood Risks

Each community in this study is located on a river; this shared characteristic is a source of economic potential and vitality. The river serves as a possible economic driver in each community, providing a scenic resource, a location for outdoor recreation, and a link between communities. The riverfront was historically an industrial space that residents avoided, however as riverine health has improved, the deindustrialized riverfront communities are re-imagining their relationships to the river. The summaries below include a description of existing riverfront access from the downtown.

Proximity to the waterfront is also a threat, as flooding threatens the longterm prosperity of the study area communities and can deter historic property investment downtown. The following community summaries include existing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood mapping data to identify flood prone areas in the downtown. Each community summary below also includes data on the event complaints recorded in the NOAA Storm Event Database in the past two decades for flooding related events for the investigated communities. More detailed information about each event complaint in each municipality as well as flood maps for each community can be viewed in Appendix C, “Flood Risk Maps.”

1.2 Monongahela River Valley

The Monongahela River Valley extends south of Pittsburgh, through southwestern Pennsylvania. The Monongahela River Valley communities in this study comprise four municipalities located within Washington and Westmoreland Counties. The communities along the Monongahela River were built on industries of trading, ship building, glass and pottery, coal mines, and steel mills.

The earliest known inhabitants of the Monongahela River valley are a prehistoric people known as the Monongahela People, or Mound Builders. Their burial mounds remain in the river valley, though the Monongahela People disappeared prior to 1500ⁱ. During the Late Prehistoric period, A.D. 675 to through the early 18th century, many different agricultural societies occupied the region. The area was abundant in large and small game, including wood buffalo, elk, bear and beaver. At this time, the valley was one of the most intensely populated areas in Pennsylvaniaⁱⁱ. Living near the waterways were the Algonquian-Speaking Shawnee and Delaware peoples (also known as the Lenni-Lenape), and the Iroquois six nationsⁱⁱⁱ.

European settlement began in the mid-18th century. Scotch-Irish traders and settlers dominated the region during early colonization. The French and British both laid claim to the region and the river was the site of various battles of the French and Indian War. The most intensive warfare ceased by 1758^{iv}. Settlers from the east formed communities near the Monongahela River on the flat portions of the river valley and avoided steep riverbanks and dense hardwood forests—much like the Native peoples who preceded them.

Early industries along the Monongahela River Valley served the newly settled farmers and craftsman in the region. Sawmills and brickyards provided building materials, and gristmills, distilleries and breweries processed agricultural products. The Monongahela River was an engine of power and transportation for the industries.

Boat-building was an important industry for the region beginning in the late 18th century. Monongahela River Valley boat builders produced flatboats, keel boats and other types of vessels used to transport goods and people to the West^v. Steamboat transportation accelerated this industry, as steamboats bound for the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers were built in Monongahela River communities. The peak of the industry was in the 1850s: in 1857, nearly half the steamboats afloat on the Mississippi River and its tributaries were built in boat building towns along the Monongahela River^{vi}. The steamboat trade declined by 1860, due to a national financial depression, the impending Civil War, and an overall decline in river traffic due to competition from railroads^{vii}.

Glass making and pottery in the Monongahela River Valley were fueled by the local abundance of sand and coal, as well as the available transportation systems on the river and railroad. Washington County's Atlas Glass Company, established in 1896, was the first in the world to use a glass-blowing machine, leading to the large-scale manufacturing of glass and glassware^{viii}. Glass factories were also built in Charleroi and Monongahela, attracting workers to the area and supporting local economies.

i: Skrabecq, Quentin R. *The World's Richest Neighborhood: How Pittsburgh's East Enders Forged American Industry*. (Algora Publishing: New York, 2010).

ii: America's Industrial Heritage Project. (1991). *Reconnaissance Survey - Brownsville/Monongahela Valley, Pennsylvania/West Virginia*. National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior.

iii: Washington County. (2005). *Washington County Comprehensive Plan*. Retrieved from https://www.co.washington.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/167/Washington_County_Comprehensive_Plan?bidId=

iv: Op. cit. America's Industrial Heritage Project. (1991).

v: Op. cit. America's Industrial Heritage Project. (1991).

vi: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (January 1993), "Longwell, David House." Prepared by Terry A. Necciai.

vii: Op. cit. America's Industrial Heritage Project. (1991).

viii: Op. cit. Washington County. (2005)

The Monongahela River Valley's development in the 19th and 20th centuries may be attributed to the extraction of coal and the industries that capitalized on the railroads to move coal. The Appalachia Coal Field covers 8,000 square miles of Southwestern Pennsylvania. By the early 20th century, coal production was the most significant industrial pursuit associated with Washington County as coal companies employed 16,000 men in that county aloneⁱ. The coal industry was a dangerous place to work. In 1908, the Marianna Mine disaster killed 152 men. In 1913, 97 men were killed in an explosion at a Monongahela River Consolidated Coal and Coke Company mineⁱⁱ. The United Mine Workers Union was established in 1890 to advocate for safer working conditions.

After the Civil War, southwestern Pennsylvania flourished as the center of the American iron and steel industry. Coal, in the form of coke, was a necessary raw material for steel making, and the region's access to both coal and iron ore gave it an unrivaled position in the industryⁱⁱⁱ. Steel mills were built in Donora and Monessen, employing thousands of residents. The steel mills and the supporting manufacturing jobs, served as major employment centers in the region. Seeking employment at the steel mills, workers from Great Britain, eastern and southern Europe, and the rural South migrated to the Monongahela River Valley with their families.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs when the steel plants closed and coal mines shuttered. In Westmoreland County, over 40 percent of manufacturing jobs were lost after 1980; and over 50 percent of coal-related jobs were lost in the same period^{iv}. The population of Washington County peaked in 1960 at approximately 217,000; the population of Westmoreland County peaked in 1980 at approximately 392,000^v. As of 2020, Washington County's total population was approximately 209,000, though it has been experiencing growth since 2000^{vi}. Meanwhile, Westmoreland County has seen continuous population decline, with a 2020 population of approximately 355,000.

The region's downtown businesses experienced extensive economic degradation due to massive population loss, as residents moved away in search of work or relocated out of the declining urban centers. Suburban industrial parks served as the new employment centers, and traditional agricultural areas were converted to new housing subdivisions. In the 21st century, economic revitalization initiatives have been developed to target historic downtowns, often considered the heart of a community.

i: Op. Cit. Washington County, 2005.

ii: Ibid.

iii: Op. cit. America's Industrial Heritage Project. (1991).

iv: Westmoreland County. (2005). Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/294/Comprehensive-Plan?bidId=>.

v: U.S. Census. 1980. Decennial Census Data.

vi: U.S. Census. 2020. Decennial Census Data.

Demographics and Employment

- Between 2010 and 2020, the population of the four communities that comprise the defined Monongahela River Valley Region decreased by 5.2 percent, compared with a 2.9 percent decrease in Westmoreland County and a 0.7 percent increase in Washington County overall. However, the defined Monongahela River Valley Region has seen a continued population decline, decreasing by 17.2 percent between 2000 and 2020ⁱ.
- Average household income is \$52,151 compared to \$85,387 in Washington County and \$78,999 in Westmoreland County but has increased over the last decade.
- The unemployment and family poverty rate (6.4 percent and 13.6 percent, respectively) are higher in the defined Monongahela River Valley Region than in Washington and Westmoreland Counties, but have decreased over the last decade.
- The major employment sector is Health Care and Social Assistance (23.1 percent), followed by Manufacturing (16.9 percent) and Retail Trade (9.1 percent).

i: U.S. Census. 2000. Decennial Census Data.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

Communities in the Monongahela River Valley are cut off from the river by train tracks and industrial land. Charleroi, Monessen and Monongahela do retain public waterfront access points, as described in the community summaries below.

Three of the four communities in the Monongahela River Valley region experience severe flooding or high-risk flood zones in the business district—the exception being Donora. Charleroi has flood risk (100-year floodplain) along McKean Avenue; Mon City has flood risk along West Main Street; and Monessen has flood risk along Donner/Eastgate Avenues. Below are the complaints recorded in the NOAA Storm Event Database in the past two decades for flooding related events in this region for the investigated communitiesⁱⁱ.

ii: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's, or NOAA, Storm Event Database. Data was observed from January 1, 2000, to December 31, 2021, for Washington and Westmoreland County and was filtered to only summarize the event information based off the municipalities in the presented county.

Washington County		Event and Event Count		
Community	Flash Flood	Flood	Heavy Rain	Event Total
Charleroi	3	1	-	4
Monongahela	2	1	-	3
Event Total	5	2	-	7
Westmoreland County		Event and Event Count		
Community	Flash Flood	Flood	Heavy Rain	Event Total
Monessen	2	2	3	7

Table 1-1
NOAA Compliant Summary
Monongahela River Valley Region 2000-2021



Monongahlea, PA

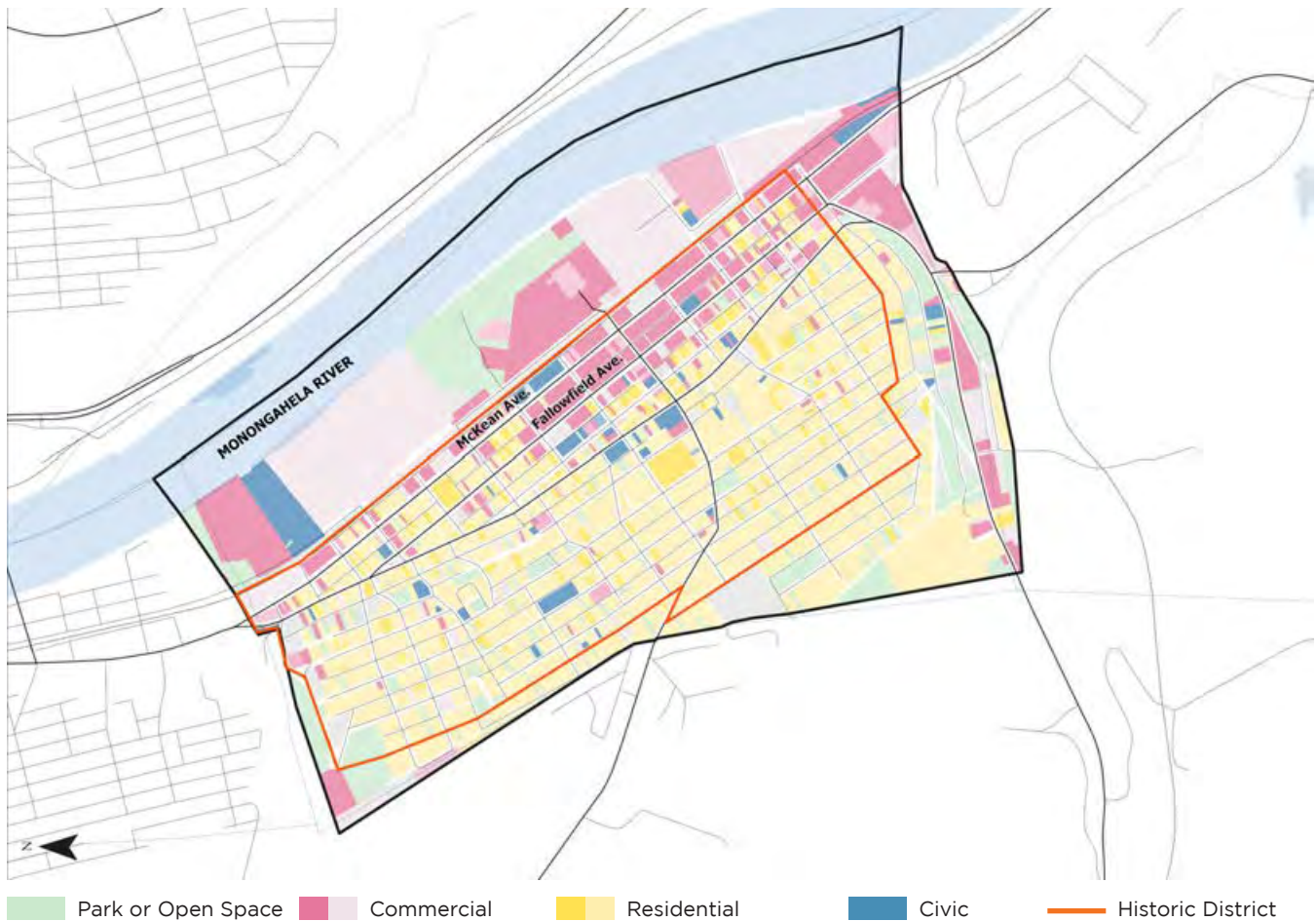
Flood zones are areas FEMA has defined by levels of flood risk. These zones are depicted on a community's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) or Flood Hazard Boundary Map. Each zone shows the potential severity of flooding in the area. High-risk areas (zones that start with the letter "A" or "V" on the FIRM), are defined as areas that will be inundated by a "100-year flood," a flood with a one percent chance of being equaled in any given year.

100-year flood zones are regulated by FEMA and adherence to National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) design standards is required when existing buildings are substantially improved, or new buildings are constructed. These high-risk areas are also known as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) and flood insurance is mandatory in these zones.

Moderate flood hazard areas, labeled Zone B or Zone X (shaded) are also shown on the FIRM, and are the areas between the limits of the base flood and the 0.2-percent-annual-chance (or 500-year) flood. The areas of minimal flood hazard, which are the areas outside the SFHA and higher than the elevation of the 0.2-percent-annual-chance flood, are labeled Zone C or Zone X (unshaded).

Charleroi

Monongahela River Valley: Washington County



Charleroi is a borough located on the west bank of the Monongahela River approximately 21 miles south of Pittsburgh. The municipality was incorporated in 1891 and was initially developed as an industrial town for glass manufacturing. Between 1890 and 1910, the population of Charleroi doubled to 11,516ⁱ. By the end of World War I, Charleroi was more diversified, with a strong wholesale and retail businesses located primarily along the two commercial corridors of McKean and Fallowfield Avenues between 3rd and 7th Streets. Typical of planned industrial towns, Charleroi's streets are laid in a regular grid pattern, with blocks of narrow residential lots to the west and industrial land located along the waterfront.

The National Register-listed Charleroi Historic District encompasses roughly 80 percent of the entire borough, including virtually the entire historic central business district, and includes almost 1,700 buildings. The Mid Mon Valley Transit Authority, which acts as the region's centralized transit service, has monthly board meetings in the Transit Center located in Charleroi.

ⁱ: National Register of Historic Places (2002). "First National Bank of Charleroi."

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

The riverfront includes industrial uses and a public park. The Magic City Riverfront Park is a pilot project of the state’s “Brownfields to Playfields,” a program that seeks to expand recreational and land conservation uses on potentially hazardous or otherwise damaged, vacant industrial or commercial properties, known as brownfields. Restoring and re-purposing brownfields is an important stewardship goal of Pennsylvania’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. PA Outdoor Recreation Plan Bound by Third Street, Hussey Street, and Second Street, the site features a Welcome Center on Second Street. The site once home to a glass factory and high school football field, is set to be transformed into the Magic City Riverfront Park complete with trails, playfields, fishing access, and a boat launch (Phase I is underway and substantially complete; the project has received over \$400,000 in funding)ⁱ.

A high-risk flood zone in Charleroi is mapped along the commercial corridor (McKean Avenue). Flooding occurs along the Monongahela River, notably encroaching inland from the river by about 1,706 feet, and along the southern border of Charleroi, along Maple Creek. There were four NOAA complaints in Charleroi over the past two decades (three flash flood events affecting Wesley Avenue and Maple Creek Road and one flood event).

i: <https://www.monvalleyalliance.org/community/community-projects/charleroi-renaissance-phase-1/>; https://files.dep.state.pa.us/EnvironmentalCleanupBrownfields/BrownfieldstoPlayfields/Brownfields_to_Playfields_Work_Group_Final_Report_Dec._15,_2021.pdf, last accessed April 7, 2022.

Demographics and Employment

- Charleroi has experienced increases in both population (2.8 percent) and average household income (6.4 percent) over the last decade.
- Though the poverty rate decreased by 37.1 percent between 2010 and 2019, the unemployment rate increased by 37.5 percent over the same time period.
- Charleroi draws in roughly 2,360 workers from neighboring communities for work, and approximately 16 percent of eligible workers living in Charleroi also work in the borough.
- The central business district is concentrated along the parallel McKean and Fallowfield Avenues, offering a concentrated area of commercial developmentⁱⁱ.

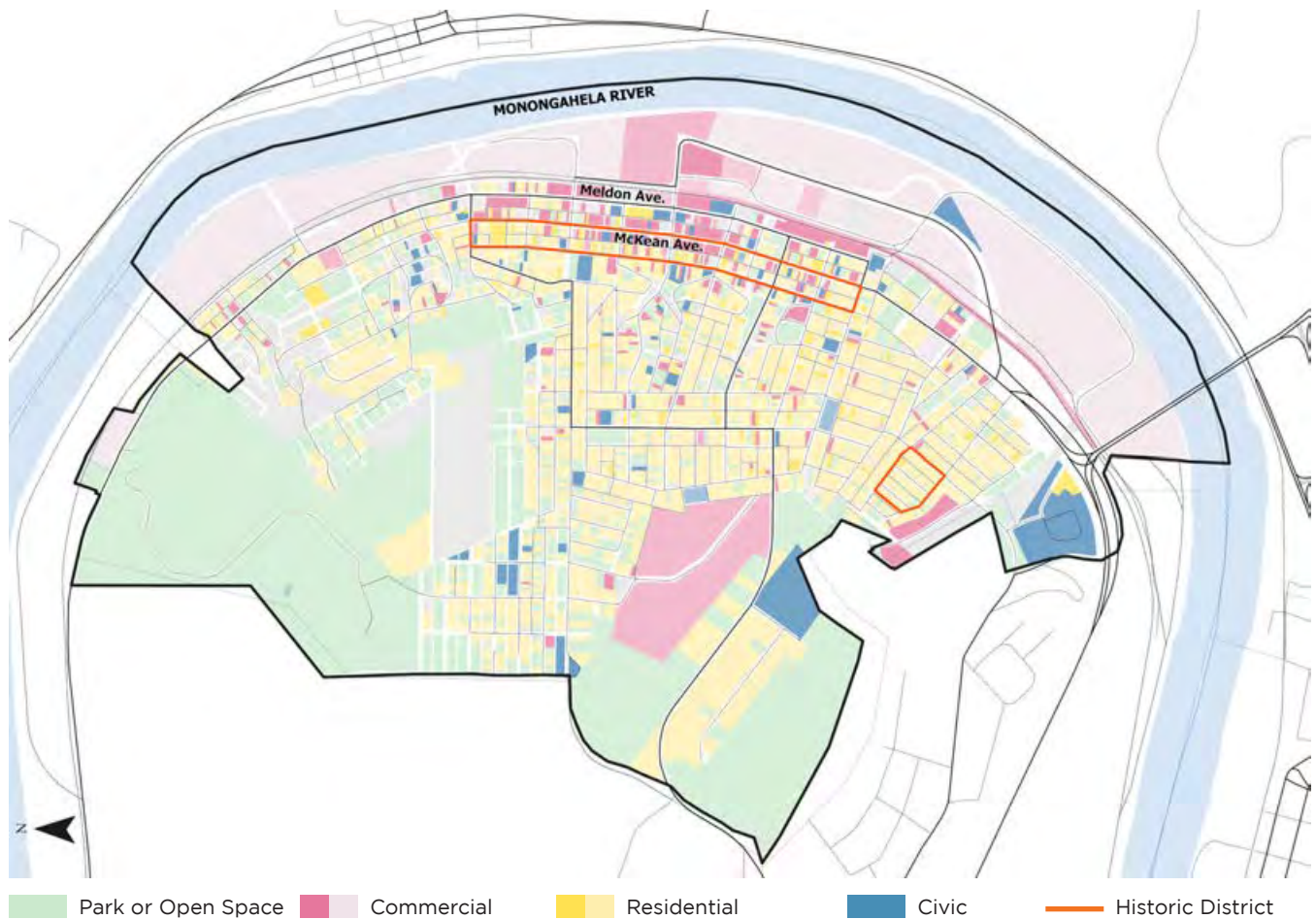
ii: Charleroi Borough. (2016). Historic Preservation Plan for the Borough of Charleroi. Retrieved from <https://www.charleroiборо.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/historic-preservation-plan.pdf>.

Name	Address	Status
Charleroi Historic District	Bounded by 1st Street, 13th Street, Oakland Avenue, and the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks	Listed
Charleroi United States Post Office	638 Fallowfield Avenue	Listed
First National Bank of Charleroi	210 5th Street	Listed
Hott-Greenburg Building	207-209 5th Street and 433-435 McKean Avenue	Eligible
Charleroi City Hall	4th & Fallowfield Avenue	Eligible
Christian Church	533 Fallowfield Avenue	Eligible
Quality Market	531 Fallowfield Avenue	Eligible

Table 1-2
Charleroi Selected Historic Resources

Donora

Monongahela River Valley: Washington County



Donora Borough is located on the west bank of the Monongahela River, approximately 20 miles south of Pittsburgh. Formerly a small mill site, in 1900 the Union Steel Company redeveloped it as Donora, an industrial town centered around the American Steel and Wire Company. Steel mills were located on the riverfront in Donora, and a zinc plant was built across the river in Webster, Westmoreland County. The American Steel and Wire Company constructed housing for workers, including the unique poured-concrete Cement City residences (NRHP 1996).

The 1948 Donora smog event was the worst air pollution disaster in U.S. history, eventually leading to the Clean Air Act, the first federal legislation regulating air pollution control. McKean Avenue, roughly between 4th and 9th Streets, is the commercial core of Donora and characterized by two-story commercial buildings with ground floor storefronts. Palmer Park is located at the northern end of the business corridor; the over 100-year-old park is an anchor in the community and provides space for community events, summer camps, sporting events, picnics, and dance and musical performances.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

The riverfront is now occupied by industrial uses. Donora currently lacks publicly accessible waterfront space. The flood zone in Donora does not quite reach the commercial corridor. Flood zone X 0.2 percent (500-year flood) occurs along the west side of Monongahela River; no other notable flooding occurs within the municipality.

Demographics and Employment

- Though the unemployment rate decreased by 40.9 percent between 2010 and 2019, the poverty rate increased by 11.0 percent over the same time period.
- Donora has a lower average household income (\$43,906) and higher rate of families living in poverty (20.3 percent) compared to the communities in the Monongahela River Valley region as a whole (\$52,151 and 13.6 percent, respectively).
- Roughly 29.0 percent of all jobs in Donora are within the manufacturing industry, which is only a slight decrease from 32.1 percent in 2010.
- Donora Industrial Park is a 400-acre industrial park along the Monongahela River with over 25 businesses and employing over 800 peopleⁱ.

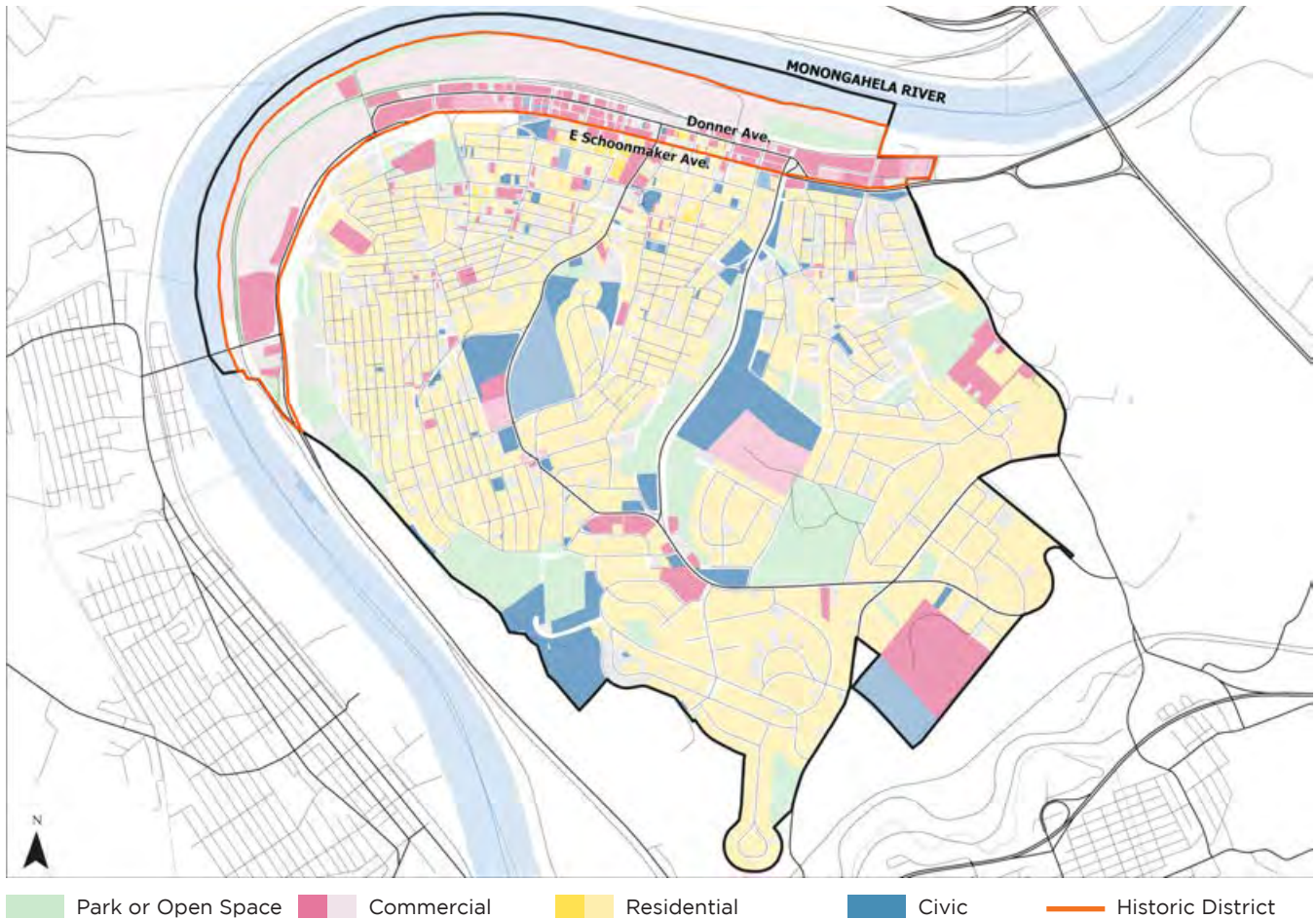
i: Donora Industrial Park. Mon Valley Alliance. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://www.monvalleyalliance.org/services/locations/donora-industrial-park/>.

Name	Address	Status
Cement City Historic District	Bounded by Dakota Alley, Beeler Alley, rear lot lines of the houses on the south side of Chestnut Street, and Modisette Avenue	Listed
Donora Historic District	Between 1st and 10th Streets, along Thompson Avenue, Linden Alley, and McKean Avenue	Eligible
Bank of Donora Building	501 McKean Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey

Table 1-3
Donora Selected Historic Resources

1 Monessen

Monongahela River Valley: Westmoreland County



The City of Monessen is located on the east bank of the Monongahela River approximately 21 miles south of Pittsburgh. Monessen was laid out as an industrial town, occupied by the Pittsburgh Steel Company, as well as factories for steel hoops, iron and brass castings, and tin plating. The Pittsburgh Steel Company dominated the waterfront, covering approximately 160 acres.

The commercial corridor in Monessen, running along Donner and Schoonmaker Avenues between Parente Boulevard and 8th Street, separates the inland residential blocks from the industrial waterfront. The commercial streets are characterized by two- and three-story masonry buildings and vacant lots. Many of the buildings are in a deteriorated state.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

The riverfront is dominated by industrial uses. The Herman Mihalich River Launch Park located on Monongahela Street provides public access to the river, although the park is at the eastern edge of the City and approximately a half-mile from the easternmost edge of Donner Avenue. Site amenities at the park include public bathrooms, fishing wharf, a picnic pavilion, and boat parking.

Monessen has some flood risk along Donner Avenue/Eastgate Avenue, the commercial corridor. Flood zones AE and X 0.2 percent occur along the east side of Monongahela River; no other flooding occurring within the municipality was noted. There were five storm event complaints in the last two decades—a mix of heavy rain (3), flash flood (Willow Drive), and flood.

Demographics and Employment

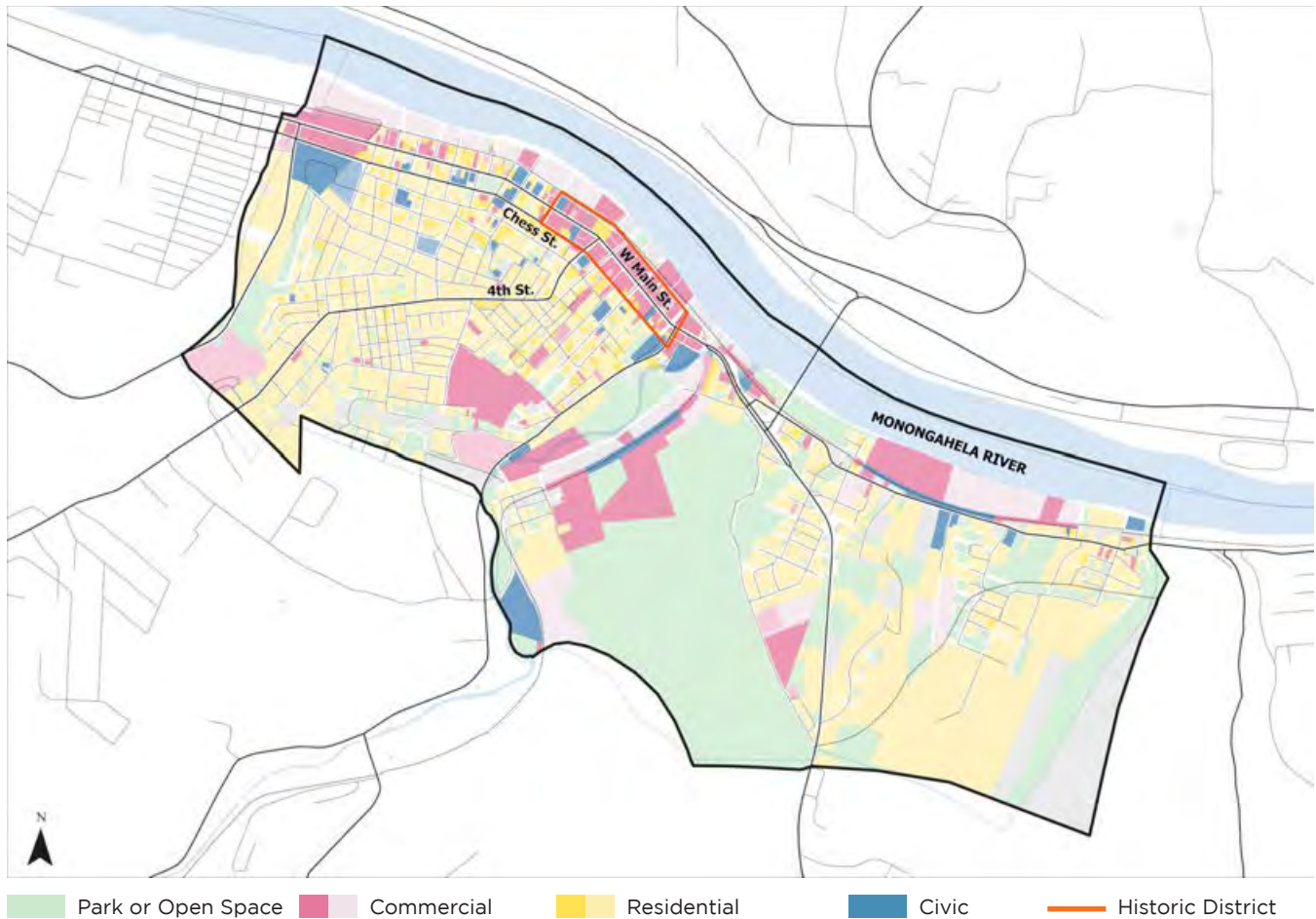
- Population decreased by roughly 900 residents (-10.9 percent) between 2010 and 2019, compared with a 5.2 percent decline for the communities in the Monongahela River Valley Region as a whole.
- The average household income in the City of Monessen (\$55,285) was slightly higher than that of Monongahela River Valley Region's (\$52,151) in 2019.
- Poverty and unemployment rates decreased by 2.7 percent and 30.5 percent, respectively, from 2010 to 2019.
- The major employment sector in Monessen is Transportation and Warehousing (20.5 percent), followed by Health Care and Social Assistance (18.1 percent), and then Manufacturing (16.6 percent).
- Monessen Riverfront Industrial Park is home to 11 companies and approximately 200 workers.
- 2,821 residents work outside of the city while 1,341 neighboring residents commute to Monessen for work.

Name	Address	Status
Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad Historic District	Located along Conrail line at the waterfront	Eligible
Monessen Borough Building	100 Third Street	Eligible
Monongahela River Navigation System: MNC/COE Old Locks and Dam No.4	Along waterfront, north of the Vance Descas Memorial Bridge	Eligible
Turne Hale German athletic club building	200 Donner Avenue	Recommended Eligible
Steel Workers Union Hall	803 Donner Avenue	Recommended Eligible
Monessen Public Library	326 Donner Ave	Recommended Eligible

Table 1-4
Monessen Selected Historic Resources

Monongahela

Monongahela River Valley: Washington County



The City of Monongahela (“Mon City”) is located 17 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, at the confluence of the Monongahela River and Pigeon Creek. The municipality originated as a ferry and ford crossing and grew with a variety of small industries and businesses that served migrants moving west. With industrialization, Monongahela became home to larger industries such as the Monongahela River Consolidated Coal and Coke Company, although the city maintained a diversity of businesses and industries. The city is considered to be a regional transportation hub, located near major interstate highways, with principal and minor arterial roadways connecting the region.

Monongahela City has a thriving Main Street and post-industrial waterfront, largely accessible to the public with four nearby river landings. Monongahela’s commercial district is along West Main Street, which forms a boundary between the residential blocks inland and the railroad corridor along the waterfront. This portion of West Main Street is characterized by a continuous street front of three-story brick buildings with ground floor retail.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

Monongahela is largely cut off from the riverfront by the railroad tracks; however, the Monongahela Aquatorium, a unique outdoor auditorium on the riverfront, provides direct access to the water one block from Main Street. Home to concerts, festivals and other events, the Aquatorium has seating for 3700 people, with overflow capacity in the spacious lawn.

Monongahela has high flood risk along West Main Street, the commercial corridor. The Flood zones AE and X 0.2 percent occur along the Monongahela River. Flooding is also present along Pigeon Creek and heavily encroaches along Route 481 and West Main Street. There were three storm event complaints over the last 20 years, including two flash flood events and a flood event, but outside of the commercial core.

Demographics and Employment

- The average household income in the City of Monongahela is approximately \$62,791, about \$10,000 more than in the Monongahela River Valley Region as a whole (\$52,151).
- The unemployment and family poverty rates (3.6 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively) are lower than in the Monongahela River Valley Region overallⁱ.
- Mon City has created a strong sense of community while capitalizing on its historic identity and robust antique marketⁱⁱ.

i: City of Monongahela. (2008). Chapter 8 Economic Development. In Monongahela City & New Eagle Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan (pp. 8-1-8-20). Retrieved from http://www.cityofmonongahela-pa.org/comp_plan_-_toc.

ii: Ibid.

Name	Address	Status
Acheson, Edward G., House	908 West Main Street	National Historic Landmark (NHL)
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of Monongahela	715 Chess Street	Listed
Longwell, David, House	711 West Main Street	Listed
Monongahela Cemetery	Cemetery Hill Road at Gregg Street	Listed
Monongahela Historic District	West Main Street, extending from 1st Street to 5th Street	Eligible
Yohe Building	400 W. Main Street	Eligible
1201 & 1203 Chess St	1100 Chess Street	Eligible
Markell Apartments	142-148 W. Main Street	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Monongahela City Trust Company	170-174 W. Main Street	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
First Methodist Church	430 W. Main Street	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Monongahela Aquatorium	200 Railroad Street	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Monongahela City High School	1200 Chess Street	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey

Table 1-5
Monongahela Selected Historic Resources

1.3 Beaver and Ohio River Valley

The Beaver and Ohio Rivers are integral to the region's identity and overall connectivity, with the Beaver River running north-south from Lawrence County to the Ohio River, which extends southwest to Pittsburgh through Beaver County. The Beaver and Ohio River Valley communities in this study comprise eight municipalities located within Beaver County. The communities along the rivers are a mix of older communities built on manufacturing and county government, and company towns built by major industries.

As with the Monongahela River Valley, Beaver County was once occupied by many different agricultural societies. The fertile soils along the riverfronts supported early Native settlements. Archaeological studies in Beaver County have revealed communities dating from the Archaic period, 10,000 to 4,300 years agoⁱ. The Algonquian-Speaking Delaware moved to area in the 18th century, when they were forced from their ancestral land in the east. The Delaware people called this new home Amwocki, or Beaver stream, named for the abundance of beavers living along the rivers. Other Native communities in the region at the time included the Algonquian-Speaking Shawnee, and the Iroquois peoples. The Algonquin and Iroquois nations vied to occupy the Ohio River, a major transportation route connecting communities

Early European settlers in Beaver County were fur trappers, who came in the 1600s in search of valuable beaver pelts. The trappers set up trading posts at key crossroads, such as Beaver Falls, and guarded them with forts. Early settlers of Beaver County also included the Scotch-Irish, Presbyterians escaping religious persecution in northern Ireland. In 1778, the Continental Army built Fort McIntosh in Beaver. Located at the confluence of the Ohio and Beaver Rivers, the fort was the headquarters of the largest army serving west of the Alleghenies. After the Revolutionary War, settlers flooded west across Pennsylvania. Some of these travelers settled in Beaver County and others continued westward. Beaver County was established in 1800, with the existing Beaver Borough as the County Seat. Small towns formed along waterways at natural rapids and falls that could be useful for powering mills.

i: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. "Beaver County." Pennsylvania Archaeology Blog. February 17, 2022.

The Harmony Society moved to Beaver County in the early 1800s, establishing a community and investing in the region's economic growth. A Christian communal group led by George Rapp, the Harmonists migrated from Germany in search of religious and economic freedom. The Harmonists laid out Old Economy Village in Ambridge in 1824. The Harmonists also invested in the region, including establishing a cutlery business in Beaver Falls and financing the construction of canals and railroads. Boat builders in Beaver County constructed flat-boats, cotton boats, keel and steamboats. Despite these activities, growth in the region remained slow until the advent of the railroad in the 1850s.

The Beaver County region was known for its natural resources, including limestone, fire clay, sandstone, and coal. Beaver County's bituminous coal was recognized for its light weight and clean bright flameⁱⁱ. With the railroad offering connections to Pittsburgh and crossing the river valleys, Beaver County industry could thrive.

Beaver County's steel production fueled the urban and economic development of America. Steel provided the material for taller buildings, thousands of miles of railroad, and the modern American navyⁱⁱⁱ. During and after the Second World War, steel and associated industries fueled Beaver County's prosperity. The local steel mills and its associated industries served as the major employers in Beaver County. The factories were powered with coal and natural gas, often extracted from the region. By the 1920s, Beaver County was the third-most industrialized county in the state after Philadelphia and Allegheny counties^{iv}.

With the shift of steel production overseas, the steel mills diminished operations in the 1980s. Beaver County saw a steady decline in population in the following decades, dropping from 204,441 in 1980 to 168,215 in 2020^v. With the regional population shift came a change in dominant employment sectors. In 2002, manufacturing was the largest sector of employment in Beaver County, comprising 15.7 percent of all jobs in the county^{vi}. In 2019, the most common industry sector was Health Care

ii: Beaver County website.

iii: National Park Service, 1994

iv: University of Pittsburgh, 1926

v: U.S. Census 2020

vi: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD

and Social Assistance, at 19.1 percentⁱ. Of the top 10 major employers in Beaver County in 2021, only one was a manufacturing companyⁱⁱ. Though iron and steel mills have largely left the region, the Beaver and Ohio River Valley Region maintains a strong manufacturing sector while diversifying the economy with employment in other fields such as Health Care and Social Assistance, Education, Retail Trade, and Public Administration.

Demographics and Employment

- In the defined Beaver and Ohio River Valley Region, the population declined by approximately 2.4 percent from 2010 to 2019, compared to a 1.4 decrease in Beaver County overall.
- The average household income (\$50,011) in the Region is lower than Beaver County’s average (\$72,337), and has decreased 3.2 percent since 2010.
- Similar to Beaver County, the unemployment rate decreased from 2010 to 2019 (from 9.6 percent to 7.6 percent); however, the rate is higher than in the County overall (4.9 percent).
- The family poverty rate slightly increased from 15.2 percent in 2010 to 16.4 percent in 2019, compared with 7.5 percent in the County overall.

i: (U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD)
 ii: (Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry)

- The major employment sector is Health Care and Social Assistance (18.3 percent), followed by Manufacturing (13.3 percent), and then Educational Services (12.7 percent).

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

Communities in the Beaver and Ohio River Valley region are typically cut off from the river by the presence of railroad corridors and large industrial parcels. Some communities, as detailed below, do not have public amenities on the riverfront.

Some communities in the Beaver and Ohio River Valley Region experience flooding along the the major riverfronts as well as their smaller tributaries. However, the flood zone generally does not encroach on the business districts in each community. Of the eight communities in this region, Aliquippa stands out as having the highest number of flood event complaints in the last two decades, and also a high-risk flood zone that runs along commercial areas of Kennedy Boulevard. Below are the event complaints recorded in the NOAA Storm Event Database in the past two decades for flooding related events in this region for the investigated communitiesⁱⁱⁱ.

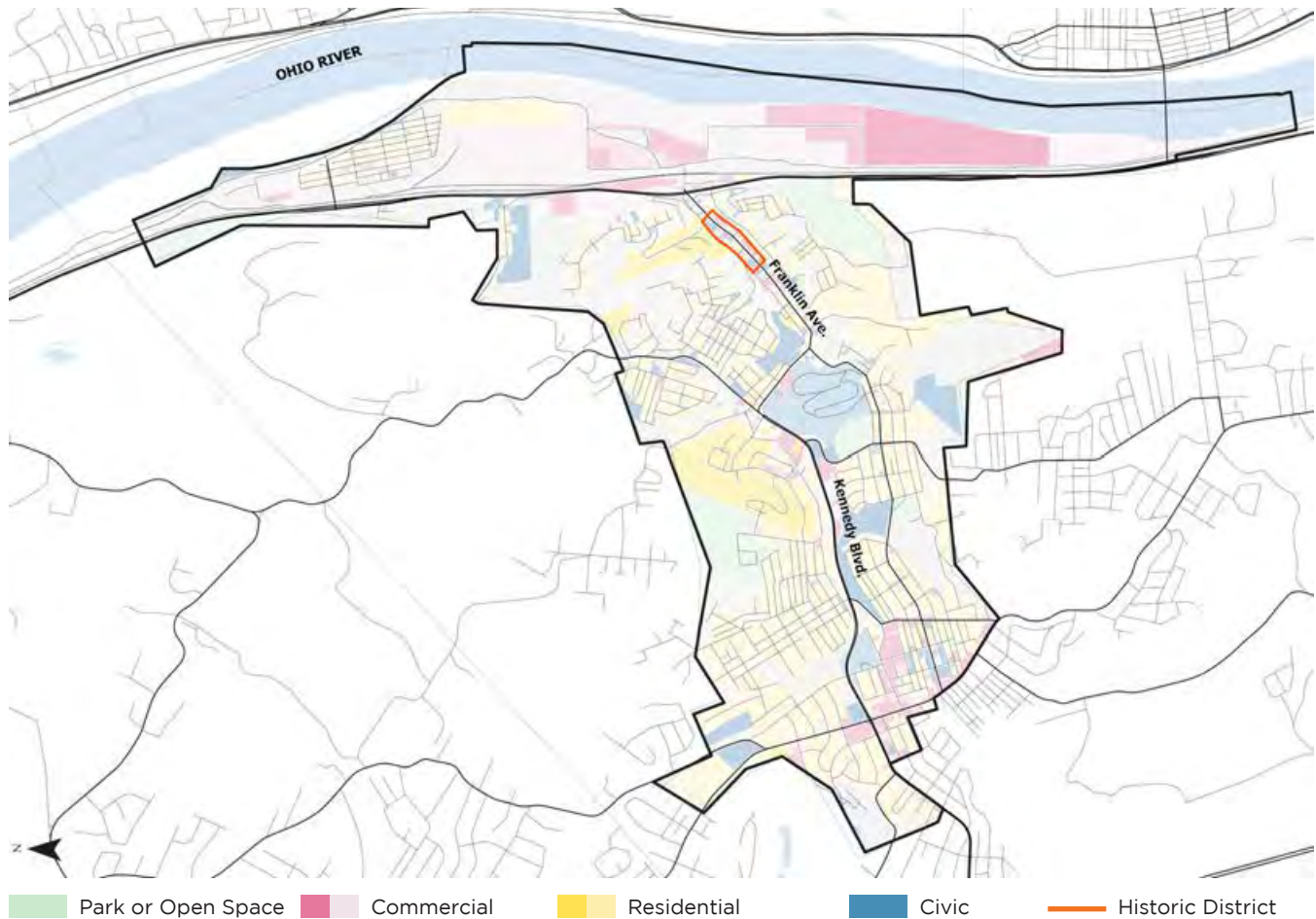
iii: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s, or NOAA, Storm Event Database. Data was observed from January 1, 2000, to December 31, 2021, for Beaver County and was filtered to only summarize the event information based off the municipalities in the presented county.

Beaver County		Event and Event Count		
Community	Flash Flood	Flood	Heavy Rain	Event Total
Aliquippa	14	4	1	19
Ambridge	5	1	-	6
Beaver	1	2	-	3
Beaver Falls	2	2	-	4
Midland	-	-	-	-
Monaca	3		-	3
New Brighton	-	1	-	1
Rochester	1	2	-	3
Event Total	26	12	1	39

Table 1-6
 NOAA Compliant Summary
 Beaver and Ohio River Valley Region 2000-2021

Aliquippa

Ohio River Valley: Beaver County



The City of Aliquippa is located on the west bank of the Ohio River in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. In the late 19th century, Aliquippa's main attraction and source of growth was Aliquippa Park, an early amusement park started by the Pennsylvania & Lake Erie Railroad (P&LE) as a means to boost ridership. In 1905 the city was redeveloped as a company town for the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company. The Steel Company laid out housing developments according to predetermined plans; these separate neighborhoods define the city today.

The City of Aliquippa's business district is along Franklin Avenue, a lower density commercial corridor which extends across the city. The business district is anchored by the former company department store at 434 Franklin Avenue, a five-story masonry building that has been repurposed as apartments.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

The waterfront is primarily occupied by industrial uses. Aliquippa has no direct public access to the Ohio River. The closest is Hopewell Community Park, a 78-acre park that has a spring-fed lake as part of its many amenities. The park is located at 2500 Laird Drive, several miles south of the commercial corridor.

Flood zones in Aliquippa do not encroach on Franklin Avenue, the main commercial corridor. Aliquippa has flood zones AE and X 0.2 percent occurring along Logtown Run following Kennedy Blvd. and 21st Street. Additional 500-year flood zones occur in the southernmost area of the community between Woodlawn Road and Beaver River. Aliquippa had eight storm event complaints from 2000 through 2021, including six flash floods (with two affecting Route 51 along the Ohio River).

Demographics and Employment

- Average household income declined from \$48,861 in 2010 to \$39,119 in 2019.
- Both poverty and unemployment rates have increased over the last decade, with 245 new families having an income below the poverty level between 2010 to 2019.
- A third of all workers in Aliquippa are in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry, with several urgent care and wellness related centers located within the city.
- Following Health Care and Social Assistance, Aliquippa’s next most popular industry of employment is Manufacturing (16.3 percent), then Retail Trade (8.1 percent).
- Nearly 90 percent of working residents (3,656) work outside of the city while 1,712 neighboring residents commute to Aliquippa for work.
- The city has a central business district located along Brodhead Road, a heavily traveled automobile thoroughfare¹.

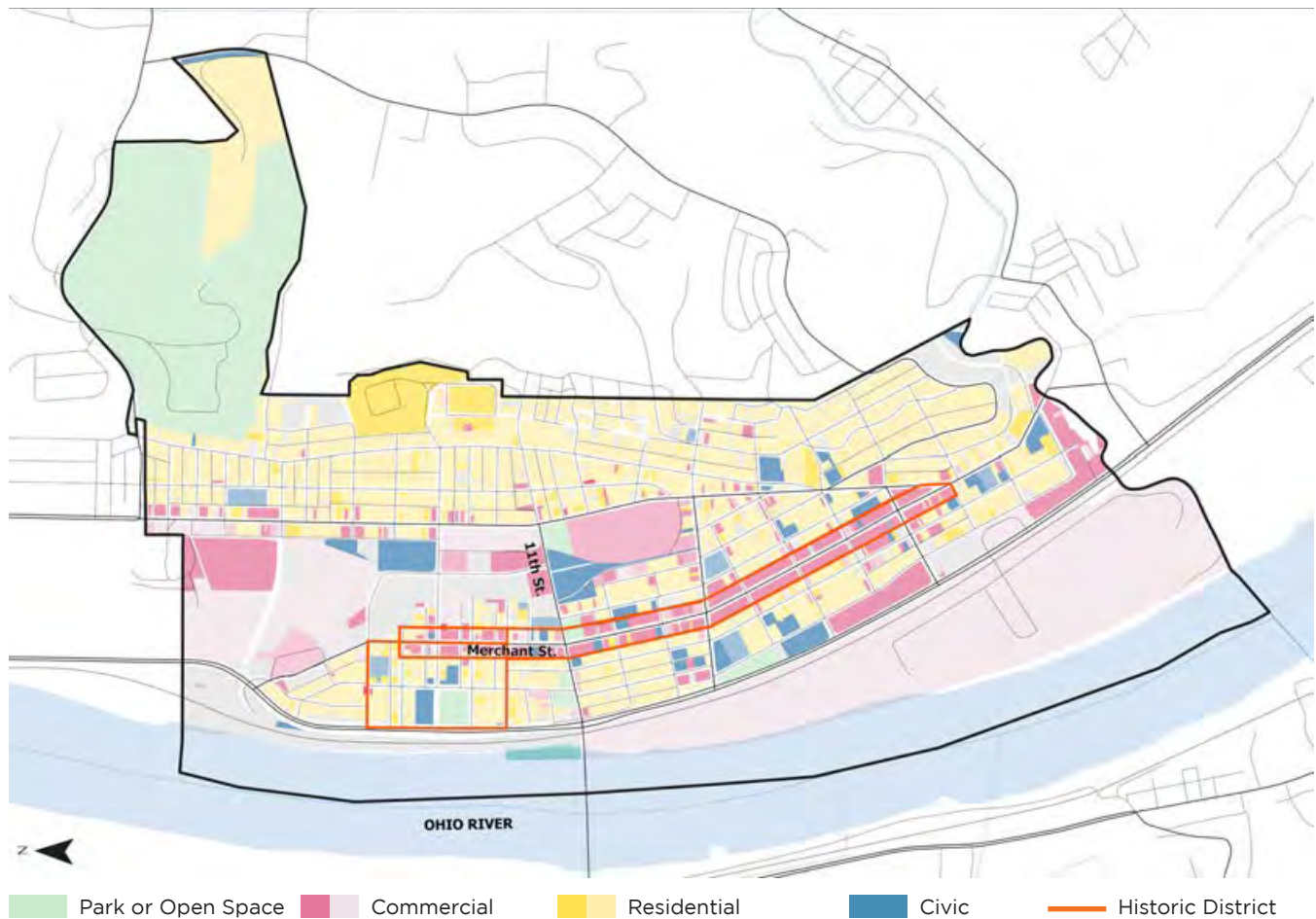
¹ City of Aliquippa. (1997). City of Aliquippa Comprehensive Plan. Retrieved from elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/Beaver_County/210:%20Aliquippa%20City/4200700820mcp.pdf.

Name	Address	Status
B.F. Jones Memorial Library	663 Franklin Avenue	Listed
Pennsylvania and Lake Erie Passenger Station: Aliquippa	111 Station Street	Listed
United Steelworkers Local #1211 Union Hall	501 Franklin Avenue	Listed
Aliquippa Commercial Historic District	272 Franklin Avenue to 538 Franklin Avenue	Eligible
State Theatre	540 Franklin Street	Eligible

Table 1-7
Aliquippa Selected Historic Resources

Ambridge

Ohio River Valley: Beaver County



The Borough of Ambridge is located on the east bank of the Ohio River in Beaver County, approximately 16 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. Early settlement in the area was by the Harmony Society—an early 19th century religious communal group, who built the town of Economy. Old Economy Village (OEV) is a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania state historic site, with 16 historic structures, 16,000 artifacts, and a 1 acre floral and herb garden.. The site is visited by tourists, school children, wedding events, and other events, and other tourists; prior to the pandemic, the site recorded 16,000 visitors a year, and visitor numbers were increasing annuallyⁱ.

In the early 1900s, Ambridge grew as a company town built for workers at the American Bridge Company steel mills. In addition, ancillary steel industry manufacturers and lumber and food processing plants operated on the waterfront. Merchant Street forms Ambridge's commercial core. The locally designated Ambridge Historic District encompasses a portion of Ambridge that includes the old Economy settlement as well as a segment of Merchant Street outside the boundaries of the National Register-listed Ambridge Commercial Historic District.

ⁱ: Information pertaining to Old Economy Village is according to an interview with the Site Administrator, Old Economy Village, March 2022.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

The riverfront in Ambridge is primarily reserved for industrial use and to the north, a sewage processing center. No public access points to the riverfront were identified in Ambridge.

In Ambridge, flood zones AE and X 0.2 percent present all throughout Port Ambridge Industrial Park and along Big Sewickley Creek. There were six storm event complaints in the last two decades, including five flash floods and one flood.

Demographics and Employment

- Poverty and unemployment rates have roughly halved from 2010 to 2019, and are lower than in the Beaver/Ohio River Valley Region as a whole.
- Ambridge maintains a strong industrial manufacturing base, employing 24 percent of workers in the borough, and 30 percent of the manufacturing base in the Region in 2019.
- Though 2,919 residents work outside of the borough, 2,245 neighboring residents commute to Ambridge for work.
- Home to major industrial parks, including the Ambridge Regional Distribution and Manufacturing Center (ARC) with over 1 million square feet of commercial and industrial space on 85 acres of land, and the Port Ambridge Industrial Park, a 100-acre site along the Ohio Riverⁱ.

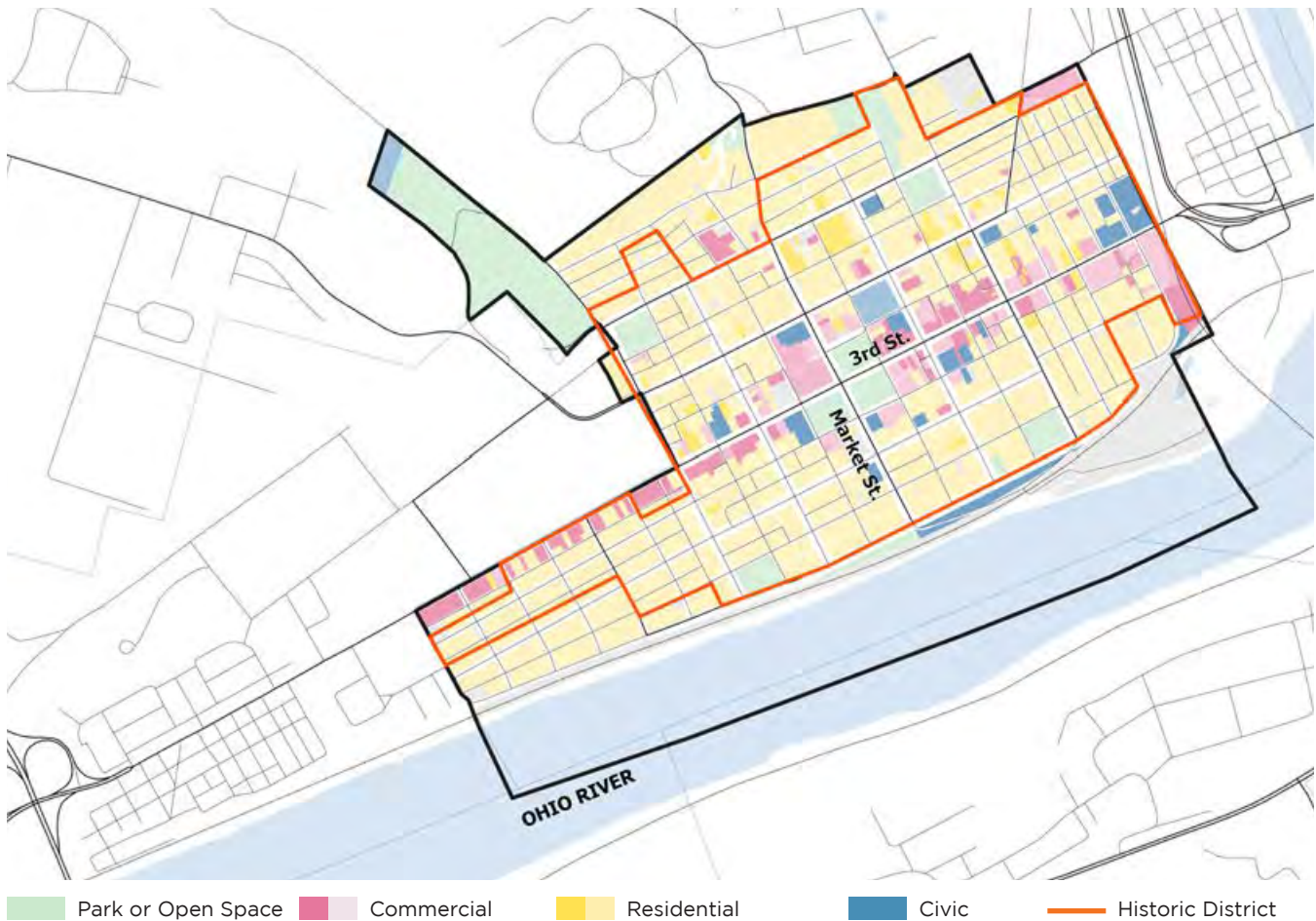
ⁱ: Largest Beaver County Industrial Park: Ambridge Regional. Ambridge Regional | Distribution & Manufacturing Center. (2020, July 16). Retrieved February 18, 2022, from <https://ambridgeregional.com/about-us/>; SHALE Steering Committee. (2004). SHALE Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. Retrieved from https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwj_hv7izcZnAhVcmHIEHS7vCNcQFjAAegQIARAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Ffelibrary.pacounties.org%2FDocuments%2FBeaver_County%2F226%3B%2520Economy%2520Borough%2F4200722264mmcp.pdf&usg=AOvVawOD_GJBqSKmhH_7pViyNANG

Name	Address	Status
Old Economy National Historic Landmark	270 Sixteenth Street	National Historic Landmark
Economy Historic District	Various	Listed
Ambridge Commercial Historic District	Merchant Street between 3rd and 8th Streets	Listed
Ambridge Historic District	Merchant Street between 3rd Street and 12th Streets	Local Historic District

Table 1-8
Ambridge Selected Historic Resources

Beaver

Ohio River Valley: Beaver County



The Borough of Beaver is located at the confluence of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers in Beaver County, approximately 30 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. Beaver is the county seat and the oldest community in Beaver County, and includes the site of the 18th century Fort McIntosh. The Borough was never dominated by industrial sites.

The borough's commercial corridor extends along Third Street through the center of town. The Ohio River waterfront is dominated by an active railroad corridor; the Beaver River waterfront includes a marina. Almost the entire community of Beaver is included in the Beaver Historic District, a locally designated historic district and a coterminous National Register Historic District.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

Public riverfront access in Beaver is provided by the adjacent community of Bridgewater. The Bridgewater Crossing is an acre of park space along the Ohio River, offering a public dock without launching facilities and parking. The park is easily accessible from the commercial corridor of Third Street.

Beaver Borough has flood zones A, AE, and X 0.2 percent occurring mainly along Two Mile Run and Gypsy Glen Park. There is also flooding present along the west side of Beaver River, however nothing notable in other areas of the municipal boundary. There were three storm event complaints over approximately the last 20 years. These included one flash flood along Shenango Road, and two floods that caused widespread road closures.

Demographics and Employment

- Beaver Borough is a more affluent community in the Beaver and Ohio River Valley Region, with an average household income of \$78,575 in 2019, compared to \$50,011 for the Region as a whole.
- The number of families living below the poverty line nearly quadrupled in 2019 from 2010, from 26 families to 98.
- More workers commute to Beaver Borough (2,700) than residents who commute to neighboring communities for work (2,257).
- A third of jobs in Beaver Borough are within the Public Administration sector, likely employed by the Beaver County Courthouse and other government entities located within the borough.
- There is a thriving central business district along Third Street with an overlapping historic district and centrally located 6-acre town squareⁱ.

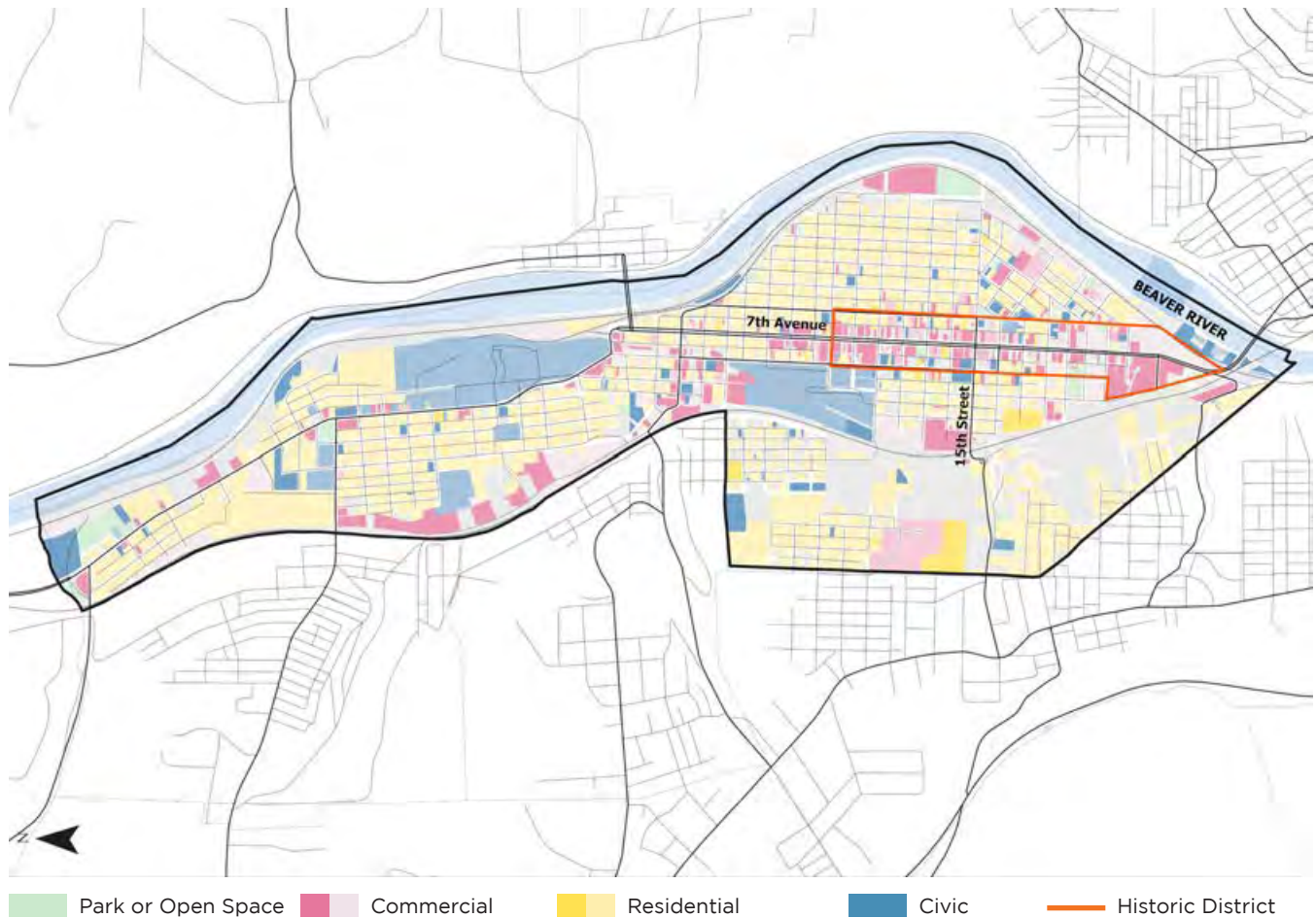
i: Beaver Borough. (2001). Beaver Borough Comprehensive Plan. Retrieved from elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/Beaver_County/213;%20Beaver%20Borough/4200704688mzo.pdf.

Name	Address	Status
Matthew S. Quay House	205 College Avenue	National Historic Landmark
Fort McIntosh Site	1 River Road	Listed
Beaver Historic District	Various	Listed
Beaver Historic District	Various	Local Historic District
Buchanan Building	671 3rd St.	Eligible

Table 1-9
Beaver Selected Historic Resources

1 Beaver Falls

Beaver River Valley: Beaver County



The City of Beaver Falls is located on the west bank of the Beaver River in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. Since the 18th century, Beaver Falls has been a manufacturing center. A variety of local mills and factories, many owned by the Harmony Society, thrived in Beaver Falls. Geneva College moved to Beaver Falls in 1880. The commercial core of Beaver Falls is located along the north-south 7th Avenue corridor, between 4th and 20th Streets.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

The riverfront is occupied by the railroad, some industrial uses, residential neighborhoods, and a public park. Beaver Falls has no publicly accessible riverfront access. The river edge is comprised of primarily commercial and residential properties. Two access points in New Brighton, Big Rock Park and New Brighton Fishing Park, are south of Beaver Falls and across the Beaver River.

In Beaver Falls, several areas show high risk flood zones (AE, AO), and X 0.2 percent—the 100-year and 500-year floods, respectively. These areas exist along the west side of Beaver River, northern and southern areas around Beaver Falls High School, and following Walnut Bottom Run to the west and south. This community has notable variation and amount of flooding occurring in the area around the high school. There were two storm event complaints in the last two decades, including one flash flood that flooded basements and roads, and one flood that caused a mudslide on Constitution Boulevard.

Demographics and Employment

- The population in the City of Beaver Falls remained steady between 2010 and 2019 at 9,005 residents though the population has decreased from 9,920 in 2000ⁱ.

- The average household income of \$45,801 in 2019 is slightly lower than that of the Beaver and Ohio River Valley Region (\$50,011).
- Average household income increased over the last decade, while the unemployment and poverty rates declined by 26.7 percent and 10.9 percent, respectively.
- Approximately 500 residents work within Beaver Falls, while 3,178 residents are employed in neighboring communities.
- Beaver Falls is home to Geneva College, a small, Christian liberal arts college, that serves as a major employer within the City (approximately 580 employees)ⁱⁱ.
- PA Route 18 doubles as a downtown commercial area with a mix of locally owned and national chain franchisesⁱⁱⁱ.

ii: <https://www.zippia.com/geneva-college-careers-583995/>

iii: City of Beaver Falls. (2013). City of Beaver Falls Comprehensive Plan. Retrieved from https://704f28c5-8ddf-4820-8fa0-e46e4f37016a.filesusr.com/ugd/a82540_a15116ef1a6445c59e4b1862b4124443.pdf.

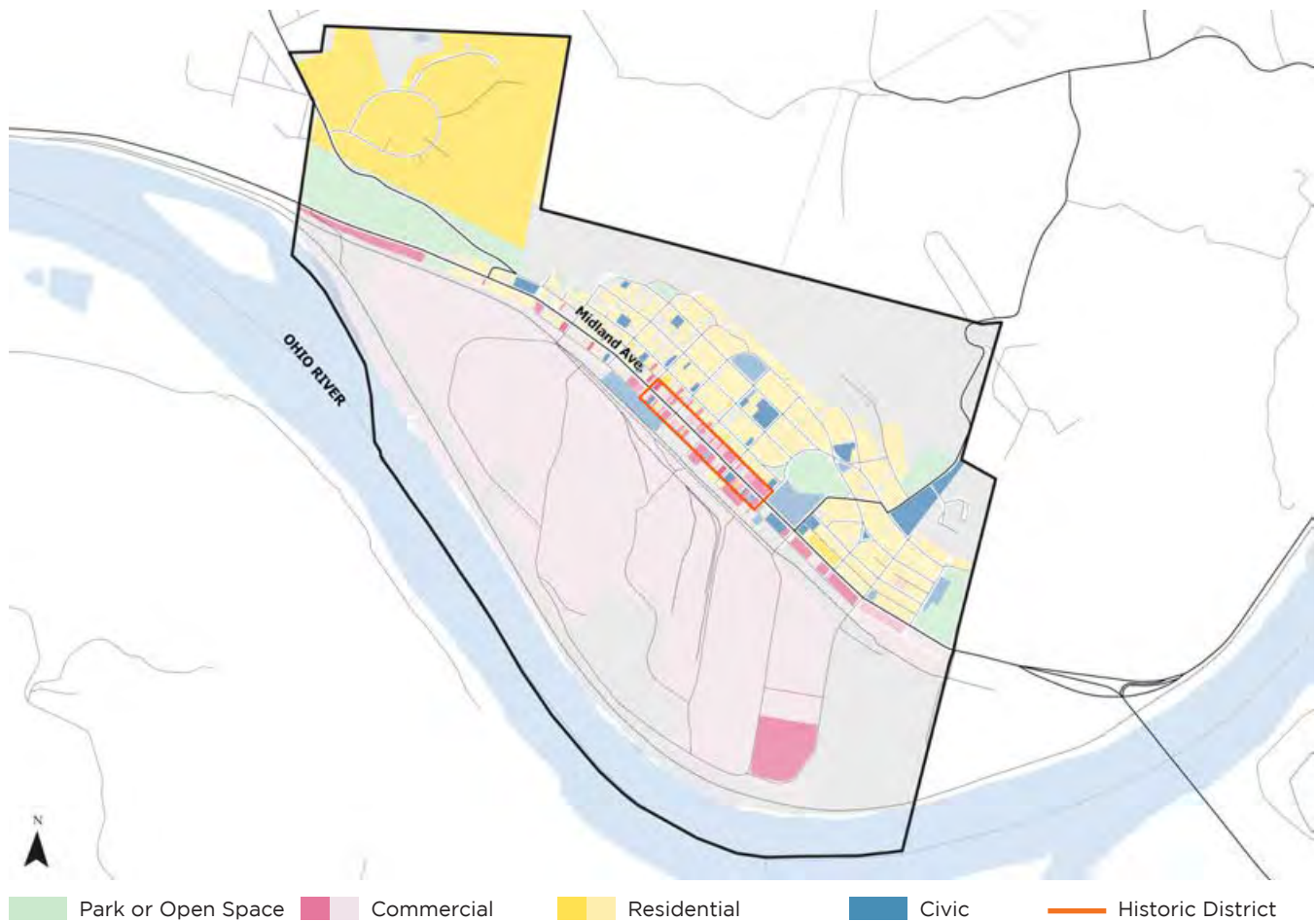
i: U.S. Census. 2000. Decennial Census Data.

Name	Address	Status
Beaver Falls Carnegie Free Library	1301 7th Avenue	Listed
7th Ave Hotel	507-509 7th Avenue	Eligible
Hotel	501 7th Avenue	Eligible
Beaver Falls Historic District	Seventh Avenue between 8th and 19th Streets	Recommended Eligible
Union Drawn Steel Company	220 7th Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
News Tribune Building	13th Street/Main Alley	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
The Farmer’s National Bank	1101 7th Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Brodhead Hotel	1205 7th Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Masonic Temple	717 12th Street/1124 8th Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Liberty Bell Savings and Loan Association	716 14th Street	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
First National Bank	401 7th Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Geneva College	College Hill, Route 18	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020

Table 1-10
Beaver Falls Selected Historic Resources

Midland

Ohio River Valley: Beaver County



The Borough of Midland is located on the north bank of the Ohio River in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. Midland developed as a company town when Midland Steel Company set up operations in 1905. By 1950, the massive steel operations employed 7,500 people. Midland Avenue is the borough's commercial corridor, characterized by two- to three-story brick buildings on larger lots. There is a commercial district concentrated along Midland Avenue with various municipal and retail facilities.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

Industrial uses dominate the waterfront. Midland lacks public riverfront access. However, Midland is home to two islands offshore in the Ohio River. These islands, Georgetown to the north and Phillis to the south, are part of the Ohio River Island National Wildlife Refuge. The islands are habitat for wildlife and are accessible via boat, with the closest boat ramp available in Ohioville, more than 2 miles away. No notable flooding occurs in this community.

Demographics and Employment

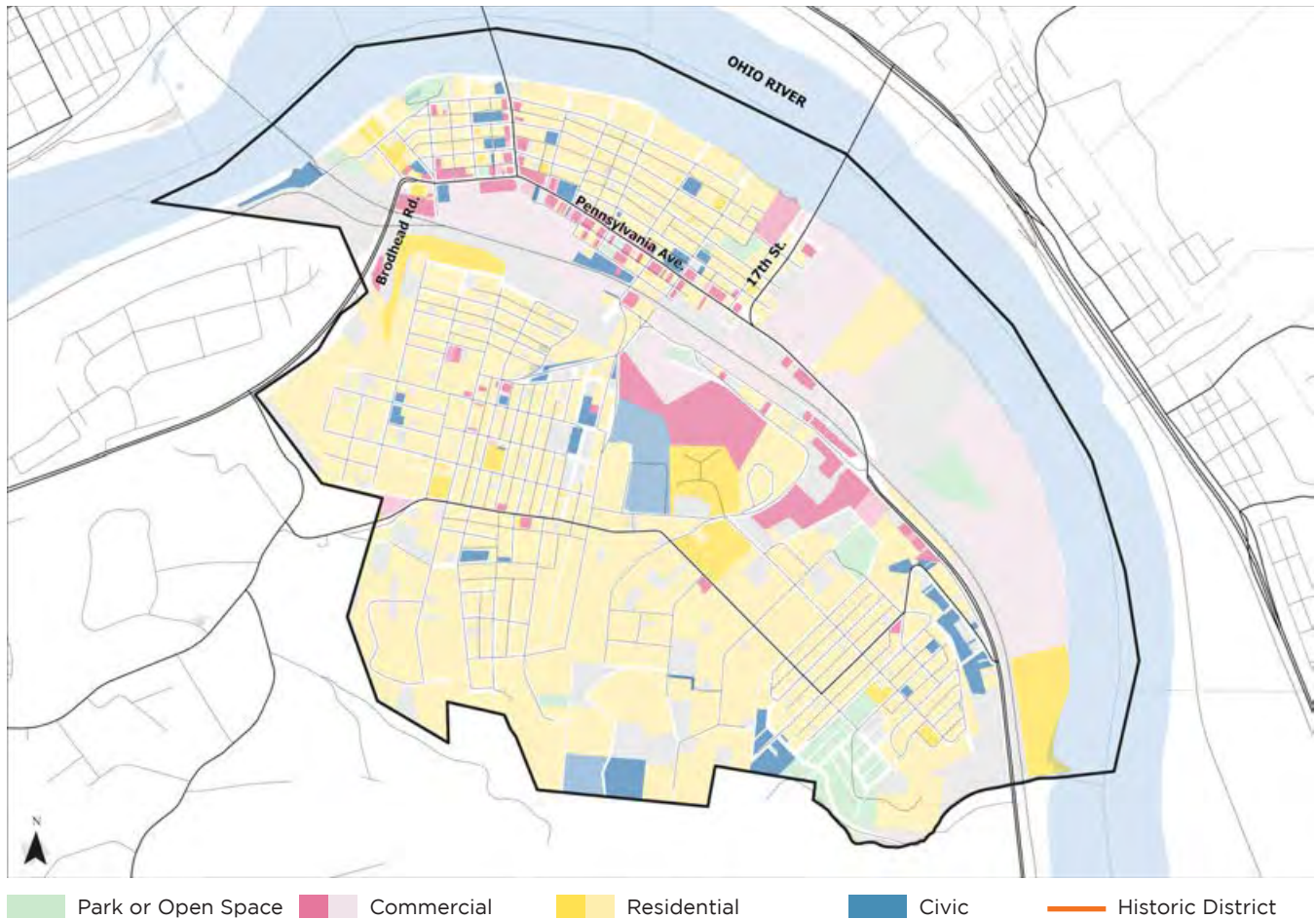
- Similar to the region, Midland has seen a total population decline, dropping from 2,635 in 2010 to 2,433 in 2020.
- The number of unemployed civilians in Midland has increased by 61.7 percent between 2010 to 2019 (with unemployment decreasing in the Region overall by 21.1 percent over the same period).
- Over half of all jobs in Midland borough are within the Educational Services sector (53.1 percent)—home of the Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School headquarters, one of the largest online public schools in the nation.
- Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center serves as a cultural anchor for the community and is responsible for the 9.8 percent of jobs in the township within the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector.
- Approximately 1,061 residents work outside of the borough while 1,140 neighboring residents commute to Midland for work.

Name	Address	Status
Midland High School	901 Midland Ave.	Eligible
Central Business District	Four blocks from 9th to 5th Streets on Midland Avenue	Recommended Eligible
Former Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad Station	520 Railroad Ave	Recommended Eligible
Midland Carnegie Free Library	Carnegie Drive and 9th Street	Recommended Eligible
Midland Post Office	Midland Ave and 8th Street	Recommended Eligible

Table 1-11
Midland Selected Historic Resources

Monaca

Ohio River Valley: Beaver County



The Borough of Monaca is located on the southwest bank of the Ohio River in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. The borough grew as a manufacturing center, first as the site of a shipyard and then with the development of factories producing glass and steel finishing products. Pennsylvania Avenue is the borough's main thoroughfare and commercial core. The street is characterized by small two-story commercial buildings. Uses along the riverfront include a public park, football field, and the rear yards of many residences.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

In Monaca, there are two access points for the public to access the riverfront, depending on what type of recreational activity is sought. Monaca Riverfront Park, the former Pumphouse playground, is located at 600 Atlantic Avenue. The park is approximately 1/5 mile from Pennsylvania Avenue, separated by residential streets. This park includes the old Pump House Building, playgrounds, an amphitheater, and a walking trail. The second option for public access is the Boat Launch Park, further along Atlantic Ave. The park provides public fishing and boating access, as well as on-site parking and covered picnic tables. No notable flooding occurs in Monaca's downtown, although three flash flood events have been recorded since 2002.

Demographics and Employment

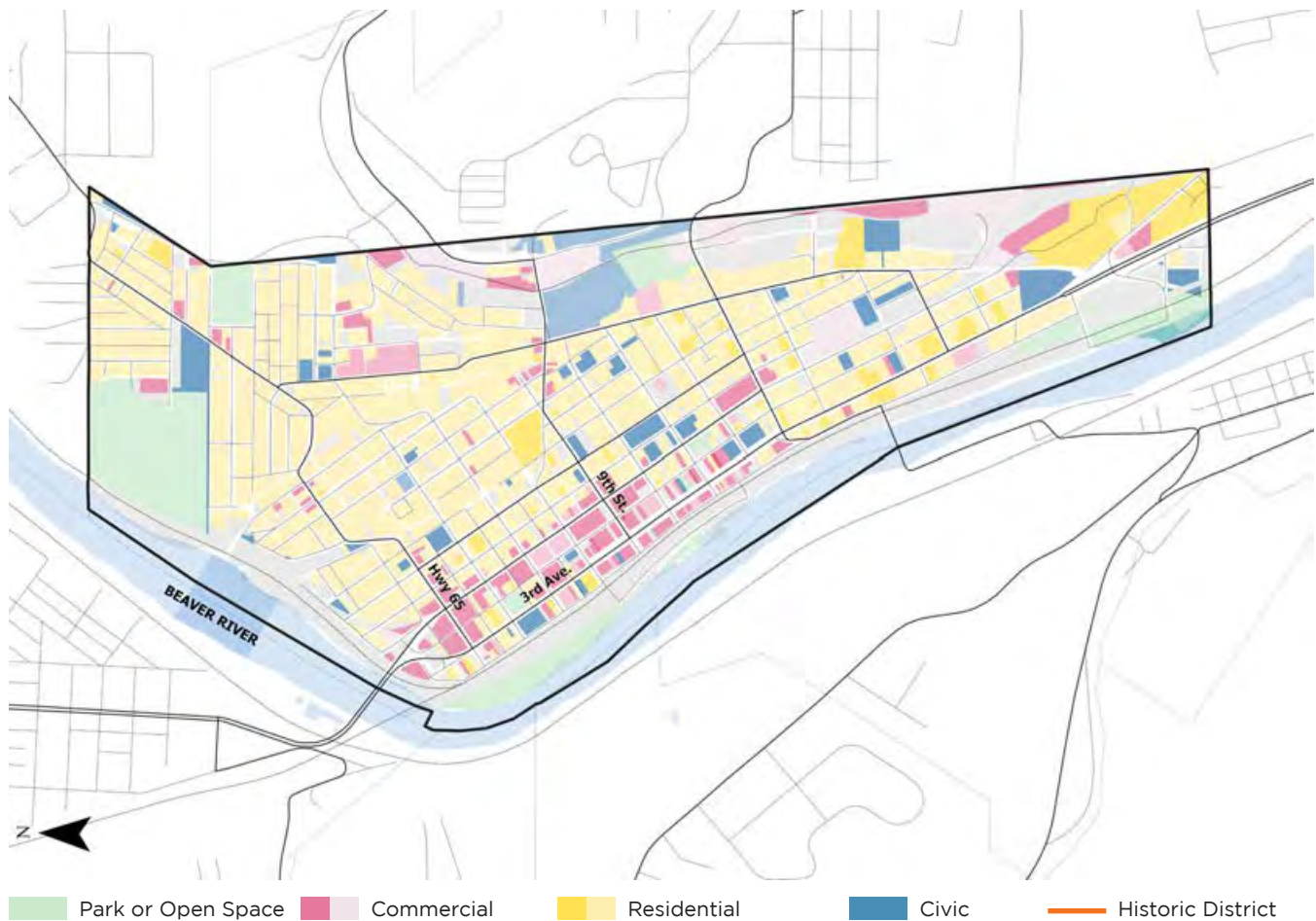
- Both the unemployment and poverty rates have improved between 2019 and 2010.
- Monaca largely employs workers in Manufacturing, with 44.3 percent of all jobs in the borough in the Manufacturing industry.
- There is a Riverfront Business Park District zoned along the Ohio riverfront south of 17th Street.
- Approximately 2,671 residents work outside of the borough compared to the 178 who live and work within Monaca.

Name	Address	Status
1030 Pennsylvania Avenue	1030 Pennsylvania Avenue	Recommended Eligible in a former historic district survey
Monaca United Methodist Church	813 Indiana Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Pump House	600 Atlantic Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Former Hotel Monaca	300 9th Street	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
P&LE Railroad Station	416 6th Street	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Monaca American Legion Post 580	600 Pennsylvania Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Former Monaca High School	989 Indiana Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020

Table 1-12
Monaca Selected Historic Resources

New Brighton

Beaver River Valley: Beaver County



The Borough of New Brighton is located on the east bank of the Beaver River in Beaver County, approximately 28 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. New Brighton was a 19th century manufacturing center, with gristmills, brickworks, pottery works, and lumber mills. The borough continued to serve a variety of manufacturers throughout the 20th century. Third Avenue is the commercial corridor in New Brighton.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

The riverfront in New Brighton is occupied by an active railroad corridor as well as a public waterfront park. Big Rock Park and New Brighton Fishing Park provide residents with options of public river access. The two sites run along the Beaver River, two blocks north of the commercial corridor. Big Rock Park is located on First Avenue, with an entrance at the Eighth Street tunnel. The park offers fishing and picnic spaces, a walking trail, and the state's only publicly visible active Bald Eagle nest. The New Brighton Fishing Park is located nearby, with entrances also at the Eighth Street tunnel and Eleventh Street. This access point is below the Townsend Dam and is known for its fishing and wildlife.

Flood zones AE, AO, and X 0.2 percent (the 100-year and 500-year floods) occur in the southernmost part of New Brighton along the Norfolk Southern rail line. Flooding is also occurring along the east side of Beaver River and along Blockhouse Run. Areas branching off from Blockhouse Run are also within mapped FEMA flood zones. There was only one storm event complaint from 2000 through 2021 in this community, comprising a flood on one block of Ross Hill Road.

Demographics and Employment

- High population density of 5,602 people per square mile, despite a 5 percent population decline over the last decade.
- Poverty and unemployment rates decreased by 31 percent from 2010 to 2019, with rates comparable to the Region as a whole.

- 25.4 percent of all jobs in New Brighton are in Other Services (excluding Public Administration) [e.g., machinery and equipment repair, dry cleaning, and personal care services].
- 2,610 residents work outside of the borough while 1,252 neighboring residents commute to New Brighton for work.
- Third Avenue, a heavily traveled thoroughfare, serves as the borough’s thriving central business district, and connects New Brighton to neighboring communities¹.

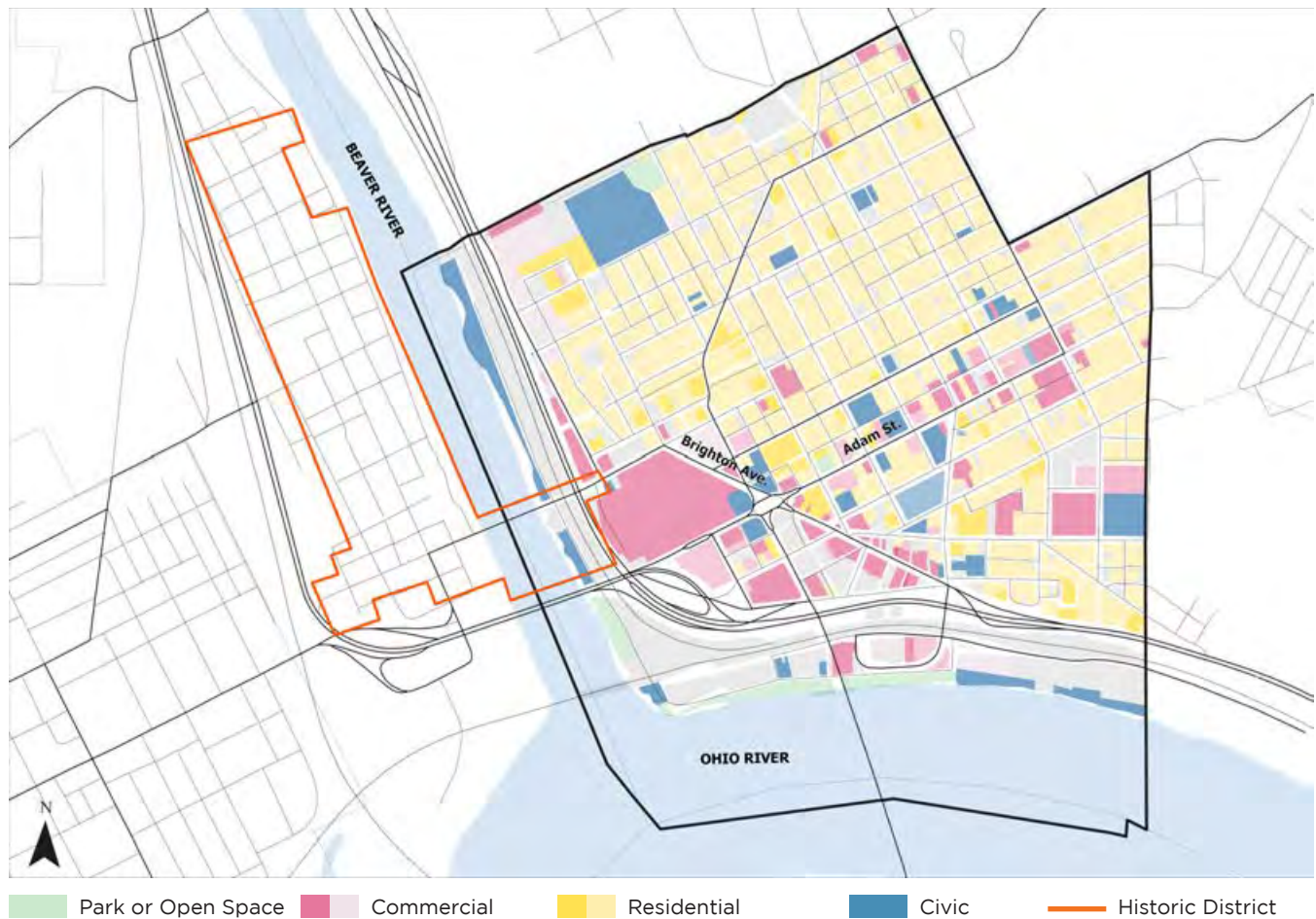
¹i: Northeast Upper Beaver Valley Regional Planning Commission. (2001). Northeast Upper Beaver Valley Comprehensive Plan. Retrieved from https://98e5543c-52f2-47c5-b1b7-ec206e6182af.filesusr.com/ugd/a91dac_de7a9b5783f34434b84cd9636f16c524.pdf.

Name	Address	Status
Merrick Art Gallery	1100 5th Avenue	Listed
Christ Episcopal Church	1217 3rd Avenue	Eligible
Irish-Townsend House	1229 7th Avenue	Eligible
John Corbus House	401 13th Street	Recommended Eligible by 2020 Survey
New Brighton Armory/ New Brighton Municipal Building	610 3rd Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 Survey
Standard Horse Nail Company Office	1415 5th Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 Survey
William McKenney House	1133 Penn Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 Survey
Robert Townsend House	1612 Third Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
401 13th Street	401 13th Street	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Former YMCA Building	732 3rd Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Former Opera House	1101 3rd Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Former Beaver Valley Children’s Home	615 Penn Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
William McKenney House	1133 Penn Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Residence	1205 Penn Avenue	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020
Sherwood Brothers Pottery	1100 13th Street	Properties Identified by the Public for Survey, 2020

Table 1-13
New Brighton Selected Historic Resources

Rochester

Beaver and Ohio River Valley: Beaver County



The Borough of Rochester is located at the confluence of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers in Beaver County, Pennsylvania. Rochester was a boat building center in the 1830s. With the onset of the railroad, industry in the borough grew with factories for iron production and refinement, glass making, and fire-brick manufacturing. The borough's commercial core comprises several blocks to the southwest, along Massachusetts Avenue, Pleasant Street, New York Avenue, and a portion of Adams Street. The commercial core is characterized by early 20th century masonry buildings in a variety of architectural styles and forms.

Riverfront Access and Flood Risk

Rochester Riverfront Park and Rochester Boat Club provide public access to the Beaver River. Rochester Riverfront Park is located on Water Street and Island Lane, between the Rochester-Beaver and Rochester-Monaca Bridges. Access to the park from the commercial core is indirect. The historic site offers fishing and boating access, as well as a paved trail and performance stage. The hazardous Pool Doctor Site, which consisted of two buildings along the Ohio River, underwent active cleanup and restoration and was completed in 2020ⁱ.

Rochester Borough experiences flooding along the east side of Beaver River, McKinley Run, and Lacock Run, as well as some smaller areas, but flooding does not generally encroach inland. There were three storm event complaints reported in approximately the last 20 years.

Flood zones AE, AO, and X 0.2 percent (the 100-year and 500-year floods) occur in the southernmost part of New Brighton along the Norfolk Southern rail line. Flooding is also occurring along the east side of Beaver River and along Blockhouse Run. Areas branching off from Blockhouse Run are also within mapped FEMA flood zones. There was only one storm event complaint from 2000 through 2021 in this community, comprising a flood on one block of Ross Hill Road.

i: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Regional Office, and Baker | O'Brien & Gere Remediation Solutions Joint Venture. Final End of Project Report Waste Removal and Disposal Pool Doctor Site, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Feb. 2021. https://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/SWRO/SWROPortalFiles/Pool_Doctor_Beaver_Alkali_Products/2021_02_05_Pool_Doctor_Waste_Removal_Final_Rep.pdf. Accessed 18 Feb. 2022.

Demographics and Employment

- Similar to the regional trend, Rochester borough's population saw a slight decline between 2010 and 2020, for a present total of 3,472 people.
- The average household income in Rochester borough is \$45,477, similar to the Beaver and Ohio River Valley Region as a whole (\$50,001).
- Though the unemployment rate has declined from 2010 to 2019 (by 8 percent), the number of families with income below the poverty level has steadily increased over the same period (55.7 percent).
- Roughly 1,645 working residents of Rochester commute outside of the borough for work (97 percent of eligible workforce civilians living in Rochester).

Name	Address	Status
Bridgewater Historic District*	Rochester-Beaver Bridge & Water Street	Listed
Rochester Masonic Lodge	197 Rhode Island Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
First National Bank	181 Brighton Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey
Beaver Valley Brewing Company	25 New York Avenue	Recommended Eligible by 2020 survey

Table 1-14
Rochester Selected Historic Resources

* The Bridgewater Historic District is largely located in the Borough of Bridgewater, except for the southeast corner of the district, which extends beyond the Beaver River into Rochester.





Chapter 2

Planning Context

Midland, PA

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter identifies the existing entities, key projects, planning initiatives and land use laws that are supporting historic property investment and downtown revitalization in the focus regions.

The success of a local economy stems from the support of local agencies and organizations, a unified vision and organized leaders, and supportive public policy and zoning. This planning context is vital for establishing an attractive and thriving central business district. The success of local businesses relies on the accessibility of resources to residents and consumers; therefore, transportation and infrastructure must be equally supported by municipalities for businesses to thrive. Communities also need financial assistance programs and workforce training for businesses and residents, as reducing financial and knowledge-based barriers of entry are crucial for the success of diverse small businesses. Additionally, local business owners and residents should have access to capable leaders who are receptive and communicative with a diverse community of stakeholders. When diverse stakeholders become involved in local economic development, a community will develop innovative ideas, effective programs, and additional funding streams.

2.2 Local Agencies and Organizations

Local municipalities have numerous agencies and organizations that prioritize economic development within their communities. The following section provides an overview of agencies and organizations that support economic revitalization and/or historic preservation in the focus regions. This list of entities is not comprehensive, but is a reflection of the types of groups that influence change in the study communities. Many towns and counties have an economic development corporation and chamber of commerce that provide resources and support to local businesses. For instance, the Beaver County Chamber of Commerce is committed to providing business assistance through site location assistance, financial incentives and programs, networking and job training, and marketing opportunities. Corporations for economic development are nonprofits governed by public-private partnerships that provide support in the form of loans, financing, workforce development, and other initiatives for sustained, local economic growth.

The Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development (CED) is designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Beaver County Commissioners to offer special initiatives for strategic investment through Keystone Innovation Zones (KIZ), Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ), a Keystone Enterprise Zone Program (EZP), and various grant and loan programs (see “Funding Opportunities” in Chapter 4). The KIZ tax credit program was developed to spur entrepreneurial growth in local economies by providing tax credits to for-profit companies less than 8 years old, while the KOZ program seeks to redevelop and revitalize formerly vacant or underutilized land and buildings into robust business or residential districts. The EZP program also serves as a tax credit program by incentivizing private companies to rehabilitate, expand, or improve land or businesses within designated areas. In addition to the Beaver County KIZ region, there is a Westmoreland County KIZ region, and a Fayette-Washington KIZ region that span the two study areas, as well as designated EZP zones in all 12 communities. Additionally, there are two designated KOZ areas within Aliquippa.

Chambers of Commerce and CEDs serve as a meaningful way for businesses to broaden networks, gain publicity, and access resources and learning tools for future growth. They have realized benefits, such as the Beaver County CED ensuring \$143 million in grants and loans, garnering \$4.6 billion in private investments, and creating 12,027 new jobsⁱ. Despite their successes, local chambers of commerce and economic development corporations also have limitations. Potential limitations of chambers of commerce include annual membership fees for inclusion, and the lack of an immediate return on investment—most of the success and growth will be a result of the business's utilization of the resources over time. Economic development corporations need to develop a diverse funding stream to adequately support the local projects, such as applying for grants, accepting loans, or partnering with other organizations on specific capital projects. CEDs, Chambers of Commerce, and similar organizations can better utilize the central business districts within the communities for economic development.

Focusing efforts on downtown districts through intentional development, financing and investments, and code compliance enforcement can have significant, positive ripple effects on the local economy.

Both Beaver County and the Monongahela Valley region are served by a number of regional entities, offering funding services and workforce development resources to the local communities. These intergovernmental agencies seek to develop a regional identity that promotes communal growth and economic development. In 2010, Beaver County created a comprehensive plan to develop a framework for revitalization throughout the Countyⁱⁱ. The comprehensive plan identifies areas for opportunity and growth, and how to stimulate economic recovery across all communities. Actions include linking the communities through public infrastructure, such as improving transportation and creating learning opportunities through shared networks, as well as creating business and tourism opportunities to draw individuals and companies to the area.

i: "Special Initiatives." Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development, Beaver County, <https://www.beavercountyced.org/special-initiatives.php>. (Accessed online December 2021).

ii: Beaver County. (2010). Beaver County Comprehensive Plan. Retrieved from http://www.beavercountypa.gov/Depts/Planning/Documents/BC_ComprehensivePlan_May2010.pdf

Other regional organizations include the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington, the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Westmoreland, Mon Valley Alliance, and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC). These organizations cover broader regions and connect multiple municipalities, or even counties, with one another to encourage regional economic growth. The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington is responsible for downtown revitalization projects and brownfield redevelopment projects in Washington County and offers loan and grant programs, as well as other business incentives.

The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington has successfully primed land for industrial and commercial use and developed economic generators for the region, such as the Donora Industrial Park and California Technology Park, a 138-acre site in California Borough, Washington Countyⁱⁱⁱ.

The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Westmoreland provides outreach and resources to promote revitalization and reinvestment in central business districts and residential neighborhoods, as well as financial incentives geared toward promoting rehabilitation and redevelopment through tax incremental financing (TIF) programs, local economic revitalization tax abatements, and community grants, amongst others. The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Westmoreland also administers a demolition program, aimed at removing spot-specific blight, primarily for municipal-owned structures or privately owned properties.

The Mon Valley Alliance serves to promote economic growth, reduce blight, improve government cooperation, and better overall community health. The SPC covers a 10-county region, including Beaver, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties, and is committed to working with local, state, and federal partners for funding and development opportunities that further the growth of local economies. SPC focuses on transportation and public mobility, economic growth, small business assistance, and improving the region's water quality.

iii: "Business and Industrial Parks." The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington, 6 Nov. 2019, <https://racw.net/business-and-industrial-parks/>. (Accessed online December 2021).

The Keystone Alliance for Creative Economies (KACE) is a potential regional organization. The Commonwealth-wide pilot program announced in spring 2021 measures potential economic development activities, and is specifically geared towards arts and culture. KACE initially was focused on Pennsylvania's two largest urban creative economies but is considering other partners to help connect to more rural areas and gradually building a broader network of organizations committed to fostering creative economies across the Commonwealth.

State programs serving downtowns in southwestern Pennsylvania include the Main Street program, a subset of the Keystone Communities program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development (DCED). The Main Street program provides funding specifically for downtown revitalization, including funding to restore deteriorated downtowns and industrial sites. The Pennsylvania Downtown Center is a Main Street America Coordinating Program that is responsible for supporting and administering the DCED Main Street Program at a local level.

The DCED also administers the Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS), serving local government officials with administrative support and financial incentives. The GCLGS provides data and statistics on municipalities, regional contacts, technical assistance, and a financial recovery program. Each region has dedicated staff including policy specialists, planners, and regional directors.

These partnerships and regional agencies create stronger economic relationships between the communities by planning together and cooperating in their pursuit of local initiatives. When the communities share services or infrastructure, they are reducing the individual burden on a local community while mutually supporting new development within the region. The region is most successful when local municipalities build a competitive workforce and set of businesses, connected by transportation and infrastructure.

Some of the specific local agencies and organizations who are currently supporting economic development opportunities in the two regions includeⁱ :

Beaver and Ohio River Valley

- Beaver County Main Streets Program – A county-wide program administered by the Community Development Program of Beaver County to foster revitalization efforts within local communities with low to moderate income levelsⁱⁱ. The program provides technical assistance and guidance that will spur economic development and attract businesses, workers, and visitors to their communities.
- Paramount Pursuits – A small business incubator providing business development services to organizations in the greater Allegheny areaⁱⁱⁱ. The organization is located in the former Divine Redeemer Catholic Church in Ambridge and offers consulting services, as well as a co-working space to new businesses and entrepreneurs in the area. The Open for Business program is an entrepreneurial program that provides free marketing, accounting, legal services, and guidance to small businesses located in low- and moderate-income areas. The organization has also been responsible for helping six different Beaver County communities through the Beaver County Main Streets Program (Aliquippa, Ambridge, Beaver Falls, Midland, New Brighton, and Rochester)^{iv}. The partnership with Paramount Pursuits is funded by the country through funds received by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development.

i: Stakeholders are also included in the list of Focus Group attendees in Appendix A.

ii: Vercilla, Nicholas. "Six Different Beaver County Communities Receive Assistance under Main Street Program." Beaver County Times, 13 Jan. 2022, <https://www.timesonline.com/story/news/2022/01/13/communities-benefit-under-county-main-street-program/9177599002/>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2022.

iii: Gannon, Joyce. "Program Helps Small Firms Trying to Survive the Pandemic in at-Risk Neighborhoods." Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 19 Apr. 2021, <https://www.post-gazette.com/business/career-workplace/2021/04/19/Small-business-entrepreneurs-assistance-Bridgeway-Paramount/stories/202104180048>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2022.

iv: Vercilla, Nicholas. "Six Different Beaver County Communities Receive Assistance under Main Street Program." Beaver County Times, 13 Jan. 2022, <https://www.timesonline.com/story/news/2022/01/13/communities-benefit-under-county-main-street-program/9177599002/>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2022.

- Rivers of Steel – A nonprofit organization that is dedicated to promoting, preserving, and protecting the industrial and cultural heritage of steel communities within the Pennsylvania regionⁱ. The nonprofit provides programming related to preservation, education, and the arts, as well as economic revitalization for local communities. The nonprofit is administered by the Rivers of Steel Heritage Corporation, a nonprofit, and provides educational tours and community engagement with the heritage area.
- Old Economy Village Historic Site – The Old Economy Village in Ambridge is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and supported by the Friends of Old Economy Village, a non-profit community-based organization. It is also a National Historic Landmarkⁱⁱ. The nonprofit organization preserves, presents, and educates locals and visitors about the history of one of the oldest religious communal groups of the nineteenth century. Based on stakeholder interviews, the site is also a destination for visitors in the region.
- Ambridge Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) – Enabled by the state Historic District Act, Ambridge has adopted a historic preservation ordinance that helps manage a defined historic area within the Borough. The Ambridge HARB is seven-member board that advises the Borough Council and property owners on how to best protect, promote, and maintain historic structures, buildings, and districts per the requirements of the ordinanceⁱⁱⁱ. The HARB adheres to specific design guidelines to ensure the rich architectural and cultural heritage of the borough.
- Beaver Borough HARB – Enabled by the state Historic District Act, Beaver has adopted a historic preservation ordinance that helps manage demolitions within a defined historic district. The Beaver HARB is a seven-member board appointed by Borough Council to give recommendations to Council regarding the issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness for demolition within the Historic District. The HARB also conducts or updates historic resources surveys and inventories and makes recommendations regarding historic markers and other matters concerning historic resources (land use, parking, signage). In addition, the HARB will informally advise building owners on rehabilitation, repair, and financing strategies, and educates the public about historic preservation. The Beaver HARB worked with PA SHPO to develop and adopt a historic preservation plan and design guidelines to better preserve the character of the historic district and establish a baseline for review.
- Ambridge Historic District Economic Development Corporation – A nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the Ambridge Historic District and ensuring the economic growth and prosperity of the historic area^{iv}. The organization provides educational resources and supports preservation efforts through grant applications and place-making. The EDC fosters a sense of cultural and historical identity through community-wide events and fundraisers.
- Beaver County Regional Council of Governments – The Regional Council of Governments is a membership organization of local government agencies within Beaver County^v. The voluntary organization seeks to provide administrative support to other local municipalities and generate region wide initiatives. A Regional Board of Appeals was established to provide legislative and regulatory guidance for regional ordinances and projects. The Board assists in the administering and enforcement of building code provisions in participating jurisdictions.

i: "Programs -- Rivers of Steel." Rivers of Steel, 20 Mar. 2022, <https://riversofsteel.com/>.

ii: "About Us." Old Economy Village, 9 Mar. 2022, <http://oldeconomyvillage.org/>.

iii: AMBRIDGE, PENN., GENERAL LEGISLATION ch. 310, § 310-42 (2018).

iv: Ambridge Historic District, <https://www.ambridgehistoricdistrict.org/>.

v: "Home." Beaver County Regional Council of Governments, <https://www.brcog.org/>.

- RiverWise – A nonprofit organization aimed at protecting and strengthening the rivers in the Beaver County regionⁱ. The organization is focused on using sustainable practices to keep the river clean from historical industrial use and promote the resource as a viable economic and environmental resource for the local communities. RiverWise has been working to engage necessary stakeholders and develop partnerships to educate communities and form ecodistricts in Aliquippa, Monaca, and Beaver Falls. Ecodistricts are defined as communities committed to incorporating equitable, sustainable practices into all areas of planning and strategic action.

Monongahela River Valley

- Monongahela Main Street Program – Part of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center’s Main Street program, the Monongahela Main Street Program aims to strengthen and revitalize the historic West Main Street business district in Monongahelaⁱⁱ. The program is responsible for developing partnerships with local businesses, tracking data on existing businesses, and promoting programs and local projects.
- Mon Valley Business Resource Center – Recently launched in Monongahela as a community space dedicated to business innovation, the Mon Valley Business Resource Center provides meeting space for businesses to engage with local partners and stakeholders, workforce training, and incubation space for new and growing businessesⁱⁱⁱ. The Mon Valley Alliance Foundation, Community Bank, and Washington County Community Foundation used a \$50,000 grant to purchase the former Community Bank Branch to house the Mon Valley Business Resource Center.
- Mon Valley Alliance (MVA) – The Mon Valley Alliance is a coalition of 14 communities in the Mid Mon Valley region that formed as a result of the consolidation of two economic development organizations^{iv}. Participating municipalities include Charleroi, Donora, Monongahela and Monessen. The MVA is developing a regional approach for future growth while considering the historical industrial foundation of the local communities. The MVA oversees development in local industrial parks, provides business services, and develops community activities that strengthen local ties. The organization is focused on the economic development and growth of the Mid Mon Valley region.
- The Mon River Valley Coalition is a collection of communities creating a unified vision and goal of vibrant river communities along the Monongahela River. These communities create Five Year Action Plans and promote tourism and recreational activities along the river. Participating communities include Charleroi and Monongahela. In 2017, the Coalition published “Capturing the Opportunities of the Monongahela River Valley Plan: A Five-Year Action Agenda to Increase Tourism in the Region.” With the goal of attracting visitors and businesses to the riverfront towns, the Plan includes prioritized goals for Monongahela and Charleroi. Goals include the development of a comprehensive signage program in Monongahela to connect downtown and the riverfront, as well as a development plan for available riverfront property in Monongahela. In Charleroi, the Action Plan recommends riverfront park improvements such as bike racks, playground equipment, and security cameras. The plan also recommends greening and murals in the Chamber Parking Lot, and signage to river access points^v. The Action plan also recommended restoring the Coyle Theater in downtown Charleroi, however this historic building owned by the Mon Valley Alliance was unfortunately demolished in 2019^{vi}.

i: “Home.” RiverWise, 10 Jan. 2022, <https://getriverwise.com/>.

ii: “Monongahela Main Street Program.” Washington County Community Foundation, <https://www.wccc.net/charities/monongahela-main-street-program>.

iii: Brown-Herman, Taylor. “Business Research Center Launches in Valley.” *The Mon Valley Independent*, 5 Nov. 2021, pp. A1-A2.

iv: Mon Valley Alliance, 2022, <https://www.monvalleyalliance.org/>.

v: Mon River Valley Coalition. “Capturing the Opportunities in the Monongahela River Valley.” 2017. https://monrivertowns.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/LATEST-3-23-14-CapturingopportunitiesMonRiverValley_140321.pdf

vi: Beveridge, Scott. “Coyle Theater demolition permit issued in Charleroi.” *The Herald-Standard*. August 21, 2019.

- National Road Heritage Corridor – Part of the 600-mile corridor, spanning 6 states, the National Road Heritage Corridor consists of 90 miles of historic roadway along the southwest corner of Pennsylvaniaⁱ. The Historic National Road is a major historical landmark and attraction within the region, and the National Road Heritage Corridor seeks to educate, advocate, and build awareness about the cultural and historic resource. The organization develops programming for local school lesson plans to highlight the importance of the historical asset for the local residents and visitors. National Road Heritage Corridor assumed the fiscal agency role for Mon River Towns (now Mon River Valley Coalition), including Charleroi, in 2014ⁱⁱ.
- Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington—The Redevelopment Authority provides a variety of resources for economic development throughout Washington County, including funding for downtown revitalization projects and business and industrial parksⁱⁱⁱ. The organization also provides loan programs for businesses and homeowners and provides a number of home modification assistance programs to local residents.
- Redevelopment Authority of the County of Westmoreland – The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Westmoreland partners with local governments and nonprofit organizations to bring revitalization efforts and impactful projects to the region^{iv}. Community revitalization programs include an accessible housing program and various financing programs for private developers.
- Washington County Planning Department – The Planning Commission is responsible for the review of land development and sub-ordinances, ensuring adherence to municipal plans, maintaining population and demographic data, conducting relevant environmental and economic studies for the region, and coordinating the educational programs and public affairs related to the county government^v.

i: "About the National Road." Pennsylvania's Historic National Road, <http://nationalroadpa.org/>.

ii: <https://monrivertowns.com/about/overview/>

iii: "Home." The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Washington, 29 Sept. 2021, <https://racw.net/>.

iv: "Redevelopment Authority." Westmoreland County, PA - Official Website, <https://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/954/RACW>.

v: "Planning." Washington County, PA - Official Website, <https://www.co.washington.pa.us/169/Planning>.

2.3 Key Projects

Economic revitalization efforts can tie into major projects that are ongoing or imminent in the region. The following list of key projects represent some of the local and regional initiatives that will draw regional visitors, improve shared open spaces, and contribute to attracting talent to the regions. These projects have regional impact and can provide opportunities for interconnection and collaboration between the communities. The following key projects are also examples of recent investments in the region. These key projects should be leveraged for their potential to benefit community revitalization and historic preservation:

- Innovation Corridor, Beaver Falls: A community and city government partnership, "with the goal of not only physically improving the city but improving economic stability for its residents."^{vi} The Innovation Corridor is located along Seventh Avenue between 11th and 16th Streets in Beaver Falls. Four ongoing projects within the corridor include the BHIVE Innovation Hub, Portobello Cultural Life and Arts Center, March Park improvements, and the Neighborhood North Museum of Play. The development of an Innovation Corridor will encourage downtown economic activity and spark revitalization.
- Magic City Riverfront Park, Charleroi: A park revitalization project that seeks to improve the existing infrastructure, beautify the park, and expand the amenities^{vii}. The rehabilitated park is funded in part by the Washington County Local Share Account Program and DCNR under the Brownfield to Playfield initiative^{viii}. Improving the park's conditions and amenities will increase usage and create an attractive regional resource rooted in the Charleroi community.

vi: Vercilla, Nicholas. "Update on Projects in Beaver Falls 'Innovation Corridor'." Beaver County Times, 2 Sept. 2021, <https://www.ellwoodcityledger.com/story/news/2021/09/02/update-projects-beaver-falls-innovation-corridor/5685617001/>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2022.

vii: Mon Valley Alliance. "Mon Valley Alliance 2020 Annual Report." Mon Valley Alliance, 2020, https://www.monvalleyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MVA_2020_AnnualReport_300dpi.pdf.

viii: "DCNR Grant Awarded to Develop Riverfront Park in Charleroi, PA." News, 7 Nov. 2019, <https://www.monvalleyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/PRESS-RELEASE-Charleroi-Park-11-7-19.pdf>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2022.

- **Ohio River Trail:** An extensive greenway trail located along the Ohio River, passing through thirty riverfront communities in southwestern Pennsylvaniaⁱ. The Ohio River North and South Shore Trails serve as a major green corridor and are part of a linear park system across five states. The Ohio River Trail is currently undergoing construction to incorporate additional bike routes, as well as connections to bridges and other trails. Over the last decade, roughly a million dollars have been invested in planning for trail development in Beaver Countyⁱⁱ. The Ohio River Trail serves as a natural connection between communities and is an attractive regional resource that brings activity to the area.
- **Franklin Avenue Park, Aliquippa:** A new park covering 1/3 acre will be located between the Aliquippa Police Station and Uncommon Grounds Café on Franklin Avenue in Aliquippa. The park will have a stage for community events, a rain garden, on-site air monitoring, and solar-powered light and soundⁱⁱⁱ. The project was led by Congressman Conor Lamb and Riverwise. The park will contribute to a more continuous street front on Franklin Avenue, it will draw visitors to the downtown, and serve as a shared community asset.
- **Aliquippa Third Avenue Playground:** A new playground is to be developed in Aliquippa's Plan 11 neighborhood, at the corner of Third Avenue and Jefferson Street, north of the Franklin Avenue commercial corridor^{iv}. The City's Department of Parks and Recreation received a \$50,000 grant from the T-Mobile Hometown Grants in December 2021 to develop a new playground for the local community. This playground will help revitalize the neighborhood by creating a new, accessible resource for children.
- **Mon Valley Creative Corridor, Rivers of Steel:** An arts program developed under the Rivers of Steel nonprofit organization to provide programming and events that aim to strengthen the economy and cultural identity of the Monongahela River Valley region^v. The Creative Corridor is comprised of partnerships between local artists and community stakeholders that generate cultural and artistic exhibits, pop-up events and shops, workshops, and other community-oriented events. The Rivers of Steel nonprofit organization utilizes grassroots efforts to strengthen community ties, promote revitalization and historic preservation, and encourage development for the southwestern Pennsylvania region.
- **City Mission Project, Monongahela:** The largest private shelter in the tri-county area of Pittsburgh^{vi}. City Mission supplies residency-based programs for those struggling with substance abuse or mental disabilities. A \$12 million New Market Tax Credit (NMTTC) was granted to City Mission for funding homelessness service and building or expanding facilities, including a men's shelter and services center, a veteran's residential facility, a women's and children's shelter, and a vocational training center. A new thrift store opened in Monongahela in July 2021 within a renovated 6,800 square-foot-building. Revenue from the thrift store sales supports the organization's programs and services. This specific store encouraged downtown revitalization by restoring a building located along the historic West Main Street business district.

i: "Ohio River Greenway Trail." Ohio River Trail Council, 2020, <http://www.greenway.ohiorivertrail.org/>.

ii: Vercilla, Nicholas. "RiverWise Hosts Virtual Town Hall to Spread Awareness of Proposed Trail Project." Beaver County Times, 22 Nov. 2021, <https://www.timesonline.com/story/news/2021/11/22/riverwise-executive-makes-call-action-beaver-county-trails/8668270002/>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2022.

iii: Rossi-Keen, Daniel. "Community Matters: Sometimes a park is more than just a park." The Times Online. March 20, 2022.

iv: Vercilla, Nicholas. "Aliquippa Wins Hometown Grant for Future Third Avenue Playground." Beaver County Times, 23 Dec. 2021, <https://www.timesonline.com/story/news/2021/12/23/aliquippa-wins-50-000-t-mobile-grant/9002626002/>. Accessed 25 Mar. 2022.

v: "Mon Valley Creative Corridor." Rivers of Steel, 7 Dec. 2021, <https://riversofsteel.com/mvcc/>.

vi: "Governor Wolf Announces Tax Credits for City Mission Project in Washington, Pa." Governor Tom Wolf, 18 May 2017, <https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/governor-wolf-announces-tax-credits-for-city-mission-project-in-washington-pa/>.

- Neighborhood Assistance Program, Beaver and Ohio River Valley: A tax credit program to encourage businesses to invest in projects which improve distressed areasⁱ. In November 2021, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf approved \$36 million to 220 community revitalization projects for the annual awards under the Neighborhood Assistance Programⁱⁱ. Specific to the region, the Aliquippa Economic Development Corporation received \$400,000 to address downtown revitalization, establish a way-finding system, host a free health fair, and develop a career fair for youths aged 12-18. Additionally, Beaver Falls Community Development Corporation received \$75,000 to implement a strategic plan for the city, which includes improving the quality of downtown blocks, both from a beautification and visual level, as well as a business improvement component. The Mycelia Development in Beaver Falls also received \$250,000 to develop the Portobello Cultural Life and Arts Center within the Innovation Corridor described aboveⁱⁱⁱ.
- Keystone Historic Preservation Planning/ Construction Grants: Grants awarded by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) to nonprofit organizations and local governments to fund small construction projects or aid in the planning and development of publicly accessible historic resources. The Planning Grant is used to identify and preserve historic resources that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places^{iv}. The Construction Grant is geared toward projects that rehabilitate, restore, or preserve resources listed in or eligible in the National Register of Historic Places. The levels of funding require a 50/50 cash match and range between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for the Planning Grant, and up to \$100,000 for the Construction Grant. Some examples of projects across the two regions include the Merrick Art Gallery in New Brighton, which received roughly \$40,000 in funds in 2004, the Beaver Station in Beaver, which received \$25,000 and \$50,000 in 2011 and 2013, respectively, and the Charleroi Historic District which received \$20,000 in 2013^v.

i: "Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP)." PA Department of Community & Economic Development, 5 Nov. 2021, <https://dced.pa.gov/programs/neighborhood-assistance-program-nap/>.

ii: "Governor Wolf Announces Nearly \$36 Million for Community Revitalization Projects," Governor Tom Wolf, 9 Nov. 2021, <https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/governor-wolf-announces-nearly-36-million-for-community-revitalization-projects/>.

iii: "Southwest Region 2021-2022 NAP Approvals." PA Department of Community & Economic Development, 5 Nov. 2021, <https://dced.pa.gov/download/sw-region-2021-2022-nap-approvals/>.

iv: "Keystone Planning Projects." Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, <https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/Planning-Projects.aspx#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20grant,projects%20under%20the%20planning%20category.>

v: "Find Keystone Projects." Keystone Recreation Park Conservation Fund, <https://keystonefund.org/find-keystone-projects/>.

2.4 Existing Plans

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires each county to adopt a comprehensive plan. The Municipal Planning Code does not require local governments to adopt a comprehensive planⁱ. A comprehensive plan is intended to convey a clear strategy for land uses and infrastructure. The MPC Section 301(a) requires each municipal, multi-municipal, and county comprehensive plan to include a statement of the community development goals and objectives. These goals and objectives must chart the location, character, and timing of future development. The goals and objectives guide the policy decisions made in the development of the plan, and they may also be closely examined in the event that a land use decision is disputed in courtⁱⁱ.

The following table identifies the areas in which the goals of this project are reflected in the county and local government planning documents within the study area (see Table 2-1). The table is not an exhaustive list of all of the studies that were reviewed, but the ones focused on the communities within the two regions. Our review found no goals that run counter to the goals of this project.

While these plans generally conform to the project goals, some communities struggle with barriers to their successful implementation. For example, stakeholders have identified barriers to local historic preservation and economic development including lack of investors, lack of appropriate or fragmented leadership, competition between communities, lack of capacity, and need for greater collaboration across counties and communities, and also between community leaders and the developer community. Meanwhile, communities that have been more successful generally have active grassroots organizations and common leadership, along with progressive land use regulations such as adaptive reuse and vacant building ordinances.

For example, Beaver Borough recently adopted a SHPO-funded standalone preservation plan as a supplement their comprehensive plan. See also “Local Agencies and Organizations,” “Key Projects,” and “Land Use Regulations” in this section. As another example, the Monongahela Main Street Program, which is part of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center’s Main Street program, aims to strengthen and revitalize the historic West Main Street business district in Monongahela.

ⁱ: The MPC requires a local government to adopted a comprehensive plan under two circumstances: if the governing body enacts a transportation impact fee ordinance; or if multiple municipalities collectively enact joint zoning controls. Source: conservationtools.org

ⁱⁱ: Department of Community and Economic Development, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. 2001. *The Comprehensive Plan in Pennsylvania*.

Community	Report (Date)	Summary of Aligning Goals
Aliquippa	City of Aliquippa Comprehensive Plan (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a central business district that is both pedestrian-friendly and thriving with local businesses • Riverfront redevelopment is needed with greater access and accommodation for public recreational use, while maintaining existing, integral industrial uses • Need for a range of housing types, particularly for varied incomes • Need for programs focused on pathways towards homeownership
Ambridge	SHALE Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support regional effort to expand commercial investment in Ambridge Historic District • Continue ongoing efforts to clean up the Ambridge/Harmony industrial corridor • Continue efforts to reduce poverty within Ambridge • Continue to identify and preserve historic and culturally significant resources within the community
Beaver	Beaver Borough Comprehensive Plan (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for riverfront development • Address the tight housing market • Continue to preserve historic and cultural resources as identified within the Historic Overlay district
Beaver	Borough of Beaver Historic Preservation Plan (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed in accordance with a Design Guidelines and Preservation Manual to develop a robust framework for identifying and preserving historic places and structures • Increase public awareness of and engagement with Borough’s history and historic resources • Maximize the economic benefits associated with the historic preservation program and identify avenues for funding

Table 2-1
Planning Documents within the Study Area Communities

Community	Report (Date)	Summary of Aligning Goals
Beaver Falls	City of Beaver Falls Comprehensive Plan (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address blight and population decline • Downtown revitalization: use design standards to increase walk-ability and reduce spot blight • Encourage homeownership • Promote multifamily and senior housing near retail and commercial corridor • Preserve single-family housing in historic district and emphasize housing rehabilitation (adaptive reuse) • Encourage brownfield redevelopment of vacant industrial sites and consider adaptive reuse for light industrial or business parks, isolate heavy industrial areas from downtown and residential uses
Monaca	Monaca Borough Comprehensive Plan (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigate presence of vacant storefronts within the central business district • Address population loss and encourage local employment opportunities • Continue to maintain housing conditions while ensuring a variety of housing choices, such as the notable presence of assisted living and section 8 units • Preserve and protect historic resources and landmarks believed to have historical significance
New Brighton	Northeast Upper Beaver Valley Comprehensive Plan (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve historic and cultural resources and promote awareness of cultural opportunities • Need to extend utility services for potential new development • Upgrade old housing units while maintaining affordability • Further develop the commercial corridor by encouraging business development

Table 2-1
Planning Documents within the Study Area Communities (cont'd)

Community	Report (Date)	Summary of Aligning Goals
Beaver County	Beaver County Comprehensive Plan (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify targeted economic development sites and areas for future opportunity and growth • Combat steady population loss and high vacancy within the region • Promote multifamily housing and affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents while encouraging pathway towards homeownership • Improve quality and location of public housing stock • Target blighted areas in Aliquippa, Ambridge, Beaver Falls, and Midland • Provide diverse housing types to appeal to young people, low-income, empty-nesters, special needs, and seniors
Monessen	2030 Comprehensive Plan (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted redevelopment of downtown commercial district to centralize businesses and reduce blight and sprawl • Create official central business district within zoning ordinance (currently have districts Neighborhood Shopping District [C1] and Business District [C2]) • Encourage employment within the Monessen Riverfront Industrial Park • Combat blight and shrinking population/tax base while rehabilitating vacant and abandoned homes • Allow for increased density and variety of housing types, specifically downtown • Further develop transit access and connectivity to regional communities

Table 2-1
Planning Documents within the Study Area Communities (cont'd)

Community	Report (Date)	Summary of Aligning Goals
Monongahela	Monongahela City & New Eagle Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue development of an attractive and vibrant main street with access to a post-industrial waterfront; increase river-based tourism and improve riverfront facility management • Continue to identify, preserve, and bring awareness to historic resources as buildings age; expand opportunities for heritage tourism • Preserve the historic integrity and community of Monongahela through grant funding, obtaining formal status for historic structures and district, and developing design guidelines to encourage rehabilitation and revitalization • Build partnerships amongst heritage and community development organizations and strengthen lines of communication; identify additional available sources of funding • Maintain high occupancy along Main Street and protection of historic homes as well as anchor buildings • Reduce vacancies and promote homeownership while maintaining diverse housing supply • Preserve diverse neighborhood housing supplies through rehabilitation and encourage new infill development that expands the housing types offered in the City
Washington County	Washington County FY 2019 Annual Draft Action Plan (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide decent housing by preserving the affordable housing stock, increasing the availability of affordable housing, reducing discriminatory barriers, increasing the supply of supportive housing for those with special needs, and transitioning homeless persons and families into housing • Provide a suitable living environment through safer, more livable neighborhoods, greater integration of low- and moderate- income residents throughout the County, increased housing opportunities, and reinvestment in deteriorating neighborhoods • Expand economic opportunities through more jobs paying self-sufficient wages, homeownership opportunities, development activities that promote long-term community viability, and the empowerment of low- and moderate- income persons to achieve self sufficiency

Table 2-1
Planning Documents within the Study Area Communities (cont'd)

Community	Report (Date)	Summary of Aligning Goals
Washington County	Washington County Comprehensive Plan (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue rehabilitation of older homes within local communities • Prevent urban sprawl and rapid conversion of traditional agriculture into new housing subdivisions; improve access to public utilities (water/sewer) and have planned, targeted density near community amenities and resources • Preserve, improve, and increase access to multifamily public housing and senior housing • Revitalize riverfront and encourage tourism for local economies (utilize Monongahela River and rail network for tourism) • Focus on economic development and specific subregions through maintenance of business corridors and business/industrial parks • Encourage public participation in comprehensive planning process • Promote heritage and preservation of historic and cultural resources; encourage rehabilitation; develop and promote cultural opportunities for seniors and youth (in and out of school); increase awareness of and involvement within heritage tourism; and improve coordination between historic and cultural groups
Westmoreland County	Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain quality of existing housing stock and reduce number of vacant and substandard units • Provide ample quality affordable housing to reduce overcrowding and lack of utilities • Continue to concentrate development along major corridors and near transportation and community resources • Provide diverse housing stock near downtown for seniors and those without cars • Include market rate housing to bolster economic vitality of community • Take advantage of key opportunity zones and sites for redevelopment such as the Monessen Riverfront Industrial Park and brownfield and gray-field sites within local communities for future development

Table 2-1
Planning Documents within the Study Area Communities (cont'd)

2.5 Land Use Regulations

Local land use planning influences the preservation, reuse, and rehabilitation of historic properties. These regulations can help to overcome the physical, cultural, and economic barriers to historic property investment. The following section includes local regulations that encourage the redevelopment of older historic properties, regulate insensitive alterations, prevent neglect, and support adaptive reuse.

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) empowers local governments to enact land use ordinances that guide local development, including the subdivision and land development ordinance and the zoning ordinance. These land use regulations have a great impact on the preservation and adaptive reuse of the historic built environment. A community's existing land use regulations can actively facilitate or inadvertently hinder building reuse, by preventing measures that harm the historic character of a building or street, or by incentivizing and encouraging the development of older buildingsⁱ. The MPC requires that municipalities plan for and zone for the protection of historic and natural resources, however it does not specify the process for achieving these protections. The following analysis presents strategic land use regulations for historic preservation as well as the activation and revitalization of existing buildings in the commercial corridor, and identifies communities within the study that have adopted these strategies.

Flexible Uses

Conventional zoning codes separate urban neighborhoods by use, including residential, commercial, and industrial areas. This does not easily accommodate the mix of uses or alternative uses often housed within older buildings, requiring a time-consuming approvals process. Some communities in the study have more progressive zoning than others in terms of allowable uses or mixed-use zoning districts. See Appendix D, "Business Core Zoning Regulations," for a chart of the permitted uses in each community's business core.

Downtown Monongahela City demonstrates a greater range of allowable uses. In addition to dining establishments and retail, which are present in each community, Monongahela City permits bank and financial institutions, boarding houses, emergency services, medical clinics, and hotels.

The commercial districts in Beaver and Beaver Falls have limitations on ground-floor uses in the downtown in order to create an active sidewalk with buildings that engage the street. In the Beaver business district, professional, business, and financial services are only permitted on upper floors, leaving general retail and dining and personal service uses along the ground-floor. Restricting ground-floor uses on the commercial corridor ensures that the main street has an active ground-floor presence along the sidewalk. Limiting ground-floor uses is effective for encouraging active pedestrian experience downtown, however this strategy should be focused on a targeted segment of the commercial corridor.

As the Congress for New Urbanism points out, "ground-floor commercial requirements are a common pitfall when establishing mixed-use districts. Non-residential ground-floor uses may be required along the primary retail corridor, typically no longer than 1/4 mile, but should not be required throughout the district. In the greater downtown area, permitting residential as a single use should be allowed, which provides population support for area businesses."ⁱⁱ Residences near the central business core will support businesses and bring vibrancy to the sidewalk. Monaca updated its zoning in 2008 to allow high-density housing downtown; the resulting influx in residents has contributed to economic success in the business core, with new businesses openingⁱⁱⁱ.

i: Preservation Green Lab, National Trust for Historic Preservation. (2017). *Untapped Potential: Strategies for Revitalization and Reuse*.

ii: Congress for New Urbanism. 2018. *Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform*. Accessible at CNU.org.

iii: Cerilli, Richard. "Beaver County Corridors: Beaver County municipalities outline plans for business district revitalization." *Pittsburgh Business Times*. <https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2020/07/08/beaver-county-corridors-breathing-new-life-towns.html>.

Adaptive Reuse Ordinance

Adaptive Reuse Zoning provides opportunities for the reuse of buildings for which the original use is no longer economically viable. Aliquippa and Charleroi have adaptive reuse ordinances that pertain to the downtown business districts. With this ordinance, the permitted uses are expanded for existing buildings. In Charleroi, the additional permitted reuses include single- and multi-family residential uses, small commercial and retail businesses, private clubs and social halls, day cares and nursing homes, hospitals and medical clinics, civic or cultural buildings, conference centers and community centers. To qualify, the applicant must show a burden of proof that the structure was initially designed and intended for a use not now allowable in the zoning district in which it is located. Communities throughout the study can also expand permitted uses for older buildings to incentivize reuse. Aliquippa's adaptive reuse ordinance applies to large buildings that were originally built as non-residential uses, but may be reused as housing, day care facilities, financial institutions, nursing homes, and other uses as approved by the City Council.

Minimum Maintenance Ordinance

Municipalities can enforce a property maintenance ordinance that prevents deferred maintenance and neglect. Basic maintenance includes preventing water infiltration and maintaining adequate protective coatings on exterior walls, replacing broken windows, maintaining gutters and downspouts, securing the building from intruders, and managing vegetation at building's perimeter¹. These efforts are simple and can prevent a building's deterioration. An ordinance can require an owner to address maintenance needs by stabilizing a building.

¹: "Minimum Maintenance Bylaws and Ordinances." Preservation Massachusetts, <https://www.preservationmass.org/minimummaintenancebylaws>. (Accessed online March 2022).

Monaca has a Vacant and Abandoned Property ordinance requiring the annual registration of abandoned and/or vacant buildings and structures and payment of registration fees to support monitoring the buildings. According to the ordinance in Monaca (Ordinance No. 171), the annual fees increase the longer a building has remained vacant, ranging from \$250 for less than one year, to \$5,000 per year for buildings that have been vacant for 10 years. In Monaca, the fees may be waived if a "good faith effort" is shown to rent, sell, or lease the space. These efforts include newspaper notices and window signs advertising the building. Annual inspections ensure public safety and building compliance with proper maintenance and fire codes. This type of ordinance attempts to limit the growing number of abandoned real properties and vacant buildings and structures throughout the city. Monessen also requires the registration of vacant buildings and payment of fees, although the ordinance only allows registration fee to be waived once, for one year, if a property is actively marketed according to the established criteria.

Local Historic Districts

A historic district is a concentration of historic buildings in close proximity to each other, that are protected locally. The Historic District Act is Pennsylvania's enabling legislation that allows municipalities to regulate historic resources through the adoption of a local historic district ordinance. In addition to the Historic District Act, the MPC allows for the creation of preservation zoning, which can apply to dispersed sites as well as historic "districts." A historic district is typically administered by the local Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), which reviews applications from property owners for alterations or demolitions within the historic district.

In Beaver Borough, any demolition of structures located within the historic district are subject to review by the Beaver Borough Board of Historic Architectural Review and require a certificate of appropriateness (COA). In Ambridge the HARB, in accordance with the Borough Council, is responsible for reviewing and recommending a COA for any exterior alterations or additions based on the Design Guidelines. The HARB is also responsible for reviewing all business use applications within the historic district.

Waive Parking Minimums

The parking requirements of traditional zoning codes are built upon an auto-centric lifestyle, which is often incompatible with the densely developed and continuous street front that characterizes historic downtowns and makes them so pedestrian-friendly. Often an existing older building occupies its entire lot and is incapable of meeting current parking requirements. In Beaver, while there are parking minimums outlined within the zoning code, they may be waived within the RC-1 district. In Beaver Falls, parking minimum standards do not apply to new or existing development within the downtown business district unless specifically related to a conditional use or special exception. In Charleroi, no off-street parking is required for commercial uses located within the CBD when abutting a public street with existing on-street parking.

Other possible strategies for dealing with parking issues include shared parking arrangements, where multiple properties within a reasonable walking distance can share use of a single parking facility if the peak demand for parking differs between uses (e.g., a residential use would demand parking during non-work hours, while an office use would demand parking during work hours). The City of Baltimore provides exemptions for buildings over 50 years old or properties that have received Federal historic rehabilitation investment tax credits. Another strategy is instituting metered parking in downtown districts, with revenues dedicated to street improvements. Not all strategies are appropriate; it is important to first identify parking supply and demand conditions to best shape policy, and then regularly monitor the effects of its implementation to make adjustments as needed.ⁱ

i: Preservation Green Lab, National Trust for Historic Preservation. (2017). *Untapped Potential: Strategies for Revitalization and Reuse*.

Limit Building Sizes

When zoning allows new construction that is much larger than what currently exists, small buildings become vulnerable to disinvestment and demolition. Some of these structures may contribute to economic and social diversity. Limiting the size of new buildings can incentivize the preservation and reuse of existing fabric along the business corridor, and it can help to maintain the sense of place downtown by retaining the rhythm and scale of the corridor. In Monongahela, as-of-right retail spaces are limited to stores under 7,000 gross square feet (gsf). Retail stores ranging from 7,000 to 25,000 gsf are permitted under conditional uses.

Demolition Delay Ordinance

A demolition ordinance delays or prevents the demolition of older buildings. This strategy is effective for a community that has not yet had the opportunity to conduct a thorough historic resources inventory, to prevent the unwanted demolition of significant historic resources. If a building is found to be significant, a delay could allow time for the community to attempt alternative plans for the building.

International Existing Building Code

Building code requirements sometimes are not compatible with existing historic buildings. International Existing Building Code (IEBC) includes provisions for older buildings, including the repair, alteration, additional and change of occupancy for existing buildings.ⁱⁱ For example, the IEBC allows a building to be repaired to its pre-damaged state, if the required repairs are less than “substantial,” as defined by the code. Structural repairs must meet requirements for new buildings. This is more flexible than other compliance options. The PA SHPO recommends the adoption of the IEBC as a best practice, including for Beaver Borough.ⁱⁱⁱ

ii: ICC Digital Codes. 2021. Accessible at <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IEBC2021P1>

iii: Borough of Beaver Historic Preservation Plan. (2022). Beaver Borough Pennsylvania. Prepared by RGA, Inc. and the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are a valuable tool as they visually communicate a community's preferred design ethic and a district's character defining features. The development of design guidelines should be a public process where the community works to identify those characteristics that make it unique, and develop strategies to protect them.

Design guidelines present clear standards for rehabilitation projects, streamlining the permitting process and ensuring that the community character is preserved. Design Guidelines do not necessarily need to be regulatory to be useful. Design guidelines are a way to develop public capacity for preservation as an investment and economic development strategy. The development of design guidelines should be a public process where the community works to identify those characteristics that make it unique, and develop strategies to protect them.

In Monongahela, the City's Historic Main Street Design Standards includes benchmarks on building reuse to promote rehabilitation and preserve architectural styles. Properties located within the downtown district are expected to adhere to the Historic Main Street Design Standards outlined in the zoning ordinance. The Aliquippa zoning code also includes design guidelines for the renovations and additions to historic buildings. Beaver Borough has Design Guidelines created with assistance by the PA SHPO. Ambridge has older Design Guidelines for the Old Economy Historic District, but not for the Ambridge Commercial Historic District.

Certified Local Government Program

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is administered by the PA SHPO, in partnership with the National Park Service, to support effective historic preservation programs and policies in Pennsylvania municipalities. The CLG program in Pennsylvania can help influence local land use policy for historic properties by offering guidance to participating communities, such as a dedicated grant program, planning and technical assistance, and participation in the National Register of Historic Places nomination process.

To become a CLG, a community must implement a preservation ordinance that meets minimum requirements of the program. Ambridge is the only municipality in the study that participates in the CLG program. Other communities in the study that have adequate staffing capacity should also pursue CLG certification, including Monongahela City and Beaver Borough. Beaver's recently adopted historic preservation plan calls for the Borough to consider certification as a CLG.

Blight Inventory

2

A blight inventory can support a data-driven preventative planning approach to blight, helping local officials target vacant or neglected buildings before they become damaged beyond repair. A successful blight inventory must be a living document, which can be updated and easily accessed online. A blight inventory can also be coupled with technical assistance, for property owners to receive support and information regarding the maintenance and activation of vacant buildings. The document also provides data about local vacancy and neglect, such as geographic locations and duration of neglect, which can help to inform initiatives to combat blight.

A local municipality can also establish financial penalties for persistent vacancy and tax delinquent properties, coupled with exemptions for property owners who participate in temporary activation of their buildings' vacant spaces. Municipal and economic development agencies can coordinate efforts with community groups and the county economic development agency to temporarily activate buildings.

Monessen created a citywide inventory of blighted properties in 2019. This project was executed by the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development. The blight inventory is a map of properties considered to be dilapidated, abandoned, and sometimes vacant, which may pose a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Monessen's 2020 Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations for prevention, remediation and redevelopment of blighted properties. Prevention strategies include improving record keeping and tracking of code enforcement, so that the blight inventory can be updated more easily. The plan also recommends employing the completed blight inventory as a resource to establish a Blighted Property Review Committee and develop a program that offers neighbors an option to obtain adjacent vacant lots.

A blight inventory could be implemented in other communities that are experiencing vacancy and neglect. Proven alternative blight management strategies also include local code enforcement, greening programs, façade improvement programs, and public art and mural programs.

Proven Blight Remediation Strategies in Historic Communities Other Than Demolition

A blighted property is a structure or space that no longer has value as a social good, economic commodity, or livable spaceⁱ. The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines blight as when a structure “exhibits objectively determinable signs of deterioration sufficient to constitute a threat to human health, safety, and public welfare.”ⁱⁱ Urban renewal programs in the 1950s and 1960s addressed blight with widespread demolition. These clearances disproportionately targeted African American neighborhoods. The urban renewal programs removed and displaced communities without addressing the ongoing problem of poor housing conditions. Blight removal does not necessarily equate to demolition. Today, rather than demolish blighted buildings, communities are launching alternative blight-management campaigns. Proven alternative blight management strategies include local code enforcement, greening and public art programs, and mothballing. Each of these is discussed below.

Local code enforcement programs inspect and take administrative and judicial actions, to ensure that buildings are in compliance with safety codes. Many local governments require property owners and managers to register their vacant properties and monitor their condition. Local real property information databases can assist with organizing and managing data related to tax and mortgage foreclosure information about properties, as well as water utility shutoffs. Many states and counties, including the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Washington County, and Westmoreland County, authorize land bank authorities to acquire, sell and redevelop tax delinquent properties.

Greening and community art programs help to enhance a vacant, underutilized or deteriorated building or lot, in order to protect the neighborhood from falling into a cycle of further disinvestment and neglect. In a greening program, local organizations clean and green vacant or underutilized lots or yards. Greening programs provide ecosystem benefits, a greater sense of safety and wellness, and storm water retention. Groundwork USA is a national nonprofit that supports local greening strategies. Detroit’s “Field Guide for Working with Lots” and Baltimore’s “Green Pattern Book” were created in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, and are valuable resources for other communities. Public murals are another established method of temporarily improving and activating a neglected property. In the South Allison Hill neighborhood of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, community members created murals on 13 vacant, city-owned propertiesⁱⁱⁱ.

i: Vacant Property Research Network, 2022. Available at vacantpropertyresearch.com

ii: HUDExchange website. Accessed 2022 at www.hudexchange.info.

iii: Currents: Penn State Harrisburg. February 2, 2015. Fighting Blight, through art and action.

As described in an article for the Journal of Urban Research, community involvement in the planning and implementation stages of an art initiative is vital to its long-term success^{iv}.

Interactive public art can also enliven a commercial corridor’s vacant buildings. In Frederick, Maryland, free-standing façades along the Market Street commercial corridor were transformed into an open air theater and nature space, known as the Sky Stage project. The Sky Stage project was led by the Frederick Arts Council and artist Heather Theresa Clark. The project featured a 100-seat open air theater with wooden bleachers and grass behind one façade, and sculptural landforms representing the local Catocin Mountain range, behind another façade. The buildings behind the façades were demolished by the city in 2000. The interactive art project aimed to draw attention to blighted properties in town and draw new energy to the commercial corridor.

Mothballing is another form of blight remediation. Mothballing is the process of deactivating a building in order to preserve the structure in its current state until funds are procured and a reuse is identified for the building’s full rehabilitation^v. A building is structurally stabilized, protected from further decay, adequately ventilated, and secured from vandals and natural disasters. A successful mothballing program will also often develop a maintenance and monitoring plan, including notifying the fire and police departments^{vi}.

Many communities procure blight remediation funding from HUD, and must comply with HUD’s criteria for Low Mod objective which generally does not support shoring up unoccupied buildings. However, communities could target HUD funding under the Slum and Blight objective, rental rehabilitation programs and other preservation-adjacent programs.

Planning is also a vital component of blight removal. Municipalities and their partners can inventory historic resources and prioritize the historic properties that add value to a local economic development strategy. Communities can plan for approaches to blight remediation that enable demolition in some areas while targeting certain areas for blight remediation strategies that do not entail demolition, such as code enforcement, greening and art programming, and mothballing.

iv: Journal of Urban Research. 2015. Public Art Beyond Downtown: Assessing Art Initiatives on the Northwest Side of Chicago.

v: Park, Sharon. “Preservation Brief 31: Mothballing Historic Buildings.” National Park Service. www.nps.gov

vi: Ibid.

