

Venango County Comprehensive Plan 2024: Planning Tomorrow Together

VOLUME 1

Topics - Priorities - Goals - Actions

Adopted: October 2024



VENANGO COUNTY
• PENNSYLVANIA •

Prepared by the Venango County Regional Planning Commission with
assistance from:



**THE
EADS
GROUP**

The preparation of this Plan was financed in part through a Municipal Assistance Program grant administered by the Governor's Center for Local Government Services, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.



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RESOLUTION 2024 - 10

ADOPTION OF THE 2024 VENANGO COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A resolution adopting the Venango County Comprehensive Plan Update, dated October 2024, as prepared by the Venango County Planning Commission and facilitated by The EADS Group, Inc.

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) requires that County comprehensive plans be updated every ten (10) years; and

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

WHEREAS, the Venango County Regional Planning Commission coordinated the preparation of the Venango County Comprehensive Plan Update that has been published in two (2) documents, entitled Volume 1: Topics – Priorities – Goals – Actions and Volume 2: Community Survey and Engagement Session Summaries, both dated October 2024 and comprised of maps, charts, textual matter and narratives, and other matters that form the whole of the County Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, the Venango County Regional Planning Commission conducted a robust and inclusive public participation and engagement process; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Venango County Comprehensive Plan Update was submitted to school districts within and contiguous to Venango County, and contiguous counties and was otherwise made publicly available for municipal and citizen review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the Venango County Regional Planning Commission adhered to the Public Meeting and Public Hearing requirements of the MPC in finalizing the County Plan Update; and

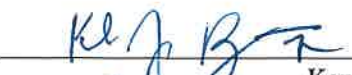
WHEREAS, the Venango County Regional Planning Commission duly noted and considered all public comments received in finalizing the County Plan Update; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the County Commissioners of Venango County hereby adopt the Venango County Comprehensive Plan Update that has been published in two (2) documents, entitled Volume 1: Topics – Priorities – Goals – Actions and Volume 2: Community Survey and Engagement Session Summaries, both dated October 2024 and comprised of maps, charts, textual matter and narratives, and other matters that form the whole of the County Plan Update and fulfills County responsibilities under the MPC.



BOARD OF VENANGO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


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ATTEST:


Bridey G. Shawgo, Chief Clerk

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Venango County Comprehensive Plan was prepared by a dedicated Planning Team consisting of the Venango County Commissioners, Venango County Regional Planning Commission and staff, Project Steering Committee members and Focus Group participants. The EADS Group and UpStreet Architects assisted Venango County to prepare this Plan.

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INTRODUCTION

The Venango County Comprehensive Plan is crafted by and for the people of Venango County. This Plan aims to strike a balance between enhancing the county's best qualities, establishing new opportunities, and addressing issues that detract from the Venango County experience.

Venango County competes with other counties and regions to attract new businesses, jobs, residents, visitors, and investment dollars. The Plan focuses on the resources, assets, and opportunities that differentiate Venango County from its neighbors. Guided by the principle that "Venango County is Open for Business," the County seeks to attract new business and job opportunities, improve its communities, and enhance its recreational, cultural, and tourism assets. The Plan provides strategies to increase the county's ability to attract and create jobs, foster healthy and vibrant communities, and focus resources on recreational and tourism opportunities.

The goals and actions in this Plan are designed to make Venango County a desirable destination for existing businesses and residents, as well as new businesses, residents and visitors.

PURPOSE

What is the Purpose of the Plan

- The Plan communicates the actions needed to address Venango County priorities. It creates a unified direction for the county to make improvements and achieve desired economic, community, recreation and tourism goals. The purpose is also to establish a roadmap for investments, support grant funding applications, and justify the use of resources.

USE

How to Use the Plan

- The Venango County Comprehensive Plan is a tool used by County departments, municipal governments, agencies, organizations, businesses and residents to align their actions, resources, and funding decisions, towards creating a stronger and more competitive Venango County.

VALUE

Why Have the Plan

- The value of the updated Venango County Plan lies in the consensus from County Commissioners, other elected and appointed officials, Regional Planning Commission staff, Focus Group participants, residents, and other stakeholders on the Priorities, Goals and Actions included in this Plan, and their commitment to work together to achieve desired outcomes for Venango County.

Planning Approach

A purposeful planning approach was followed to create the Venango County Comprehensive Plan. A straightforward set of principles guided the planning process.

FOCUSED

Issues, Assets and Solutions

- The planning approach relied heavily on public engagement and collaboration among the Venango County Regional Planning Commission Staff, the Project Steering Committee, and Focus Groups to identify issues, assets, and achievable solutions for Venango County. Engagement with officials, residents, and stakeholders was crucial to this planning process.

IMPLEMENTATION

Partners and Collaboration

- The Plan was prepared to ensure that desired actions would be completed and improvements achieved. The completion of this document marks the beginning of the implementation phase. County Commissioners, the Venango County Regional Planning Commission and staff, members of the Project Steering Committee and Focus Groups, municipal leaders and residents will partner together and will collaborate on implementation efforts.

UPDATES

A Living Document

- The Plan is designed to be a living document that evolves to meet the changing needs of the County. It is not an unchangeable, fixed, to-do list. It is expected that the Priorities, Goals, and Actions are revisited regularly, evaluated and updated as needed. It is okay if sections of this Plan are revised and replaced annually to keep pace with new opportunities, funding sources, approaches and partnerships.

Plan Organization

The Plan is organized in a logical way that highlights its progression from initial input to action strategies. The clear and concise organization ensures that County officials, County staff, municipal leaders, residents and other stakeholders can easily understand and follow the development process and the rationale behind the identified Topics, Priorities, Goals and Actions.

‘Where We Are’ – Trends and Conditions:

This section provides an overview of the current state of Venango County, including basic demographic, economic and housing trends and conditions.

‘What We Heard’ – Community Engagement:

This section summarizes the input and feedback received from the public and stakeholders during the planning process. It highlights the key issues, concerns, and aspirations of the community.

‘What We Want’ – Topics:

This section outlines the main Topics and areas of focus that emerged from the community engagement process. The Topics set the foundation for the Priorities and Goals.

‘What We Will Do’ – Priorities:

This section identifies the key Priorities for Venango County based on the analysis of current conditions and community input. They further define wanted outcomes and establishes a clear direction for the County's future development.

‘How Will We Do It’ – Goals and Actions:

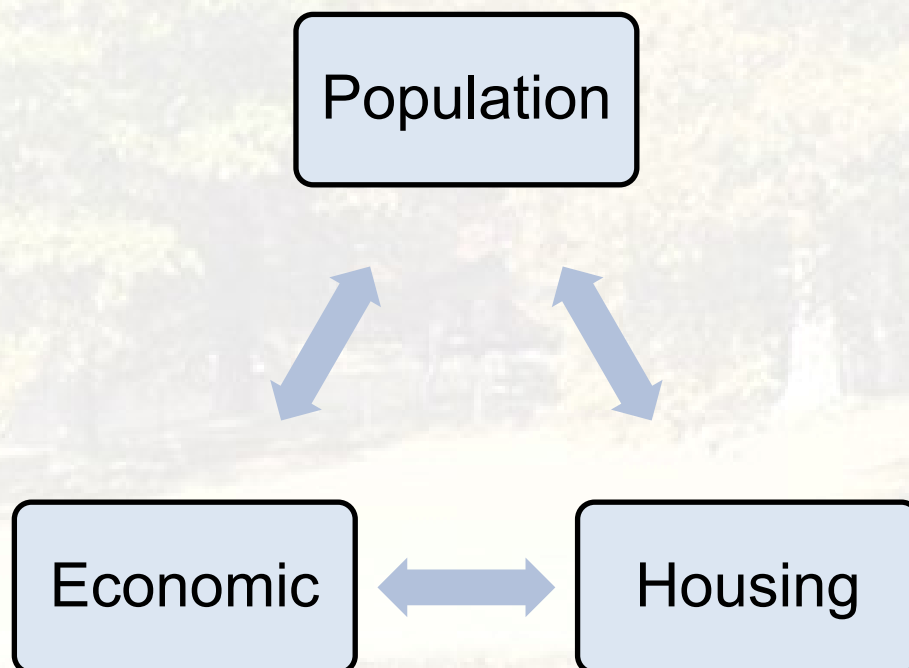
This section provides specific Goals and Actions to achieve the identified Priorities. It includes strategies, initiatives, and projects that will help the County accomplish wanted outcomes. It also includes guidance on Next Steps in the implementation process.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

“Where We Are”

The following section provides concise profiles on conditions and trends in Venango County. This section is not a massive collection of regurgitated data and information. There are other planning documents and studies prepared by the County that can be reviewed for more detailed and in-depth types of information and data. This section provides a glimpse at trends and conditions to be aware of in the County. Information on the following is included:

- Population changes in terms of numbers, age, household and family characteristics.
- Economic changes in terms of workforce, transportation, income, employment, occupation and education characteristics.
- Housing changes in terms of occupancy, units, values, type and age characteristics.



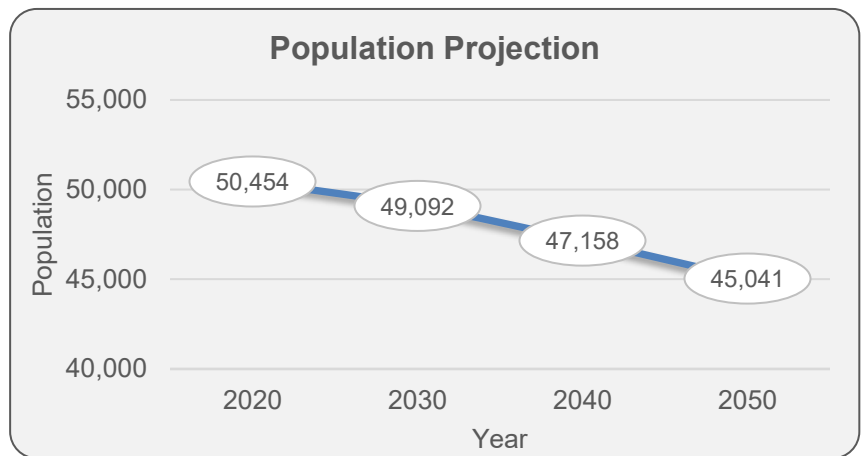
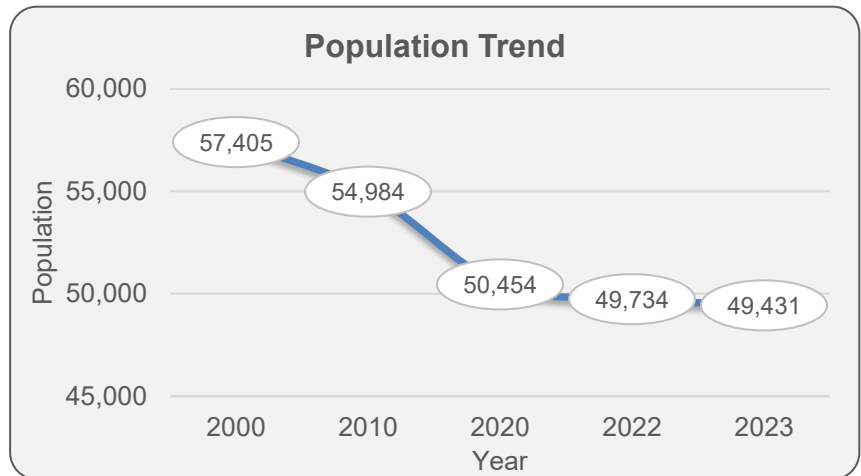
Current conditions and trends were considered as the Action Strategies were being developed.

It is important to understand how population, economic and housing factors have been changing over time. In many cases, this gives those involved with implementing this Plan evidence and justification for how and why implementation decisions are made. It also helps to provide a baseline for measuring how implementing the Plan has positively helped the County and residents.

Population Profile

Venango County has experienced population declines over the past 20+ years. The County's population decreased by approximately 6,951 persons (12%) between 2000 and 2020. Current estimates indicate the County lost approximately 1,023 persons (2.0%) since 2020. The County is projected to lose approximately another 5,000 residents by 2050.

The impact of population loss goes beyond just having less residents. Population declines put an economic strain on the County and every community in the County. Having less qualified workers will directly impact the economic potential of the County. The County and its communities may also suffer from having fewer residents to support local programs and events and fewer residents to fill leadership positions in groups and organizations.



The table below highlights population trends in comparison to surrounding Counties. Except for Warren County, Venango County has the lowest population total in the surrounding region. The more concerning trend is the percentage of population decline experienced in Venango County has outpaced surrounding Counties. A reverse in population declines is needed in the County.

Population Trends						% Change	% Change
County	2000	2010	2020	2022 (est.)	2023 (est.)	2000-2020	2020-2023
Venango County	57,405	54,984	50,454	49,734	49,431	(12.1%)	(2.0%)
Crawford County	90,306	88,765	83,938	82,405	82,001	(7.1%)	(2.3%)
Butler County	174,444	183,862	193,763	197,368	198,413	11.1%	2.4%
Warren County	43,716	41,815	38,587	37,818	37,572	(11.7%)	(2.6%)
Mercer County	120,211	116,638	110,652	109,137	108,503	(7.9%)	(1.9%)

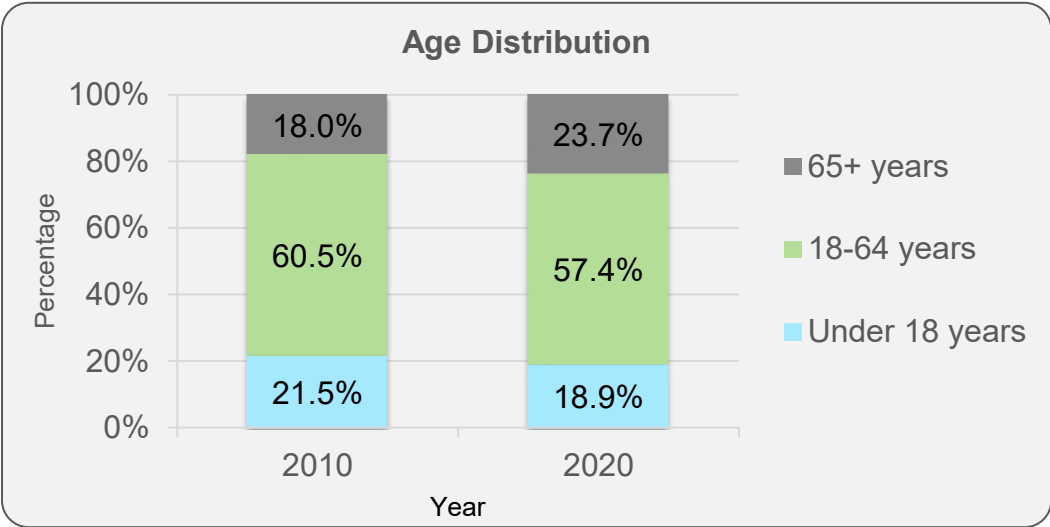
source: US Decennial Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Age

Venango County’s population is also gradually getting older. The median age of County residents is 47.6. This is well above the median age (40.8) of residents across Pennsylvania. It is concerning that the percentage of the County’s population over 65 years of age has increased from 18% in 2010 to 23.7% in 2020. And conversely, the percentage of residents under 18 years of age has dropped from 21.5% in 2010 to 18.9% in 2020. Unfortunately, this aging trend is typical of most counties throughout northwestern Pennsylvania.

Age	2010	2020
Under 18 years	21.5%	18.9%
18-64 years	60.5%	57.4%
65+ years	18.0%	23.7%

source: US Decennial Census



source: US Decennial Census

Economic Profile

This subsection profiles various economic characteristics in Venango County.

County Workforce

There are approximately 27,453 persons aged 16 years or older in Venango County's workforce. Approximately 73.4% of the County's workforce consists of Venango County residents.

Place of Work

Approximately 74% of County residents in the workforce are employed within the County. Approximately 26% of County residents work outside of Venango County. Approximately 18% of County residents have a job within 10 minutes of their home; 48% of residents work 10 to 24 minutes from their homes; and 20% work within 44 minutes of their home. Approximately 14% of residents travel over 45 minutes to their place of work. The average commute time is 24 minutes.

Transportation to Work

Over 88% of residents use a car, truck or van to commute to work. The remainder use public transportation, walk/bike or work at home.

Transportation Mode	
Car, Truck or Van	88.5%
Drove alone	79.0%
Carpooled	9.5%
Work at Home	7.6%
Walk/Bicycle	2.7%
Public Transportation	0.5%
Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)	24.2

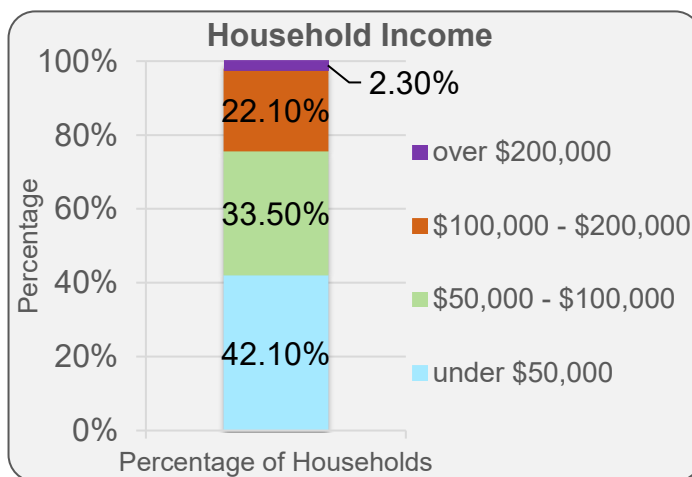
source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

Income

A high percentage (42.1%) of County households earn under \$50,000 a year, while just over 2% earn over \$200,000 a year. The median household income is just under \$60,000 a year. The median household income has risen 49% since 2010.

Factor	2010	2020
Median Household Income	\$39,812	\$59,278

source: US Decennial Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



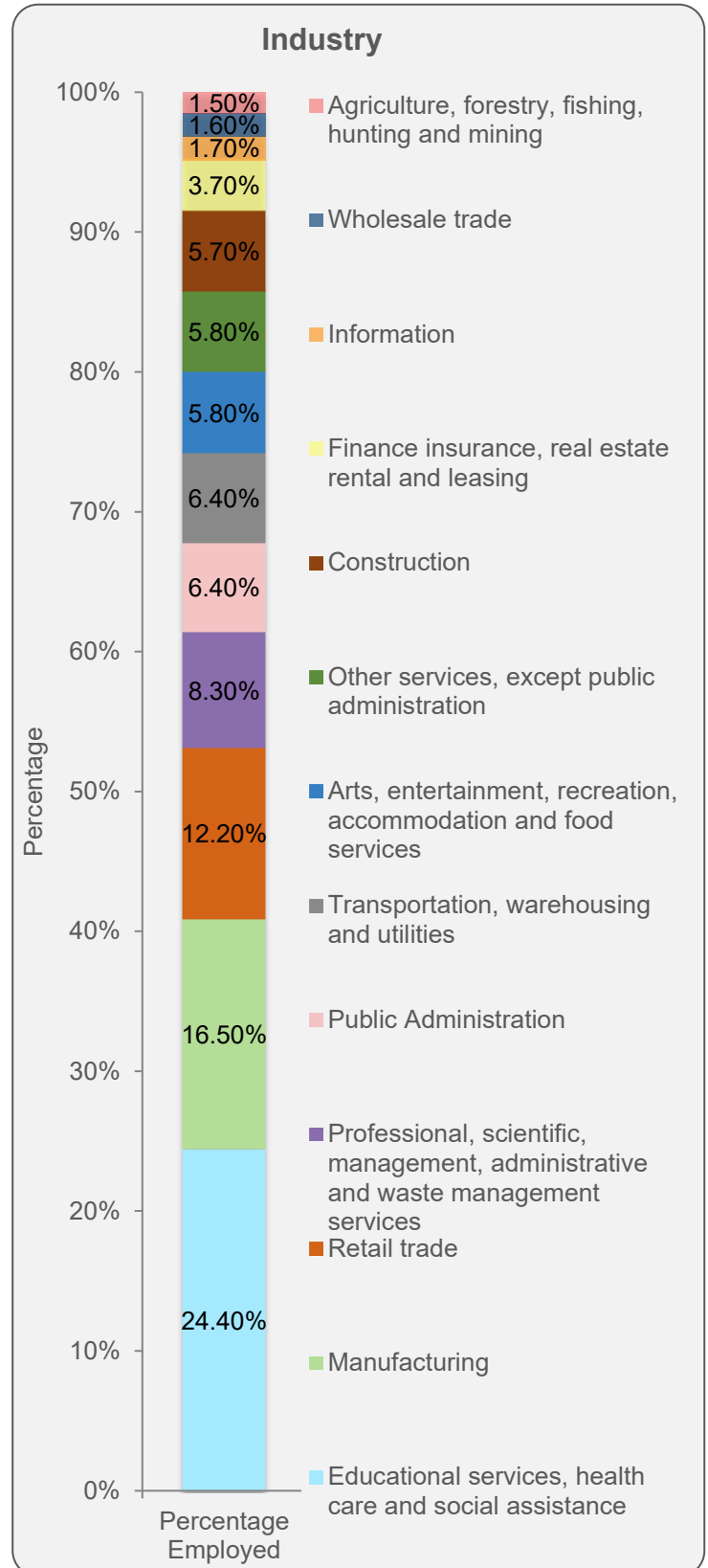
source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

Type of Employment

The table below and the graph to the right show the number of County residents employed in a range of industries. The data suggests a relatively good level of economic stability and some diversification among areas of employment. Of note is the relatively high percentage (24.4%) of employees within the educational, health care and social assistance category. Over 10% of the employed residents work in the manufacturing and retail trade sectors.

Industry Description	#	%
Educational services, health care and social assistance	5,293	24.4%
Manufacturing	3,595	16.5%
Retail trade	2,656	12.2%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	1,803	8.3%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	1,396	6.4%
Public Administration	1,373	6.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	1,256	5.8%
Other services, except public administration	1,260	5.8%
Construction	1,248	5.7%
Finance, insurance, real estate rental and leasing	804	3.7%
Information	374	1.7%
Wholesale trade	354	1.6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	321	1.5%

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

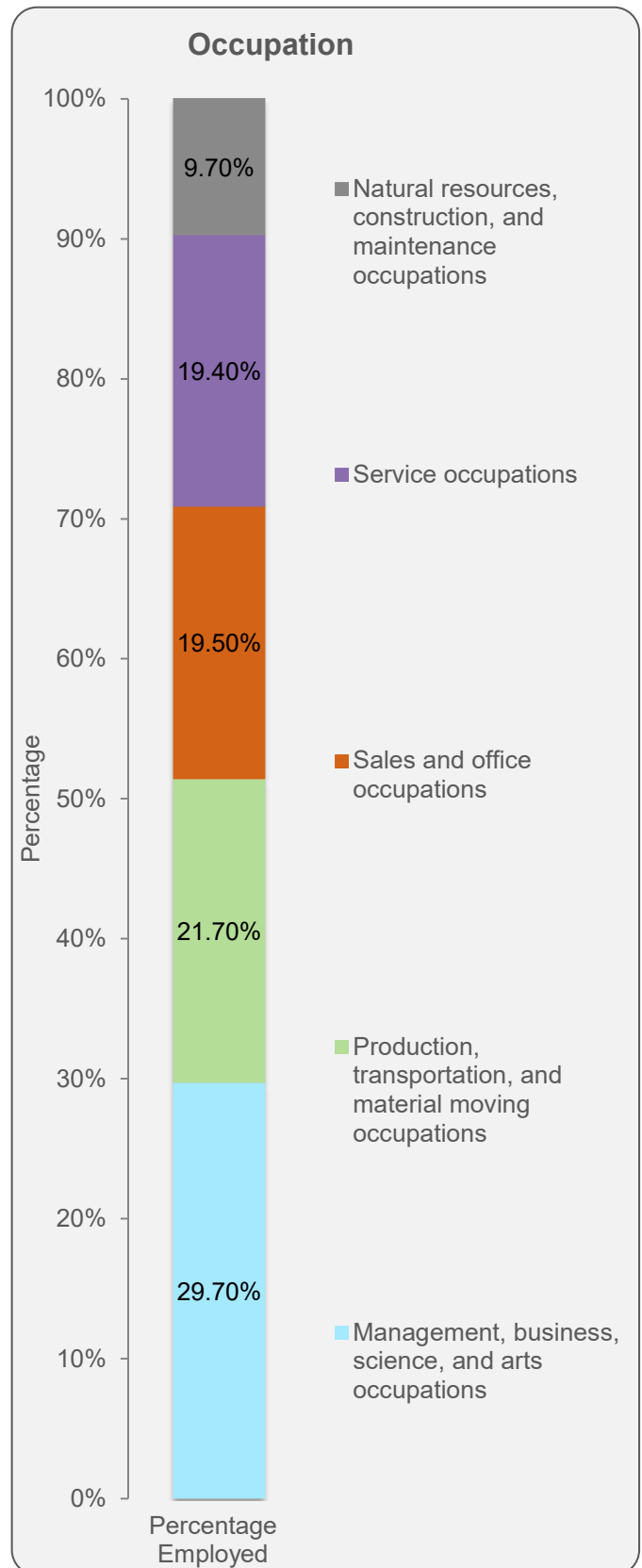


Type of Occupation

The table below and the graph to the right illustrate the number of County residents employed in certain types of occupations. Nearly 30% of residents are in some type of management, business, service, or an arts occupation.

Industry Description	#	%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	6,448	29.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	4,716	21.7%
Sales and office occupations	4,243	19.5%
Service occupations	4,217	19.4%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	2,109	9.7%

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

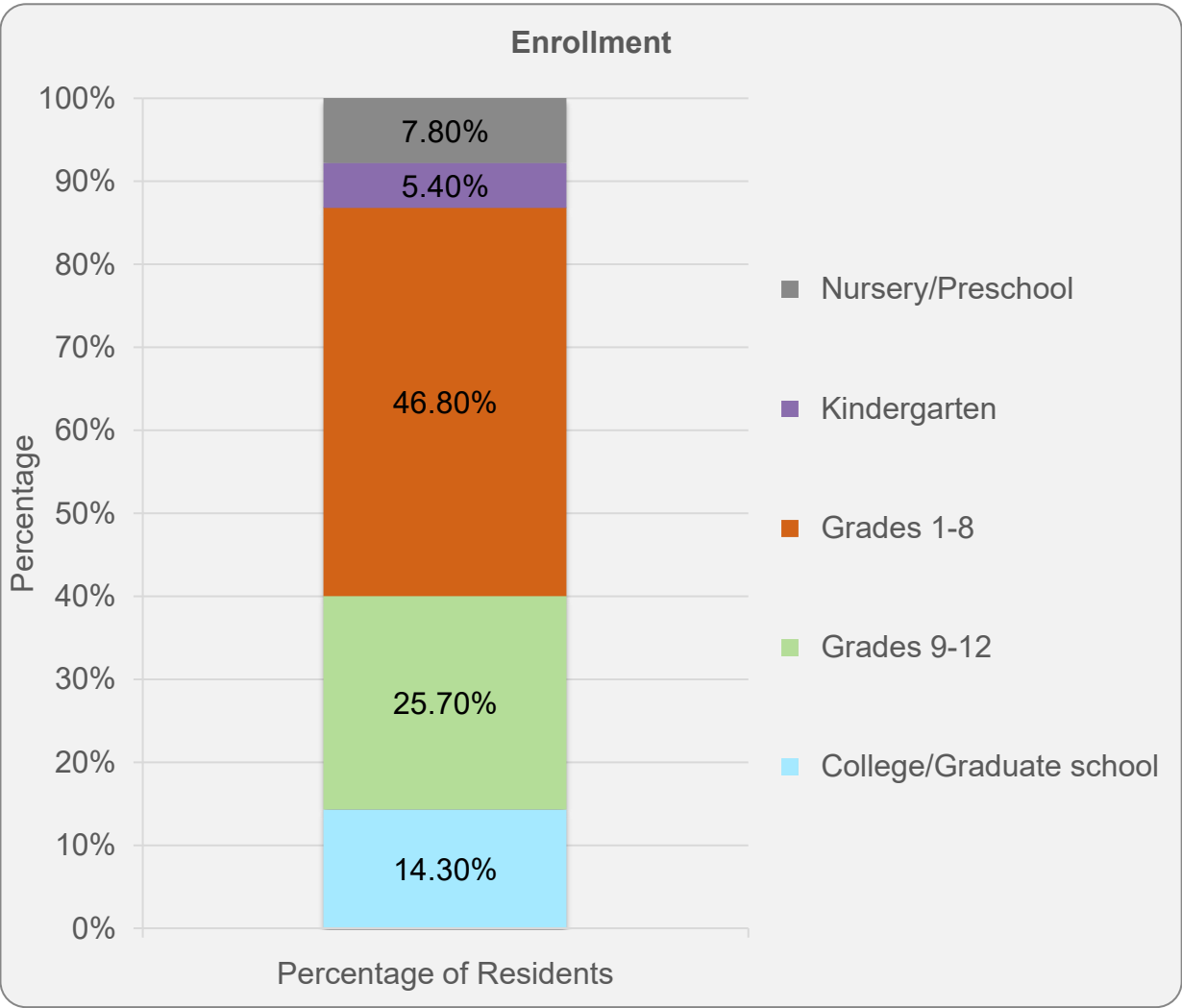


Educational Enrollment

The following highlights educational enrollment information for Venango County. The County has approximately 8,797 residents enrolled in school. Of those, just over 13% are in nursery/preschool or kindergarten. Nearly 47% of students are in grades 1-8 and approximately 26% are in grades 9-12. Just over 14% of residents are enrolled in a College or graduate program.

Enrollment	
Nursery/Preschool	7.8%
Kindergarten	5.4%
Grades 1-8	46.8%
Grades 9-12	25.7%
College/Graduate School	14.3%

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates -



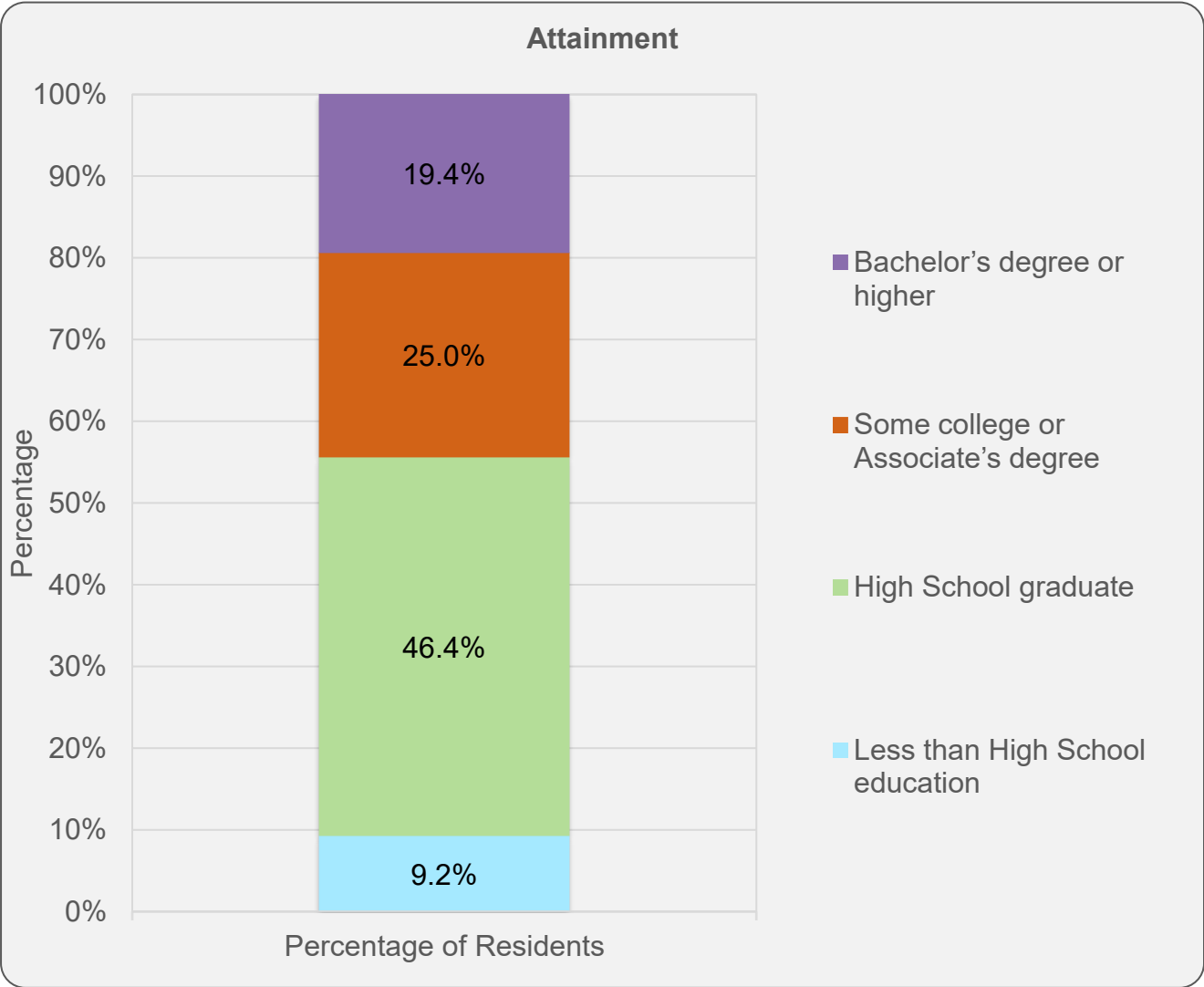
source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

Educational Attainment

The following highlights educational attainment information for Venango County. The County has a relatively low percentage of residents who have less than a high school education. The percentage of residents who have some college experience or an Associate’s Degree (25.0%) is less than residents who have a high school education (46.4%).

Attainment	
Less than High School education	9.2%
High School graduate	46.4%
Some College or Associate’s degree	25.0%
Bachelor’s degree or higher	19.4%

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022



source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

Housing profile

This subsection profiles various characteristics of the housing stock in Venango County.

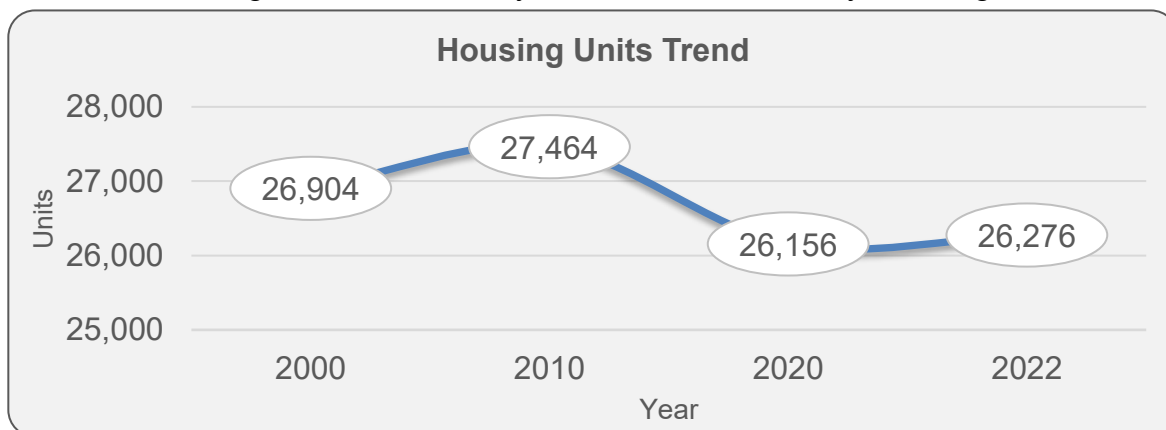
Housing Units and Occupancy

There are approximately 26,276 housing units in the County. Just over 80% of the housing units are occupied. 75% of the occupied units are owner-occupied and 25% are rental units.

Housing Units	
Total Housing Units	26,276
Occupied housing units	21,323 (81%)
Owner occupied units	16,024 (75%)
Renter occupied units	5,299 (25%)
Vacant housing units	4,953 (19%)

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

The number of housing units in the County has remained relatively unchanged since 2000.



source: US Decennial Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Households

A household is defined as being one or more persons, related or unrelated, living in the same dwelling unit. Married couple households have decreased since 2010, while nonfamily households have increased. Households that have a male or female householder with no spouse present have decreased slightly since 2010.

Factor	2010	2020
Married Couple Family Households	51.4%	50.3%
Male Householder, No Spouse Present	5.1%	5.0%
Female Householder, No Spouse Present	11.1%	9.7%
Nonfamily Household	32.4%	35.0%

source: US Decennial Census

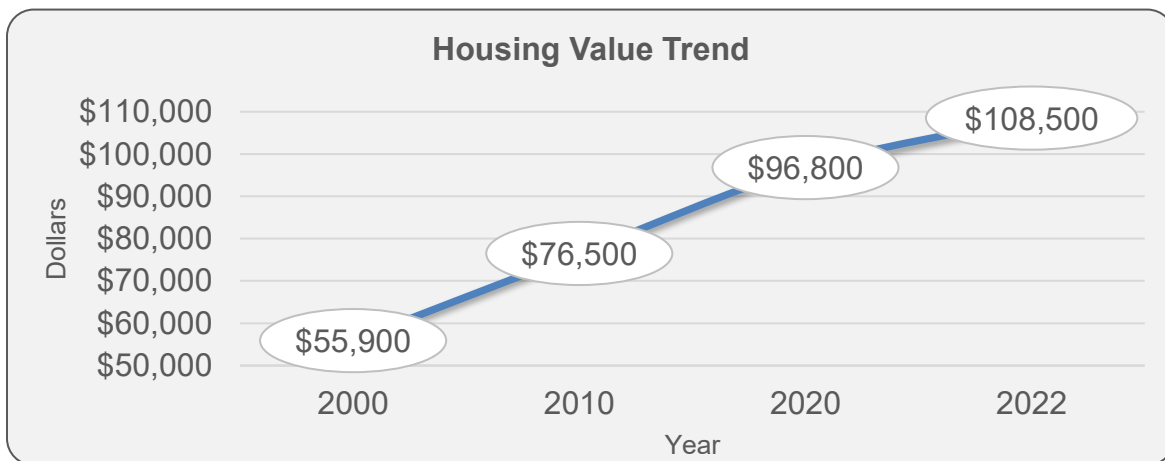
Housing Values

The median value of owner-occupied housing units in the County is \$108,500. Just under 50% of owner-occupied housing units are valued at less than \$100,000 (46.1%).

Housing Values	
Under \$100,000	46.1%
\$100,000 - \$200,000	33.9%
\$200,000 - \$300,000	13.2%
\$300,000 - \$500,000	4.9%
More than - \$500,000	1.4%
Median Value	\$108,500

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

Housing values have increased by nearly 95% since 2000.



source: US Decennial Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Housing Characteristics

There are more Single-family detached homes (78.4%) found in the County, followed by mobile homes at 10.5%, multi-units at 9.8% and single-family attached units at 1.3%.

Units in Structure	
1-unit, detached	78.4%
1-unit, attached	1.3%
2 or more units	9.8%
Mobile home	10.5%

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

Nearly 75% of the homes are over 60 years old. Most residential structures are at least 85 years old, with 33% being constructed in 1939 or earlier. Only 11.5 % were constructed after 2000 and only 3% were built since 2010.

Year Structure Built	
2010 or later	3.0%
2000 to 2009	8.5%
1980 to 1999	14.3%
1960 to 1979	23.4%
1940 to 1959	17.8%
Built 1939 or earlier	33.0%

source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - 2022

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Venango County was committed to having residents, County and municipal officials, County and regional agencies, organizations and other stakeholders involved in the planning process. A variety of options and opportunities were provided for obtaining community input and guidance as the Plan was being developed. The County was also committed to using the input and guidance to develop the Action Strategies included in this Plan. Connecting residents, agencies, community leaders and County officials to the planning process ensures a high level of ownership of the implementation efforts. The following highlights the engagement efforts completed for this Plan:

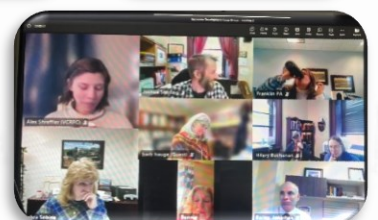
Steering Committee Meetings

Working Meetings with the Venango County Regional Planning Commission Staff

Focus Group Sessions

Community Education/Engagement Sessions

Community Survey Sessions



Steering Committee Meetings:

- Meeting #1 – Kick Off Meeting - October 26, 2022
Goals and wanted outcomes for the County's Comprehensive Plan update were discussed with Steering Committee members.
- Meeting #2 - January 4, 2023
Additional input on County needs and opportunities were gathered from Steering Committee members. Ways to gather input from the County residents, including using a Community Survey and having Education / Engagement Meetings, were discussed. Methods for promoting the Survey and Meetings were also identified.
- Meeting #3 - May 10, 2023
Summary of the Community Engagement events were shared and discussed. The meeting was also used to discuss how the Plan will be organized and to begin compiling an initial list of Plan Topics, Priorities and Goals.
- Meeting #4 - July 19, 2023
Further discussion on Plan Topics, Priorities and Goals was completed. An initial list of potential Action Items was reviewed.

Venango County Regional Planning Commission Staff – Working Meetings:

Several calls, on-line meetings and in-person gatherings with Venango County Regional Planning Commission Staff were completed to review, organize and refine Plan Themes, Topics, Goals, Priorities and Actions.

Focus Group Sessions:

Three (3) Focus Groups were convened to support development of the Action Strategies. Focus Group members were invited to participate based on their related advocacy, expertise and perspective on a particular Topic. Two (2) on-line sessions were held with each Focus Group.

Economic Development Focus Group

November 27, 2023
January 24, 2024

Community Revitalization Focus Group

November 29, 2023
January 25, 2024

Recreation and Tourism Focus Group

November 29, 2023
January 29, 2024

Focus group members were asked to review and comment on an initial set of Topics, Priorities, Goals and Actions developed by the County. The Focus Group sessions were instrumental in helping to identify implementation partners and to gain consensus on achievable goals and implementable action items.

Community Education/Engagement Sessions:

Open House public meetings were held in four (4) different areas within the County to gather community input.

Western Venango County Meeting
February 8, 2023 - City of Franklin

Eastern Venango County Meeting
February 15, 2023 - City of Oil City

Northern Venango County Meeting
February 22, 2023 – Cherrytree Township

Southern Venango County Meeting
March 1, 2023 - Clintonville

County Priorities – A thorough review of the suggestions, input and guidance received from participants at the Open House sessions revealed that residents want the following Priorities focused on in the Plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



Venango County
Pennsylvania



Provide your input...

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

WHEN & WHERE	WHAT
Western Venango County Meeting February 8, 4-6pm City of Franklin - 737 Elk Street	Venango County is updating our Comprehensive Plan. The Plan will provide action oriented strategies focused on top County priorities. It is vital that Residents, Community Organizations, Business/Industries, and Service Providers are meaningfully engaged as the Plan is being developed. Therefore, open house Community Engagement meetings are being held in four (4) different areas within the County to gather community input.
Eastern Venango County Meeting February 15, 4-6pm Oil City - National Transit Building, Great Room 206 Seneca Street	
Northern Venango County Meeting February 22, 4-6pm Titusville - Cherrytree Township Municipal Building 1311 Cherrytree Road	
Southern Venango County Meeting March 1, 4-6pm Clintonville - Clintonville Fire Hall 501 Emlenton Street	
Community input and suggestions are critical and necessary to this important Project! Join us and bring a friend!	

TOPICS

Feel free to join us anytime during the meetings. Representatives from the County, the Project Steering Committee and The EADS Group consultant team, will be available all through each meeting to talk with residents and to discuss the planning process, provide information, answer questions and to review expectations for the updated Plan.

The meetings will be fun, informative and interactive. Come prepared to discuss ways to improve Venango County!

Business and Jobs

core and direct actions to provide jobs and work force development improvements

Community Health and Wellness

housing, blight, recreation, connectivity, safety, services, sewer and water

Outdoor Recreation

recreation improvements, tourism, trails, local and regional connections, preserving open spaces

Community Survey:

An online Survey was prepared to gather input on priorities and actions wanted in the County. The Survey was open generally between February and April 2023. A total of 343 responses were received. The Survey was accessed using the following link and QR code. Hard copy paper versions of the Survey were also available.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Venango_County



Approximately 75% of the responders were in the adult (30-64) age group; 16% were older than 65 years of age; and 9% were in the young adult (18-29) age group. The range of responders also balanced out the types of responses received. Responses from County residents reflect direct quality of life issues and opportunities. Those coming from residents outside of the County reflect a visitor's experience in the County. Responses from younger residents are oriented towards more active types of community facilities, programming, and other improvements. Those representing older residents suggest more passive leisure types of facilities and improvements. While those middle-aged residents have an orientation focused on spending time with family and friends, leisure time activities, enjoying open spaces, and existing County amenities and assets. Together, the responses provide a good representation of resident's thoughts and feelings about Venango County.

County Priorities - The following highlights top Priorities identified in the Survey:

Jobs business/industrial/commercial/manufacturing opportunities, job development
Economic Development workforce development, training, work at home amenities
Broadband/Internet better availability, reliable service, more choices
Community Health connections, connectivity, safe routes, health resources and opportunities, active transportation focus, municipal cooperation, access to health foods.
Community Beautification blight removal, sidewalk repairs, more attractive communities
Tourism promote and expand existing natural and recreation resources

Detailed summaries of the Open House sessions and the Community Survey results are provided in Volume 2 of this Plan.

TOPICS

“What We Want”

The Venango County Regional Planning Commission and staff, residents, County Commissioners and municipal leaders, County departments and staff, County and regional agencies, organizations, commissions and authorities provided input and guidance during the planning process, and helped to identify improvements they want to see accomplished in the County.

A desire for the County to drive economic development and to be open for business and job creation was evident throughout the planning process. It was also evident that residents are proud of the County’s outdoor recreation and heritage resources and realize these resources can improve quality of life and economic conditions in the County. There is also an appreciation that strong, well-connected and healthy communities are important to the overall success of the County.

Input from the Venango County Regional Planning Commission staff and the Venango County Commissioners helped to evolve wanted improvements and outcomes into the following three (3) Topic Areas that the Venango County Comprehensive Plan addresses.

Economic Development - Business and Jobs



Community Empowerment and Revitalization



Recreation and Tourism



PRIORITIES

“What We Will Do”

The three (3) Topic Areas are rather broad on their own. Coordination with the Venango County Regional Planning Commission staff and a series of targeted Focus Group sessions were completed to gain consensus on the following top Priorities within each main Topic area.

Economic Development - Business and Jobs



Return Vacant and Underutilized Space to Productive Use
Provide Support for a Changing Local Economy

Community Empowerment and Revitalization



Stop the Spread of Blight
Support Inclusive Community Involvement for People of All Life Stages
Improve the Vitality of Communities

Recreation and Tourism



Increase Capacity to Attract Tourists and Visitors
Enhance Existing Parks, Trails and Water Resources
Honor the Heritage and Culture of the Region

ACTION STRATEGIES

“How We Will Do It”

Collaboration with the Venango County Planning Commission staff and guidance from the Focus Group sessions was used to identify and evolve a set of Priorities into realistic Goals and achievable Actions. The following section presents Actions Strategies for the County and its partners to implement over the next ten (10) years. The Action Strategies are not standalone items. There is overlap and connections among them. For example, improving Recreation and Tourism in the County will also improve Economic conditions. Creating healthier communities will also improve Recreation conditions in the County. Improving Economic Conditions will make the County and its communities' better destinations. A certain amount of flexibility should also be considered as implementation occurs. This allows the County to adjust and modify the Strategies to take advantage of new opportunities, new partners and changing conditions.

The following approach guided the development of the Action Strategies:

**Identified
Topic Areas**

**Evolved Topic
Areas into
Priorities**

**Developed Priority
Goals and Action
Items**



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS AND JOBS - STRATEGY

Results of the Community Engagement process show that addressing jobs and economic development are top County priorities. Input received from the Community Survey and Community meetings indicated that core and direct actions to provide jobs are necessary in the County. Actions that will support business, industrial, commercial and manufacturing employment opportunities, create safe and welcoming areas for investment, workforce development and job training programs are wanted.

Venango County will work with its Economic Development Agency, business owners, merchants, law enforcement and emergency services providers, community volunteers and leaders to promote and grow the economic mobility and viability of the County. Venango County will also partner with the following to implement the Economic Development Action Strategy.

- ⊙ Venango County Commissioners
- ⊙ Venango County Regional Planning Commission
- ⊙ Venango County Economic Development Authority
- ⊙ Venango County Land Bank
- ⊙ UPMC Northwest
- ⊙ Franklin Industrial & Commercial Development Authority
- ⊙ Oil Region Alliance
- ⊙ PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED)
- ⊙ Private and Public Property Owners
- ⊙ Cranberry Economic Development Agency
- ⊙ Northwest PA Regional Planning & Development Commission
- ⊙ Local Municipal Officials
- ⊙ Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, PennWest Clarion-Venango Campus, Erie Center for Arts & Technology
- ⊙ Industry and Businesses
- ⊙ Venango County Airport Representatives
- ⊙ PREP Program Members
- ⊙ Northwest Workforce Development Board
- ⊙ Small Business Jumpstart and Small Business Development Centers
- ⊙ Venango Area Chamber of Commerce
- ⊙ Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce

Venango County's Economic Development Strategy focuses on two (2) Priorities and seven (7) Goals. Recommended Action Items for achieving the Priorities and Goals are provided on the following pages. The following action items will help build the business climate and economic draw of Venango County.

Priority - Return Vacant and Underutilized Space to Productive Use

- ⦿ Goal 1 - Revitalize and Redevelop Existing Spaces
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Desirable Land and Buildings for New Commercial and Industrial Use
- ⦿ Goal 3 - Upper-Story Development

Priority - Provide Support for a Changing Local Economy

- ⦿ Goal 1 - Robust Workforce and Improved Job Accessibility and Economic Mobility
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Appealing Economic Development Corridors
- ⦿ Goal 3 - Balance Amount of Private and Public Land
- ⦿ Goal 4 - Sustain Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

Priority - Return Vacant and Underutilized Space to Productive Use

Goal 1 - Revitalize and Redevelop Existing Spaces

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Develop and maintain inventory of vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial land and buildings.
2. Prioritize redevelopment of the following buildings and land: Emlenton Business Park, 100 Seneca, Polk Center and its surrounding lands, Wildcat Mansion, Cranberry Mall, Phoenix Investors-Joy Plant #1, JM Building, the former PennWest campus, Sandycreek Industrial Park, Fuchs site, Kraft Dahlstrom, Oil City Riverfront, National Transit Building, and Justus Park.

Goal 2 - Desirable Land and Buildings for New Commercial and Industrial Use

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Develop an authoritative infrastructure data repository.
2. Complete reuse planning on vacant lots to facilitate new development.
3. Rehabilitate brownfield properties and prioritize those that would benefit Environmental Justice areas.
4. Provide support to municipal authorities on funding applications to complete utility/infrastructure expansion and improvement projects throughout the County.
5. Work with local law enforcement, fire departments and other public safety providers to create desirable areas in which to invest.

Goal 3 - Upper-Story Development

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Provide equitable access to code compliance resources (i.e. elevators, fire suppression, second means of egress, etc.).
2. Provide access to economic development financing tools for upper-story development.

Priority – Provide Support for a Changing Local Economy

🕒 Goal 1 – Robust Workforce and Improved Job Accessibility and Economic Mobility

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Develop partnerships with Post Secondary/Training/Trade Schools, such as the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College, the former PennWest Clarion-Venango Campus, Erie Center for Arts & Technology, and others to offer targeted student training opportunities.
2. Develop partnerships with Job Providers (Industry) to connect job opportunities with Job Seekers (Residents).
3. Work with transportation providers to improve transportation options for students and employees who do not have a vehicle or other methods of reliable transportation.
4. Work with various County partners and the DCED to develop programs (job fairs, presentations, field trips, etc.) to engage with elementary school students and parents – use case studies to show career opportunities in the County.
5. Work with various County partners to create mentorship and apprenticeship programs.
6. Increase access to work-at-home and remote work opportunities by expanding the broadband network and promoting affordable access to broadband internet for all residents, especially those unserved and underserved.
7. Develop quality workforce housing opportunities.
8. Partner with existing programs to help high school students successfully transition into the workforce.

🕒 Goal 2 - Appealing Economic Development Corridors

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Prioritize development within specific corridors (i.e. I- 80 Interchange Corridors, Route 8 Corridor, etc.).
2. Work with existing businesses, property owners and County partners to help procure and install Electric Vehicle charging stations and supporting infrastructure.
3. Work with municipal authorities to provide a reliable supply of water, to expand sewer/water infrastructure and to enhance other essential utilities.
4. Expand use of the Venango County Airport according to its most recently adopted Master Plan and capitalize on the Airport's Foreign Trade Zone.

Priority – Provide Support for a Changing Local Economy (cont.)

⦿ Goal 3 - Balance Amount of Private and Public Land

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Encourage no net loss of private land to public (state & federal) ownership.
2. Establish standards for balancing the amount and development of private and public lands.

⦿ Goal 4 - Sustain Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Partner with existing efforts, such as the PREP Program, Northwest Workforce Development Board, Small Business Jumpstart, University Small Business Development Centers, Venango Area Chamber, Franklin Area Chamber and other similar organizations to help potential business owners navigate the business planning and start up process – and to connect them to local resources and municipal opportunities.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

Results of the Community Engagement process show that addressing Community Health and Community level improvements are top County priorities. Input from the Community Survey and Public Meetings suggests that community connections and connectivity, safe routes, health resources and opportunities, active transportation focus, municipal cooperation, access to reliable sources of water, healthy foods and related amenities are necessary at the Community level. Actions focused on blight removal, sidewalk repairs and related improvements that will result in more attractive communities are also wanted in the County.

Venango County will collaborate with community officials, local leaders, law enforcement, emergency services providers and other representatives to strengthen Venango County communities. Venango County will also partner with the following to implement the Community Empowerment and Revitalization Action Strategy.

- ⊙ Venango County Commissioners
- ⊙ Venango County Regional Planning Commission
- ⊙ Venango County Land Bank
- ⊙ Venango County Human Services
- ⊙ Venango Area Chamber of Commerce
- ⊙ Venango County Emergency Management Plan and Solid Waste programs
- ⊙ Northwest PA Regional Planning & Development Commission
- ⊙ Crawford Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
- ⊙ Local Municipal Officials
- ⊙ PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED)
- ⊙ PennDOT, District 1-0
- ⊙ Bridge Builders Community Foundation
- ⊙ McElhattan Foundation
- ⊙ United Way of Venango County
- ⊙ Non-Profit Organizations
- ⊙ Nursery or Preschool Programs
- ⊙ Public Water Service Providers
- ⊙ PA Heart & Soul Program
- ⊙ Local Businesses
- ⊙ Venango County School Districts

Venango County's Community Empowerment and Revitalization Strategy focuses on three (3) Priorities and eight (8) Goals. Recommended Action Items for achieving the Priorities and Goals are provided on the following pages. The following action items will help build stronger and more attractive Venango County communities.

Priority – Stop the Spread of Blight

- ⦿ Goal 1 - Anti-Blight Strategy
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Rehabilitation of Blighted Residential Structures to Improve the Housing Market

Priority – Support Inclusive Community Involvement for People of All Life-Stages

- ⦿ Goal 1 - Increased Opportunities for Aging-In-Place
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Increased Enrollment in Nursery or Preschool Programs
- ⦿ Goal 3 - Multi-Generational Communities

Priority – Improve the Vitality of Communities Throughout the County

- ⦿ Goal 1 - Clean, Green and Beautified Communities
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Increased Quality of Life Benefits and Stability for Families and Individuals
- ⦿ Goal 3 - Universal Access to Critical Services and Resources

Priority - Stop the Spread of Blight

⦿ Goal 1 - Anti-Blight Strategy

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Prepare a blight remediation toolbox for municipalities and non-profits – including criteria for evaluating blighted buildings, improving public safety, a guide for ‘tackling blight in your community’, guidance for shared property maintenance and building code enforcement services (model after Crawford County resource).
2. Support the efforts of the Venango County Land Bank to acquire, maintain, demolish or improve properties.

⦿ Goal 2 - Rehabilitation of Blighted Residential Structures to Improve the Housing Market

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Provide resources to support the owner-occupied home rehab program.
2. Provide resources to support a rental property rehab program.
3. Update the Countywide Housing Market Study to identify short- and long-term housing goals and to show locations where to prioritize funding.

Priority - Support Inclusive Community Involvement for People of All Life-Stages

⦿ Goal 1 - Increased Opportunities for Aging-In-Place

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Improve transportation access to senior centers and other senior used resources.
2. Develop programs, activities, events to keep seniors physically active.
3. Increase the diversity of housing options for seniors – modify current living spaces to improve accessibility and develop special 55+ communities.
4. Develop and promote programs to assist with routine home maintenance.
5. Improve the Digital Literacy of 55+ residents using workshops, programs, and improved broadband access.

⦿ Goal 2 - Increased Enrollment in Nursery or Preschool Programs

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Expand the availability of- and access to- affordable childcare options.
2. Support the expansion of existing- and the development of new- childcare centers and programs.

⦿ Goal 3 - Multi-Generational Communities

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Create and foster local programs that engage the civic participation of all age ranges, with a focus on youth and the elderly.
2. Work with community leaders, local law enforcement, fire departments and other public safety providers to make their communities safer and more accessible for children, teenagers, young families, adults, and seniors.
3. Complete Active Transportation Planning to provide bike/pedestrian options and amenities, ADA and accessibility improvements, and safe routes to schools to connect all age groups to community services and resources.
4. Continue to implement the recommendations of the Sugarcreek/Franklin Route 8 Complete Streets Study.
5. Work with community partners entered in the Heart & Soul community planning program.

Priority - Improve the Vitality of Communities Throughout the County

⦿ Goal 1 - Clean, Green and Beautified Communities

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Work with community leaders on the new tree planting and tree replacement programs, and on completing greening and beautification projects.
2. Partner with local law enforcement, fire departments and other public safety providers to complete litter cleanup events, and to host anti-graffiti and vandalism programs, and other blight reduction efforts.
3. Promote education, training and funding opportunities for residents/contractors/product distributors to help install green infrastructure systems such as rain gardens, rain barrels and native vegetation plantings.
4. Develop pet friendly parks, exercise areas, facilities and amenities.

⦿ Goal 2 - Increased Quality of Life Benefits and Stability for Families and Individuals

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ensure equitable access to education support services (i.e., provide broadband internet and technology for online programs, support local library programs, etc.).
2. Ensure equitable access to healthcare services and resources (i.e. provide broadband internet for virtual appointments, establish clinics along accessible transportation networks, provide transportation to clinics, etc.).
3. Ensure equitable access to jobs and workforce training opportunities (i.e. increase the availability of public transportation, increase ride-sharing resources, etc.)
4. Ensure equitable access to clean, safe and reliable drinking water for all residents (i.e. limit impacts to water supply sources from mineral extraction and agriculture production, establish programs that help disadvantaged populations drill water wells, expand public water service lines, replace lead pipes, address contamination sources, support municipal authorities comply with PFAS requirements, etc.).
5. Support the missions of non-profit and related organizations to ensure equitable access to food resources and nutrition to reduce food insecurity.
6. Ensure equal access to art-based resources, programs and workshops.
7. Support Digital Equity for all County residents – including providing digital skills, training and education to low-income populations; improving online accessibility of social services for individuals with disabilities; and empowering unserved and underserved communities to measure and address their own broadband needs.

Priority - Improve the Vitality of Communities Throughout the County (cont.)

🕒 Goal 3 - Universal Access to Critical Services and Resources

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Implement the recommendations of the most current Emergency Management Plan.
2. Implement the recommendations of the most current Solid Waste Management Plan.
3. Assist with funding efforts to complete broadband improvement projects throughout the County.



RECREATION AND TOURISM STRATEGY

Residents have great pride in the Recreation, Heritage and Cultural Resources that exist in the County. A need to honor and celebrate the unique history of Venango County and the region was expressed throughout the planning process. Input from the Community Survey and Public Meetings reinforced that Venango County has incredible outdoor recreation resources including Rivers, Hike/Bike Trails, Parks and Open Spaces that differentiate the County from surrounding areas. The input received revealed that residents want improvements and upgrades to existing recreation and tourism facilities and amenities. Residents also want better access to existing resources, including additional river access points, additional access to existing trail networks and more diverse lodging opportunities.

Venango County will collaborate with public park operators, trail and recreation providers, as well as cultural and history/heritage providers to improve, expand and promote County recreation, cultural and history resources. Venango County will also partner with the following to implement the Recreation and Tourism Action Strategy.

- ⊙ Venango County Commissioners
- ⊙ Venango County Regional Planning Commission
- ⊙ Oil Region Alliance
- ⊙ Road Cyclists and Advocates
- ⊙ Northwest PA Regional Planning & Development Commission
- ⊙ Allegheny River, French Creek, Oil Creek State Park, Two Mile Run County Park Representatives
- ⊙ Bike, Hike and Equestrian Trail Representatives (see action items)
- ⊙ Trails to Ales Brewery
- ⊙ PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR)
- ⊙ Sporting Tournament and Competition Organizers
- ⊙ PA Office of Outdoor Recreation
- ⊙ Businesses and service providers that cater to outdoor recreation enthusiasts – outfitters, breweries/restaurants and lodging providers
- ⊙ French Creek and Oil Creek Water Trail Representatives
- ⊙ Local Municipal Officials
- ⊙ Cultural, history and heritage resources providers representatives (see actions items)

Venango County's Recreation and Tourism Strategy focuses on three (3) Priorities and nine (9) Goals. Recommended Action Items for achieving the Priorities and Goals are provided on the following pages. The following Action Items will increase the viability and draw of Venango County recreation, cultural and tourism resources.

Priority – Increase Capacity to Attract Tourists and Visitors

- ⦿ Goal 1 - Diverse Recreational Attractions and Events
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Connections Between Consumers and Attractions
- ⦿ Goal 3 - Diversity of Local Lodging Opportunities
- ⦿ Goal 4 - Improved Amenities at Parks/Playgrounds for Visitors

Priority – Enhance Existing Parks, Trails and Water Resources

- ⦿ Goal 1 - Upgraded Parks/Playgrounds
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Upgraded Water Trails and Water Resources
- ⦿ Goal 3 - Upgraded Hiking and Biking Trails

Priority – Honor the Heritage and Culture of the Region

- ⦿ Goal 1 – Celebrate the Acclaimed History Unique to Our Region
- ⦿ Goal 2 - Flourishing Cultural Resources and Events Unique to Venango County

Priority – Increase Capacity to Attract Tourists and Visitors

⦿ Goal 1 - Diverse Recreational Attractions and Events

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a variety of local/regionally attractive recreational amenities, including a white-water park, disc golf course(s), equestrian trails, sports tourism facilities, recreation centers, etc.
2. Designate ATV trails and local roads open to ATV use – provide trail maps in print and digital formats.
3. Work with organizers to develop/expand sporting tournaments and competitions.
4. Support the recommendations of ORA's Outdoor Recreation, Heritage and Tourism Committees.

⦿ Goal 2 - Connections Between Consumers and Attractions

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Promote the County's unique recreation resources (i.e. Allegheny River, French Creek, Oil Creek State Park, Two Mile Run County Park, etc.).
2. Identify, promote and expand equestrian resources (i.e. Two Mile Run County Park Bridle Trails, Kennerdell Tract of Clear Creek State Forest Horseback Trails, Allegheny River Trail (Multi-Use Ride Beside), Sandy Creek Trail (Multi-Use Ride Beside), Samuel Justus Trail (Multi-Use Ride Beside), Venango Area Riding for the Handicapped Association, North Country Scenic Trail, etc.).
3. Provide technical support and assistance to municipalities and support ongoing efforts of DCNR, DCED and other agencies to implement local recreation and open space plans, and park rehabilitation and development projects.
4. Promote secondary, tertiary and complementary regional recreation and tourism resources.
5. Print additional copies of the Trail Guide and other local/regional marketing tools and make them available to local lodging sites and/or make it available in a digital format.
6. Invest in a study to quantify the positive impacts of Outdoor Recreation and Heritage to the local economy.

Priority – Increase Capacity to Attract Tourists and Visitors (cont.)

⌚ Goal 3 - Diversity of Local Lodging Opportunities

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Promote and advertise the diversity of available lodging opportunities.
2. Communicate the need for different lodging types near population centers and local businesses.
3. Communicate the need for existing hotels and short-term rentals to make upgrades/improvements to be competitive with lodging options in other counties.
4. Inventory short-term rental operations and work with them to have consistent registrations and regulations.

⌚ Goal 4 - Improved Amenities at Parks/Playgrounds for Visitors

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Install Electric Vehicle charging stations.
2. Provide Wi-Fi and Cellular Service.
3. Develop recreation support services, such as outfitters, repair shops and public restrooms.

Priority – Enhance Existing Parks, Trails and Water Resources

⦿ Goal 1 - Upgraded Parks/Playgrounds

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Enhance Two Mile Run County Park by funding the goals and objectives in their 5-Year Plan.
2. Support connections to Two Mile Run County Park and other public parks and playgrounds in the County.
3. Provide ADA improvements and accessible trail(s) at Two Mile Run County Park and other public parks and playgrounds in the County.

⦿ Goal 2 - Upgraded Water Trails and Water Resources

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Work with Crawford County Planning and the Titusville Redevelopment Authority to implement recommendations outlined in the Oil Creek Water Trail Feasibility Study.
2. Install additional accessible kayak launches on French Creek and the Allegheny River.
3. Carry out projects recommended in the most current Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan including the French Creek and Oil Creek Water Trails.
4. Develop waterfront areas along the Allegheny River to better connect residents/visitors to the water resource.

⦿ Goal 3 - Upgraded Hiking and Biking Trails

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Close the gaps in the Venango County Trail System using guidance from the most current NW Greenways Plan, NW Trail Gap Study, DCNR Trail Gaps mapping, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail study, etc.
2. Perform repairs to the Rockland Tunnel.
3. Improve access points and physical connections between communities and trail resources.
4. Add comfort stations, signage and provide education on heritage relics found along the trails.
5. Support improvements to the Jersey Bridge Trailhead.
6. Carry out projects found in the most current Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan including to the Allegheny River Trail, French Creek Trail, North Country National Scenic Trail, and Polk/Franklin Loop Trail.
7. Promote bike rental and trailhead concessions.

Priority – Honor the Heritage and Culture of the Region

⦿ Goal 1 – Celebrate the Acclaimed History Unique to Our Region

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Support the implementation of the 2021 Oil Region Alliance Strategic Plan.
2. Support ongoing efforts to develop, publish, and promote interactive mapping of cultural & historical resources.
3. Assist in oil-related interpretation and storytelling throughout the Oil Heritage National Heritage Area.
4. Develop exhibits with a focus on the region's natural resource history or show the link between the oil industry and transportation.
5. Increase diversity of local and regional cultural interpretations to include a focus on marginalized, underserved, and overburdened populations.
6. Communicate the need for more cultural opportunities for children, including developing programs at Wildcat Manor, children's museums and travelling exhibits supporting the Venango Museum of Art, Science & Industry, DeBence Museum, Drake Well and others.
7. Support the promotion of oil boomtown attractions.

⦿ Goal 2 - Flourishing Cultural Resources and Events Unique to Venango County

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Support events that celebrate Venango County's cultural history (i.e. Applefest, Oil Heritage Festival, indigenous history, veteran/war history and oral history/ghost tours, etc.).
2. Support local agencies to establish links (i.e. cross-marketing, tours, displays, brochures, maps, wayfinding signs, etc.) between events & resources (i.e. DeBence Antique Music World, Barrow Civic Theatre, Drake Well Museum, Pithole City Historical Site, Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad, Oil Creek State Park, Venango Museum of Art, Science, and Industry, Venango County Historical Society, Heritage Society of Oil City, Pumping Jack Museum (Crawford Center), Franklin Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Center, Franklin Historic Society and Franklin Preservation etc.).
3. Partner with entities working to preserve and restore local historical resources (i.e. Lyric Theatre, Oil City Library Theatre, historic fort sites, and other similar resources).
4. Promote existing financial incentives for historic building rehabilitation.
5. Actively preserve and protect historic buildings under County ownership.
6. Coordinate with existing organizations and communities to develop local historic districts, including design guidelines.

Once the Venango County Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the following next steps will be taken by the Venango County Regional Planning Commission to build upon the successful adoption of the updated County Plan. These steps will build momentum for Plan implementation and will ensure compatibility with existing and proposed development and plans within Venango County and with neighboring counties and municipalities.

1. Include a Plan Implementation Update in the Venango County Regional Planning Commission's Annual Reports

Plan implementation successes should be publicized to highlight the County's progress toward achieving the Priorities and Goals in the Annual Reports. The Venango County Regional Planning Commission staff will conduct an annual strategic planning session prior to the start of the County's fiscal year to decide on the Actions they want to accomplish in the following year. The description of these actions will be published in the Annual Report. Additionally, the Annual Report will include a description of actions taken by the County and partners over the past year that helped achieve the Priorities and Goals set forth in the Plan.

This approach will build accountability and ensure the Regional Planning Commission is realistic about its capacity to implement the Plan. The Commission will need to balance what they want to accomplish with what they did accomplish. This will prevent over-commitment of capacity and resources in any given year. This logical implementation approach helps to organize efforts, helps to measure outcomes year by year, and helps to create a manageable implementation 'to-do' list. It will also allow the Regional Planning Commission to manage implementation efforts based on available resources, capacity, and opportunities.

The Regional Planning Commission will also survey municipalities, other County Departments, and regional partners to identify projects and actions they completed that are helping to implement the Plan.

2. Advance Collaboration and Partnerships

Implementing the Action Strategies presented in the Plan and successfully achieving the Priorities and Goals will require multiple partners and layers of implementation responsibilities. Venango County and the Venango County Regional Planning Commission staff cannot lead every project or action item. Cooperation is needed from the County Commissioners, County Departments, regional agencies and organizations, municipalities and residents. The following will be completed:

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Venango County will foster collaborations between the public sector, private businesses, and non-profit organizations to achieve shared goals.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Venango County will work with regional entities on initiatives that benefit the County.
- **Community Engagement:** Venango County will involve residents and community leaders in certain planning and decision-making processes to ensure that local development aligns with County Priorities and Goals... and vice-versa.

3. Communication Approach

The Venango County Regional Planning Commission recognizes that an Early Action Item of the Plan will be to present the Plan at Regional, County and Municipal levels to gain implementation support. The Regional Planning Commission will provide County Departments, Regional partners and municipalities with a copy of the Plan for their review and support. Commission staff will also identify appropriate opportunities to present the Plan. Presentations will focus on the following:

- Describe the value and benefits of the Plan.
- Explain why and how the County and communities will benefit from the Plan.

Value and Benefits – the following are value and benefit statements the County can use to communicate the Plan to Regional, County and Municipal audiences.

Economic Development -

- **Attracting New Businesses:** Venango County will be an attractive destination for new businesses, offering incentives and support for startups and entrepreneurs.
- **Evaluate Industries that can Provide Growth and Revenues:** A balanced analysis and plan for the development of alternative industries including Agricultural products and Energy production can be further evaluated on a County and regional level as part of the implementation of this Plan.
- **Job Creation:** Initiatives aimed at creating job opportunities across various sectors, particularly in manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism.
- **Business Retention and Expansion:** Efforts to support and retain existing businesses, helping them expand and thrive within the county.
- **Support for Startups:** Creating an environment that encourages innovation and supports tech startups and small businesses.
- **Broadband Expansion:** Expanding high-speed internet access to support businesses, education, and telecommuting.
- **Educational Institutions:** Supporting local schools and higher education institutions to provide employment training.
- **Workforce Training:** Developing programs that equip residents with the skills needed for modern jobs, focusing on vocational training and continuing education.
- **Youth Engagement:** Encouraging youth involvement in community activities and providing pathways for young people to stay and work in the County.

Community Improvement -

- **Infrastructure Development:** Upgrading and maintaining transportation networks, utilities, and public facilities to support growth and enhance quality of life.

- **Housing:** Developing affordable and diverse housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents.
- **Public Services:** Enhancing public services, including education, healthcare, and safety, to ensure a high standard of living for residents.
- **Public Safety:** Working with local police and fire departments, EMS, and other public safety providers will foster a sense of security within communities, which is essential for attracting businesses, residents and investment. Public safety will contribute to business attraction, resident well-being, community development, tourism and recreation development and growth. It is also important to work with and support public safety providers that are exploring or have already begun studying options for consolidations and mergers.
- **Smart Development:** Utilizing technology and innovative practices in planning and development to create efficient and sustainable communities.
- **Healthcare Access:** Ensuring all residents have access to quality healthcare services, with a focus on expanding facilities and services.
- **Public Health Initiatives:** Implementing programs to promote healthy lifestyles, including fitness, nutrition, and mental health.
- **Connections:** Developing and maintaining walking and biking facilities and amenities that encourage physical activity and community engagement.

Recreation and Tourism -

- **Promotion of Natural Assets:** Leveraging the County's outdoor recreation resources, including natural beauty, parks, rivers, and trails, to attract tourists and outdoor enthusiasts.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Preserving and promoting Venango County's rich history, particularly its significance in the oil industry, through museums, historical sites, and events.
- **Events and Festivals:** Organizing and supporting local events and festivals that celebrate the County's culture, heritage, and community spirit.
- **Conservation Efforts:** Protecting natural resources, including water bodies, forests, and wildlife, to ensure long-term environmental health.