

Overview - Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability focuses on perhaps the most critical determinant of sustainability, the economic lifeblood of the County and its constituent communities. Since the mid-1970's most observers see the population decline directly related to the past economic dislocations, especially in the Steel and Coal industries. These industries were not just *employers* but *customers*, direct and indirect, as well. Relatively well-paid steelworkers and coal miners had fairly generous benefits and bought various retail goods and personal/professional services in their respective communities. The companies also bought goods and services from other local companies. As is the case elsewhere in southwestern and southcentral Pennsylvania, the demise of steel and coal dominance had and still has implications for the County economy, even though diversification and new types of businesses have and continue to spring up. Economic sustainability requires one to put down the proverbial "rear view mirror" and stop envying the "good old days" and look forward to a new economy that may require some painful choices and greater cooperation within the County.



Economic Sustainability Recommendations may be summarized within the following categories:

- ❑ Continue efforts to enhance the accessibility especially in underserved sections of the County - Rt. 56/Rt. 403 West, Rt. 56 East, Rt. 219 North and Rt. 53 North;
- ❑ Support for other aspects of a multi-modal transportation system including retention/expansion of commercial air/rail and transit service;
- ❑ Establishment and strengthening of an economic development partnership and designation of an Ombudsman/Point of Contact as coordination mechanisms for economic development;
- ❑ One-stop developmental marketing effort with countywide focus and unified, consistent and complete message, sites, buildings, resources, incentives, etc. – website tab and County App;



- Pursue a balanced developmental approach keyed to new development in growth areas, redevelopment, Brownfield reclamation/reuse and agricultural preservation;
- Emerging industry emphasis such as energy – ranging from “clean coal” to Marcellus Shale to wind energy, advanced-technology applications, agri-business and tourism;
- AMD remediation to enhance water and environmental tourism; and
- Recognition of the economic role for regional recreation, tourism agencies and agriculture by inclusion in the proposed *Economic Partnership*.

**TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE 2010-2030 – ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY
ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

<i>Vision Statement: By 2030 Cambria County communities will benefit from a diverse economic base that enhances the quality of life and blends the best of the “new” and “old” economies</i>				
SUBCATEGORY	ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES	GOALS/OBJECTIVES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Natural Resources	<p>Relatively narrow floodplains along valley floors with exception of Johnstown, northwest and northeast where floodplains are relatively wide</p> <p>Larger pockets of steeply sloping land in southwestern and northwestern sections of the County</p> <p>Assembling trails and corridors that foster/reinforce nature-tourism face complications due to the lack of funding, occasional citizen fears/opposition regarding trail users, minimal number of regional sponsors and regulatory land use gaps</p>	<p>Relatively wide swath of active agricultural land stretching from southcentral, central and northcentral sections of the County.</p> <p>Small pockets of steeply sloping land in central and eastern sections of the County</p> <p>There are 8 trails within the County, 24 planned trails/trail extensions, 4 proposed regional greenway corridors and 4 preservation corridors/habitats</p>	<p><i>Appropriate utilization of natural resources of the County as significant assets to improve the economic conditions, image and quality of life for current and future residents.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Focus sensitive development in floodplains <input type="checkbox"/> Recognize and preserve agricultural lands as an economic asset in the County and work to preserve this industry and existing concentrations of Prime Agricultural Soils and other land currently in productive agricultural use. <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve steeply sloping land while encouraging environmentally sensitive selective timber harvesting and siting of wind turbines <p><i>Recognize Nature Tourism as an economic asset with an economic role for the County</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage coordinated planning and marketing of nature-tourism resources by the sponsoring attractions and the Johnstown/Cambria County Visitors Bureau <input type="checkbox"/> Connect residents and visitors to the higher quality streams, rivers, water bodies and other natural resource assets in the County <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain and enhance natural resource based ‘outdoor enthusiast’ recreational opportunities and continue to value the preservation of open space and critical natural areas for use by existing and future residents <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage continued restoration of land impacted by mining activities that may affect nature tourism 	<p>Continue partnership with the County Conservation District to support agricultural preservation programs, including Agricultural Security Area and Agricultural Conservation Easements Programs</p> <p>Encourage numerous regional resources – Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority (CCCRA) trails and other trails, Prince Gallitzin State Park (PGSP), Rock Run ATV Park, Duman Lake and Cambria-Somerset Authority (CSA) Reservoirs to coordinate activities and cross-promote nature-based attractions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Greater attention should be given to fishing as nature-tourism by promotional agencies <input type="checkbox"/> Explore alternative tourism opportunities to complement current attractions and resources <p>Promote the development of a “Cambria County App” and/or QR Reader Code linking nature-based resources, businesses and attractions</p> <p>Promote the completion of the Path of the Flood Trail Segments from Ehrenfeld to Conemaugh, and in the longer term, the proposed segments through the South Fork Dam Site, connecting to the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club Historic District in St. Michael, and ultimately to the National Flood Memorial Visitors Center.</p> <p>Implementation of the AMD treatment systems for St. Michael Discharge and Portage areas are needed to continue to improve critical surface waters that in turn reinforce the nature tourism economic component</p> <p>CCPC assists municipalities requesting land use planning and follow-up assistance</p>
Economic Base	<p>Major commercial development is confined to relatively small pockets in the Ebensburg and Johnstown/Richland area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Major traditional regional economic centers and industrial areas are concentrated in the southwest and central sections of the County. <input type="checkbox"/> There has been development pressures and resulting impacts on agricultural land in some rural areas <p>During 1990-2009 the number and percent of unemployed has increased while employment levels have remained flat</p> <p>The decline in manufacturing employment levels continues a trend experienced since the late-1970’s has been joined by a more recent decline in retailing employment</p>	<p>The 2009 unemployment rate was moderate and the % increase in unemployed persons was the 2nd lowest among surrounding counties</p> <p>Economic diversification trend continues with growing service, tourism and defense sectors</p> <p>Employment profile changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employment in health and social care, transportation/warehousing, information technology and administration has increased <input type="checkbox"/> Changing occupational profile reflects changing economy with a decline in production and manufacturing occupations and an increase in management and professional occupations 	<p><i>Unify and consistently revisit the economic development message being delivered</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain the effort towards diversifying the County economy <input type="checkbox"/> Follow a balanced approach between the marketing of industrial/business park sites and redevelopment/reuse of older Brownfield sites <input type="checkbox"/> Follow a balanced approach focusing marketing to conventional manufacturing/processing and emerging “new economy” businesses (i.e. advanced technology manufacturing, service, professional, alternative energy, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Build on the presence of agriculture with the retention of farming and attraction of agri-businesses and the enhancement of agri-tourism 	<p>County coordination of an <i>economic development partnership</i> that provides a focused message and approach to economic development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a <i>Cambria County Economic Development Partnership</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increase the visibility and membership of the <i>Alliance for Business and Industry</i> or <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a new <i>Partnership</i> comprised of representation from existing developmental/promotional agencies <input type="checkbox"/> Designate a <i>Cambria County Point of Contact, Intermediary or Ombudsman</i> who will institutionalize the linkage among developmental groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Central point of contact - Referrals not duplication <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner’s “eyes and ears” <input type="checkbox"/> Staff for the <i>Partnership</i> <input type="checkbox"/> “One-Stop” development “tab” prepared for the County Website identifying sites, buildings, incentives, contacts, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize emerging industries such as advanced technology (service and manufacturing), Marcellus Shale, alternative energy, “clean coal” technologies, agri-business and tourism

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SUBCATEGORY	ISSUES	OPPORTUNITIES	GOALS/OBJECTIVES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Economic Base (continued)	<p>Numerous developmental and promotional agencies within the County result in diffused message, internal competition and lack of coordinated developmental efforts</p> <p>Infrastructure/access gaps inhibit development in many northern Cambria County communities</p>	<p>Special economic activity areas (i.e. correction institutions, post-secondary educational institutions, governmental services and recreation) are fairly dispersed within the County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Agriculture is a leading small business in rural areas <p>Many communities are “development-friendly” with recent success in new development, redevelopment and Brownfields development</p> <p>There are several well-planned industrial and business parks relatively well-located to the regional transportation network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Coordinate the efforts of local developmental and promotional agencies to avoid intra-county competition, develop a consistent County image and message and encourage balanced development □ Promote the expansion of existing industrial and business parks consistent with the developmental focus directed towards delineated Growth Areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ County maintains/coordinates contact between local/sub-county development agencies and Marcellus Shale-based businesses via a showcase/conference focused on up-stream (shale to well-head), mid-stream (gathering/piping to transmission) and down-stream (transmission) businesses and their respective suppliers and providers of ancillary professional/business services □ Prioritize a development/redevelopment/Brownfields activities within the Growth Areas □ Develop, maintain and cross-promote heritage, nature and cultural tourism as a part of the County economy <p>Pursue a developmental/ redevelopment/Implementation strategy focused on the delineated Growth Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Prioritize development/redevelopment/Brownfields projects in the Growth Areas □ Prioritize infrastructure projects in the Growth Areas □ Develop a sewer/highway plan that links more detailed infrastructure and land use/development planning □ Foster the preservation of agriculture in areas sustaining large areas in active agriculture and encourage agri-tourism
Transportation	<p>The County has limited direct access to the Interstate System and regional highway network in general, affecting development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Most major roads north of US Route 22 being of the 2-lane variety; Only a partial 4-lane North/South highway exists within the county □ Southern Cambria County lacks a direct connection with the Pittsburgh Metro Area, depending on outdated 2-lanes roads through residential neighborhoods that create developmental and safety issues <p>Passenger air and rail service are limited affecting business and commutation to other cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Air ridership from John Murtha Johnstown Cambria County Airport has declined and may face Federal funding cutbacks □ Rail service is minimal limited to one train east and west daily <p>With the decline of the County’s traditional heavy manufacturing and coal mining industries, there are fewer industries that rely on rail for input or output goods, and none of the newer industrial parks offer rail service</p>	<p>Overall, the County has elements of a multi-modal transportation system, consisting of highways, mass-transit, passenger/freight rail and commercial air service, with some limitations</p> <p>Limited access highways are located in the central and southern sections of the County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Rt. 22 provides 4-lane access east to/from I-99 and 4-lane or at least improved access west to Pittsburgh Metro Area for Central Cambria County □ Rt. 219 provides 4-lane access south to I-76/70 for Central and Southern sections of the County <p>The physical plant of the Airport is excellent</p> <p>Rail service and rail-served sites are available in the Johnstown area, the northeastern section of the County and a portion of the Forest Hills area</p> <p>The newer industrial parks have ready access to one or more of the major highways that carry higher truck volumes</p> <p>Numerous bridges have been rehabilitated or reconstructed to better carry truck traffic</p>	<p><i>Assure that the transportation network (roads, rails and air) that are used in the movement of vehicles, materials, goods and people is maintained and strategically improved to ensure safe and efficient movement of goods and people that reinforces economic development by enhancing the County’s accessibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Provide completed East/West and North/South highway with more direct connections with the larger region, nearby metro area and the Interstate system □ Address gaps and connectivity in the multi-modal transportation network that would better link the County with the Pittsburgh Metro Area □ Maintain a stable level of convenient air passenger service that meets and/or creatively anticipates needs □ Develop a strategy to better utilize the freight and passenger rail lines in the County □ Encourage Cam Tran to continue to reevaluate the mass transit system in the urbanized and rural service areas □ Insure that future growth and development in identified Growth Areas create minimal traffic and access issues □ 	<p>Emphasize the planning, programming and funding of key transportation projects within the PennDOT Highway Construction Program planning process that have the greatest impact on economic development and sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Rt. 56 West – Modern access between the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area and the Johnstown Urbanized Area and is seen as critical in the economic revitalization and sustainability of the latter. The <i>Short-term recommendations</i> in the Community Sustainability section of this matrix is important for public safety and would likely reinforce the local economy. However, the <i>Long-term recommendation</i> would have a more lasting economic impact. This would include the analysis and eventual programming, design and construction of Route 56/Route 403 Connector near the Johnstown City/Lower Yoder Township boundary on Route 56 connecting with Rt. 403 on Cooper Avenue via undevelopable Brownfield area locally known as “the Clay Pits” and a structure over Conemaugh River and Norfolk Southern tracks. □ Rt. 56 East – In lieu of construction of a limited access link between the Richland/Windber area and I-99 in Cessna programming of various safety improvements including intersection improvements and alignment improvements with additional passing lanes in Somerset and Bedford Counties and especially safety improvements/flattening of the Peggy Westover Curve in Bedford County.

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Transportation (continued)	<p>At least 40 municipal roads/streets are within the identified growth areas and are not subject to access management reviews</p> <p>In the urban area, mass-transit ridership is low and showing a variation from the historic CBD-oriented fixed routes, affecting and reflecting commutation and shopping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Camtran recently eliminated several routes (Conemaugh and Daisytown) ❑ Camtran has reduced service on other routes <p>In the rural area, not all population centers have fixed-route service, most notably the Forest Hills Region. Both of these affect commutation, shopping and development in general.</p> <p>Lack of modern north/south highways inhibits intra-county commerce and bleeds commerce to adjacent Blair, Westmoreland and Indiana Counties</p>	<p>Frequently new development uses direct access to/from the State highway network, triggering access management reviews via the PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit process</p> <p>Camtran has increased service and/or created more direct service within the growing East Hills commercial and residential area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Continue to program bridges for replacement and rehabilitation based on the accepted criteria ❑ Encourage Marcellus Shale-related development based on County’s central location and accessibility in relation to regional rail and roadway system in relation to drilling locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Rt. 219 North – Continue to advocate short- and long-range improvements to north/south travel in northern Cambria County that reduces regional traffic through various boroughs and villages while improving overall access with the regional transportation system : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The short-term recommendation for enhancements to SR 4013 roughly between Carrolltown and Route 36 northwest of Patton and on-line safety improvements to Route 36 to existing Route 219 in Mahaffey (Clearfield County). However, this still provides no direct modern link to I-80 near DuBois. ○ The long-term recommendation is to continue to press for a four-lane limited access highway from the present termination between Carrolltown and Ebensburg to I-80 in Jefferson or Clearfield Counties, as a separate Route 219, part of the Continental One concept or with a realigned US Rt. 219/119 Corridor in coordination with Indiana and Jefferson Counties. ❑ On-line improvements to Route 53 between US 22 and Clearfield County in northeastern Cambria County with strategic safety and traffic flow improvements <p>Coordinated marketing of industrial/business sites that encompass both the truck served industrial and business parks and the older rail served industrial areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Cambria County Industrial/Business Parks, Johnstown Industrial/Business Parks, Cresson, Hastings and other light industrial/warehousing parks are geared towards truck served industries ❑ Industrial sites in the Johnstown Urbanized Area, along a Norfolk Southern branch line in the Forest Hills region and along RJ Corman Rail Group lines in northern and central sections of the County may be geared towards rail served industries <p>CCPC recommends that Camtran study the feasibility of extending fixed route service via its Rural Division to the Forest Hills Area, reinforcing on-going multi-density residential and commercial development</p> <p>CCPC to offer technical assistance to Growth Area municipalities in enacting free-standing access management regulations and/or augmenting existing land use/land development regulations with access management regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ PennDOT/NJDOT <i>Smart Transportation Guidebook</i> (2008) can serve as a base ❑ Focus on the 40+ municipal roads in the identified Growth Areas

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<p>Transportation (continued)</p>				<p>Facilitate centralized coordination with Cambria County Point of Contact, Intermediary or Ombudsman of meetings and/or one-on-one discussions between county appropriate businesses near the rail network with rail operators (i.e. Norfolk Southern, CSX, R.J. Corman, Lehigh Valley/former Conemaugh and Black Lick) rail line services throughout the Region by gaining a level of understanding of rail line regulations, the issues associated with connections and general business elements needed to best utilize the rail lines.</p> <p>Encourage Amtrak to study the feasibility of additional service between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh</p> <p>County develops an inventory of development sites and a quick-action response and marketing capacity for Marcellus Shale based businesses seeking potential sites for mid-stream and down-stream businesses/facilities accessible by highway and/or rail</p> <p>Prioritize bridge rehabilitation/replacements crucial for the movement of goods and/or that reinforce economic development</p> <p>CCPC coordinates and technically assists the Cambria County Airport Authority in its efforts to attract another/additional carriers, serve niche air markets and market the airport area as an air-oriented commerce park</p>

Economic Sustainability Implementation Strategy

The preceding matrix helps define *Economic Sustainability* in terms of identified issues, opportunities, goals/objectives and recommendations, related to functional planning categories. This subsection establishes short and longer-term implementation measures and action statements.

Economic Sustainability Recommendation	Short-Term Implementation Strategy	Long-Term Implementation Strategy
<p>Centralized and coordinated economic development embracing a centralized marketing message and coordinated implementation</p>	<p>County coordination of a an <i>Economic Partnership</i> with a focused message and approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Reconstitute <i>Alliance of Business and Industry</i> or establish new “umbrella” partnership ❑ Designate staff - Point of Contact, Intermediary or Ombudsman ❑ Prepare “one-stop” development tab for County website ❑ Develop a “Cambria County App” ❑ Develop coordinated marketing approach – sites and buildings ❑ Initiate and maintain active energy-related roles related to wind power and Marcellus Shale 	<p>Maintain <i>Economic Partnership</i> and Point of Contact, Intermediary or Ombudsman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ More centralized economic marketing by County stressing quality of life, “new economy” success stories, in energy, advanced technology manufacturing applications and nature-tourism ❑ Coordinated strategic marketing effort identifying truck- and rail-served sites ❑ Focused strategic marketing effort emphasizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ advanced technology ○ energy (Marcellus Shale, wind and coal) ○ agricultural-related industries ○ tourism (heritage, nature, agricultural and cultural)
<p>Highway access improvements focused on improving regional access in relation to the economy</p>	<p>CCPC through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) focuses on several signature projects in the short-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Signage project for truck rerouting via Route 403 rather than Rt. 56 ❑ On-line enhancements to SR 4013 and Rt. 36 as alternative for regional traffic accessing Rt. 219 North <p>CCPC offers technical assistance to Growth Area communities in access management regulations as either a free-standing ordinance or revisions to existing land use and/or subdivision and land development regulations, focused on improved traffic management for developments on municipal roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ planning assistance via the Municipal Assistance Program or PennDOT sources to be explored 	<p>CCPC encourages MPO to analyze, program, design and implement Rt. 56/Rt. 403 Connector</p> <p>CCPC encourages MPO to analyze, program, design and implement 4-lane limited access Rt. 219 North.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ County developmental agencies continue to coordinate with allied agencies in counties between Clearfield and McKean to see a Rt. 219 North <p>On/Off-line enhancements such as intersection/alignment improvements, passing lanes and curve softening to PA Rt. 56 East to enhance access to I-99/I-76</p> <p>CCPC monitors safety needs on Rt. 53 north of Rt. 22 and encourages MPO to program enhancements</p>

Economic Sustainability Recommendation	Short-Term Implementation Strategy	Long-Term Implementation Strategy
<p>Multi-modal transportation system retention and enhancement</p>	<p>County through the Cambria County Airport Authority continues to seek to increase passenger enplanements via competitive fares, convenient flights/connections and/or alternative routes to popular destinations</p> <p>CCPC and County <i>Economic Partnership</i> develops an inventory of development sites for Marcellus Shale related businesses, ranging from drillers to suppliers to treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Inventory should reflect space and access needs ❑ Include input from current Marcellus-based businesses ❑ Include Brownfield sites inventories of the Cambria County and Johnstown Redevelopment Authorities <p>County Conservation and Recreation Authority completes segments of the Path of the Flood Trail, connecting various communities and nature-based resources</p>	<p>CCPC through MPO requests Camtran to study service area expansion of fixed-route service to the Forest Hills Area</p> <p>County Point of Contact, Intermediary or Ombudsman facilitates coordination among rail operators and potential and current rail-using businesses to increase and improve rail use</p> <p>County <i>Economic Partnership</i> through MPO encourages Amtrak to study feasibility of additional passenger service between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh</p> <p>CCPC through MPO prioritizes bridge rehabilitation/rehabilitation critical for economic development via input from County <i>Economic Partnership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Maintain dialogue with local industries and shippers <p>County Conservation and Recreation Authority and/or local recreation/trail interests complete other trail segments filling trail gaps in land and water trail systems, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Implementation of the Mainline Canal Greenway ❑ Improving water trails via resolution of AMD and sanitary sewer overflows by other agencies ❑ Land trail extensions in the Johnstown, Portage and Forest Hills area
<p>Coordination among regional recreation, tourism and agricultural interests.</p>	<p>County includes representation of all tourism, heritage and allied interests within the <i>Economic Partnership</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Tourism resources and attractions are included within “Cambria County App” ❑ CCCD maintains Agricultural Security and Conservation Easement Programs 	<p>Coordinated marketing and cross-promotion of nature tourism resources</p> <p>Encourage public/private ventures to determine feasibility of new types of tourism resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Rail/Trolley ❑ Increased water-based recreation ❑ Agri-tourism encouraged in the form of visits to working farms and coordinated marketing of Cambria-produced farm products