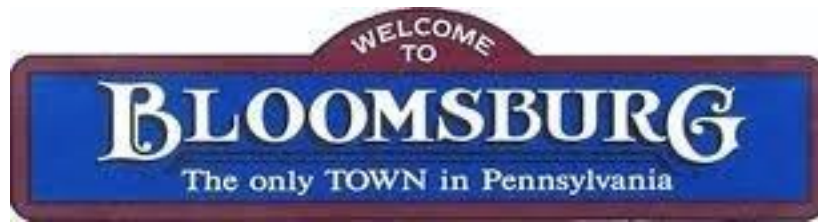


Blueprint for Bloomsburg

The 2023 Comprehensive Plan



Adopted by the Bloomsburg Town Council on 07/17/2023 and
prepared by the Bloomsburg Planning Commission.

This plan was amended in collaboration with members of the Planning Commission, Town Council, and staff.

INSERT RESOLUTION NO: 07.17.2023.03

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Summary

The Town of Bloomsburg is nestled along the banks of the Susquehanna River and Fishing Creek in Columbia County, Pennsylvania. As the only incorporated town in the Commonwealth, it has a long practice of successfully blending tradition with progressive ideas to form its unique character and charm.

The Town has long been acknowledged as having idyllic surroundings and is a relaxed place to live and conduct business.

In accordance with the requirements of the Municipalities Planning Code the Town periodically reviews and updates its Comprehensive Plan. The Plan evaluates existing conditions and projects future growth and land development needs while also protecting the natural and cultural resources so necessary for the Town's survival.

In the course of its review the Planning Commission is making a series of recommendations to help guide the Town into its future, these include, among others:

- Continue to extend protection to the west end of Town with improvements to protect life and property.

- Additional attention to pedestrian needs and comforts including improving and extending the sidewalks.

- Improve access to the park areas for pedestrians as well as bikers.

- Continue to enhance the relationship with the river and creek. Increase the use and availability of emerging "green" technologies with the Town acting as an early adaptor.

- Continue with floodwall expansion to protect Kawneer North America.

- Continue to work effectively with the leaders of the community to insure responsiveness to the needs of the residents.

- Continue to improve the safety of all Town residents by encouraging the improvement of the quality of available housing.

In order for the Comprehensive Plan to be consistently relevant to the needs of the Town it will need to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis by the Planning Commission.

1

Introduction

101 Comprehensive Plan Objectives

Sustainable Town management requires strong planning with the willingness to plan according to a public consensus. The Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for long-term commitment to planning within the Town of Bloomsburg over the next ten years. The creation and management of a Town Comprehensive Plan increases the level of public involvement in community life. Collaboration with our riverside community of citizens, businesses and University partners will help establish a sustainable vision over the next ten years. These visions and goals generate a greater sense of pride and caring throughout the community. The more people care about their town, the more motivated they become to make it a good place to live and work.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and amended, requires the Comprehensive Plan to consider and plan for many factors which influence a community. It evaluates the existing conditions of the natural and man-made environments and markets, including land use, transportation systems, housing, community facilities and services, and natural and cultural resources; primarily within the municipal boundaries, but also in the context of the surrounding area and region. The Comprehensive Plan projects future community and economic growth trends and considers their impacts on the community. Most importantly, the Comprehensive Plan recommends a future land use plan, infrastructure investments, and service improvements to accommodate and guide expected growth while protecting the area's natural and cultural resources consistent with the municipality's vision of its future character.

"There are dreamers and there are planners; the planners make their dreams come true."

Edwin
Louis Cole,
Diary of a
Journal
Planner

The Comprehensive Plan can...

- Form consensus on a vision for the Town's ten-year future and corresponding goals for the various elements of community and economic development.
- Engage local officials and community residents in a planning process to develop policies that address quality of life issues locally.
- Address growth and development trends and issues with innovative solutions.
- Provide a realistic projection of future land use scenarios based on current patterns and proposed strategies for a more desirable and sustainable future.
- Establish consistency between future land use policies, land use and land development regulations, infrastructure investments, and conservation policies.
- Assist state, county, and municipal officials in their decision-making process by establishing the Town's needs and priorities.
- Outline feasible areas for cooperation and partnership among government bodies and stakeholder organizations.

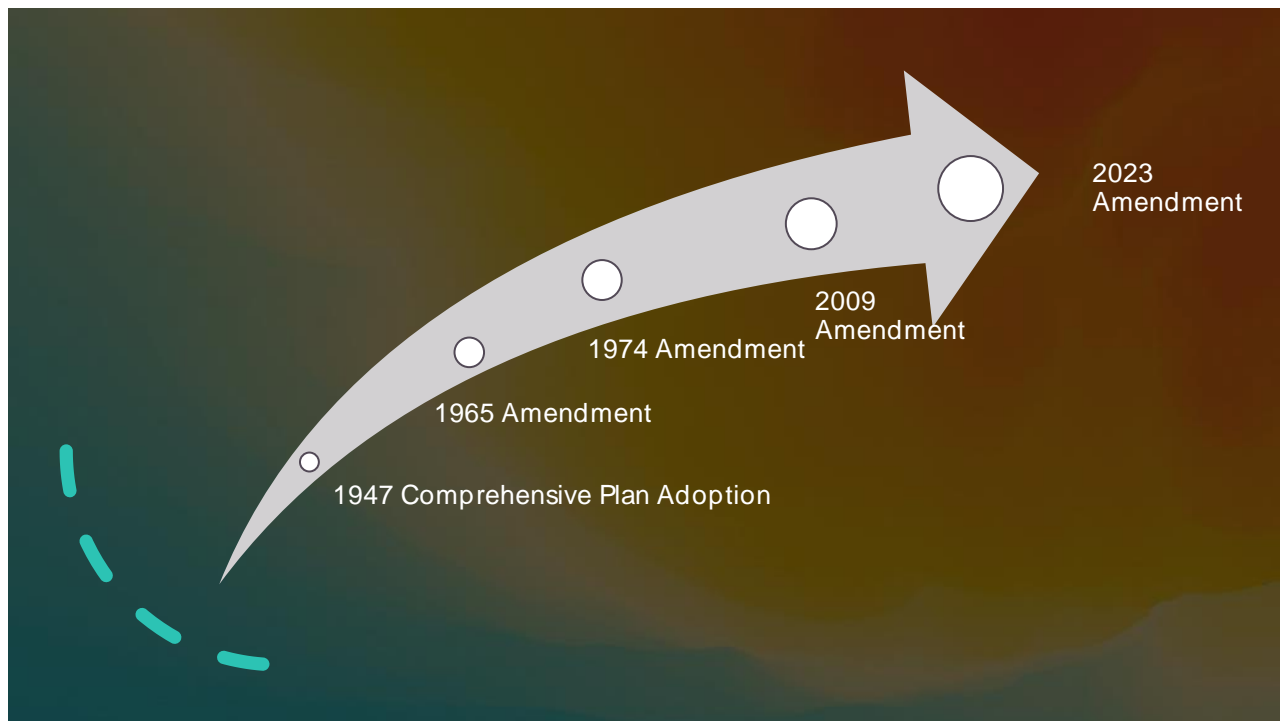
The Comprehensive Plan cannot...

- As Act land use regulation; land use is regulated by Zoning Ordinances and maps.
- Require new standards for development and construction; Subdivision and Land Development Ordinances (SALDO) regulate these topics.
- Determine what land will be developed; this is a property owner's decision.
- Determine what land will be owned by the public sector or by private owners.

As a policy document, the Comprehensive Plan does not change or establish new requirements or standards. It may however recommend that these planning tools be revised to guide the development of a more cohesive and sustainable community. It is through the implementation of the plan's recommendations, not the planning itself, that the quality of community development, resource conservation, and public services are sustained and/or improved.

102 *Planning is a Continuing Process*

The Town of Bloomsburg has a long history of planning. While the early planning efforts that laid out the patterns of streets, blocks and public buildings were largely informal, the Town prepared its first formal development plan in 1947. Revised and updated plans were prepared in 1965 and 1974. In the 1980s, the Town prepared a revitalization study and proposal. This effort sparked an era of historic preservation and renovation for the downtown business district. It called for the designation of the historic district, the beautification of Main Street, and the creation of walking tours, all of which have been accomplished.



Goals and objectives do not come from flashes of insight; instead, they emerge from data gathering and analysis and much discussion about how to maintain the community's good aspects and improve upon its weaknesses.

- Bloomsburg Town Park has been consolidated into one deed while the master plan has been reconfigured with the installation of the levee system.
- Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc. developed a revitalization plan for Downtown Bloomsburg in 2016.
- Bloomsburg University enrollment peaked around 2010. There has been a significant decrease of approximately 20% since 2010. Additionally, the University began requiring sophomores to live on campus in 2021.
- The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's governing board recently consolidated Bloomsburg, Lock Haven and Mansfield Universities into one institution, Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania.
- Several studies were conducted that confirmed that adequate parking is available for downtown business owners and customers. Analysis and flexibility should be conducted to properly manage the existing parking inventory.

These changes throughout the Town will require additional planning in Bloomsburg and the surrounding area. Town Council, administrative staff, Downtown Bloomsburg Incorporated, The Chamber of Commerce, Bloomsburg University and the citizens of Bloomsburg should continue work together to take proactive or corrective steps towards sustainability, equality, and the overall quality of life throughout the Town of Bloomsburg.

103 Comprehensive Planning Throughout the Municipality

Bloomsburg's 2023 Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that gives direction to Town Council, its appointed committees, and administrative staff on municipal regulation, codes and other planning efforts. The Comprehensive Plan provides visions and goals for future development that may have an effect on the following municipal plans and regulations:

- Bloomsburg Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan.
- Bloomsburg Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- Bloomsburg Zoning Ordinance.
- Bloomsburg Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan also recommends that the Town actively represent the planning area and participate in county and regional planning efforts that can benefit residents, such as:

- Fair Housing Study.
- Parking Study 2015.
- Parking Study - Bloomsburg Strategic Plan Phase III.
- Town of Bloomsburg FY 2021-2025, 5-year consolidated plan & FY 2021 Annual Action Plan.
- Town of Bloomsburg FY 2016-2020, 5-year consolidated plan & FY 2016 Annual Action Plan.
- Town of Bloomsburg Walkability Plan.
- Downtown Bloomsburg Incorporated revitalization plan.
- Columbia County Comprehensive Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Columbia County Greenway and Open Space Plan.
- Susquehanna Greenway Plan.
- Act 167 Stormwater Management Plans.
- North Branch Canal.
- Susquehanna Economic Development Association - Council of Government (SEDA-COG) Transportation Plans.
- SEDA-COG's Valley Vision: 2020 A Plan for Pennsylvania's Heartland.
- SEDA-COG's Revitalizing Rivertowns project.
- Middle Susquehanna Heritage Area Feasibility Study.

104 2023 Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Technical Preparation

Amendments to the 2023 Comprehensive Plan were conducted over a period of time. Contributing members include, but are not limited to administrative staff, members of Town Council, Planning Commission members, and the Chamber of Commerce. This group of individuals donated their time to review and make recommendations on the sections of the plan that required amendments. These individuals identified important current and future needs facing the community such as improving education, bringing jobs to the area, a broader property tax base, clean water, sewage treatment, sustainability and affordable housing.

Goals and objectives were created, and updated, based on the residents' perspective of our community.

1. Consider flood protection in the west end of Town.

2. Research grants to assist residents in curb replacement throughout Town.
3. Improve lighting in dark areas of the town while maintaining lumens that do not create a public nuisance.
4. Work and partner with county and state agencies to acquire funding for street/alley repairs.
5. Protect our parks, wetlands and open space.
6. Replace street trees, in a sustainable manner, with trees that will not buckle sidewalks or damage tree pits.
7. Lack of affordable housing continues to be a challenge.
8. Encourage residents to participate in periodic community clean-up days.
9. Utilize available apps, newspaper, radio, tv, cellular and other social media networks for emergency management.

Transportation & Infrastructure

- ❖ Add additional sidewalks and bike paths connecting each independent trail and sidewalk system throughout areas of the Town to improve pedestrian safety.
- ❖ Consider alternative transportation options such as bike sharing while improving walkability.
- ❖ Work collaboratively with residents, the University, and the owners of commercial properties to connect the new pedestrian overpass with the upper campus by adding sidewalks and bike paths.
- ❖ Work with the University to add bike racks to the front of the commuter buses.
- ❖ Encourage creating workshop groups to tackle larger projects throughout Town under the guidance of Town staff.
- ❖ Consider adding alternative means of recreation in underutilized areas prone to flooding that would not increase floodwaters.
- ❖ Encourage creating an inventory of most common vehicle accident sites and consider solutions to prevent damage to citizens and property.
- ❖ Encourage creating transit in Town and between Berwick, Bloomsburg, and Danville. Work to keep

the Rabbit Transit Hopper as a service provider for low income or disabled transportation services. Their “Stop Hopper” on demand shuttle service can be utilized by anyone in the service area.

Sustainability

- ❖ Focus on development and implementation of stormwater Best Management Practices throughout Town to prevent stormwater from entering the town’s stormwater system (rain gardens, vegetated roofs, runoff capture and reuse, etc.). In effect these practices would reduce flooding of waterways and streets, damage from flood events, and prevent pollution to nearby waterways.
- ❖ Design a Green Energy Plan that focuses on policy and implementation of sustainable energy production in Town owned buildings and lots, fostering energy and conservation partnerships with conservation organizations and agencies, introducing incentives with local business and energy suppliers.
- ❖ Continue to acquire flood prone lots and plant with trees and/or grasses.

Economic Development

- ❖ Focus on reclaiming/improving dilapidated structures throughout Town and on improving the facade of Town.
- ❖ Encourage creating a Town portfolio for individuals starting a new business in Town so that all requirements are outlined showing necessary approvals, taxes, financing, and contacts for assistance. Assistance from an appointed Town ombudsman would help accomplish this.
- ❖ Promote infill development incentives and encourage utilization of existing buildings, structures, and lots rather than disturbing open space.
- ❖ Continue to promote and incentivize mixed use development.
- ❖ Invest in historically underserved parts of the Town so that in turn, the Town is more appealing to private investment.
- ❖ Plan for a future where state and federal funding will not be generous and budget austerity will require the existence of reserve funding to provide fiscal prudence.

- ❖ Consider promoting and developing more spaces for outdoor seating at restaurants to help local businesses thrive and create vibrant places.
- ❖ Maintain an inventory of underutilized sites and structures and market them as opportunities to private industry and developers.
- ❖ Reinforce economic development initiatives by coordinating them with federal and state funding directed to the revitalization of existing neighborhoods and areas of the Town.

Arts/Culture

- ❖ Maintain a supportive environment for artists and cultural organizations. Promote and support development, while using performance spaces (indoor and outdoor) in Downtown Bloomsburg to encourage a thriving music/arts scene.
- ❖ Increase cultural events, that could be attended in auditoriums such as the high school, BTE, and Mitrani Hall at Commonwealth University that encourage residents to attend.
- ❖ Encourage partnership between the arts programs of local high schools and the University.
- ❖ Encourage the expanded use of the Fairgrounds for events throughout the year that increase activity throughout the Town.

Carbon Neutral

- ❖ Set a goal for the Town to be carbon neutral by 2030 by incorporating green technology.
- ❖ Recommend the purchase of electric vehicles as replacements are needed including school buses, police, and fire vehicles.
- ❖ Install solar panels on Town buildings.
- ❖ Encourage renovations to include green technology such as solar and wind walls into new

construction projects.

- ❖ Designation of additional community garden sites throughout the Town could give the town a more natural look.
- ❖ Include rain gardens and additional green space into future construction projects.
- ❖ Encourage, by ordinance, inclusion of solar and other green technologies.

2

Bloomsburg as a Place***201 Historic Community Development***

Bloomsburg was established in the fertile valleys of the Appalachian Mountains along the North Branch of the Susquehanna River. To the south of the Town lies Catawissa Mountain and the Appalachian Ridge and Valley Province. To the north is Knob Mountain at the foothills of the Allegheny Plateau. The topography of the surrounding area, the mountains and river valleys, provided the original resources that early people found valuable.



Dillon Greenhouses 933 Columbia Boulevard

The area's earliest development was closely associated with the Native American period of American history. The tribes were the first occupants of the Susquehanna River Valley which served as a major route into Central New York State. The only reminder of the original inhabitants is the legacy of indigenous names such as Susquehanna, Catawissa, Nescopeck, and Shickshinny.

Settlement in the area brought about an influx of early squatters and land speculators. The bottom lands along the river were occupied first, followed by higher lands. Settlers were largely self-sufficient at first, but gradually developed a need to find markets for surplus products. The construction of the North Branch of the Pennsylvania Canal ushered in a new era in the history of Bloomsburg. It linked Bloomsburg to larger established communities in the east and brought the Industrial Revolution to the Susquehanna Valley. Begun in 1826 and completed five years later, the canal generated a host of small manufacturing operations. Expanding opportunities in business and farming led to an increase in population, which in turn required the services of barbers, weavers, carpenters, blacksmiths, doctors, and lawyers. The first newspaper, the Bloomsburg Register, and the growing number of travelers, fostered the transmission and exchange of ideas and popular tastes.

Mineral wealth from the discovery of nearby iron ore and the Town's designation as the county seat in 1846 presaged the advent of the railroad in the 1850s. Between 1850 and 1890, three railroads served Bloomsburg, no small testament to the volume of traffic generated by the Town's booming manufacturing and commercial activity. In the midst of this growth, portions of the existing Bloom Township along with portions of surrounding townships was organized as the Town of Bloomsburg in 1870.

The turn of the century brought about a substantial change in Bloomsburg's economy. The iron ore was exhausted, and the agricultural base was depleted. New types of businesses were introduced. Textile mills such as Magee Carpet began to locate here. These were supplemented by numerous small manufacturing enterprises. Owners and managers served as a quasi-public board of directors for the Town as they served on the boards and committees of civic and cultural organizations and invested in the Town's growth through the development of worker housing.

Since 1926 US Route 11 has been the primary highway connecting the Town to other communities along the Susquehanna River and southward along the Appalachian front. By 1970 Interstate 80 was completed creating a second highway connecting Pennsylvania's eastern and western borders and providing nearby interstate access to and from Bloomsburg via exits 232 (PA 42 Buckhorn), 236 (PA 487 Bloomsburg), and 241 (US 11 Berwick). Travel distances and times to major metropolitan areas are:

Harrisburg, PA	73 miles	1 hour 37 minutes
New York, NY	148 miles	2 hours 44 minutes
Philadelphia, PA	137 miles	2 hours 21 minutes
Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, PA	61 miles	1 hour 8 minutes
State College, PA	91 miles	1 hour 36 minutes
Williamsport, PA	42 miles	51 minutes



North Market Street looking at David Stroup fountain, Circa. 1910

Milestones in Bloomsburg's Development

- 1772 - James McClure arrived from Lancaster County
- 1781 - Fort McClure protected by stockade
- 1797 - Bloom Township established
- 1802 - Town laid out by Ludwig Eyer
- 1813 - Columbia County established
- 1822 - Iron ore discovered on Montour Ridge; spurred manufacturing
- 1831 - North Branch Canal opened, giving access to Philadelphia by water
- 1839 - Bloomsburg University founded as the Bloomsburg Literary Institute at the Northwest corner of Jefferson and Third Streets.
- 1842 - Public school system established
- 1846 - Bloomsburg designated the county seat of Columbia County
- 1858 - Lackawanna and Bloomsburg railroad opened
- 1870 - Bloom Township was organized as the Town of Bloomsburg
- 1874 - Bloomsburg Gas Company and Bloomsburg Water Company incorporated
- 1882 - Bloomsburg woolen mills
- 1884 - Public sewer established
- 1889 - Magee Carpet founded
- 1890 - Town Hall constructed
- 1899 - Bloomsburg Library (Company) established
- 1905 - Bloomsburg Hospital established
- 1933 - Town Park established
- 1936 - Bloomsburg Post Office constructed
- 1979 - Historic Resource survey completed
- 1982 - Historic District designated
- 1985 - Children's Museum began service with traveling exhibits
- 1997 - Magee Automotive acquired by Reiter Automotive
- 2006 - Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc. established
- 2010 - Streater Field Development
- 2011 - Compost Site Relocated
- 2011 - AGAPE established
- 2013 - Kidsburg 2.0 dedicated
- 2016 - Phase I Flood Levee Completed
- 2018 - New Airport Terminal Bldg. dedicated/opens
- 2019 - Town Hall Renovation/Police Station relocation
- 2020 - Phase II Flood Levee completed.
- 2022 - Merging of Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield Universities into Commonwealth University of PA.
- 2023 - Renovations of Town Pool complete

Today, Bloomsburg is one of 33 municipalities in Columbia County. As the county seat and seat of the 26th Judicial District of Pennsylvania, it hosts many county, judicial and associated service offices—both public and private. This concentration of government and related services creates a hub of activity, an influx of daily visitors and regular demand for visitor parking.

Bloomsburg's architecture, significant because it represents an unusually dense collection of residential, social, religious and commercial buildings that display virtually every architectural style popular between 1830 and the present, is a veritable template for tracing the growth and development of the Town and for appreciating the cultural and aesthetic values that give it its special character. That such a mixture exists is a true indicator of the community vitality that makes Bloomsburg an architectural showplace.

The Town offers a beautiful, safe, and healthy environment. When combined with the benefits of a diverse and progressive community, great location, cultural tradition, quality education and outdoor fun, it makes Bloomsburg an ideal place to raise a family and operate a profitable business.

202 Bloomsburg Demographics



Bloomsburg's Main Street Looking East to Carver Hall

In 2000, Bloomsburg was a community of 12,375 residents. By 2010, population was estimated at 14,855. Estimates for the average household size is 2.10 persons. In 2020, Bloomsburg had a population of 12,711 people with a median household income of \$41,540.

Many of Bloomsburg's demographic figures were, and continue to be, influenced by the presence of Bloomsburg University. The median household income between 2016-2020 was estimated at \$41,035. Owner occupied housing during this period was 34.9% leaving 65.1% of the housing stock as rental properties. 94.4 % of the resident population are High School graduates. 32.2% of persons over the age of 25 years old had a Bachelor's degree or higher. However, Bloomsburg University's student population has been decreasing over the past several years. As a result, there is a decreased demand for in-town student housing.

Housing

With the increased percentage of rental properties throughout the Town of Bloomsburg, Town Council passed a Non-Student Rental Licensing Ordinance in 2013-2014 aimed at requiring any property being occupied by persons other than the owner of record to be licensed and inspected prior to occupancy. The inspection program has improved the rental property stock by utilizing property maintenance codes to increase the health, safety, and general welfare throughout the Town.



Bloom Mills Apartments on the north side of Sixth Street

Bloomsburg provides a range of housing options in terms of housing types, or units per structure, compared with the neighboring, county, or state jurisdictions. In 2017, Community Strategies Group, (CSG) completed construction of a 40-unit elderly housing building, including a senior center located at 237 W. Sixth Street. The senior center offers an assembly area with a capacity of 52 people.



Silk Mills apartments on south side of Sixth Street

Construction of the Silk Mill Apartments located at 236 W. Sixth Street, was also completed by CSG in 2020. The project created a four-story multi-family housing building which contains 64 housing units.

Both projects were designed with adequate parking, lighting, and beautiful landscaping to create an additional vibrant community within an existing community on 6th Street.

In 2021, the Planning Commission approved an additional housing and land development application for Mulberry Mills. The construction will neighbor the Silk Mill Apartments and include a four-story 44-unit apartment complex as well as commercial office spaces within the building.

Local and Regional Economy

As home to a university and county government, Bloomsburg is a major employment center for its own residents and more strongly for the county as a whole. Government and manufacturing jobs are particularly important to Columbia County's economy because over 52 percent of the total amount of compensation paid by businesses to their employees comes from these two sectors, yet they represent only 33 percent of the jobs. According to the 2021 U.S Census Bureau data for the Town of Bloomsburg, the total percentage of civilian labor force was estimated at 48.8%.



Soltz Hall on lower campus

The University has continued to renovate outdated buildings by using sustainable technology over the last decade. The bookstore was replaced in 2015 to add additional housing space for students on the lower campus and to reduce overcrowding on campus, while improving the existing bookstore. The renovations also included an additional food service facility. Lycoming Hall received a 1,400 square foot building addition in 2017. The additions included steam piping vents, new sidewalks, ADA ramps and new landscaping to improve the instructional facilities as well as the student housing within the building.



Arts and Administration Building

A former parking lot on the University's lower campus was developed into a new Arts and Administration Building which features four stories of mixed office and instructional space.

In 2018, the University improved campus safety and walkability by creating a Gateway to Bloomsburg at the intersection of Lightstreet Road and Country Club Drive. The project reconstructed the intersection to better protect students in their daily commutes to class.

203 Downtown Bloomsburg

Shoppers visit downtown Bloomsburg for retail services, dining, and a variety of night-life experiences. Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc., (DBI) a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the downtown, has been instrumental in encouraging residents to support the downtown. DBI strives to bring more diversity and public interests and resources to the downtown.



Renaissance Jamboree

DBI hosts several events that bring residents together throughout the year. Renaissance Jamboree is an outdoor event, typically held downtown in the Spring. The Jamboree features a variety of foods and hundreds of craft vendors.



Parade of Lights on Main Street

The Exchange is an organization dedicated to bringing the arts to all communities throughout the region. The Exchange organizes Halloween window painting throughout the downtown to showcase the talents and creativity of local Middle and High School Students.

After the leaves fall, a local radio station hosts the Parade of Lights which brightens the downtown of Bloomsburg on Black Friday with classic cars, floats, fire trucks, and thousands of holiday lights, while bringing in the Christmas season with a visit from Santa Claus.

DBI also holds a Coming Home for Christmas Festival. This gathering in downtown Bloomsburg provides holiday cheer as locals light up the Town Christmas Tree. The event offers late night shopping, holiday vendors, live music and a variety of foods.

204 Land Use Composition and Patterns

The physical pattern of dense development connected by streets and sidewalks in a gridded fashion is what visually distinguishes Bloomsburg from its municipal neighbors. Maintaining this pattern while encouraging redevelopment is essential to the Town's identity. Future infill development will help to keep the integrity of the Town's historic layout without sacrificing undeveloped land. While the historic district regulations are intensive to administer, requiring special expertise, they are the primary tool to sustain the integrity of the highly visible, high quality architectural building stock of the community. The Town has also adopted essential zoning provisions in its hazard areas, namely the airport and floodplain.

In 2021 The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education consolidated three eastern regional universities as a result of declining enrollment numbers. The plan was referred to as the Northeast Integration Plan. Under this plan, Bloomsburg University merged with Lock Haven and Mansfield Universities into the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania.



Carver Hall

As a result of this consolidation and declining enrollment, freshman and sophomores are now required to reside on campus. This has changed the rental property demographics within the Town.

The Town of Bloomsburg's Regulated Rental Ordinance was amended in 2021 to allow existing student rental license holders to continue to rent to students as well as traditional families. The amendment requires property owners to have the properties licensed and inspected on a yearly basis to preserve their ability to rent to students. The amendment was enacted in an effort to keep rental properties occupied.

Revisions to the zoning ordinance have attempted to provide greater specificity and flexibility to the permitted locations of off-campus student housing without restricting or concentrating student housing in a single district. Student housing is a permitted use in areas where it fits well with the community dynamics and enhances the atmosphere, such as in the downtown. It is not permitted in select residential districts.

205 Natural Resources and Natural Hazards

Bloomsburg's identity is influenced by its rural setting and natural resources, by the area's rolling topography, the area's agriculturally productive soils, its riverside and creekside location, and the wildlife associated with these habitats.

Its proximity to protected forest areas and public waterways allows for recreational and tourism opportunities in the great outdoors.

Approximately 67% of Bloomsburg's land contains environmental features such as floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and natural areas that are sensitive to development and its impacts.



View of the Susquehanna River

According to studies, the waters of both Fishing Creek and the Susquehanna River contain mercury. Sources are not known but are believed to be located upstream as the impaired classification extends upstream beyond the Pennsylvania-New York border. The river carries these pollutants downstream through many other riverside communities to the Chesapeake Bay and ultimately to the Atlantic Ocean.

Fishing Creek and the Susquehanna River flood frequently. Much of the Town lies within the 100-year floodplain and is affected. When the Susquehanna River overflows its banks, it hinders normal flow from Fishing Creek to the mainstream of the Susquehanna resulting in backwater flooding on Fishing Creek. When the Susquehanna River and Fishing Creek simultaneously rise above flood stage overbank flooding can cover up to 25 percent of the landmass within Bloomsburg's boundaries. Recently completed flood wall projects have significantly reduced floodwater exposure to major industrial companies, business centers, the high school complex and a number of individual residences. Further studies are being conducted to assess the feasibility of providing flood protection for the west end of Town. The Town has instituted systems for early warning, evacuation, and damage reduction.

The Town acquired the Streater property, located at the confluence of Fishing Creek and the Susquehanna River, in 2010. It is a property that was repeatedly damaged by flooding. A number of athletic fields were constructed at the site and are definite assets for community youth athletics.

In 2019 & 2020, two homes on West Main Street were elevated through CDBG-DR funding. In 2022, one additional home was elevated through FEMA funding.

Two phases of flood levee protection have been completed. In 2016, a \$29 million flood levee system was developed to protect two major industrial complexes (Autoneum) and the former Windsor Foods). In 2020, Phase II of a flood levee system was completed around the Bloomsburg High and Middle School complex and extended to Center Street. In addition, a portable flood levee for additional flood



643 West Main Street

protection is available for additional protection from the earthen levee to the Public Works facility on Catherine Street.

Future plans are underway to connect the Phase II levee with the Kawneer levee, providing flood protection to the entire riverfront. Columbia County is conducting a study about flood protection in the west end of the Town from flooding along Fishing Creek. Areas that are prone to flooding, yet not protected by the floodwall (near the Town Park), should be considered as designated wetland or natural resource areas.

Maintaining these areas as natural areas can help with flood water infiltration and create beautiful spaces.

The Town, in conjunction with its state and federal agency partners, should consider a community approach to living in harmony with the area's dynamic waterways that includes enforcement, relocation, acquisition, in-place elevation of structures, barriers, and both wet and dry flood proofing measures. "No adverse impact" is one model for such an approach; information is available from the Association of State Floodplain Managers, <http://www.floods.org>.

206 Cultural and Historic Resources



Rupert Covered Bridge

The Town of Bloomsburg has a rich heritage, evident in its historic architecture and celebrated through cultural events. The Bloomsburg Historic District and the Rupert Covered Bridge are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and therefore afforded some level of protection from federally funded or federally assisted projects that could harm their integrity. More than 650 properties comprise the Bloomsburg Historic District and as a district, are regulated by special provisions of the Town's code. Six of the eight properties eligible for listing on the National Register are located on the Bloomsburg University campus. The remaining two are former public school sites: the Junior High School and the Benjamin Franklin Laboratory School.

Additional historic sites acknowledged by area residents include 14 businesses, 18 churches three government buildings, and two monuments. Since the last update to the historic survey of properties was completed between 1986 and 1988, additional properties have come of historic age and could be evaluated for their significance and integrity as part of the current district, a new district, or as individual historic resources.



The Bloomsburg Regional Technology Center

The Columbia County Historical & Genealogical Society, collects and preserves local records and artifacts but does not pursue property preservation initiatives. The society is planning to move into the adjacent former PNC Bank building at the corner of Market and Main Street.

Cultural events sponsored by local organizations and held throughout the year enable citizens to connect as one community. The Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble produces classic and contemporary plays as well as original works from folklore, found text, history, interviews, and literature of many cultures. It also offers educational programs for area residents. Downtown Bloomsburg Inc. and The Exchange organize food, entertainment and art events to draw people into downtown. The University's Arts In Bloom program brings national talent to Haas Center for the Arts and Carver Hall. In addition, Bloomsburg University has many student organizations and ensembles that bring entertainment and cultural events to the residents of Bloomsburg and the surrounding area. A downtown performance venue for concerts and events, in addition to the Town Park Band Shell, could bring talents and artists to Bloomsburg, and help to promote local artists as well. For over 30 years, more than eighty Christmas trees decorated by community groups, families, and local businesses are displayed during the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble's annual TreeFest.

The Bloomsburg Fairgrounds has hosted the annual Covered Bridge Festival that attracts nearly 150,000 visitors over a four-day festival since 2021. The festival features more than 325 craft vendors, 32 food vendors, free parking and free admission.

The annual Bloomsburg Fair is the largest annual community event in Columbia County. Originating as a one-day event in 1855, the fair has grown to a nine-day community, agricultural and entertainment

exhibition. Today, the fair fills 227 acres, and attracts over 400,000 fair-goers annually. The Bloomsburg Community Garden, located along Ferry Road across from the airport, is a collaborative green space providing its participants, who may not have suitable yards of their own, a place to grow fresh produce, flowers, and other plants. This group of local gardeners tends individually assigned plots and shares in the maintenance of the site.

207 Walking and Riding Plans

Bloomsburg's transportation system is a multi-modal system for pedestrian, bicycle, freight, aviation, and vehicular travel. Sidewalks line at least one side of most streets throughout the Town. Some areas at the perimeter of Town lack sidewalks—more so than central areas.



8th and Poplar Street

In 2021, the Town obtained funding to reconstruct East Street & Route 487 leading to the Susquehanna Bridge. With this funding the Town was able to install sidewalks along Poplar Street which now connects with Fort McClure Boulevard, a goal of the Town for many years. In addition, grant funding has also allowed for the installation of ADA warning pads, designed to alert the visually impaired when walking on or off the sidewalks, throughout areas of the Town of Bloomsburg.

In 2023 construction of the Bloomsburg Area Recreational Trail (BART) began, providing a safe and scenic walking/riding path along the Susquehanna River.

Most streets provide suitable conditions for serious cyclists but many are too narrow for occasional and recreational riders who are not comfortable riding with motorized vehicle traffic. Off-road trails would supplement both recreational and commuter travel. A pedestrian and bicycle trail could connect the communities of Danville, Catawissa and Bloomsburg and provide trail recreation for residents and visitors.

Rabbit Transit started an on-demand service, called The Stop Hopper, which provides pre-scheduled door to door on-demand service during operational hours within its operating service area. Bloomsburg University operates a small fixed route system; however, it is only available to students. Greyhound lines, Inc. and Susquehanna Trailways stop at Uni-Mart on Lightstreet Road, and on East Second Street by the Scranton Commons. Go To Bus is another alternative transportation company offering services to New York City. These transportation companies assist in connecting residents with nearby cities.

Should passenger rail service return to the central Pennsylvania region in the future, Bloomsburg would be well situated to host a station due to its current land use pattern and density.

According to 2008 PennDOT data, Route 11/Main Street, Route 487/Lightstreet Road/Ferry Road, and Market Street are the busiest roads in Town, followed by Millville Road, Old Berwick Road and Fifth Street. High traffic volumes have made pedestrian circulation in downtown difficult. In 2023, the Town conducted a retiming of all of the traffic signals through an Automated Red Light Enforcement, (ARLE) grant. Two major intersections will have new red lights and improved cross walks at the intersection of 5th and Market Street near the Bloomsburg Memorial School and the intersection of Route 11 and Park Street. In 2023, the Town will conduct three combined ARLE grants for Park Street & Route 11, Market Street & 5th Street and retiming of the traffic lights in Town.

208 Community Facilities and Services

A total of 17 uniformed Police officers protects public safety throughout Town. The University currently has 13 uniformed officers that patrol campus as well and can assist the Town Police when necessary. The Town's consolidated fire department provides fire protection for the community, including the University campus. The department faces the typical issues of a volunteer fire company; recruiting and retaining volunteers, ongoing fundraising efforts as well as maintaining adequate operating funds.

In Spring 2008, the Town of Bloomsburg installed a siren/audio system to provide residents with warning of potential floods and other hazards. The Columbia County Water Mitigation Authority, (CCWMA) was established to maintain the flood levees. The CCWMA maintains the flood levee structures and is responsible for placing the stop logs in the multiple roadways in the event of flooding event.

The Bloomsburg Area School District significantly improved their campus by completing a two-phased Land Development project. Phase I included constructing new athletic fields within the flood protection levee system, new building additions, a new parking lot, as well as a new driveway and pedestrian access to the eastern side of the school.



Floodwall
protecting the
Bloomsburg
Area High-
School Complex



Phase II included three new athletic fields, parking, roadway alignments on the western side of the facility, and associated storm water facilities to protect the entire site.

New athletic fields at Bloomsburg Area High School

Public water is supplied to Bloomsburg residents and businesses from Fishing Creek. Veolia made significant improvements to their facility in 2014 to protect the water system from flooding events such as experienced during the 2011 flood. The project consisted of constructing of a new water treatment plant to replace the existing Irondale Water Treatment Plant. The new water treatment plant provides a capacity of 4.0 million gallons of water per day. The supplier's name changed from Suez to Veolia in 2022.

The Bloomsburg Wastewater Treatment Plant is owned and operated by the Municipal Authority of the Town of Bloomsburg and provides collection service to all the developed portions of the Town of Bloomsburg, Bloomsburg University and the majority of Scott Township. During 2021, the Authority improved the existing Waste Water Treatment Plant by constructing a new screening facility, a new influent grit removal facility, a storm water management system, rehabbing and elevating the existing primary clarifiers and repaving walkways and access roads throughout the facility.



Bloomsburg Recycling Center

Recycling is mandatory for Town of Bloomsburg residents, businesses, schools, offices, multi-family housing units and organizers of special events. The Town of Bloomsburg was the first community in Pennsylvania to provide curbside collection of recycling starting in August of 1977. Every household receives bi-weekly curbside collection of steel cans, aluminum cans, clear and colored, glass bottles, newspaper, mixed paper, and #1 and #2 plastic bottles. In addition, a once-a-month collection of corrugated cardboard is provided. The Town of Bloomsburg began collection in the Borough of Danville as an inter-municipal venture in 2014.

The Town's compost site is located at the corner of Sands Street and 11th Street. It provides a drop-off site for compostable materials, such as yard waste, garden residue, leaves and small tree limbs and branches. The Town processes these materials into compost and wood chips and makes them available to the residents of the Town and Scott Township. The Town entered into an intermunicipal agreement with Scott Township to begin collecting in their municipality. The Town also conducts curbside yard waste in the Spring as well as leaf collection in the Fall.

Bloomsburg is home to the only municipal airport in the county. The 96-acre facility has a 3,200 foot runway and accommodates recreational and corporate flyers. The airport also has a repair facility and self-serve avgas service on-site.

209 Developments of Regional Impact

The following developments and designations have brought both impacts and opportunities to the Town of Bloomsburg. They have shaped and will continue to shape the Town's identity as a place to live, work, learn, and visit.

Bloomsburg Fairgrounds



Bloomsburg Fairgrounds

The 227-acre Bloomsburg Fairgrounds includes an 8,000-seat grandstand, 78,000 square feet of exhibit buildings, an indoor arena, a covered band shell, a one-half mile harness race track, and a 3/8-mile clay auto race track. The Fairgrounds have been the site of the annual Bloomsburg Fair since 1855. The nine-day long fair begins the third Saturday after Labor Day and draws over 400,000 people from all along the eastern seaboard.

The Fairgrounds also hosts many trade shows and events throughout the year. For its duration, the Bloomsburg Fair is temporarily the largest employer in Town. The fair employs around 4,000 people for the week, mostly local residents. Approximately 1,200 vendors attend the event each year, each employing up to 20 local workers. Two school districts suspend classes for this week, making many teachers and school district workers available for these temporary positions. The impacts from the Fair, and to a lesser extent from other events held at the fairgrounds, include:

- Greater awareness of the assets of the Town and region.
- Increased visitation to the Town and region.
- Increased traffic volumes and congestion. Parking is largely handled onsite but overflows do occur onto local neighborhood side streets. Local property owners also rent out their land and charge visitors to park on their private property during Fair week.
- Increased demand for traveler services, i.e., food and accommodations, though food is featured at the Fair and many exhibitors live in their recreational vehicles.
- Much of the daily retail activity normally focused on downtown is transferred to the fairgrounds for the week. As a result, retail revenue typically falls during the fair.

Bloomsburg University



Carver Hall at Bloomsburg University

The 280-acre campus of Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania is one of 10 member schools in Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. With a student population of approximately 7,000 in a Town of approximately 14,000 residents, the University makes Bloomsburg a college town. The impacts from the University are both positive and negative and include:

- An economic powerhouse as a major purchaser of goods and services, employer (and resident recruiter), real estate developer, incubator of new business ideas, advisor/network builder, and workforce developer.
- Significant increases in traffic volumes at the beginning and end of semesters as well as for campus events, e.g., alumni, parent, and cultural events.
- The Library and Archives on campus which are open to the public are a great asset to the community.

Interstate 80



Interstate 80 opened in the 1960s. Interstate travel reduced travel times to metropolitan areas across and beyond Pennsylvania. At the same time, the Bloomsburg area was also made more accessible to long-haul travelers. The impacts from I-80 include the relocation of lodging uses to the I-80 corridor. Subsequently, the Columbia Mall was constructed at Exit 232, which drew retail activity away from downtown during the 1970s and 1980s. Motorists are now permitted to go faster, up to 70 MPH in Columbia County, as the speed limit was increased in 2016.

Susquehanna Greenway



The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership is working to expand recreation opportunities along the entire 500 miles of river from New York to Maryland that feature river towns, such as Bloomsburg, as destinations. Bloomsburg has been designated as a Susquehanna Greenway Community since 2003. Benefits from the designation include:

- The potential for increased tourism along the Susquehanna Greenway.
- Increased competitiveness for grant funding for natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resource related projects located in the greenway.

Flood Mitigation Project

Columbia County and its neighboring counties specialize in manufacturing, metals and textiles. Several manufacturing enterprises were located in the 100-year floodplain and therefore at risk from flooding from the Susquehanna River and Fishing Creek. Repeated flood damages have discouraged corporate investment.



Floodwall protecting Autoneum

the U. S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) at \$15 Million.

One of the Town's largest employers, Autoneum North America, Inc., received significant protection starting in 2015 when the Columbia County Commissioners recognized that Autoneum was a critical economic booster for the community. A significant job base was in jeopardy due to past flooding events. The Commissioners advocated to state and federal lawmakers for funding to build a flood wall that would protect the facility. The project would go on to receive one of the largest grants in the history of the Philadelphia Regional Office of

SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) prepared the EDA grant application for funds and administered the project on behalf of the Columbia County Commissioners. The project officially began on Feb. 19, 2015 and later broke ground on April 8, 2015. The floodwall also protects the former Windsor Foods site. The building is now protected to maintain its potential for reuse, industrial development and local employment.

The Town has implemented efforts to reduce damage from flooding, including:

- Floodplain management and resident awareness through public outreach programs.
- Participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Inspection and cleaning of the streets, channels and drainage ways.
- Acquisition and elevation of properties that are repeatedly flooded.
- Maintenance of a flood warning and response program.
- Participation in the Community Rating System (currently a CRS class 7).

3

Land Use and Zoning



Soldiers and Sailors Monument at Market Square

In 2023, The Town of Bloomsburg, in collaboration with Environmental Planning and Design created a Zoning overhaul that was not yet adopted at the time of publication.

With an understanding of the kind of community that citizens want Bloomsburg to become, goals were prepared to identify the various aspects of community and economic development that should be given attention. These goals provide the framework for actions to be taken by the Town and its community and economic development partners. These will be outlined in the subsequent chapters and illustrated on the zoning map. Similar to the vision statement, the goals should be used as a reference for daily decision-making by Town council. If so, the actions and decisions of Bloomsburg's Town Council and other civic leaders will create a better community.

Specific Planning goals include, but not limited to:

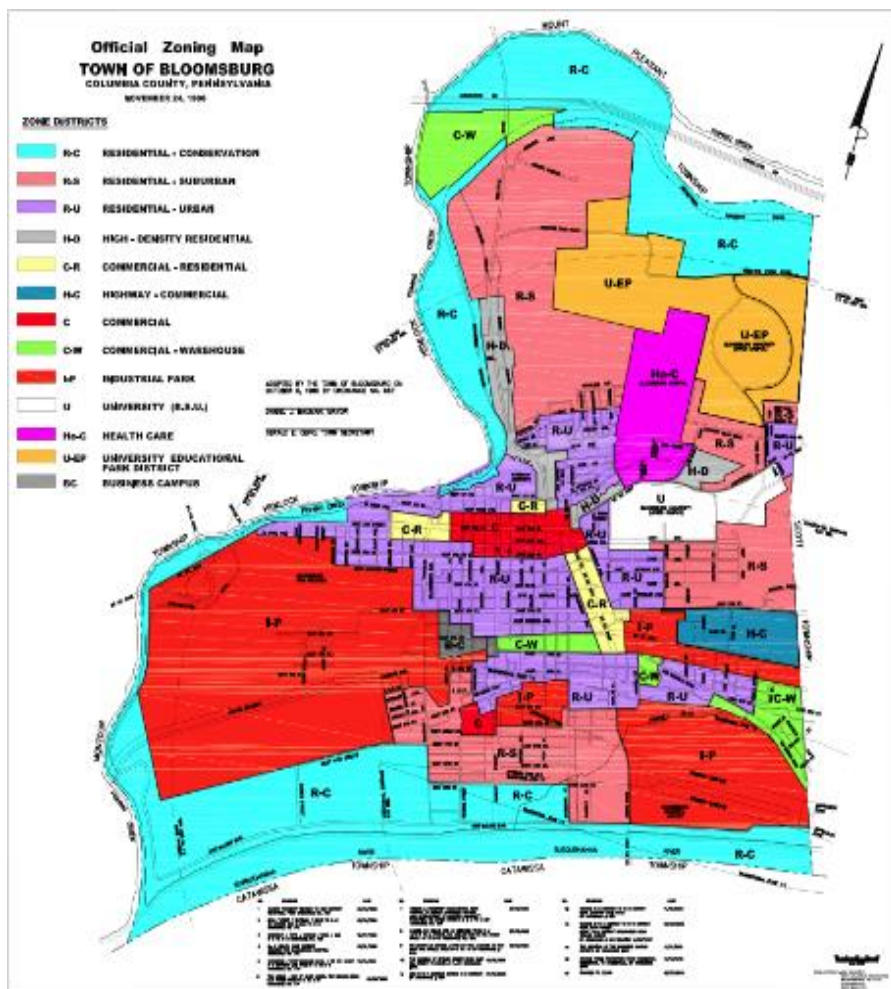
- Citizens of all ages and stages of life find affordable, quality housing and neighborhoods.
- Citizens travel in a variety of ways to reach their work, school, and leasured destinations.
- Community partners provide quality educational services, programs, and facilities for all ages from childhood through workforce preparation to continuing education.
- Citizens and public services are prepared to prevent and respond to emergencies and natural hazards.
- Citizens make conscious decisions about consumption of goods and sustainability services and the resources required to provide them.
- Citizens appreciate their own diversity.
- Public, private and institutional investment respects, maintains and adds value to the distinctive small-town pattern and historic architecture.
- Leading and emerging industries shape and are shaped by area initiatives, entrepreneurial opportunities, and business assistance.
- Citizens and visitors find a fun, welcoming, and navigable destination with a rich variety of recreational, leisure attractions and special events.

These goals should establish the expectations for future development in the Town. They define, “Smart Growth” for Bloomsburg - growth that is planned and well-managed and contributes to the vitality and sustainability of the Town, the economy, and the environment.

Land Use & Zoning

The Official Zoning Map for the Town of Bloomsburg separates approved land uses throughout the community that are compatible to specific areas of the Town. The Zoning map provides thirteen different land use designations:

■	R-C	Residential - Conservation
■	R-S	Residential - Suburban
■	R-U	Residential - Urban
■	H-D	High Density - Residential
■	C-R	Commercial - Residential
■	H-C	Highway - Commercial
■	C	Commercial
■	CW	Commercial - Warehouse
■	I-P	Industrial - Park
■	U	University Park
■	He-C	Health Care
■	U-EP	University Educational Park
■	BC	Business Campus



The Zoning Map is very important for separating future public and private development in the community. Public officials, landowners, and developers reference these sections in making land use decisions on the type, density, and location of new developments. The map provides an overview of the Town broken down into zones of the community.

Zoning districts are regulated by Ordinances adopted and amended from time to time. The Town of Bloomsburg's Zoning Ordinance reflects policy goals of community development objectives and gives consideration to the character of the municipality, the needs of the public and the specific nature of each particular district throughout the community.

The Zoning Ordinance contains provisions for special exceptions and variances administered by the Zoning Hearing Board. Relief from the Zoning Ordinance can be approved if specific criteria is met and voted upon by the Board. The Ordinance aims to prevent overcrowding of land, blight, congested travel areas, and the loss of health, life or property from a fire.

301 R-C Residential Conservation District



Bloomsburg Town Park

Purpose: The Purpose of the Residential Conservation (R-C) District is to encourage the continued use of the land for agricultural purposes and permit those uses which are compatible and allied with agricultural operations, to promote such open space activities as parks, playgrounds, recreational areas and campgrounds as well as low-density residential development.

Intended Uses:

- Agriculture, dairies, riding academies, kennels, pet and animal hospitals.
- Community Living facilities.
- Single-unit dwellings.
- Two-unit dwellings.
- Display and sale of Agricultural and related products produced on the premises.
- Public and Semipublic uses including:
 - Churches, or similar places of worship, and parish houses and convents.
 - Libraries, museums and public buildings.
 - Hospitals, nursing and convalescent homes.
 - Municipal Parks, playgrounds and recreation areas, including swimming pools.
 - Semipublic parks, playgrounds and recreation areas, including swimming pools when accessory to and incidental to residential uses of the district and not operated for gain or profit.
 - Golf courses, country clubs, resort hotels and cemeteries.

Accessory Uses:

Accessory uses on the same lot with and customarily incidental to any of the above permitted uses including but not limited to, garages, private swimming pools and home gardening.

Special Exception Uses:

- Multi-unit dwellings.
- Cluster dwellings.
- Elder family accessory dwellings.
- Home occupations.
- Mobile home parks.
- Natural resource production uses.
- Recreation vehicle camps.
- Commercial communications antennas and commercial communications towers.

Conditional Uses:

- Schools and colleges.

302 R-S Residential Suburban District



1000 Market Street Shopping Plaza

Purpose: The purpose of the Residential Suburban (R-S) District is to provide for the orderly expansion of suburban -type residential development, to prevent the overcrowding of the land through the application of maximum housing densities, to provide standards which will encourage the installation of public facilities and the preservation of public open space, to exclude activities of a commercial or industrial nature and any activities not compatible with residential development, to provide an environment for traditional families comprising of related individuals and to provide for the public convenience and to avoid undue congestion on the roads.

Intended Uses:

- Accessory apartments.
- Community living facilities.
- Single-unit dwellings.
- Libraries.
- Accessory uses.

Special Exception Uses:

- Multi-unit dwellings.
- Cluster dwellings.
- Elder family accessory dwellings.
- Home occupations.
- Nursing homes.
- Public and semipublic facilities, including parks, playgrounds, nursery schools, churches and similar places of worship, essential service buildings and structures and swimming pools.

303 R-U Residential Urban District



Wesley United Methodist Church

Purpose: The purpose of the Residential Urban (R-U) District is to encourage the orderly development and preservation of existing built-up residential sections of the community by providing public facilities necessary for the health, welfare and general convenience of the population, to prevent overcrowding of the land by restricting maximum housing densities, to provide an environment for traditional families comprised of related individuals; to preserve public open space; to limit activities of a commercial nature and exclude activities of an industrial nature and any activities not compatible with the residential environment; to provide for public convenience; to provide areas for student housing; and to avoid undue congestion on the roads.

Intended Uses:

- Community Living facilities.
- Conversion apartments.
- Single-unit dwellings.
- Two-unit dwellings.
- Multiple-unit dwellings.
- Libraries.
- Accessory uses on the same lot with and customarily incidental to any of the above permitted uses including, but not limited to, garages, private swimming pools and home gardening.

Special Exception Uses:

- Tourist Homes.
- Elder family accessory dwellings.
- Home occupations.
- Public and semipublic facilities, including parks, playgrounds, nursery schools, churches and similar places of worship and essential service buildings and structures.
- Student Housing

304 H-D High Density Residential District



Lightstreet Road

Purpose: The purpose of the High-Density Residential (H-D) District is to provide an

area where related and unrelated individuals can reside in facilities designed for large groups of people.

Intended Uses:

- Conversion apartments.
- Fraternal Organizations.
- Single-unit dwellings.
- Community Living Facilities.
- Two-unit dwellings.
- Multiple-unit dwellings.
- Libraries.
- Student Housing.

Special Exception Uses:

- Home occupations.
- Mortuaries.
- Nursing Homes.
- Public and semipublic facilities, including parks, playgrounds, Hospitals, churches and similar places of worship and essential service buildings and structures.
- Halfway house for persons on parole or probation.

305 H-C Highway Commercial District



Scott Town Center

Purpose: The purpose of the Highway Commercial (H-C) District is to provide reasonable standards for the development of highway-oriented commercial uses along the roadside in areas where such uses exist and where, due to the character of undeveloped land, the development of highway commercial uses is feasible. The standards of this district are designed to separate access roads from thoroughfares, to minimize traffic congestion, and to provide buffer yards and screen plantings where such adjoin residential districts.

Intended Uses:

- Supermarkets.
- Animal hospitals and pet shops.
- Automobile and gasoline service stations, wash and repair facilities.

- Automotive and/or mobile home sales.
- Drive-in restaurants, motels and hotels, drive-in theatres and banks.
- Golf courses, bowling alleys, skating rinks, swimming pools and other such amusement and recreational uses.
- Warehouses, distribution and service centers and terminals for trucks.
- Furniture stores.
- Home and garden centers.
- Convenience stores.
- Professional massage establishment.

Special Exception Uses:

- Clubs and lodges.
- Golf driving ranges and miniature golf.
- Municipal buildings.
- Partial hospitalization substance abuse treatment facility.

Conditional Uses:

- Sexually oriented.
- Shopping centers.

306 C Commercial District



Main Street

Purpose: The purpose of the Commercial District is to encourage the orderly development of commercial uses usually associated with a Central Business District. Standards are designed to encourage the provision of a wide variety of goods and services, to reduce congestion on the streets and to reduce fire and safety hazards.

Intended Uses:

- Dwelling units on the second floor and above a mixed-use structure.
- Community living facilities.
- Retail stores, personal service shops and game rooms.
- Banks, offices and studios.
- Specialty shops for custom work and articles to be sold at retail on the premises, such as baking, confectionery, dressmaking, printing and tailoring.
- Restaurants, cafes, tearooms and taverns.
- Movies and performing arts theatres.
- Public and semipublic facilities including parks, playgrounds, commercial and trade schools, clinics, churches and similar places of worship, libraries, public utility buildings.
- Student Housing on the second floor and above a mixed-use structure.
- Accessory uses on the same lot with customarily incidental to any of the above permitted uses.
- Professional massage establishment.

Special Exception Uses:

- Clubs and lodges.
- Home occupations.
- Hotels and motels.
- Mortuaries.
- Municipal buildings.
- Public transportation terminals.
- Recreation facilities and uses indoor.
- Commercial communications antennas and commercial communications towers.
- Parking facilities, including a parking lot and/or a parking structure.
- Partial hospitalization substance abuse treatment facility.

Conditional Uses:

- Schools and colleges

307 C-W Commercial Warehouse District



Ninth Street Commercial Businesses

Purpose:

The purpose of the Commercial Warehouse (C-W) District is to facilitate the receipt of raw materials and the distribution of finished products through the establishment of warehouses, storage areas, loading and unloading facilities.

Intended Uses:

- Warehousing, including storage of waste material provided that such is entirely enclosed within a building.

- Wholesale and retail activity and business and professional offices.
- Agricultural equipment, handling and product sales, service, distribution and supply.
- Building supplies sales, storage, fabrication and distribution of components incidental to building construction.
- Welding, machine and printing shops.
- Laundry and dry cleaning plants.
- Automotive, mobile home and related sales, service, repair and supply.
- Conversion apartments.

Special Exception Uses:

- Home occupations.
- Homeless Shelter.
- Partial hospitalization substance abuse treatment facility.

308 C-R Commercial Residential District



East Street

Purpose: The purpose of the Commercial Residential (C-R) District is to encourage the development of a district that provides goods and services in a predominantly residential neighborhood. The facilities shall be designed to minimize traffic congestion on the streets, to provide of the public convenience and to harmonize adjoining commercial and residential uses.

Intended Uses:

- Single-unit dwelling.
- Community living facilities.
- Two-unit dwellings.
- Conversion apartments.
- Dwellings above or in combination with commercial uses.
- Libraries.
- Retail stores and personal service shops (grocery, drugs, general merchandise, beauty parlors, barbershops and shoe repair, including drive-through window service).
- Business, professional and financial offices (not including drive-in service).
- Laundry and dry-cleaning stations.

- Accessory uses on the same lot with and customarily incidental to any of the above permitted uses including, but not limited to, garages, private swimming pools and home gardening.
- Professional massage establishment.

Special Exception Uses:

- Clubs and lodges.
- Home occupations.
- Mortuaries.
- Nursing Homes.
- Public and semipublic facilities, including parks, playgrounds, nursery schools, churches and similar places of worship, municipal buildings, public transportation terminals and essential buildings and structures.
- Recreation facilities and uses indoor.
- Student Housing.
- Homeless Shelter.

Conditional Uses:

- Schools and colleges.

309 I-P Industrial Park



Ferry Road Industrial Complex

Purpose:

- The purpose of the Industrial Park District is to permit and encourage industrial development and growth, to constitute a harmonious and appropriate part of the physical development of the Town, to contribute to a sound economic base of the Town and to promote the appropriate development of the district by minimizing air and water pollution, noise, glare, heat, vibration and fire safety hazards.

Intended Uses:

- Manufacturing.
- Wholesale activity and related business offices.
- Warehousing.
- Agricultural produce wholesale activities.
- Agricultural equipment handling and sales, service and supply.
- Building supply, service, storage and sales.

- Contractor construction yards and storage.
- Municipal and public utility garages and storage yards.
- Public transportation depot.
- Welding, machine and print shops.
- Laundry and dry cleaning plants.
- Automotive, mobile home and related sales, service or storage.
- Accessory uses on the same lot with and customarily incidental to any of the above permitted uses including, but not limited to, cafeteria, nursery and daycare schools, and health clinics.

Special Exception Uses:

- Natural resource production uses.
- Municipal buildings.

Conditional Uses:

- Airports.

Prohibited uses:

- Residential uses.
- The manufacture of rockets, projectiles, Shells or other similar missiles, gunpowder or fireworks, however, the manufacturing of component parts thereof which have been assembled without all of their explosive or propellant components shall be permitted.
- Stockyards, piggeries and slaughterhouses.
- Fat rendering and tannery operations.

310 U University District



Bloomsburg University

Purpose:

The purpose of the University District is to recognize and protect the original university (lower campus) as a unique use in Town, a use consisting of a variety of activities, including instructional, residential, health, cultural, recreational, commercial and maintenance all associated with the educational institution.

Intended Uses:

- Instructional facilities
- Student Housing.
- Fraternal organizations.
- Stadiums, gymnasiums and athletic fields.
- Parks and recreational facilities.
- Administrative and faculty offices related to the university functions to include, but not limited to, business office, data processing and student records.
- Day-care facilities.
- Accessory university uses and buildings customarily incidental to the above uses, sized to meet the needs of the university as defined, but not limited to:
 - University food service facilities.

- University bookstore facilities.
- University health and counseling facilities.
- Parking lots and parking garages.
- Maintenance facilities.

Conditional Uses:

- University research facilities.

311 HE-C Health Care District



Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital

Purpose:

The purpose of the Health Care HE-C District is to provide adequate maintenance of existing hospital facilities and guide development in a manner compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods. Further, the Health Care District limits permitted uses to those which are accessory, subordinate and supportive to hospital facilities and services. The district requires that all hospital and related uses be designed in a manner that will preserve the residential character of the surrounding neighborhoods through the use of such zoning tools as landscape buffers, design features and required yard areas.

Intended Uses:

- Single-family dwelling.
- Community living facilities.

- Administrative officers related to hospital functions to include, but not limited to, business office, processing and medical records.
- Day-care facilities.
- Medical offices.
- Hospitals, including outpatient facilities.
- Outpatient medical testing laboratories.
- Medical and dental clinics.
- Educational and conference facilities for in-house healthcare training.
- Automobile parking lots and parking garages affiliated with the hospital.
- Parks and recreational facilities.
- Retail sales related to health care products.
- Eating establishments incidental to and located within the hospital.
- Service establishments incidental to and located within the hospital.
- Continuing-care retirement community (CCRC).
- Uses and buildings customarily incidental to any permitted uses.
- Professional massage establishment.

Special Exception:

- Heliports.
- Emergency vehicle facilities.
- Nursing homes.
- Hospital-related dormitories.
- Substance abuse detoxification treatment facility.
- Non-hospital drug-free residential substance abuse treatment facility.
- Partial hospitalization substance abuse treatment facility.
- Wholesale activity and related business offices.

312 U-EP University Education Park District



Bloomsburg University Petit Athletic Complex

Purpose:

The purpose of the University Educational Park (U-EP) District is to permit and encourage the continued growth and development of the existing university facilities as appropriate developing and new areas of the Town and to encourage the design and development of these areas as an integrated campus. Further, the U-EP District limits permitted uses to student housing, instructional facilities and uses, which are accessory, subordinate and supportive to the university facilities and services. Special attention is given to the design of the campus, including the spacing of buildings and interior yards, pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular access to and from buildings and parking lots, lighting of walkways and parking lots, landscaping, screening and buffering, directional signage for increasing mobility and accessibility and street layout and accessibility.

Intended Uses:

- Instructional facilities.
- University student housing.
- Stadiums, gymnasiums and athletic fields.
- Parks and recreational facilities.
- Administrative and faculty offices related to the university functions to include, but not limited to, business office, data processing and student records.
- Day-care facilities.
- Accessory university uses and buildings customarily incidental to the above uses, sized to meet the needs of the university, only, and as defined in 27-302, including but not limited to:
 - University food service facilities.
 - University bookstore facilities.
 - University health and counseling facilities.
 - Parking lots and parking garages.
 - Student services.
 - Maintenance facilities.
- Fraternal organizations.

Conditional Uses:

- University research facilities in accordance with 27-703(5).

313 BC Business Campus District



Business Campus Area

Purpose:

The purpose of the Business Campus District is to encourage the development of an area that provides goods and services in a predominantly mixed-use setting accommodating continued operation and redevelopment of business locations and providing for light industrial activities involving generally unobtrusive processes that do not produce significant noise, smoke, odor, dust, vibration, or glare typical of more intensive industries.

Intended uses:

- Single-unit dwellings, two-unit dwellings and multiple-unit dwellings.
- Community living facilities and conversion apartments.
- Retail stores, personal service shops (grocery, drugs, general merchandise, beauty parlors, barbershops, laundry, dry cleaning and

shoe repair).

- Business, professional and financial offices and banks.
- Nursing homes, day-care and adult day-care facilities and assisted living facilities.
- Continuing-care retirement communities.
- Restaurants, tearooms, cafes and other places serving food and beverages.
- Private, public and semipublic transportation terminals.
- Enclosed warehouse or other storage facilities.
- Theaters, fitness centers, and indoor and/or outdoor recreation trails and facilities.
- Hotels, motels, and convention and conference centers.
- Parking lots.
- Instructional facilities, museums and libraries.
- Dwelling units above or in combination with any permitted use in a mixed-use structure.
- Drive-in/drive-thru service for any permitted use.
- Accessory uses on the same lot with and customarily incidental to any of the above permitted uses.
- Professional massage establishment.

Special Exception uses:

- Mortuaries.
- Churches and similar places of worship, municipal buildings.
- Commercial communications antennas and towers.
- Light industry.
- Homeless Shelter.

Conditional Uses:

- Schools and colleges

Regional Consistency:

Columbia County's Comprehensive Plan shares many of the same principles for guiding community development and investment in urban areas.

4

Visions and Goals

The Town of Bloomsburg is a 4.7 square mile municipality in Columbia County. It is the only incorporated town in the Commonwealth and is the seat of Columbia County. Bloomsburg is bordered by Mount Pleasant Township and Hemlock Township to the North, Hemlock Township and Montour Township to the west, the Susquehanna River to the south, and Scott Township to the east. Fishing Creek forms the west and north borders.

Citizens of the Town of Bloomsburg value their natural and cultural heritage, history and the walkable mixed-use pattern of downtown. Residents have expressed that increased access to education, and community's services could improve the quality of life.

The Town must prepare for short term economic booms and busts, the community impacts as well as leveraging the programs and resources at the University.

These ideas begin to characterize how residents would like the future of Bloomsburg to be different, and in fact better, than its present. They form the basis of a vision for an even better and more sustainable way of life for residents and the Town.



New Bloomsburg Diner

Vision

It is important for citizens to agree on what they want to accomplish for themselves and for future generations of the Town. From the values and ideas mentioned, the Planning Advisory Committee prepared a vision statement. It characterizes the Town of Bloomsburg the way citizens would like to see it 10 years from now. This vision statement will help Town Council and other community leaders and stakeholders evaluate their day-to-day decisions, actions, and investments in comparison to the future they desire.

Vision Statement - Business Oriented

By 2032, the Town of Bloomsburg will continue the approach of maintaining Town assets in order to achieve its distinct and vibrant character. The Town will also continue to pursue a sustainable and entrepreneurial approach to public, private and institutional development and investment that nurtures community and university life and the local economy.

401 Community Characteristics

There are three Census Tracts in the Town:

- Census Tract 510 forms the southern border of the Town;
- Census Tract 511 is to the north of Census Tract 510; and
- Census Tract 512 is to the north and west of Census Tract 511.

The following block groups are considered to be Low- to Moderate-Income by HUD:

Census Tract	Block Group	Low-Moderate %
511	1	74.36%
	2	86.03%
	4	86.03%
512	1	62.50%
	2	98.66%
	3	58.14%

- *Bloomsburg is more diverse than the county; however, 90.7% of residents are white. the Bloomsburg university student body is 78.7% white.*
- *Approximately 5.39% of Bloomsburg residents are Black or African American, 5.3% who are Hispanic or Latino, and 1.5% who are Asian.*
- *Student enrollment at Bloomsburg university has declined approximately 20% in the past 10 years.*
- *About 7.1% of residents under 65, and 27.2% of older adults age 65 and over, have a disability.*
- *Nearly 10% of housing units are vacant in census tract 512. the vacancy rate is just 3% in census tract 510.*
- *More than half of the housing stock was built before 1950. many more rentals (15.2%) than owner- occupied units (3.3%) were built since 2000.*
- *The majority of households (65%) are renters. there are 47 non-white and 30 Hispanic or Latino homeowners in Bloomsburg. overall, 35.2% of white households, 14.92% of non-white households, and 29.41% of Hispanic or Latino households are homeowners. this data should be interpreted with caution as a large percentage of non-white residents are Bloomsburg university students.*
- *About 30.6% of homeowners are over the age of 65.*

Further On Down the Road

Goal: Bloomsburg is known as a community where...

- redevelopment maintains vibrant activity and distinct architecture through sustainable techniques while keeping its historic values.
- citizens and public services are prepared to respond to emergencies and hazards.

We will achieve our goals if we...

1. Sustain Bloomsburg's small-town character.
2. Preserve, interpret, and apply the patterns of the most significant historic resources; use other techniques to recognize and appreciate other historic resources, as appropriate.
3. Provide safe travel options for citizens and visitors moving within and through the Town.
4. Continue to foster redevelopment.
5. Redefine Bloomsburg's connection with the Susquehanna River.
6. Embrace Bloomsburg University as a community and economic development partner.



Whiteman Avenue

402 Sustain Small Town Character



Bloomsburg's small town character results from a multitude of individual design elements. Its fine-grained land use pattern, walkable system, historic architecture, tree-lined main streets and lively street life contribute to its identity and charm. New development throughout the Town should seek to compliment this pattern.

North Main Street

Recommendations:

- ❖ Continue to permit mixed use structures in the downtown. Consider permitting mixed use structures in the commercial highway district and other applicable districts, enabling the long-term redevelopment of this area as a multi-story mixed use district.
- ❖ Maintain and create new places for people to meet.
- ❖ Enforce requirements for sidewalk installation and maintenance. Consider alternatives, such as a walking path, that might better suit the topography, prior to granting a waiver for sidewalk installation.
- ❖ Prepare for the conversion from gas to electric vehicles by planning for charging station availability.

403 Foster Sustainable (Re) Development

Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of present residents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It seeks to accomplish this goal by balancing environmental concerns with social equity and economics. The underlying premise is that the overall quality of life of a community is highest where these concerns are balanced.



Former PNC Bank on Market and East Main Street

The fact is Bloomsburg will continue to develop, redevelop and change as it has in the past. The Town may not expand outward much farther, but it will grow and change in other ways, including the composition and needs of its citizens. Redevelopment initiatives can help a community take advantage of important assets while encouraging a compact development pattern. Ensuring that development and change occur in environmentally friendly ways will ensure the long-term health of the Town.

Sustainability also involves creating a place that can maintain a healthy population into the future. Bloomsburg already has some of the most important components, such as housing, employment, and community destinations in walkable patterns, public water and sewer utilities serving most properties, a strong recycling program, and large open spaces along its waterways. The Town should build upon this solid base toward becoming more self-sufficient and environmentally conscious.

Sustainable development considers environmental effects in every choice from site and structural design to construction and waste disposal to occupancy and operations. Nationwide, there is rising demand for walkable, green communities that encourage a healthy lifestyle while supporting a healthy planet. The U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) initiative combines the principles of smart growth, new urbanism, and green design. The LEED for Neighborhood Development program focuses on housing diversity, storm water management, energy production, and transit accessibility. An elevated emphasis on green building practices could distinguish Bloomsburg from other communities in the region and the state. These green building practices could appear in the form of solar panel installation and green or vegetated roofs.



East Main Street

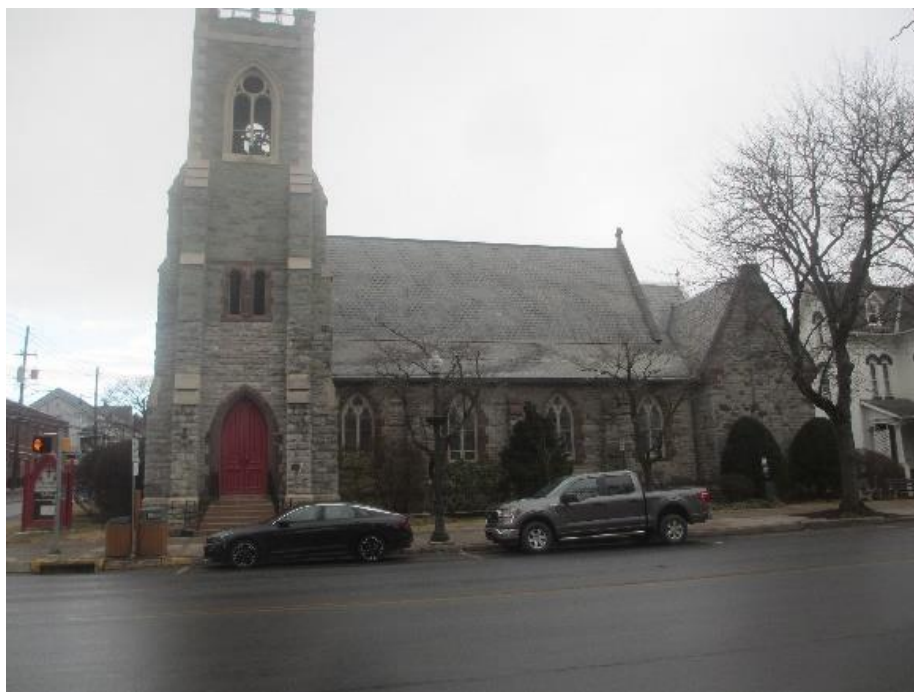
Sustainable development can also focus on economic efficiency and prosperity. Investment in the downtown reinforces the downtown as the community core. Maintaining this core is important for area businesses, residents and the cultural base of the community. This keeps people in the downtown and brings in tax revenues for local government. By promoting compact development and discouraging sprawl, the downtown is kept healthy and vibrant. It creates a healthy active lifestyle that allows people to walk and bike around Town instead of driving. This reduces automobile use, fuel consumption and vehicle emissions, traffic, and traffic accidents. Fewer automobiles translates to a reduced demand for parking, leaving more land for tax generating development. More money can then be invested in creating bike paths and protecting open space and natural areas.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Continue to encourage compact, walkable, mixed-use development. Site public uses in proximity to residents to facilitate walking, bicycling and transit use and to reduce fuel consumption and associated pollution.
- ❖ Encourage installment of charging stations in new development and Town parking lots.
- ❖ Support redevelopment efforts by investing in public improvements, programs and initiatives such as traffic circulation/parking efficiencies, pedestrian improvements, streetscaping, façade improvement programs, and streamlining the development review process.
- ❖ Maintain and expand pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to link residential areas, the downtown, the University, the Hospital, and other activity centers in the Town. Expanded availability and use of bicycle and foot traffic will reduce fuel consumption and improve citizens' health.
- ❖ Revise zoning regulations to allow increased density, i.e. taller buildings. This may require a block-by-block analysis of maximum building height permitted by the airport hazard zone that overlays the Town.
- ❖ Work with Geisinger Bloomsburg Hospital and the health care community to identify the economic infrastructure needed to be competitive.
- ❖ Promote green building practices in the construction and operation of new development. These practices apply to both building design and site design. Building design techniques include reduced electric demand (by lighting rooms and offices as needed rather than entire floors), while green site design practices can reuse stormwater for watering vegetation, use landscaping to shade buildings, and orient buildings to maximize the winter solar gain.
- ❖ Establish financial and other incentives to encourage redevelopment. For instance, the Town could establish a Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) program in the established core to reduce the cost of development there. This program would provide property owners with a temporary property tax abatement on the value of improvements to their property. Tax increment financing for redevelopment of housing might also be applicable.

- ❖ Prepare redevelopment plans to guide redevelopment activities in designated areas. Focus this effort to areas where strong community anchors are needed. Involve partners with land acquisition authority to assist in land acquisition and assembly, if needed. Having a plan in place or in preparation may help stimulate private investment.
- ❖ Adopt a “green infrastructure” approach to stormwater management; permit best management practices that manage and treat stormwater on-site. A green infrastructure approach, retaining open space on-site to reduce the amount of stormwater, has been applied in new and existing developments in communities large and small across the country. In intensively developed areas, soft engineering structures such as rain gardens, native vegetation gardens, curb cuts, and flat curbs allow stormwater to infiltrate instead of directing it to an off-site management facility. These methods can decrease the amount of stormwater by 30- 90% while costing only 25% as much as off-site management methods. With minor engineering, many sites can be retrofitted while others are more appropriately incorporated into larger public works projects, e.g., street resurfacing. Local regulations accompanied by design specifications are needed to ensure hydrological effectiveness.
- ❖ Expand municipal and commercial recycling programs. Consider a deposit program where recyclables can be redeemed. Currently only 10% of plastics actually get recycled.
- ❖ Conserve resources in municipal operations. Town departments should be directed to find ways to reduce their use of energy, water, paper and other materials and resources, and to recycle materials through municipal or commercial operations.
- ❖ Identify and preserve/restore critical environmental areas. Riparian zones along the river and creeks, wetland areas, and wildlife habitat areas can become part of an open space and greenways system that helps to maintain physical linkages among land and water resources.
- ❖ Review both the zoning and Subdivision and Land Development regulations to note where water resource protection provisions, including innovative stormwater management, can be enhanced to reduce off-site flow and improve water quality, helping to ensure green infrastructure practices are installed on the ground.
- ❖ Promote the installation of solar panels in new and renovated construction.
- ❖ Introduce electric vehicles, and solar energy into public facilities and services.
- ❖ Encourage repurposing student housing into family housing.
- ❖ Develop a list of sustainability indicators and periodically measure the Town’s carbon footprint.
- ❖ Acknowledge quality compliance and give annual awards for innovative environmental achievements. Involve the University in developing sustainability indicators and calculating the Town’s carbon footprint, as students and faculty may be aware of emerging analysis concerning the environment and sustainability.
- ❖ Focus on filling vacant stores through an effort between DBI and Town Council.

404 Preserve Historic Treasures, Conserve Historic Resources



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Historic District in Bloomsburg was designated a National Historic District in 1983 under the Pennsylvania Historic District Act. The area is roughly bounded by Penn, Chestnut and East Streets on the east, Fishing Creek, Iron Street and Lightstreet Road on the north, West Street on the west, and 5th and 6th Streets on the south. It includes roughly 30 blocks of historic buildings built primarily between 1845 and 1930. The significance of Bloomsburg's Historic District results from the overall density and collective value rather than from each individual structure. For this reason, the district is pivotal to the identity of the Town.

The Historic Architectural Review Board, or HARB, is an advisory board that reviews exterior renovation requests and advises the Town Council on issuing certificates for changes to be made to properties within the district to assure the renovations are harmonious within that area. They also advise property owners in the historic district on the physical and financial aspects of preservation, rehabilitation and reuse. The HARB is made up of an architect, one licensed real estate broker, two resident property owners in the historic district, two members with knowledge of and interest in preservation of historical structures and the Code Enforcement Officer. These members must be appointed by Town Council. Recognizing the importance of maintaining historic validity should always be considered when planning to update a historic property.

Recommendations:

- ❖ Review the regulations and boundaries of the historic district. Consider revising the boundary to include the most significant properties. Consider the use of design guidelines to conserve the character of properties removed from the historic district.
- ❖ Promote HARB membership, including through professional organizations for the required architect and realtor.
- ❖ Create annual quality awards for historic district maintenance and for historic district renovation/rehabilitation.



405 Provide Safe Travel Options

Bloomsburg's transportation system is a multi-modal system for pedestrian, bicycle, freight, aviation, and vehicular travel. But there are conditions in each mode of travel that limit the full potential of travel options:



East and Main Street

- Sidewalks line at least one side of most streets throughout the Town.
 - Most streets provide suitable conditions for bicyclists but many are too narrow for occasional and recreational riders who are not comfortable riding with motorized vehicle traffic.
 - Public transportation includes Fullingtown Trailways, Greyhound, Martz, and Megabus transportation to New York and Philadelphia. Uber is available on a limited basis. Rabbit Transit also provides services for senior citizens by appointment.
-
- Route 11/Main Street, Route 487/Lightstreet Road/Ferry Road, and Market Street are the busiest state roads in Town, and anecdotally have high pedestrian volumes. East and Main Street crosswalks are particularly dangerous with the number of students crossing the street.
 - When there are traffic accidents on Interstate 80, PennDOT has traffic detoured onto Route 11, and/or Lightstreet Road, creating significant congestion. Traffic seems to move efficiently through Town as a result of recent PennDOT improvements. However, residents feel that the improvements have made it more dangerous to walk or bike in Town with traffic flowing more freely.
 - There are many people who work in Bloomsburg but live in the surrounding townships, generating local congestion on a daily basis.
 - Deliveries are an issue for some downtown businesses as some delivery trucks have difficulty navigating the alleys to reach the rear entrances or double park on the streets causing congestion.
 - Some businesses have left downtown, citing a lack of parking. While several studies indicate that the parking inventory is adequate, new technologies and practices could result in better management of that inventory.

406 Findings of the 2015 Town of Bloomsburg Parking Study

In the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014 students and faculty from the Bloomsburg University Department of Environmental, Geographical, and Geological Sciences (EGGS) Department and the Department of Sociology conducted a study of parking in downtown Bloomsburg.

General Observations from the results of the study:

- o There is some parking congestion along Main Street, east of Market Street.
- o Generally, parking is available at any given time in downtown Bloomsburg if people are willing to walk, and have improved knowledge of parking options.
- o Overall, for those who purchase permits, it appears that the permit system is working effectively.

Surveys indicate:

- o Driving is the primary way to get downtown and then people commonly report parking as close as possible to their destination. Efforts to avoid parking challenges (e.g., parallel parking) are not widely reported.
- o Employees, managers and owners report a higher frequency of adding time to expired meters than patrons, but recall that the parking sweeps show that this practice does not appear to be a common occurrence (or at least did not show up given the manner in which the data were collected).
- o Many find parking in downtown Bloomsburg to be frustrating and a not insignificant number say they avoid downtown because of parking (though a similarly large proportion does not avoid downtown because of parking). Age appears to predict avoidance of downtown, with patrons over forty being more likely to report avoiding downtown because of parking.

Communication Changes:

- o Develop a new, consistent patron parking map/brochure for the various Bloomsburg websites. Highlight the locations of metered/non-metered parking, meter hours, permit lots, and parking rules. Make the map available on mobile devices (advertise for mobile devices).

Policy Changes / Future Considerations:

- The town parking permit process is confusing and expensive. This may prevent many students from purchasing permits. Make a lower cost, short-term permit for downtown employees. This will help to incentivize use of permitted lots for employees.
- Downtown is currently optimized for traffic flow. Instead, the town should work to shift the balance toward pedestrian flow. This will incentivize patrons' willingness to park further away from their destinations.
- Remove traffic from some alleys on Main Street. This will reduce the perceived/physical barrier to parking further away.
- Improve lighting at pedestrian crossings (e.g. East and Main Streets).
- Add sidewalk build-outs on intersections to make it easier for pedestrians to cross wide intersections (e.g. Main Street and Market Street, or Main Street near Town Hall).
- Give pedestrians more control at intersections by making the signals more responsive to their requests to walk.

407 Redefine the Town's Connection to the Susquehanna River

Due to its location at the confluence of Fishing Creek with the Susquehanna River, flooding is a significant natural hazard to the Town of Bloomsburg. The flood that has a 1% chance of occurring each year is called the "base" flood. When water reaches the base flood elevation, 1,421 acres of the Town lie under water.

The Town has experienced four floods higher than the base flood: in 1904; Hurricane Agnes in 1972, 2006 and again in 2011. The Town has also experienced other floods that came within a foot of the base flood level in 1936 and 2004. Five floods since 1972 were within five feet of the base flood stage: in 1979, 1984, 1993, 1996 and 2005.

Past flood events have resulted in extensive damages to structures and their contents and have threatened public safety. In addition, floods have disrupted major transportation systems, requiring closure of roads, railroads, and the municipal airport. Flood damages are attributable to overbank flooding from the Susquehanna River and to flooding along Fishing Creek, which is exacerbated by backwater flooding from the Susquehanna River. When the Susquehanna River and Fishing Creek simultaneously rose above flood stage, overbank flooding has covered up to 25 percent of the landmass within the Town of Bloomsburg's boundaries. Kinney Run & the Kinney Run diversions ditch has been prone to major flooding for residents of Old Berwick Road and business owners.

Bloomsburg was well established as a riverside community long before formal floodplain delineation and land use and development regulations were put in place. Therefore, most properties are not subject to current floodplain zoning regulations unless they are substantially improved and zoning cannot be considered independently as a long-term mitigation solution for flood damage reduction to existing structures.

The Town's efforts to reduce damage from flood hazards include:

1. Bloomsburg manages land use and development regulations for flood hazard areas. In 1974, Bloomsburg enacted its floodplain management ordinance to restrict intensive development from the floodplain. The ordinance was later amended in 2019 to require additional floodplain development permits.
2. Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program in order to make flood insurance available.
3. Inspection and cleaning of the streets, channels and drainageways to reduce the chances that blockages will cause flooding.
4. Acquisition of properties that are repeatedly flooded.
5. Maintenance of a flood warning and response program.
6. Implementation of a Hazard Mitigation Plan.
7. Improve flood protection for residents in the west end of Town.
8. Improvements to Kinney Run.

2021 Columbia County Flood Mitigation Study

In 2021, Columbia County contracted with Borton Lawson to provide engineering services to undertake a flood mitigation study in the west end, of the Town of Bloomsburg. The study included an investigation of potential flood mitigation projects in the floodplain of Fishing Creek and the Susquehanna River. The project was financed by grants from the Commonwealth Financing Authority and the Department of Community and Economic Development.

408 Embrace Bloomsburg University as a Community and Economic Development Partner

Community engagement is critical to the mission of Bloomsburg University as a community and economic partner with the Town of Bloomsburg. The primary goal is to increase the collaboration efforts between the University and the community to create a better exchange of knowledge as well as resources.

- Limit student housing to select areas of Town to preserve some neighborhoods for non-student residents.
- Consider methods to continue to encourage landlords to improve the rental housing stock. The intended outcome is well-constructed, well-maintained properties that meet the needs of student and non-student renters.
- Strengthen design and/or performance standards for student housing. Standards that control the building form (what it looks like) through form-based codes, an innovative approach to land use and land development regulations.



Greenly Center

The University should continue to seek partnerships in the public and private sectors that enrich scholarship and create activities, enhance curriculum, teaching and learning, engage citizens, strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility, address key societal needs, and contribute to the public good.

As these partnerships are considered, two issues should be addressed. The first issue is that many schools and departments within the University, besides the College of Business and Corporate and Continuing Education Division, are under-utilized for their expertise. The University should engage students and faculty from a variety of schools and departments within the University, as appropriate to the area's business community.

The second issue is that the University has several advisory programs which focus on individual company issues, but few that focus on business environment issues. Therefore, the University could incorporate its business environment expertise in advisory programs.

When developing new advisory programs or improving existing advisory programs, the University should consider possible pitfalls to ensure programs are effective. One pitfall of advisory programs includes fragmented student and faculty participation resulting from the fact that student involvement may be limited to a single academic term. It is important to note that business concerns cannot always be fully understood or resolved within a short window of time.

Another pitfall is that students and faculty may spend insufficient time identifying core issues and clarifying expectations.

As a result, the University should manage students, staff, and faculty engagements rigorously from the beginning to the end of a project. This can be achieved by assigning oversight staff with management expertise to coordinate and monitor a program; matching the appropriate students, staff, or faculty advisors to businesses; and clearly outlining deliverables and managing timelines.

5

Living in Bloomsburg

Bloomsburg offers a unique lifestyle in Central Pennsylvania. Bloomsburg's prominent architectural character and university lifestyle create a strong Town identity. It is home to a diverse working community with deep Columbia County roots while students, faculty and staff represent much wider origins. This mixture, at times, creates challenges but overall it adds to the wonderful diversity of the Town. Residents and students alike enjoy a high quality of life with easy access to a variety of cultural and community facilities.

501 Public Input on Current Conditions

Positives

- The Town is relatively safe today with a statistically average amount of reported crime.
- Coordination between the Town and the University has improved in recent years.

Negatives

- The lifestyles of off-campus students and residents sometimes clash.
- Bloomsburg University enrollment already peaked and is projected to continue to decline in the future. This will have a major impact on many areas of the Town such as less demand for off-campus student housing. At the same time, the University is requiring increased on-campus residency. Starting in the fall of 2021 the University mandated first and second year students to live on campus. Consequently, there likely will be reduced demand for off-campus student housing.

502 Provide Housing Choices for all Stages of Life

Towns across the country are being revitalized by increases in the availability of downtown housing. This strengthens the downtown economy by having people in the area 24 hours a day. A key factor behind the recent increases in downtown housing is a change in demographics.

Findings from the housing profiles indicated that most of the homes in Town are over 60 years old. The code enforcement officers continue to utilize the International Property Maintenance Codes to improve the property stock throughout the Town of Bloomsburg.

The housing inventory should also reflect the increased need for support of a telecommuting culture and the conversion to electric vehicles.

Another finding related to housing is that student housing dominates new construction in the housing market. Quality varies but often doesn't convey a sense of permanence or contribution to the quality of the neighborhood. Many rental units were originally single-family homes and are owned by non-resident owners, contributing to maintenance issues and connection to the community. The majority of rentals in the US are owned by large corporations.

One final finding is the need for housing for seniors and the elderly that meets their housing and health care needs. Community Strategies Group has been very helpful with building complexes in order to fulfill this need.

Goal

Bloomsburg is a community where citizens of all ages and stages of life find affordable, quality housing and neighborhoods.

We will achieve our goal if we...

1. Provide housing choices that meet residents' needs through all stages of individual and family life.
2. Protect public safety through Town, community, volunteer, and regional services.
3. Extend the walkability of downtown throughout the town.
4. Build community from diversity.

Recommendations

- ✓ Increase development of housing options suitable for young adults, “empty nesters”, seniors, persons with disabilities, telecommuters, work from home culture and traditional families. The predominant type of housing is single-family detached. The Town currently lacks housing types such as townhouses and condominiums. The Town also lacks housing for continuum of care from independent living to assisted living to skilled care units. This could be accomplished through revised zoning, specific initiatives with the private housing sector, or public redevelopment.
- ✓ Promote housing maintenance and renovation. Preserve neighborhood quality through public investments and incentives for private investment maintenance, renovation, rehabilitation and tax incentives such as Payment in Lieu of Taxes Payment (PILOT or LERTA).
- ✓ Continue to enforce property maintenance requirements for all properties throughout Town.
- ✓ Consider methods to encourage landlords to improve rental housing stock. The intended outcome is well-constructed, well-maintained properties that meet the needs of student and non-student renters.
- ✓ Identify potential sites for infill housing or redevelopment. Infill and redevelopment are closely related, especially in well-established communities. Infill can mean the development of vacant parcels within the established development pattern. It can also imply taking advantage of multi-level development when existing conditions are just a single story. However, if the existing structure was only designed for single story, infilling above may require strengthening the foundation or redeveloping the property from scratch. In either case, the new construction should be sensitive to and compatible with the character of the existing neighborhood.
- ✓ Work to introduce market and above market housing in Town.
- ✓ Continue to introduce housing for professionals.

503 Redevelopment Targets

Redevelopment projects take advantage of underutilized properties to meet needs or create opportunities. They can be led by the public or private sector and can serve public or private sectors. They can rehabilitate existing structures or they can clear blighted properties and build new. Redevelopment projects evolve through a process:

- Site Assessment and Market Study.
- Master Plan.
- Zoning revisions, if needed.
- Plan Review and Approval.
- Permitting and Construction.

Potential Development sites:



- Lightstreet Road from Main Street to the hospital for multi-family residential use with special attention given to sidewalk layout to accommodate pedestrians comfortably along Lightstreet Road.
- Commercial Strip along US Route 11 to Mixed Commercial/Residential use.
- Encourage the redevelopment of industrial sites to residential housing.

Vacant Warehouse

- Development of the now vacant YBC (Your Building Center Inc.) property, current owner has proposed a series of townhouses.
- Encourage the redevelopment of Industrial sites to residential housing.

504 Protect Public Safety

Nothing else matters if you don't feel safe where you live. Feeling safe (not threatened or at risk) while at home or in public places is vitally important. If people don't feel safe, they will either stay in their homes or move from the area, so ensuring the safety and well-being of the public ensures the health of the community.

Bloomsburg takes a proactive approach to safety. The Town has dedicated police, fire and emergency response teams. Bloomsburg University has a police force to ensure the safety of the students and the public on its campuses.

A strong and trusted police, EMS and fire department with excellent training and good equipment is essential. Multiple other state and local agencies contribute to protecting the public, including the Sheriff's Office, Constables, the PA Game Commission, the PA Fish & Boat Commission, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Conservation District, and the PA State Police.



Fifth and Center Streets

Recommendations:

- Continue to promote and permit a mix of uses appropriate to neighborhoods and downtown districts, respectively. These efforts will keep the neighborhoods vibrant and will help in deterring crime.
- Encourage community policing programs, such as neighborhood watch programs.
- Encourage an annual initiative to lock homes, vehicles, and valuables.
- Continue to work cooperatively with the Bloomsburg University Police Department. The two police forces already meet regularly for the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) programs and should continue to develop strategies that address common problems.

- Continue to work with the Fire Department on public programs to prevent and reduce fire damage, such as providing free smoke alarms.
- Work cooperatively with the security team at the Bloomsburg Area School District to ensure maximum student security.
- Upgrade traffic signals with preemptive signals for emergency vehicles.
- Install additional street lights at locations where dusk to dawn lighting could reduce vandalism and other criminal or mischievous activity.
- Continue to promote flood preparedness among citizens. Flood protection via a floodwall system is now protecting a large portion of Town.
- Coordinate coverage of the Town utilizing Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV).

The west end of town is still in need of protection from flooding. Studies are underway to find ways to accomplish this. In the meantime, the hazard of flooding along the Susquehanna River and Fishing Creek will remain. Town officials and staff should continue to emphasize the need to be aware of flood watch/flood warning status and to prepare to respond appropriately. The Town has made information on flood damage reduction available on its website. Additional steps should be considered:

- Annually prepare and distribute flood preparedness and damage reduction information in a brochure, in addition to the recycling calendar. Online information is helpful in advance of flood events, but during a flood when electric service may be interrupted, a brochure provides direct, tangible assistance.
- Hold annual flood preparedness outreach meetings to inform new residents and update residents on the status of the Town's early warning system and flood protection efforts.
- Continue an annual flood awareness campaign. This campaign typically includes a press release to local television, radio, and print media to help focus attention on flood and winter storm hazards. The campaign encourages citizens to become familiar with expected local flood conditions near their home and work locations and to prepare in advance.
- Hold multi-agency meetings at the beginning of the flood season, or at other times, in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) programs to coordinate flood response activities and procedures and to update priority call lists that are used for early flood notification. Request attendance by all first response agencies, including Columbia County Emergency Management Agency, staff from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, fire and police departments, the Red Cross, local public works and/or roads maintenance staff, the National Weather Service and local school districts.

505 Extend Walkability Throughout Town

At one time communities were built for pedestrians, but communities today are usually designed around the automobile. For this reason, the once common features that make a community walkable: sidewalks, street trees, street lights, etc. are viewed as amenities today. These features include:

- Relatively short distances between origins and destinations that make walking feasible.
- A well-connected network of sidewalks throughout the community.
- Mixed uses, including retail and service establishments which create a variety of destinations and routes.

The frequency or density of historic/cultural features and attractions make walking interesting and enjoyable. The condition of the sidewalks, crosswalks, crossing signals, and street lights are important safety elements for the pedestrian, as are the slope or grade of pedestrian routes.

The benefits of walkable communities include: improved fitness, reduced risks of health problems, cleaner air, less depression, and a greater sense of community. In Bloomsburg, walking also serves as a viable means of transportation. There is a well linked network of sidewalks and the Town is relatively compact. Because the sidewalks are so well used in the Town, they are an integral part of Town life. There are many beautiful and interesting neighborhoods to walk through in Town and the Town Park has trails to enjoy as well.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Implement recommendations in the Town's Walk/Bike Plan.
- ✓ A new volunteer committee could be appointed to monitor sidewalk/trails conditions and connectivity.
- ✓ Encourage sidewalk maintenance by property owners.
- ✓ Enhance pedestrian comfort with streetscape improvements.

- ✓ Improvements on East Street were made in 2021 and 2022 with PennDOT replacing roads, sidewalks and trees along that corridor.
- ✓ Consider implementing a neighborhood street tree program. Where grass strips are wide enough to accommodate street trees, the Town should install trees at regular intervals. Where there is no grass strip or it is too narrow, the Town should make trees available for willing property owners to plant in their front lawns, or offer to have trees planted.
- ✓ Promote and distribute, on-line and at visitor centers, the Bloomsburg Walking Tour Brochure to encourage residents and visitors to see the wonders of Bloomsburg.
- ✓ Work with Scott Township to construct a walking path from Bloomsburg along Route 11 and 5th Street Hollow Road eastward, more or less following property lines, to the Giant shopping complex and possibly to Central Rd through the Zeisloft development. This would enable people (especially teens) to get to retail jobs in this area, and to entertainment destinations like the movies and restaurants on foot or bicycle.
- ✓ Explore options to make Country Club Drive and Lightstreet Road areas of Town more accessible by foot or bicycle. Create sidewalks from the Honeysuckle overpass to Country Club Drive to connect with the upper campus.
- ✓ Divide the proposals in the Walk Bike path into small projects that community service groups might be interested in developing.
- ✓ Make the southeastern part of Town (7th street extension) friendlier to pedestrians and more clearly linked to the rest of Town, perhaps through sidewalks.
- ✓ Explore options to make the Sun-View Terrace and Arbutus Park developments accessible by foot or bicycle to the downtown via Millville Road.
- ✓ Recommendations can be achieved by grant funding and monies available from the American Rescue Act Legislature.

506 Build Community from Diversity

According to Merriam-Webster, a community is “people with common interests living in a particular area.” Bloomsburg is a complex, mixed community of longtime residents and short-term residents. This creates an interesting mix of people and lifestyles, but also has led to some issues between the populations.

The residents of Bloomsburg are primarily blue-collar workers, living as families or retirees. Most students are four-year community residents. Some students stay longer for advanced degrees. In relative standards, they are considered low-income residents. Off-campus students primarily live in groups in apartments. Some have a lifestyle that involves late night hours and parties on weekends, which don’t fit with the more traditional residential neighborhoods.



Lightstreet Road

This mix of lifestyles provides an active, vibrant downtown that most other small towns lack. Bloomsburg certainly would not be the town that it is without the University. One benefit of the student lifestyle that is often overlooked is that students’ late-night hours provide “eyes on the street” when others have long retired for the evening.

Residents need to work with the students and understand that disturbances will occur at times. At the same time, the students need to realize that Bloomsburg is more than a college town and be respectful of the Town’s other residents and their differing lifestyles. Maintaining an open and ongoing dialogue among the diverse elements of the community will help to alleviate tension.

The Bloomsburg Town/Gown Relations Committee is a joint body comprised of representatives from the Town of Bloomsburg and Bloomsburg University. The Committee addresses concerns including public safety, and the reflection it has on both the University and the Town of Bloomsburg. The Committee members will continue to work together to mitigate lifestyle differences to make the Town of Bloomsburg more enjoyable for all ages.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Continue to promote an integrated or mixed land use approach to Land Development. In the downtown, business and residential uses are successfully mixed. In residential neighborhoods, housing types can be successfully mixed.
- ✓ Promote desired community service projects to civic, high school, vo-tech, and University service clubs and organizations. There are far more community initiatives than the Town can afford. Some may be suitable for volunteer groups to complete or to begin. For instance, if the Town wanted a better understanding of its senior citizens' housing needs, vo-tech students from Health Occupations Students of America or from the University's Allied Health and Nursing programs may be interested in conducting this research experience.
- ✓ Continue to work with the Community Government Association at Bloomsburg University to promote and encourage participation in The Big Event Spring cleanup activity and other community development issues.

6

Working & Doing Business in Bloomsburg

Sustainable development is defined by the United Nations as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” By translation, sustainable economic development means providing diverse job opportunities for present and future citizens, while respecting the natural and cultural resources that give identity to our community and may drive future economies. The emphasis on both present and future economies requires progressive thinking about business retention and new business development, an available and adaptable workforce, and a “business-friendly” environment.

601 Summary of Current Conditions

Positives

- Bloomsburg has a local hospital as well as a nearby regional medical center.
- The Town has a variety of restaurants and eateries.
- The Regional Technology Center, with the assistance of the Columbia-Montour Chamber of Commerce, and Bloomsburg University, acts as a small business incubator.
- Recently completed floodwalls now provide protection for a significant portion of the Town.
- Bloomsburg University, a member of the Pennsylvania State system of Higher Education, is a major factor in the health of the Town being one of the largest employers throughout the region.

Negatives

- In the past many enterprises and families have experienced significant property damage as a result of repeated flood events.
- More family sustaining jobs are needed in Bloomsburg and the surrounding area.
- Traditional retail stores are increasingly threatened by the increase in online shopping and immediate delivery.
- Much of the land in Town has been developed and creative solutions are needed for continued growth.
- Lack of Foot Traffic.
- Inability of University Students to use their Husky Card downtown for goods and services.

Opportunities

- Opportunities in the construction field are short to mid-term, but are on an upturn as construction in warehousing and medical fields increase.
- Emerging job opportunities throughout the region may offer increased potential for personal income and draw workers to our area.
- Employers may be able to assist with housing initiatives.
- Boutique and specialty stores and cafes can serve as destination stores to attract patrons to the central business core.
- The family friendly environment of the Town is especially attractive to workers working from home, or experiencing some type of hybrid work experience.



J. Lylo Jewlers on East Main Street

The Town of Bloomsburg has many positive attributes that serve as a basis for sustainable economic growth, including excellent access to local, regional and national markets, developing industry “clusters”, and a downtown business district that has been designated as a Main Street Community. At the same time, there are conditions that may prevent the Town from realizing greater economic prosperity, including limited space to develop, a limited workforce supply as well as a perception that the Town doesn’t offer enough “things to do” for employees and their families. Town residents, employees and business owners must continue to work together to provide economic growth and encourage development that will create the same.

602 Retain Existing Businesses and Nurture New Opportunities

A business or industry cluster is a system of interconnected businesses, suppliers, and associated institutions in a particular field. The term was introduced by Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter and has become a standard unit for analyzing a region’s economic prospects. Business clusters are a strategic approach

to economic development because they exchange ideas regularly through daily business communications, leading to innovation, which is essential to economic growth.

In Bloomsburg, textile products manufacturing is a significant cluster.

Lead firms in this cluster located in Bloomsburg include Autoneum, Milco Industries, as well as Bloomsburg Carpet Industries located outside of Town. Leading local firms are supported by a variety of supplier firms, which provide raw materials, proprietary equipment, or support services, such as payroll, office supplies or janitorial services.

As we have seen in recent years the “supply chain” has become critically important. It is important to encourage as many of these firms to locate in this area, not only to support our industries but to allow the area to become a regional hub for services.

This may be accomplished by convening with the area’s economic development partners on a regular basis to review economic development activities to avoid redundancy as well as to ensure that programs and funding activities are meeting the needs of the local business community.



Autoneum Automotive North America

603 Bloomsburg University and the Education Cluster

Education, at all levels, (traditional K-12, vocational, higher education, and continuing education) is important in keeping well-paying jobs and job opportunities in our area. It is important to note the current trend to encourage high school students to take college level courses while still enrolled in high school. This serves to increase the competitive nature of our work force and reduces the overall long term cost for students.

With the diminishment of the traditional office environment there is an opportunity for the Town to capitalize on the trend for distributed work, also known as work from home. The increased use of video conference technology allows highly paid employees to work from any location. The Town's bucolic surroundings, well-educated residents, technical savvy and convenient geographical location allows it to capitalize on this trend.



Carver Hall of Bloomsburg University

Recommendations:

- Acting as an Incubator:

Offering services to support start-up companies and expedite research commercialization. The Bloomsburg Regional Technology Center is a local example of a successful incubator that brought together Bloomsburg University, Bucknell University, and Susquehanna University, as well as Ben Franklin Technology Partners, Geisinger Medical Center, and the Columbia Alliance for Economic Growth to support the development of new business enterprises. The state's Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ) program supports these kinds of activities with state tax incentives.

- Serving as an advisor/network builder:

Channeling University expertise to increase local business capacity or improve the local business environment. At Bloomsburg University, this effort is not limited to the formal efforts of the institution but also includes the support provided to students by the Zeigler Institute for Professional Development in the College of Business.

- Creating unique programs:

Bloomsburg University's Institute for Interactive Technologies (IIT) is another example of a unique service program that provides consulting, training and multimedia development services to the university, corporations, government agencies, and other educational institutions. The IIT is a consortium of faculty, staff and graduate students in Bloomsburg University's Instructional Technology program. This strategic relationship offers opportunities for faculty and staff to mentor students in practical "hands-on" experiences as they apply theoretical knowledge to real world projects.

- Serving as a workforce developer:

Addressing local and area workforce needs through educational programs and network building opportunities. Bloomsburg University's Division of Corporate and Continuing Education is just one example of how Bloomsburg University currently fills the role of workforce developer. It specializes in assessing the training needs of the area workforce, and working with companies to customize training programs that are responsive to the development of their incumbent workforce.

- Working with Education Institutes outside of Bloomsburg:

Luzerne County Community College provides expertise and support in the region as well as providing college level courses to high school students.

Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School provides trade programs in transportation, manufacturing, construction, technology and Health/Human Services.

Other examples are discussed in more detail in the Lifelong Learning section of the plan.

Bloomsburg University is already a key economic development partner in each of these areas. Moving forward, the Town of Bloomsburg should continue to explore ways to leverage the role of the University, understanding that success will require strong partnerships between the Town, the University, and the business community.

Among the advisory programs and services that universities offer, there are also opportunities for:

- Faculty members to serve on the boards of local companies or offer expert advice.
- Staff members could offer highly specialized skills, such as finance, accounting, information technology, and administration.
- Students to consult or intern at local companies.
- Universities to offer special centers, e.g., Small Business or Entrepreneurship Centers, that specialize in training and educational programs, consulting, and research.

These programs and services can connect local companies to important business networks. Universities and colleges often provide a forum for businesses to meet with each other. They also provide access to alumni and business networks.

Business advisory programs can target individual companies or the overall business environment in which businesses have to compete. These programs can focus on company-specific issues such as company strategy, sales, logistics, marketing, and accounting operations as well as business environment issues.

As expansion of services is considered, two issues should be addressed. The first issue is that the expertise of many schools and departments within the University, besides the College of Business and Corporate and Continuing Education Division, are under-utilized. The university should encourage students and faculty from a variety of schools and departments within the university to participate.

The second issue is that the University has several advisory programs which focus on individual company issues, but few that focus on business environment issues. Therefore, the University could incorporate its business environment expertise in advisory programs.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Enhance and expand the University's existing advisory programs to assist local businesses and government organizations as well as broaden and enhance educational opportunities and research applications for University students and faculty.
- ✓ Ensure new and existing advisory programs are effective by designing them to avoid systematic pitfalls.
- ✓ Encourage the University and other local education institutes to focus on specialty programs that offer trades and certifications.

604 The Downtown Business District

Bloomsburg's Downtown Business District also serves an important function in the Town's economy. In some ways, it could be considered a retail service cluster, although it functions more generally as part of the economic infrastructure. More importantly, it offers an authentic shopping experience for those looking for merchandise they can touch and feel and for a more personal customer service.

Local commitment to the renewal of downtown Bloomsburg began in 1979 with the organization of the Revitalization Steering Committee. Specialty stores and boutiques became the anchor of downtown in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1982, Bloomsburg Revitalization, Inc. was established to administer a revolving loan fund for downtown businesses. After the opening of the mall, the Town was designated as a Main Street Community. This five-year program provided grants to the Town to help a community's downtown economic development effort through the establishment of a local organization dedicated to downtown revitalization and the management of downtown revitalization efforts by hiring a full-time professional downtown coordinator.

Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc. (DBI) was established in 2006 as the Town's local organization dedicated to downtown revitalization. Since its inception, DBI has launched a website, developed a vision for downtown, and established and revised its five-year strategy. DBI has also completed a downtown market survey with the help of the University.

605 The Industry of Student Housing



Student Housing Downtown Bloomsburg

With the University as the Town's largest employer, its customer base created a large demand for off-campus student housing. As the University grew, the proportion of student housing, largely rental properties, also grew through the conversion of single-family homes to multi-unit homes and construction of safer and more appealing facilities. The recent change by the University that requires all first and second-year students to live on campus and the continuing decline in enrollments has had a significant impact on the student housing industry.

606 Tourism



Disc Golf Goal Course Town Park

Bloomsburg is well positioned to take advantage of the heritage and outdoor recreational tourism markets. Particularly, businesses in this cluster build on the region's historic and natural resources that make the region unique. The Town's historic district, especially its downtown, its Fairgrounds, its proximity to the Susquehanna River and the Susquehanna Greenway, and its many cultural amenities such as the disc golf course, swimming pool, skate park, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, and Children's Museum, create a strong hub for the further growth and development of the Tourism cluster. New businesses that would cater to tourists might offer guided covered bridge and other tours of the area, kayak rentals, specialty "home grown" products, and high-quality dining, lodging, and shopping opportunities. A growing community of artisans and the "college town" atmosphere are also known to attract visitors.

607 Health Care & Life Sciences

The Health Care/Life Sciences cluster also has potential to generate new growth in the community given the presence of the Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital and the many health science programs offered at the University. Other health care organizations such as UPMC and Lehigh Valley Hospital System are establishing themselves in Pennsylvania and should be considered as future contributors to advances in this area.



Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital

Businesses that provide services and products for an aging population will continue to be in ever greater demand as the baby boomers begin to retire. Strong working relationships between Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital and the University could lead to new research and innovative technologies that could be brought to market in an incubator setting in the Town.

While the Town of Bloomsburg is not in a position to directly create jobs within these clusters, it is able to support the growth and development of the businesses that will create new jobs by ensuring the economic infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of existing and potential suppliers and lead firms.

608 Foster and Promote a “Business Friendly” Environment



East Main Street, Downtown Bloomsburg

Existing and prospective businesses need to know that Bloomsburg values its business community. In order to sustain economic development, the Town has to be known as more than a college town. Utilizing social media platforms is an excellent way to promote the Town and the University. Bloomsburg should be known for being genuinely interested in the success of businesses at all stages of development from entrepreneurs in start-ups, to emerging leaders in growing ventures, to seasoned professionals in expansions and finally to mature companies. Genuine support comes from appreciating the struggles of business development and doing what is possible to enable success.

The Town can still meet its obligations for protecting the health, safety and welfare of the community while giving equal attention to prosperity.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Continue to recognize outstanding members of the local business community through awards and other acknowledgements.
- ✓ Create an Ombudsman position to assist anyone interested in navigating the process of opening or expanding a business in Town.
- ✓ Create a local regulatory environment that supports the development of target industry clusters by ensuring that the following are available to meet each industry's specific needs:
 - Predictable development processes, in terms of timely reviews and specified fees.
 - Reasonable length of time for the permitting process.
- ✓ Create a competitive local tax environment. Maintain and expand use of state incentives, e.g. Keystone Opportunity Zone designations, as appropriate. Use local tax relief programs to make business start-up and expansion more affordable. Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) provides for temporary local tax relief (county, municipal, and school district) on the value of property improvements in a designated area. Tax Increment Financing (TIF), authorized in the Commonwealth in 1990, aims to assist in the development, redevelopment, and revitalization of both brownfield and greenfield sites.
- ✓ Take the lead in educating residents and local officials (or bringing speakers to the area) to learn about the opportunities and benefits of working together, such as cost and revenue sharing, in order to market the area's assets to new and expanding business ventures.

609 Foster a Culture of Innovation and Entrepreneurship



The Bloomsburg Regional Technology Center

Recent research shows that more than 70 percent of all new jobs are created by entrepreneurs. It also shows that innovation — the successful development and marketing of new products — is crucial to survival in today's economy.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Work closely with SEDA-COG, the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau, the Susquehanna Greenways Partnership, and other regional marketing organizations to identify and promote niche markets that local businesses can fill by building on natural and cultural assets. Natural capital entrepreneurship is based on the sustainable use of forests, farmland, and other natural resources and includes businesses that focus on ecotourism, outdoor recreation, and adding value to agricultural and wood products. Place-based entrepreneurship draws on the beauty and unique history of the area, including traditional crafts and music.
- ✓ Build a supportive environment for entrepreneurs. The Town of Bloomsburg should be known as a community where local leaders encourage residents to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path and recognize successful start-up businesses. The Greater Susquehanna Keystone Innovation Zone, which is based in the Regional Technology Center in downtown Bloomsburg, administers a number of programs to support entrepreneurs. SEDA-COG's "Buy Fresh, Buy Local"

has been instrumental in furthering support for local farmers and other producers of goods and services, while its Susquehanna Artist and Artisan Project has begun to create a regional support network for local artisans to develop and market their products. Also, providing mentoring, educational opportunities, and funding pools further enhances the support network needed for new businesses.

- ✓ Establish seed money for small innovation projects.
- ✓ Seek to attract remote workers to the area.
- ✓ In addition, residents should “Buy Local” whenever possible to provide ongoing support for their local businesses and fellow citizens.



Lifelong Learning in Bloomsburg

The community of Bloomsburg offers educational resources that are comprehensive, well developed, and versatile. Its educational environment provides learning opportunities for residents in all stages of life. It also provides opportunities that satisfy a variety of interests and objectives, from professional development to personal enrichment to leisure.

701 Summary of Public Input on Current Conditions

Positives

- Bloomsburg University offers a variety of programs and services for young, mature and older residents.
- The Bloomsburg Public Library is a popular gathering place which enables programing for all residents and offers literacy programs as well as access to social media and the internet for residents without access.
- The Children's Museum complements the public school district, the library, and other community services for children and is a tourism destination.
- Luzerne County Community College and Bloomsburg University offer higher education classes for high school students.
- Geisinger Senior Center and Geisinger Bloomsburg offer exercise, social and learning activities.
- The Bloomsburg YMCA is active in exercise and educational activities.
- Several cyber schools are currently based in Bloomsburg.

Negatives

- Some residents of Bloomsburg and the surrounding area lack digital skills that would help qualify them for area employment positions.

Goal

Bloomsburg is a place where community partners provide high quality educational services, programs and facilities that meet the needs of the community.

We will achieve our goal if we...

1. Increase public awareness and availability of local educational services, events, programs, and facilities available to all residents.
2. Ensure that the educational services, programs, and facilities available to residents are, and continue to be, high quality.
3. Narrow the gap in professional and digital skills to ensure a more job ready workforce.
4. Continue to enhance the cooperative and collaborative relations between the Town, the University and local employers.

702 A Lifelong Range of Educational Opportunities



St. Columba School East Third Street

The community of Bloomsburg offers a range of educational services, programs, and facilities for residents in all stages of life and age groups.

For children and youth, the community offers several local educational services through multiple organizations and institutions. Public schooling is available through the Bloomsburg Area

School District (K - Grade 12) and Columbia-Montour Area Vocational-Technical School (Grades 9 - 12). There are opportunities for private schooling at the Columbia Child Development Center (Preschool) and St. Columba Catholic School (Preschool - Grade 8). Several at home schooling programs are based in Bloomsburg.

Local Scout programs, the YMCA, the Children's Museum, and Bloomsburg University's Reading Center all offer enrichment programs for the community's youngest residents.

For the college bound students, Bloomsburg University and Luzerne County Community College are the focus. Services at Bloomsburg University include career counseling and planning for University students and alumni through the Career Development Center; tutoring, academic advising, and other support services for University students through the Department of Developmental Instruction; and workforce development, corporate and customized job training for professionals of all ages through the Department of Corporate and Continuing Education.

Bloomsburg University also offers programs, such as the Upward Bound Program and the Advance College Experience Program, which prepare local high school students for post-secondary education. Academic courses are also available for senior citizens at little or no cost.

The University, in conjunction with local area school districts, offers programs for interested and qualified high school students to take college courses at little to no cost. A similar program is available through Luzerne County Community College.

Learning opportunities are also available for retirees and seniors primarily through local senior centers, the YMCA and Geisinger. These programs encourage people to remain mentally active in their senior years. They also promote social interaction and community involvement and can provide opportunities for sharing knowledge as well.

Town residents have access to excellent educational and enrichment resources. Among these are the Columbia County Historical Society, Bloomsburg Public Library and Bloomsburg University's Harvey A. Andruss Library. All are open to university students and the general public. Bloomsburg University also offers a lecture and film series, non-degree for credit courses, cultural events and recreational programs to the public.

Encourage the University, the historical society and the high school to develop a speakers program using local presenters. Speakers could be offered to retirement centers as well as other interested groups for presentations.

Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble offers a variety of educational opportunities.

The Area Agency on Aging also provides educational and social services to its target public.

The Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technical School, in cooperation with the county commissioners, offers a free vocational training program for the region.

The Chamber of Commerce offers a Night at the Business program as well as leadership training programs for rising managers.

Bucknell and Susquehanna Universities both have long established “lifelong learning institutes” that provide speakers of regional renown to the greater communities at little to no cost. It may be possible to establish a similar program through Bloomsburg University.

Encourage the expansion of the online services provided by the Bloomsburg Public Library. The Chamber of Commerce, the Institute for interactive Technology at the University as well as the tech startups at the incubator center could be helpful.

703 Public Library and Literacy Programs



Bloomsburg's Public Library is located in the heart of the downtown business district and within a few blocks of residential neighborhoods. The library is easily accessible by pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles and the campus shuttle. On street parking as well as bike racks are available. Its central location makes it a convenient destination for many Town residents. Because of its ability to draw local residents

Bloomsburg Public Library Market Street

and university students to nearby business, the library remains an economic asset.

The library is also a critical educational asset to the Town. The library provides free access to quality reading materials, on-line resources and wi-fi hot spots, and other services that enable citizens to research and reference materials successfully. In addition, the library offers several educational programs that support literacy and reading among all ages. These programs include weekly story time for preschoolers, youth reading clubs, adult book clubs, and an award program that recognizes the reading achievements of library members. The library also offers other educational opportunities for professional development, personal enrichment, or leisure. These opportunities range from arts and crafts activities, such as scrapbooking classes, to guest lectures and special events.

The library partners, formally and informally, coordinate work with other community organizations to promote reading and literacy in the community. It coordinates with the school district on reading challenges for elementary students. "Readers in Bloom" pairs University students with community youth to improve reading skills. The library also provides space for adult literacy programs provided by the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit.

Renovations to the library in 1998 doubled its size and requests for use of library space and resources

continue to grow. The library is increasingly used as a meeting place by community organizations and by patrons in need of on-line access. The library continues to expand its on-line resources through programs such as Hoopla and Flipster. The library recently announced they are going to be curating a “library of things” where residents can borrow used household tools or other useful items families may not own, or have access to in their homes.

The library was home to Columbia County’s Historical and Genealogical Society until 2023. The society’s main office, archives and museum are located on the second floor and are open to the general public. The Historical Museum is relocating to the former PNC Bank building on the corner of Market and Main Street. The archives and museum are instrumental in preserving and interpreting the Town’s history and culture.

704 The Children's Museum



The museum is a non-profit corporation managed and operated by staff, volunteers, and a Board of Directors. The museum is located on West 7th Street, just off South Market Street, and is easily accessed by pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles. The facility has on-street and off-street parking available.

Children's Museum West 7th Street

Its central location makes it a convenient tourism destination for visitors and local destination for many Town residents.

The Children's Museum offers unique learning experiences to children of all ages by providing interactive learning materials. The museum offers hands-on exhibits at the museum as well as traveling exhibits that serve 17 school districts in the five county Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit area. The museum's exhibits are very diverse; topics range from science, to health, to culture, and are rotated for variety. The museum also offers useful teaching kits for the area's classroom. Kits come complete with a teacher's guide and enough materials for a full classroom of students. Teaching kits can be used in conjunction with classroom curriculum or for enrichment. Teaching kits are a wonderful enrichment resource for home schooling programs.



Children's Museum West 7th Street

The museum converted a former firehouse into a large exhibition space, gift shop, and work room that is used for after school programs, and arts and crafts programs. The museum can be rented for special events. The museum hosts group and school visits. It offers a variety of programs including children's camps, arts and science clubs, and weekly themed events and activities.

The Children's Museum is an important educational and economic asset to the Town for many reasons. Its interactive programs and services enrich the community's existing educational system while providing fun and interesting opportunities for local employment and civic volunteerism. The museum's programs and services also provide opportunities to interpret the Town's natural and cultural history for local residents, students, and visitors by incorporating related themes into its traveling and stationary exhibits. The museum is also used as a venue for parties, special events, programs, and group meetings, which gives it the ability to draw visitors to the area.

The museum has developed additional parking that is leased from the Town to the Children's Museum, a picnic area, an outdoor education classroom and a native plant garden.

The museum continually updates and upgrades its programs and exhibits including a new Makers Exhibit, expanded technology exhibits as well as new interactive programs for all ages.

Funding for the museum comes from a variety of sources including program fees, admission fees, facility rentals, membership fees, and donations. Other funding is provided to the museum by individual, corporate, and community donors and various grants including the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA), and the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts (PCA) and the National Endowment for the Art (NEA).



Children's Museum

Recommendations:

- ✓ Continue to partner with local school districts and other organizations in the area to foster interactive, hands-on learning opportunities for children in the community.
- ✓ Enhance exhibits by directly linking them with the community, businesses and organizations.

705 Preparing the Workforce for Local Jobs

Bloomsburg's local economy offers residents a variety of employment options in many different fields. The Town's local economy is primarily based on three business or industry clusters. These clusters or major sectors of the local economy include the Textile Products Manufacturing Cluster, Bloomsburg University and Education Cluster, and the Downtown Business District. These clusters, or major sectors, of the local economy are very different from one another in terms of the kinds of the jobs they offer and the skill sets they require. Employment opportunities range from trade and labor jobs to sales and service to professional, administrative, and managerial jobs.

706 Student Preparation for Higher Education and Workforce Entry

PA Smart, a statewide movement for accountability, readiness and training, is focused on ensuring Pennsylvania students and workers have the skills and abilities to meet the economic needs of the 21st century. Careers with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) jobs growing at over 9 percent with graduates earning an average annual wage of \$37,000 or more at the entry level and an average of \$65,000 or more annually over the course of their careers.

Through PA Smart, students, workers and businesses are collaborating to ensure that all Pennsylvanians have an opportunity to succeed in the jobs of today, while gaining the skills of tomorrow.

As previously noted, the Town is served by a high quality public school system, several private schools and several cyber schools that prepare the area's young residents for job placement or higher education. The Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technical School (AVTS) is part of this school system and offers practical programs to secondary school students and adults that provide training in a variety of vocational and technical areas for career development or immediate job placement in the community. The county commissioners and the AVTS also offer a free adult vocational training program. Scholastic institutions must continue to create innovative ways to adapt on a yearly basis as the curriculum changes.

In terms of preparing the future workforce, Bloomsburg University and Luzerne County Community College offer multiple programs that give local high school students opportunities to take college courses while still enrolled in high school. These and similar programs are good strategies for retaining young, skilled and motivated residents in the area.

These programs are targeted toward the Bloomsburg Area School District as it prepares students for 21st century civic involvement, higher education or gainful employment. Classrooms for the Future is about recognizing and embracing the need for high school reform, enabling teachers to use technology as an effective tool for educating students, and preparing students to enter and successfully compete in the ever-expanding high-tech global marketplace.

Keystones Technology Integrators (KTI), is a program that celebrates model practice teachers throughout Pennsylvania. These teachers bring to the classroom content, motivational and management expertise to capture students' imaginations and harness learning in our children. Over 3000 teachers from across the Commonwealth have been identified as Keystones. These Keystones represent over 300 school districts, non-public schools, Career and Technology (CTC), and AVTS. Approximately 100 Keystones attend a five-day Summit each year in the summer where they engaged in hands-on workshops with topics such as differentiating instruction and teaching in the 21st Century.

Throughout the years, the Keystones network continues to grow stronger through use of communication tools, learning communities, grant writing competitions and professional development opportunities. Keystones also continue to be featured at the annual Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference (PETE&C).

The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) Program is a statewide, standards-based continuing professional education program for school and system leaders. The comprehensive, cohort-based program

is focused on developing the capacity of leaders to improve student achievement. The program is offered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Intermediate Units and other partners at eight regional sites.

An IU Technology Integration Mentor (IU TIM) acts as a support and resource for the Classrooms for the Future (CFF) coach. The IU TIM develops a professional learning community for all CFF coaches within their respective IU. In this non-supervisory role, the IU TIM supports coaches as they support teachers to deliver data-driven, technology enhanced lessons in their schools. Focusing on coaches' strengths, the IU TIM collaborates with the CFF coaches in their efforts to help teachers transform classrooms into 21st Century, authentic, differentiated, learner-centered environments. The IU TIM understands the connections between/among CFF and other Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) high school reform projects.

PIMS, or the Pennsylvania Information Management System, is PDE's data collection and enterprise- wide longitudinal data warehouse and reporting system. It is designed to improve student achievement through more efficient and effective use of data. PIMS was first implemented during the 2007-2008 school year to the 501 public school districts and 232 other K-12 educational agencies (collectively these are referred to as local education agencies, or LEA) throughout the Commonwealth.

707 Current University Programs

Bloomsburg University, a major workforce developer, offers a variety of training programs and services for local businesses and their employees through its Division of Corporate and Continuing Education (CCE) located at the Greenly Center.

The CCE offers:

- ❖ Non-credit mini courses to individuals for professional development primarily in computer training and literacy.
- ❖ On-site corporate and customized job training in Information Technology, Computer Programs/Software, Business Operations and Management, Office Administration, Languages, Manufacturing Principles/Operations, and Industrial Health and Safety.

Bloomsburg University's Career Development Center (CDC) is another valuable asset to the Town. It

provides career counseling, planning assistance and job placement to students and alumni. Therefore, the CDC would be a good partner in helping to retain college graduates and alumni by assisting college educated residents in finding and obtaining local employment. Its location in the Greenly Center makes this resource more valuable for the entire community.

708 Leveraging More of Bloomsburg University and Luzerne County Community College.

As a major economic engine, Bloomsburg University is an integral asset to the Town. Luzerne County Community College is also becoming more of a presence in the community as it provides classes to area high school students. Generally, there are six broad areas where universities and colleges can have meaningful impact on job and business growth in the local community: purchasing of goods and services, employment, developing real estate, incubating business, advising business and building networks, and developing a workforce (see Chapter 6, Working and Doing Business in Bloomsburg for further explanation). While all six activities are important to the role the University plays in economic development of local communities, workforce development and advising/network building are the only two that are directly linked to learning. This section explores ways in which the Town, University, and business community could work together on leveraging workforce development activities to spur economic growth and improve the standard of living in the community.

Workforce development is one activity carried out by colleges and universities that can significantly impact job and business growth in the local community. According to a study, workforce development involves addressing local and regional workforce needs. The role of universities extends beyond existing academic programs to private and public sector support in recruiting, training, retraining, and promoting workers, particularly those that need skills upgrading or are adults in the labor force for the first time.

The study suggests that universities and colleges can offer the following types of workforce development programs and services:

- Research on labor supply and demand, as well as workforce development best practices.
- Program design and capacity building for workforce development partners.
- Training of prospective workers.
- Facilitating workforce development partnerships and programs through relationships with local and regional businesses.

- The University should consider expanding internship, work study and volunteer programs that allow students to provide their expertise and services at low or no cost to local businesses and government or non-profit organizations. Where feasible, it should consider yearlong placements in local jobs to offer continuity and increase the effectiveness of the program.
- The University could also develop a volunteer program in which optional service learning opportunities are integrated into the classroom curricula. This would not only increase student participation in the local community, it would benefit university students by enabling them to gain hands-on, real-world experience while earning academic credit.

The University's workforce development programs are extremely thorough and customized to meet the needs of local businesses. To maintain and enhance the University's workforce development programs, the University should partner with local employers, the Chamber of Commerce and the public sector in identifying important workforce trends and industry needs. In addition, the University should seek ways to expand existing workforce development programs to increase job placement and faculty research opportunities aligned with local business needs.

There are several opportunities in which the Town can work with the University to benefit from its expertise and advisory programs. In many instances, the University's faculty and students use the Town as an extension of the classroom to conduct field research and studies for hands-on, real-world experience. The Town should consider these instances good opportunities to gather pertinent information about its environment which can be used to direct local policies and investments.

For example, the Town and the University could work together to identify and research natural, historic, and cultural resources in the area and avenues to protect or enhance them. In addition, it would be possible to gather information on labor supply and other workforce data, which can be used to develop strategies for job and business growth.

The University's expertise could be critical in acquiring assistance with operational and administrative functions of local government. As the Town's partner, the University should consider how its expertise might be used through in-kind services in areas such as data system processing and development.

The Town should also work with the business community to initiate efforts with the University and increase awareness and participation in University programs and services. The Town could work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote the University's advisory/network building and workforce development activities and encourage local businesses to utilize the University's programs and services.

The Town could increase outreach to high school students and increase awareness of the local high school's work training programs.

709 Other Workforce Development Efforts

More local employers could also offer internship or co-op opportunities to university students. Internship opportunities often turn into job opportunities and could work as a job placement or recruitment strategy. Providing additional incentives that retain or attract skilled and educated workers is necessary in a competitive economic environment. Therefore, the Town should encourage local employers to explore employee incentives such as housing benefits, tuition reimbursement, or free specialized training.

Investing time and resources into developing a qualified and skilled workforce that meets the needs of local employers would have a series of positive impacts on the Town.

Recommendations:

- Maintain and enhance workforce development programs. Bloomsburg University, Luzerne County Community College and Columbia-Montour Area Vocational Technical Schools should continue to partner with local employers, the Chamber of Commerce and the public sector to ensure existing programs are meeting local workforce needs.
- Expanding existing workforce development programs to increase job placement and faculty research opportunities aligned with local business needs.
- Develop or improve internship and volunteer programs that allow students to gain hands-on real world experience while providing their expertise and services at low or no cost to local businesses and government or non-profit organizations.

- Develop an internship program that matches students with growing companies through rigorous screening of the student and company. Students should be placed in long term internship positions to offer continuity and increase the effectiveness of the program. Students could be placed in a volunteer or work-study program in which optional service learning opportunities are integrated in the classroom curricula. This would not only increase student participation in the local community, it would benefit University students by enabling them to gain hands-on, real-world experience while earning academic credit.
- Encourage local businesses and the University Foundation to increase the number of scholarship opportunities available to graduate students involved in local public service.
- Use University expertise, services, and programs to gather pertinent information about the Town's environment, which can be used to direct local policies and investments.
- Use University expertise to acquire assistance with operational and administrative functions of Town government.
- Encourage the local business community to partner with the University on developing workforce training curricula and job or work-study placement programs.
- Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to act as an intermediary to identify local business needs that the University can address. The Chamber of Commerce should invite/recruit University faculty to serve on the boards of local businesses and business associations.
- Encourage local employers to explore employee incentives such as housing benefits, tuition reimbursement, or free specialized training.
- Incorporate University expertise in making the community more competitive for business and job growth by inviting or recruiting University participation on public/private economic development policy boards.
- Develop a program that rewards or recognizes local businesses for offering internships, scholarship opportunities, or tuition reimbursement.

- Incorporate University expertise in designing and implementing business technical assistance programs and local workforce development programs.

8 Visiting Bloomsburg's Park & Recreational Activities

Bloomsburg is a great place to visit and a great place to live. The Town's central location and numerous events and activities make it the cultural center of the Columbia and Montour County region. The Bloomsburg Fair, the largest annual event of its kind in the region and the state, draws hundreds of thousands of visitors from across the region and the state to the Town each September. Cultural events like Artfest, Winterfest, the Parade of Lights, Renaissance Fair and BTE performances direct residents and visitors alike to the downtown.



Soldiers and Sailors Monument

Bloomsburg is a community where citizens and visitors find a fun, welcoming, and navigable destination with a rich variety of recreational and leisure attractions and special events.

801 Bloomsburg Town Park



Town Park



Bloomsburg Skate Park

The Bloomsburg Town Park (including Streater Fields) is located on the southern and western edges of Town. The park offers baseball, football, soccer fields, tennis, a bocce court, basketball, hockey courts, a fitness trail, a skate park, swimming pool, a disc golf course, play area, and a large community-built playground known as Kidsburg. The Town's bicentennial band shell as well as smaller picnic pavilions and charcoal grills are available for public use.

The Park is well connected to the adjacent school and neighborhoods by sidewalks and well used by citizens of Bloomsburg and beyond. Part of the park has been recently separated by a floodwall. Youth leagues heavily use the baseball and soccer fields. The tennis courts are used by adult and high school tennis teams as well as free recreational instruction for children and adults. Swimming lessons will be offered at the newly renovated Norris E. Rock Memorial Swimming Pool. The park also provides Bocce Ball courts, community patch gardens as well as a fenced in dog park. There are numerous special events held at the park throughout the year, including summer concerts and sporting events. In addition to these structured activities, many people use the park for various unstructured outdoor activities, including family reunions and weddings. The park is well maintained by the Bloomsburg Public Works Department. Financial assistance is provided by the Town Park Improvement Association.

With so much to offer, it is easy to see why the park is an asset to the Town. It provides opportunities for active and passive recreation, provides the Town with green space, and is a venue for community entertainment, activities and social life. Its facilities and programs attract users from the surrounding area, which reinforces the Town's identity as a regional hub. Even local businesses benefit from it, because the park helps to make the community a desirable place to live.

The PA Fish and Boat Commission owns and maintains a watercraft river access at the airport.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Master plan the Streater Fields location. This will begin to establish the riverfront as a park and connected open space system. The property's long, uninterrupted history of agricultural use, enabled by its floodplain location, should be a focal point of site interpretation.
- ✓ The park should continue to be developed as a waterfront communal recreational space intentionally designed to be flooded with minimal damage during storm or flood event, while providing public health and wellbeing opportunities for community engagement.
- ✓ Add walking/biking paths along Fort McClure Blvd from the Airport to the Rupert Bridge and around to the Fairgrounds.
- ✓ Schedule festivals and events at the Town Park for all ages that attract locals and out of towners to come visit and stay in the Town of Bloomsburg.
- ✓ Encourage development of a master plan for the entire park network - including, Market Street Park, Streater Fields and the connecting areas. Consider intentionally designing the areas to be flooded. This would allow for quick recovery from flooding events. Consider, in the design, the use of the area for street festivals, farmer's markets, food trucks and other community events that could exist without closing the main street of Town.
- ✓ Also consider increasing the development of additional pollinator fields and areas for foraging and breeding for local wildlife.
- ✓ It would also be possible to develop a plan to allow solar panels hardened against flooding in these areas or elevated above the floodplain, such as atop the floodwalls. Properly designed ground panels hardened against flooding or design panels that could be elevated above the flood plain.

802 Bloomsburg Municipal Airport

As the only airport in Columbia County, it provides a unique facility and opportunity for air service. The airport enables visitors to fly to the town, and supports recreational flying in the region. Local business executives use the airport to maintain contact with customers and suppliers outside of the region, while others use the airport to access Bloomsburg businesses.



Bloomsburg Municipal Airport

The Bloomsburg Municipal Airport (the only airport in Columbia County) is located along the north bank of the Susquehanna River and it is owned by the Town. A ten-member Airport Advisory Committee provides support to Town Council when it considers airport-related matters. The Town leases hangars to pilots. A private for-profit company, Columbia Aircraft, leases maintenance space for their FAA certified aircraft and powerplant mechanic shop.

The Bloomsburg Municipal Airport (N13) is an engaging, educational place for our youth and community to learn about aviation, to safely participate in aviation related activities, and pursue advanced training if desired. It is comprised of 96 Acres, and receives both PENNDOT Bureau of Aviation (BOA) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding. It has one privately owned 10 Bay T-Hangar. The remaining hangars are owned by the Town. Currently there are 25 planes, 22 - single engine, and 3 twin engine planes and one Gyro-copter based at the airport. The apron area has 20 tie downs, and currently 2 planes occupy tie down spaces. In addition to the hangar tenants, Columbia Aircraft Services (CAS) LLC, is also an tenant. In addition to the maintenance services, the airport is home to several flight related organizations including Civil Air Patrol Squadron 522, Bloomsburg Flying Club, Bloom Flyers, Aviation Explorer Post, Aluminum Falcons Flying Club, EAA Chapter 1641, and Turn2Aviation, LLC, a part 61 Flight School.

2021 brought the first private Air Charter Express company offering a la carte charter. Annual air traffic operations have increased from 6,766 in 2013 to 14,000 operations in 2020. Avgas Fuel Sales have increased since 2017. Angel Flights also operate out of the airport.

Recent Developments and Improvements:

- Extended, realigned, and widened runways 9 and 27 to 3200 x 60 feet.
- Completion of the Airport Terminal building including a conference room, pilot lounge, Red Bird Simulator training room, manager office, and general briefing area.
- Reconstructed and rehabilitated the main apron.
- Self-serve fuel farm configured with a 12,000 gallon tank size with 24/7 availability.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Consider installing a 14 Bay T-Hangar to reduce the waiting list for available space.
- ✓ Consider partnering with Bloomsburg University to create an Aviation Management Program.
- ✓ Consider creating a cutting-edge drone pilotage program.
- ✓ Explore installing an FAA Certified Airport Weather Observation Station - AWOS.
- ✓ Explore installing Precision Approach Path Indicator Lighting (PAPI).

- ✓ Consider installing perimeter fencing for safety.
- ✓ Explore the possibility of having a restaurant on the field open to the community.
- ✓ Consider camp sites near the boat launch once fencing is in place.



Approach to Bloomsburg Municipal Airport

803 Bloomsburg Fairgrounds



Bloomsburg Fairgrounds

The Bloomsburg Fairgrounds comprise 227 acres on the western edge of Town. Facilities include a covered grandstand with seating for 8,000, a half-mile harness track, a 3/8 mile clay auto track located within the half mile track, parking for 20,000-22,000 vehicles, three 20,000 square foot exhibition buildings, a 17,000 square foot arena, as well as historic facilities and a farm museum.

The Bloomsburg Fair Association, a non-profit corporation, owns the fairgrounds and is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and marketing of the facility.

The Bloomsburg Fair, the main event at the Fairgrounds, is held during the last week of each September. Fair activities and events include a fair midway, livestock shows, and various entertainment. Other events during the year include 4H shows, dog and other animal shows, a sportsman's show, farmer's market, builders show, antique show, covered bridges festival and a Monster Truck rally which fill most weekends throughout the year.

Bloomsburg's identity is closely linked with the Fair. This makes the Fairgrounds an important part of the community. The Fairgrounds can accommodate events both large and small, as well as multiple events at the same time. The Fair and these other events draw visitors from a wide region, which reinforces the town's identity as a regional hub and benefits local businesses. In addition, when not in use the Fairgrounds provide the Town with open space which can be used for recreation.

There is no master plan for the Fairgrounds. The Fair Board prepares an annual assessment of needs and improvements for the fairgrounds.

The Fair is ideally positioned to produce solar energy on many of its facilities and even in the parking area where raised solar panels could provide power as well as shaded parking areas. Additionally, parts of the Fairgrounds lend themselves to expansion of a planned trail system as well as a place to encourage pollinators to settle.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Encourage the Fair Board to develop and share a Master Plan to guide future physical improvements at the facility.

- ✓ Evaluate the appearance and functionality of the Fairgrounds entrance and the main access routes, e.g., entrance and directional signs, landscaping, parking/internal circulation, streetscaping, pedestrian access, etc.
- ✓ Encourage the Fair Board to increase efforts to market the Fairground's facilities to area organizations as a site for events. Obtain local input on the fair's land use plans prior to execution.

804 Signage Throughout the Town

Signage is an important but often overlooked component of a community. For communities like Bloomsburg that have a regular turnover of residents (e.g. first year University students) and masses of visitors (e.g. for the Bloomsburg Fair and University events), signage is particularly important. It helps define a community's identity and creates a welcoming atmosphere for visitors.

Signage has secondary benefits to the community, as well. By guiding visitors to their destinations, it eases traffic congestion. Signage also promotes other attractions that visitors may wish to visit.





A good signage system for Bloomsburg would include a series of consistently placed directional information signs for drivers and pedestrians in a defined artistic style. This system could be designed or expanded to direct visitors to county or regional destinations, as well. This concept should be explored during the development of the signage system.

805 Special Events and Community Coordination

Community calendars are a great way to keep the public informed and involved in local events. Because Bloomsburg is the cultural center of the region, there are many events that occur in the Town. This emphasizes the need for a coordinated means to schedule and advertise them.

Community events calendars not only inform the public but also help organizations avoid conflicts between events and identify gaps in community activities. The Town could use its web site to promote community events in coordination with visitor sites run by the Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau, Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, Bloomsburg University and the Susquehanna River Valley Visitor Bureau.



Area Events Calendar

Events for September, 2022

EVENTS IN 9/2022	SEARCH Keyword	FIND EVENTS	VIEW AS Month
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Community events calendars are a cost-effective marketing and promotional tool. Local businesses benefit from increased visitor spending that events bring in. Using the community calendar to coordinate event schedules can result in a wide awareness of events for Town residents and visitors to enjoy. There is also a Facebook Group called Columbia County PA listing community events in Bloomsburg and surrounding areas.

9

Implementation

This chapter overviews how to use the Comprehensive Plan as a land use and programming tool for the Town of Bloomsburg and recommends an annual review of the plan by the Town Planning Commission.

901 Exploring and Implementing New Approaches

The vision and goals of this plan can only be fulfilled through the concerted efforts of Bloomsburg's community leaders and citizens. As the elected leaders of the Town, Town Council holds the authority to enact policy and regulations and dedicate staff time and funding resources toward specific initiatives. At the same time, the Planning Commission is the body appointed to help Town Council make informed decisions regarding the near and long-term development of the Town through plan reviews, special planning studies, etc. Administrative staff carry out the day-to-day duties of providing services that protect the health, safety and welfare of citizens. Volunteer citizens—residents, business owners and managers, county and regional agency staff—serve on the Town's appointed boards and committees out of their interest in bettering the community.

An interest in improving the community and a willingness to serve in an official or unofficial capacity are fundamental. This plan raises the bar on community planning and development in light of new and renewed approaches to redevelopment, walkability, building partnerships and sustainability, to name a few. Exploring and implementing these new approaches will require research of techniques and standards, best practices, lessons learned from others, etc. Those responsible for looking into new approaches may require additional knowledge, training, or other resources to build their working knowledge and capacity to discuss these new ideas with other community leaders and citizens. Various workshops, conferences, and training sessions are available online as podcasts, online seminars and zoom meetings.

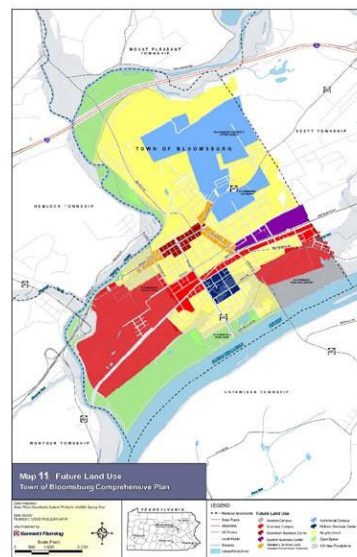
902 Using the Future Land Use Plan

The future land use and development, decision making, in Chapter 3, is a guide for land use and development decision-making and regulation. It should be used by Town Council, as well as by Columbia County and state agencies when making decisions or offering review comments regarding growth, redevelopment, sustainability and conservation.

The plan identifies land use tools appropriate to each land use category that will help to achieve the vision, goals, and objectives set forth in this comprehensive plan. The Land Use Plan should serve as a guide for subsequent zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance revisions to be implemented following adoption of the comprehensive plan.

Until such changes are made to the Town's ordinances, municipal officials should use the future land use plan to evaluate proposed development:

- Is the proposed development consistent with the future land use plan?
- Does the proposed development fit the scale and intended character of a district?
- How will adjacent sidewalks and streets fit together?
- Are the setbacks of buildings similar and appropriate to historic patterns?
- Where and what type of landscaping is provided?
- How much traffic will be generated?
- How will the proposed development impact an adjacent site?
- How will storm water runoff be handled?
- How will this development impact our community or adjacent communities?



Through open communication, dialogue, and use of the Comprehensive Plan's land use plan and map as a guide, the Town's vision should be more easily reached.

903 Revising Land Use and Development Regulations

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) provides the legal framework for local governments to enact, revise, administer, and enforce zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations. Zoning regulations dictate where certain land uses are permitted within the municipalities to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents. Subdivision and land development ordinances determine the layout and design of development on the land, e.g., landscaping standards, and right-of-way widths for roadways and utilities, etc.

These regulations are the Town's primary tool for managing the amount, character and intensity of future development. Infrastructure maintenance and planned expansion, collaborative relationships with developers and design guides are valuable supplementary tools for achieving the desired physical development of a community. Land use regulations, water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure plans should be updated on a consistent basis to proactively steer new development to the appropriate locations outlined in the land use plan. Through effective regulation, the Town can achieve greater opportunities to thrive economically, encourage more tourism, and enhance the overall quality of life for local citizens.

904 Implementation Priorities

The tasks listed in the Action Plans need further prioritization for timely and effective programming. The recommendations provide suggestions for future significant improvements. The responsibility for initiating these items lies with the Town Council as it delegates tasks, compiles annual initiatives, and approves annual budgets.

Town Council with the assistance of the Planning Commission should provide a full 10-year program of recommendations.

905 Capital Improvements Program

With many recommendations listed in this plan, a true Capital Improvements Program may be particularly useful in keeping projects that represent visible change to Bloomsburg's physical conditions on the annual agenda. These capital projects, or brick-and-mortar projects, may in fact require several months to several

years to identify and determine appropriate or priority locations, design the facility, assemble funding, and complete construction. Town Council may delegate the responsibility of project planning, design, and the exploration of cost estimates, funding sources, and funding partners to the Planning Commission or staff, while retaining the authority for project approval and budgeting.

Capital Improvement Projects

- ✓ Support redevelopment efforts by investing in public improvements, programs and initiatives.
- ✓ Prepare for electrification of most modes of transportation. e.g., charging stations, both public and private. Encourage installation of charging stations in private homes and public places.
- ✓ Encourage and allow for development of other developing “green” technologies.
- ✓ Convert select side streets with potential for increased retail/office use into pedestrian streets.
- ✓ Explore the relocation of overhead utilities to underground locations.
- ✓ Maintain and expand pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- ✓ Work to construct a sidewalk or walking path from Bloomsburg along 5th Street toward the Giant shopping center.
- ✓ Install new curbs and sidewalks to provide better access for pedestrians.
- ✓ Maintain the Town’s status as a Tree City USA with smart tree planting. Work with homeowners to plant trees that will not upheave sidewalks. Promote the benefits of trees in an urban area.
- ✓ Develop or enhance the Main Street corridor for multi modal transportation.
- ✓ Encourage parking lot usage with kiosks and use of apps/coins and credit card payment.
- ✓ Increase the available non-student housing stock to encourage and make available affordable housing in the Town.
- ✓ Continue to improve the quality of all rental properties.
- ✓ Advance flood protection in the Town.
- ✓ West end levee development.
- ✓ Strive to connect the phase II flood levee from Town Park to Kawneer for an additional flood levee.
- ✓ Enhance pedestrian comfort with streetscape improvements.
- ✓ Make the southeastern part of Town (7th street extension) friendlier to pedestrians and more clearly linked to the rest of Town, through sidewalks and other improvements.
- ✓ Explore options to make Country Club Drive and eastern Lightstreet Road areas of the Town more accessible by foot or bike.
- ✓ Explore options to make the Sunview Terrace and Arbutus Park developments accessible by foot or bicycle to the downtown.
- ✓ Develop loop trails and signage to promote the variety of walking/running opportunities in Bloomsburg.

- ✓ Develop more outdoor gathering spaces.
- ✓ Improve walkability and bike travel through additional paths and trails as suggested in the Walk Bike Bloomsburg Connectivity Plan of 2020.
- ✓ Improve access to outdoor recreation through safe corridors to parks and recreation.
- ✓ Establish bike lanes and improve sidewalks to allow for public benches.
- ✓ Continue to promote bike racks throughout Town and on University busses.
- ✓ Consider electric bike rentals on Bloomsburg University campus and at the Town Park.
- ✓ Maintain and create new places for people to meet.
- ✓ Improve/enhance and protect access to the river and creek; interpret riparian and aquatic habitat and ecological functions.
- ✓ Recommend a master plan for the Streater property and other properties along the river to create a cohesive plan for development.
- ✓ Encourage preparation and sharing of a Fairgrounds Master Plan that would include adoption of emerging energy conservation technology.
- ✓ Add walking/biking paths along Fort McClure Blvd from the Airport to the Rupert Bridge and ideally attaching all walking trails together around to the Fairgrounds.
- ✓ Enhance access to the Susquehanna River. Promote Bloomsburg's River and Town connectivity.
- ✓ Add additional boat/kayak launches at the Town Park and confluence of the Fishing Creek and the River.
- ✓ Encourage the usage of the Streater Field for youth sport tournaments.
- ✓ Work with Downtown Business Inc. to encourage business development on Main Street.
- ✓ Work with Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau to promote Bloomsburg as a recreational destination.
- ✓ Continue River Trail from Rt. 487 along the Kawneer levee and airport to Industrial Drive and further into Scott Township.
- ✓ Encourage increased Town Park bandshell concerts.
- ✓ Develop programing for events at the Town Park.
- ✓ Encourage Community Events in the Downtown, Market Street, Fairgrounds, or River Walk Areas.
- ✓ Continue to implement concepts of the Bloomsburg Municipal Airport Master Plan including establishing a perimeter fence around the complex. Work to develop new hangars and establish a restaurant on site.
- ✓ Encourage efforts to improve the quality of life of all residents residing in the Town of Bloomsburg by enforcing and potentially amending ordinances relating to noise reduction/control, traffic control, and dirt amelioration.

906 Annual Plan Review and Plan Updates

Bloomsburg's Comprehensive Plan, will only be useful if it is implemented, evaluated and updated. For this to occur, it is recommended that the Town Planning Commission perform the following actions:

Annually evaluate the Comprehensive Plan and, if necessary, make modifications to the plan to ensure it remains useful in terms of guiding the decisions made regarding the continuing development of the Town