



**BEAVER
COUNTY**

FOCUS

BEAVER COUNTY FOCUS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RESOLUTION NO. 082224-62

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF BEAVER IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE BEAVER COUNTY FOCUS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, WHICH SERVES AS AN OFFICIAL POLICY GUIDE FOR SHORT AND LONG TERM DECISION MAKING RELATED TO FUTURE LAND USE, GROWTH, AND DEVELOPMENT OVER THE NEXT TEN (10) YEARS INCLUDING PLANS FOR THE COUNTY'S MAIN STREETS AND RIVER TOWNS;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Beaver, a fourth class county under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

1. That, pursuant to recommendation of Daniel Distler, Director of the Office of Planning and Redevelopment, a copy of which is annexed hereto and by reference made a part hereof, the Resolution adopting the Beaver County Focus Comprehensive Plan, which serves as an official policy guide for short and long term decision making related to future land use, growth, and development over the next ten (10) years including plans for the County's main streets and river towns, a copy of which is attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, is hereby approved.

2. That the Board of Commissioners, for and on behalf of the County of Beaver, is hereby authorized to execute said instant Resolution and the Chief Clerk is hereby directed to attest the due execution thereof and to affix the Seal of the County of Beaver thereto.

3. That, following proper execution, attestation and ensealing of said duplicate counterparts of said Agreement, the Chief Clerk is hereby directed to cause delivery of the same to be made as follows: The original to the Controller of the County of Beaver.

Adopted this 22 day of August, 2024.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY OF BEAVER

(SEAL)

ATTEST:

Nicole Young
Chief Clerk

Approved As To Legal Form:

Garen Feduke
County Solicitor's Office

DCJ
Daniel C. Camp III, Chairman

Absent
Jack Manning

Tony Amadio
Tony Amadio

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Daniel Camp III, Commissioner Chairman

Jack Manning, Commissioner

Tony Amadio, Commissioner



STEERING COMMITTEE

Daniel Camp III, Commissioner Chairman

Jack Manning, Commissioner

Tony Amadio, Commissioner

Tony Caltury, Director, Beaver County Tourism

Dan Distler, Assistant Director, Beaver County Office of Planning and Redevelopment

Lance Grable, Director, Beaver County Office of Planning and Redevelopment

Heather Harmon Kennedy, Business Attorney, Harmon Kennedy

Nathan Kopsack, CEO, Valley Vintage Motorworks

Marlene Landrum, Director, Community Development Program of Beaver County

Anthony Rosatone, Chairman, Planning and Redevelopment Board

Lew Villotti, President, Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development

CONSULTANT TEAM

Michael Baker International, Inc.

"All photographs in this plan were taken in Beaver County"

INTRODUCTION

Beaver County FOCUS serves as Beaver County's official policy guidebook for short and long-term decision-making related to future land use, growth, infrastructure, and development. This guidebook is referred to as a comprehensive plan because it covers all aspects of the planning process, from vision to implementation. Countywide comprehensive planning helps communities proactively identify opportunities to foster positive and transformative change, improve quality of life, and boost economic competitiveness.



WHAT IS AN IMPLEMENTABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The *Beaver County FOCUS* Comprehensive Plan serves as an official policy guide for short- and long-term decision-making related to future land use, growth, and development over the next 10 years including plans for the County's main streets and river towns.

The plan follows the Implementable Comprehensive Plan model, which is supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), and thereby centers practical and workable recommendations around key existing conditions and issues captured through thorough research. Throughout the planning process, comprehensive plans work as a tool that allows public officials, staff, and residents to easily look at the big picture to form a strategic plan for initiatives and investments. The following chapters present data, trends, community feedback, and planning implications, that informed key priorities for the County over the next 10 years.

To support both the creation and continued success of this plan, Beaver County convened a steering committee of Borough residents and employees to oversee and help facilitate the planning process. This approach has provided strong local buy-in and support for the Plan's vision, goals, and recommendations for implementation.



THE ROLE OF A COUNTY PLAN

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) empowers municipalities and counties within the Commonwealth to develop comprehensive plans to guide land use and planning for community facilities and utilities, historic preservation, natural resource protection, transportation, housing, and economic development.

In addition to setting a roadmap for County initiatives for the next decade, a county comprehensive plan establishes broad goals and criteria for municipalities to use in the preparation of their comprehensive plan and land use regulations, such as zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDOs). These local municipal plans and regulations should be generally consistent with the objectives of the county comprehensive plan; however the county plan serves as a guide and does not impose decisions. The municipalities retain their right to prepare individual or multi-municipal comprehensive plans, control zoning, and regulate subdivision and land development within their boundaries.

Beaver County FOCUS presents community objectives and potential action items to guide how the County will work with municipalities to address land issues, provide technical assistance to municipalities, and identify funding sources, such as grants. The Beaver County Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the challenges facing Beaver County, but also the great opportunities that can be leveraged to continue to enhance innovation, quality of life, and prosperity into the future.

The last Beaver County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2010 and has guided development and growth. Since the adoption of the 2010 plan, Beaver County has experienced demographic transitions and realigned priorities reflecting how communities and economic forces have evolved. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected housing trends, work and commuting patterns, and consumer preferences.

Beaver County FOCUS examines the County's needs and provides a guidebook for targeting time, collaboration, and investment in the years ahead in alignment with the shared vision defined through this Plan.



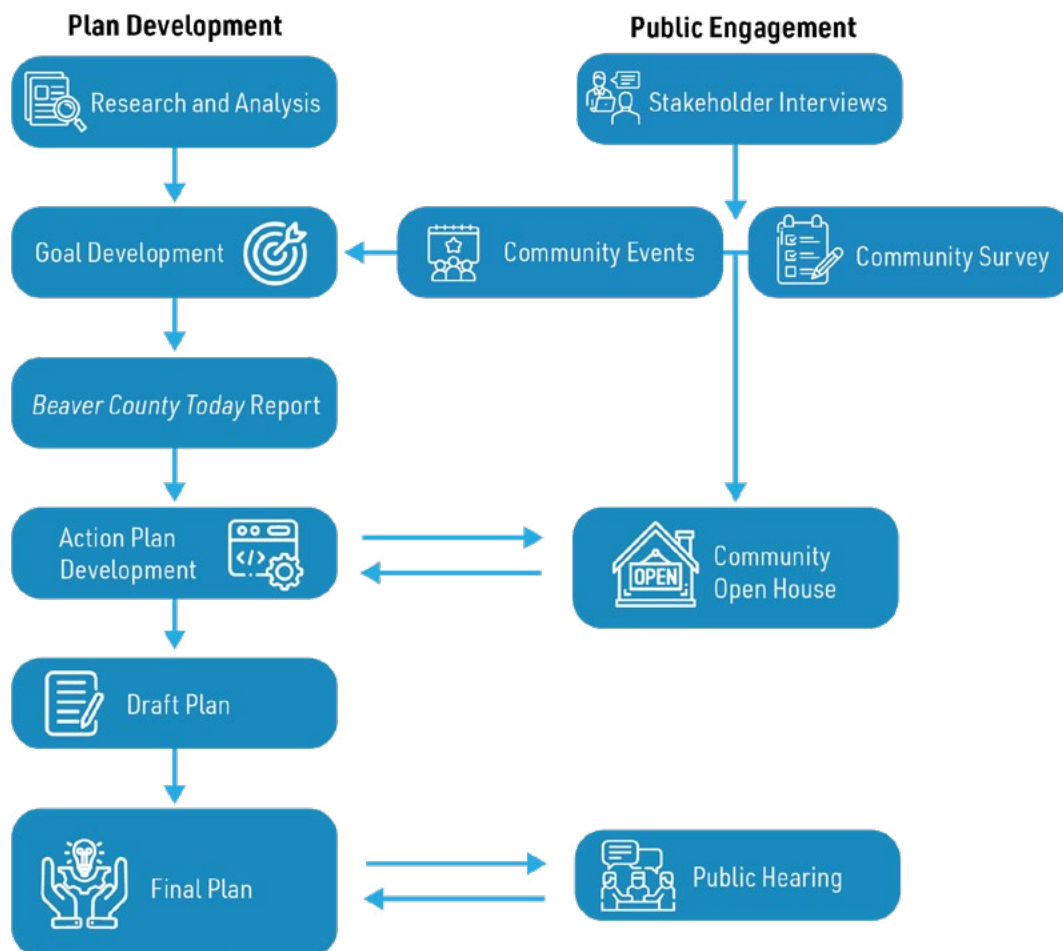
PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

PREVIOUS BEAVER COUNTY FOCUS ENGAGEMENT

This comprehensive plan builds upon an earlier engagement effort for *Beaver County FOCUS*, which the county undertook from 2018 to 2020. This was a launched with a clear purpose to strategically address the community's needs through a focused lens. Following a readjustment period during the COVID-19 pandemic and an additional strategic postponement that allows this plan to incorporate decennial Census data into this plan, Beaver County resumed the engagement and planning process in 2023. The entire *Beaver County FOCUS* initiative from the inception of the working group is captured in this comprehensive plan. The engagement, focus group findings and analysis gathered beginning in 2018 have been incorporated into this full comprehensive plan.

Crafting a well-thought-out and thorough implementable comprehensive plan requires a process that is founded on robust public engagement and an iterative development of community objectives, goals, and action step. The *Beaver County FOCUS* engagement from 2018-2020 served as the basis for this plan's public engagement efforts, research and analysis of existing conditions, demographic analysis, and vision planning. This provides deep engagement with the County and the community's desires.

Following the initial engagement efforts for *Beaver County FOCUS*, the comprehensive planning process was restarted in 2023 by the County, the project team, and the Steering Committee which was formulated to guide the development of the plan. The Beaver County Office of Planning and Redevelopment served as the direct point of contact with the project team on project coordination, public engagement, and plan development while taking advantage of the knowledge and expertise of the Steering Committee to serve as a sounding board to develop buy-in on the elements of the comprehensive plan and to guide the overall planning process.



STEERING COMMITTEE

The 11-person Steering Committee convened by the County to chaperone the development of the comprehensive plan consisted of representatives from the Beaver County Board of Commissioners, Beaver County Office of Planning and Redevelopment, the Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development, Beaver County Tourism, the Community Development Program of Beaver County, two local businesses, and residents.

The Steering Committee was instrumental to the project team in explaining local context, advising and actively promoting public engagement activities and outreach activities, and drafting the Action Plan. Their feedback ensured that engagement materials resonated with residents of the County and reached a wide audience. They also served as the Comprehensive Plan's ambassadors, helping to represent the plan's progress and findings to the public and guiding effective messaging for public involvement events and promotional materials. In drafting the plan, they helped analyze public input received and channeled the feedback into the Plan's five focus areas and subsequent recommendations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder Interviews

A total of 26 interviews were conducted with Beaver County stakeholders as part of the research process. These interviews were with service providers, elected officials, government employees, non-profit organizations, small business owners, and other members of the Beaver County community.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand the existing conditions across the County from the perspective of boots-on-the-ground experts with a keen understanding of their field. These conversations help provide key insights on the current issues, challenges, and opportunities throughout the County.

List of Stakeholder Organizations Interviewed

- Beaver County Building Trades Council
- Beaver County Community College
- Beaver County Conservation District
- Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development
- Beaver County Department of Recreation and Tourism
- Beaver County Emergency Services
- Beaver County Genealogy and History Center
- Beaver County Intermediate Unit
- Beaver County Office of Planning and Redevelopment
- Beaver County Tourism
- Beaver County Transit Authority
- Beaver Falls Community Development Corporation
- Beaver/Lawrence County Farm Bureau
- Borough of Ambridge
- City of Beaver Falls
- District Attorney's Office
- Farm and Dairy Magazine
- Heritage Valley Health System
- Little Beaver Historic Society
- Local Union 712
- Merrick Art Gallery
- Penn State Extension
- Rochester Area Historical Society
- Sheriff's Office
- South Side Historical Village
- Township of Centre
- Township of Hopewell
- Township of New Brighton
- Vintage Valley Mopeds



Community Survey

An online community survey was open from October 2 to November 13, 2023. The survey received a total of 961 responses from residents throughout the County. The survey used plain language to ask residents about their priorities for housing, community facilities, environment, land use, transportation, infrastructure, and other core planning issues in the County. This input played a critical role in shaping the comprehensive plan planning process, and ultimately, the future focuses for investment and priorities for the County. The survey led to the formation of the five overarching Community objectives within the *Beaver County FOCUS* Action Plan.

Public Engagement Activities

In the fall of 2023, the project team attended the New Brighton Fall Fest and the Rochester Oktoberfest to engage with the county's residents in-person to better understand why they like about Beaver County and their vision for its future. The project team was appreciative of the resident's willingness to share their opinions and be engaged in the planning process. These events served as an opportunity to push awareness for the community survey or to simply provide direct input outside of the survey. These in-person responses were combined with the community survey responses to develop the Community objectives.



Promoting the Plan

To help ensure that all community members were aware of the planning process and public engagement opportunities, the following public outreach tools were used:

- A project website for *Beaver County FOCUS* was created, and regular updates were posted. (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/4793284c08424ea08b9546c07b8356ab>)
- Social media advertising for the community survey was distributed widely and shared by municipal leaders, local organizations, community groups, and others to spread the word.
- Radio promotion was undertaken using WMBA, a local radio station.

Public Open House

On April 23, 2024, the project team and Beaver County staff hosted a Public Open House at the Community College of Beaver County to provide the residents of Beaver County an overall understanding of the comprehensive planning process, the findings from the community survey and demographics research, and the overarching Community objectives guiding the remainder of the plan development.

Approximately 50 people attended the open house and contributed to a room full of stimulating conversation around the state of Beaver County and what their critical feedback on the work that had been done up to that point.

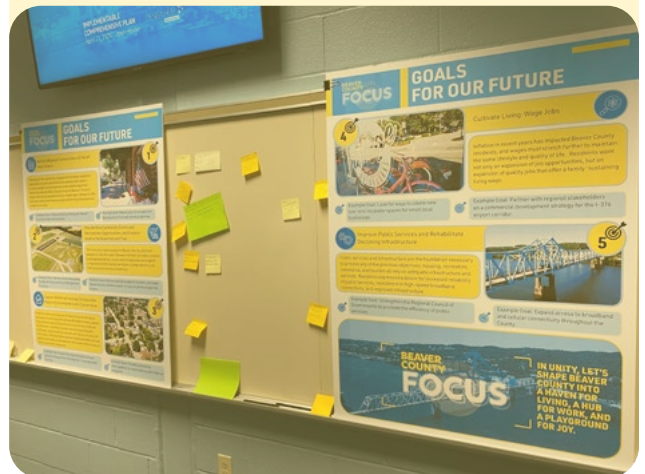
The Open House also provided an opportunity for the project team to engage with those present on a more personal level to talk about issues in their communities to consider when writing the implementable Action Plan.

Plan Development

The project team took the input gathered from the public engagement activities, the responses from the Steering Committee, and the background research and best practices to develop a Comprehensive Plan document rooted in an implementable approach.

This plan includes an Action Plan that take the five overarching Community objectives and provides a series of goals, then actions, to take as a means of achieving each community objective. This hierarchy (Objectives → Goals → Potential Actions) provides the County with a clear and concise set of steps that allow for a simpler decision-making process.

It also gives the County's municipalities an easy-to-understand breakdown of the County's priorities when they developed their own Comprehensive Plans and municipal decisions.



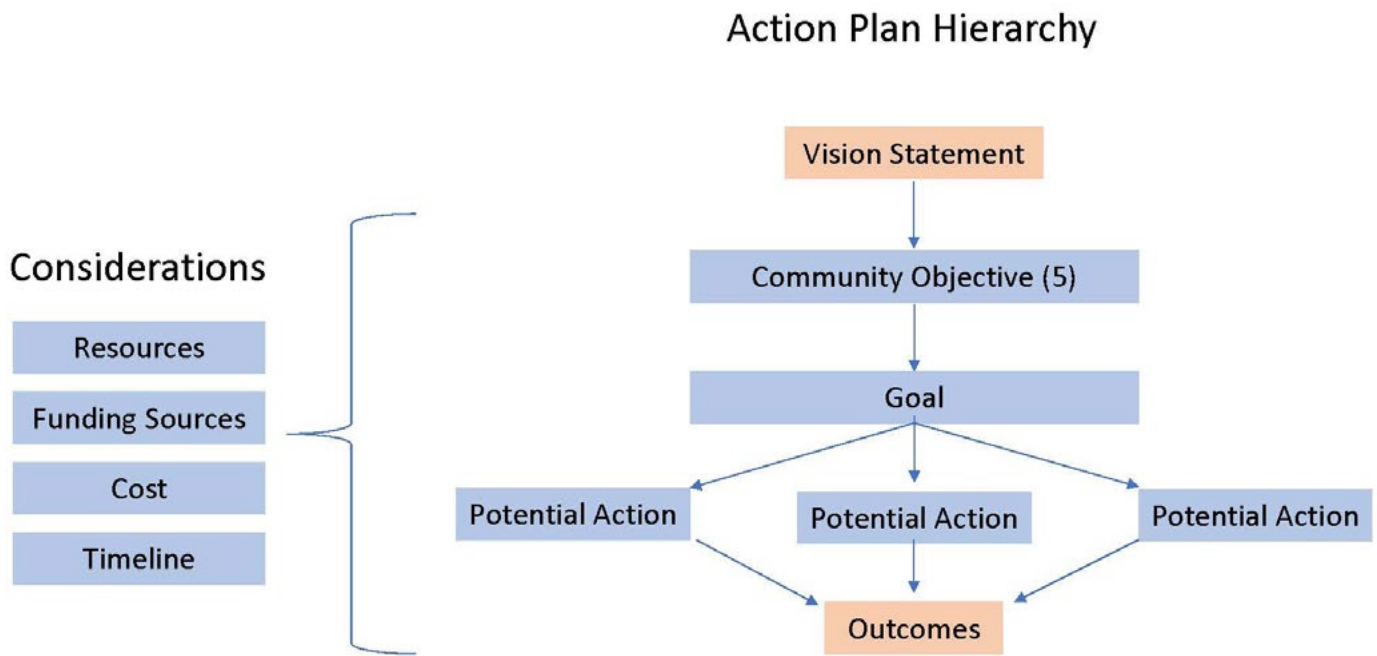
HOW THIS PLAN IS ORGANIZED

This section provides an overview of the Plan’s structure and components.

As part of the initial research done to develop action items for the plan, the Beaver County Today report was compiled. This report serves as the background chapters for the plan and the basis on which the community objectives and potential action items were based. Additionally, the Beaver County Today report aligns with MPC requirements for a comprehensive plan.

Included within these background chapters is the Character Areas Map. The map geographically reflects and situates the community objectives and plans for the amount, intensity, and character of development and the preservation of the County for the next 10 years. The plan concludes with the Implementation Chapter and the Action Plan. These include details for each of the community objectives including goals, potential actions, outcomes, potential resources, funding sources, cost, and timeline.

A series of Appendices are included as supporting documentation.



PLAN INTERRELATIONSHIPS

Beaver County FOCUS is structured to demonstrate interrelationships between the identified focus areas and their recommendations through association with the five overarching plan goals. The five focus areas link the various components of the Plan, including the recommendations, specific objectives, and Action Plan, together in order to accomplish the plan’s vision.

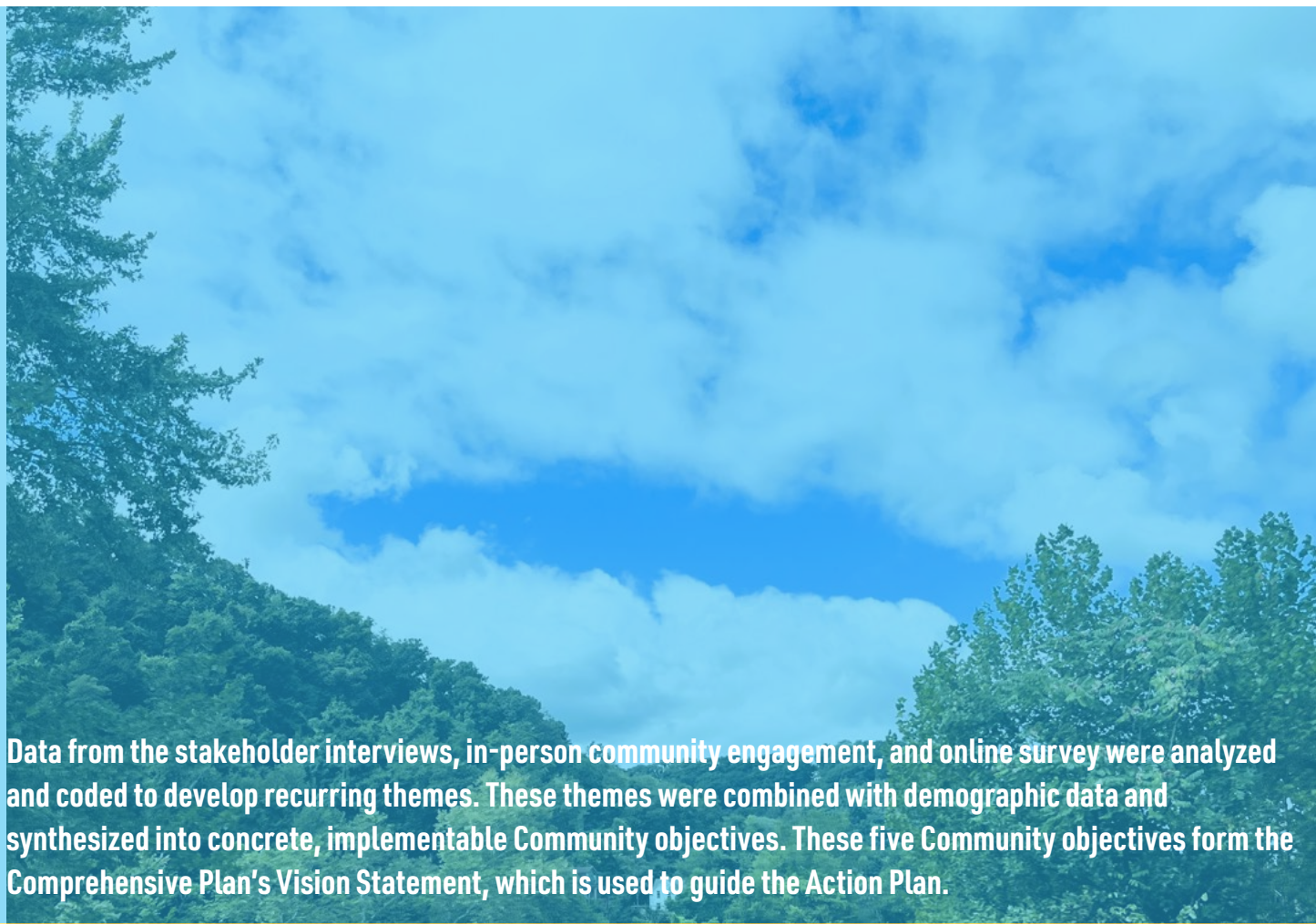
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE (MPC)

The MPC empowers municipalities and counties in the Commonwealth to develop comprehensive plans to guide land use and plan for community facilities and utilities, historic preservation, natural resource protection, transportation, housing, and economic development. The MPC dictates that the comprehensive plan be updated every ten years. Beaver County last updated its comprehensive plan in 2010. A comprehensive plan must meet the requirements of Article III, Section 301. *Beaver County FOCUS* meets the requirements of the MPC as outlined in the figure below.

Section	MPC Requirement	Where it is Addressed in Beaver County FOCUS
301(a)(1)	Statement of objectives concerning future development	Future Vision Chapter, Character Areas Chapter
301(a)(2)	Plan for land use	Character Areas Chapter, Focus Areas Chapters
301(a)(2.1)	Plan to meet housing needs	Housing Chapter
201(a)(3)	Plan for movement of people and goods	Transportation Chapter
301(a)(4)	Plan for community facilities and utilities	Public and Community Facilities Chapter, Infrastructure Chapter
301(a)(4.1)	Statement of interrelationships among the various plan components	Introduction Chapter - Plan Interrelationships
301(a)(4.2)	Discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies	Action Plan
301(a)(5)	Statement that the existing and proposed development of the municipality is compatible with existing and proposed development and plans of contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities	Character Areas Chapter
301(a)(6)	Plan for the protection for natural and historic resources	Natural Resources Chapter, Historic Resources and Preservation Chapter
301(a)(7)(i)	Identify land uses as they relate to important natural resources and appropriate utilization of existing minerals	Character Areas Chapter
301(a)(7)(ii)	Identify current and proposed land uses which have a regional impact and significance	Character Areas Chapter
301(a)(7)(iii)	Identify a plan for the preservation and enhancement of prime agricultural land	Character Area Map, Natural Resources Chapter
301(a)(7)(iv)	Identify a plan for historic preservation	Community Development Chapter
301(b)	Plan for reliable supply of water	Infrastructure and Utilities Chapter
301.2	Careful surveys, studies, and analyses of the plan elements	Community Survey Chapter
301.4	County planning commissions shall publish advisory guidelines to promote general consistency with the adopted county comprehensive plan	Appendix A: Guidance for Municipalities
302	Adoption process requirements	This plan will be reviewed and adopted according to the MPC.

Due to the interrelatedness of the Community objectives and the unique nature of Beaver County, the chapters of this comprehensive plan do not directly align with MPC section organization. Each MPC requirement is fulfilled within at least one area of the plan, but more often in multiple chapters.

FUTURE VISION



Data from the stakeholder interviews, in-person community engagement, and online survey were analyzed and coded to develop recurring themes. These themes were combined with demographic data and synthesized into concrete, implementable Community objectives. These five Community objectives form the Comprehensive Plan's Vision Statement, which is used to guide the Action Plan.

The Future Vision is presented in the following pages.





RESTORE BLIGHTED COMMUNITIES AND VACANT MAIN STREETS

Beaver County is proud of its rich history, reflected throughout its river towns and rural inland communities. However, changes in population and industry have left their mark on towns and their main streets, many of which have unused capacity to support more housing and more businesses as the county looks towards the future. Throughout the community engagement activities, residents expressed concerns about vacant properties and a desire to reduce blight and reinvigorate underutilized properties. Beaver County's aging buildings represent its history and heritage, and they require ongoing maintenance to keep in good shape for another generation.



Restoring communities is a key priority for Beaver County to ensure the strong foundations built in years past continue to offer desirable and varied housing supply and thriving downtowns for residents to enjoy. Restoring communities encompasses multiple outcomes that the County has identified as focus areas. Current vacancy rates leave gaps in main streets that serve as opportunities to reactivate spaces and knit communities together. Through place making initiatives such as art installations, including murals, and amenities added in unused lots to provide lighting and seating, vacant spaces can become point of community pride. Murals can reflect history and shift perception of a building from appearing ignored to appearing beloved, and creating artwork provides opportunities to feature and celebrate local talents. This can be a catalyst to draw more attention and investment towards these areas and towards adjacent businesses. Restoring aging buildings may take more investment but is also a desired outcome. Buildings, both residential and commercial, that are vacant or under maintained over time become less usable and unsafe. The County seeks to address blighted properties through identification and targeted strategies to improve conditions, which may range from restoration to replacement. Supporting owners and tenants with the tools to help them invest in existing buildings helps strengthen neighborhoods and business districts. Programs aimed at attracting new residents and business through initiatives to promote downtowns, market available opportunities, and highlight what the County has to offer to new and diverse residents can draw new growth and increase the tax base for the benefit of all residents. The County will build upon ongoing initiatives to celebrate heritage, preserve and enhance main streets, and support new and local businesses.

How does this connect to the other Community objectives?

The restoration of the County's communities and revitalization of its main streets can serve as a launch point for new housing options and allow for the emergence of new business that support living-wage jobs.

Advancing multiple goals

- Art installations can be used to promote community events and recreational amenities. With minor amenities also included (such as seats, lighting), they can make vacant spaces become gathering spaces and contributing parts of the open space network.
- Eliminating blight and restoring vacant main streets can lead to available space for new businesses or infill development to promote additional jobs and/or housing.
- Centralized resources such as inventories and directories make it easier for prospective investors to locate available properties and move into Beaver County, growing the population and tax base.
- Attracting diverse populations of all races and ethnicities provides more cultural diversity and opportunities to expand cultural event and programming for all residents to partake in.



PROVIDE MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. CONNECT THEM TO THE RIVERFRONT AND TRAIL

The rivers are a beloved asset for Beaver County, and most people live near the water. The outdoor access to views, fresh air, walking paths, and recreational opportunities are highly valued by County residents. Because riverfront recreation crosses municipal boundaries, countywide collaboration and support is important to help maintain and grow a comprehensive and interconnected network of amenities. Beaver County recognizes its excellent natural assets and social networks that bring people together and draw residents and visitors alike to enjoy the parks, trails, and events offered across the County.



The County will build upon ongoing initiatives to enhance river connections and promote the natural resources and parks, from playing fields to creeks and waterfalls. These initiatives will promote Beaver County as a recreational destination for the region and the state.

Several key actions to enhance the County's assets and grow its prominence as a destination have been identified. Increased wayfinding and signage will direct people to and through the existing park and trail networks, increasing their visibility and use. Expanded event programming, including Beaver County Boom, provides not only reasons for people to gather but also opportunities to celebrate local history and drive customers to local businesses. Events bring marketing and visibility beyond the event itself and can drive tourism as they expose visitors to all Beaver County has to offer. At the municipal level, towns and townships are deeply invested in their own events and parks, but will benefit from the county's support of funding opportunities to maintain facilities and grow their recreational offerings.

The outdoor access to views, fresh air, walking paths, and recreational opportunities are highly valued by County residents. Because riverfront recreation crosses municipal boundaries, countywide collaboration and support is important to help maintain and grow a comprehensive and interconnected network of amenities. Beaver County recognizes its excellent natural assets and social networks that bring people together and draw residents and visitors alike to enjoy the parks, trails, and events offered across the County.

How does this connect to the other Community objectives?

Boosting recreational opportunities and community events throughout the County can attract new residents and spur business opportunities. The new residents can drive a private investment in new housing, which new businesses can bring about more jobs.

Advancing multiple goals

Placemaking initiatives link directly the restoring blighted communities by offering a holistic approach to blight remediation, combining physical improvements, community engagement, economic development, and cultural preservation. By fostering a sense of place and belonging, these initiatives contribute to healthier, more resilient neighborhoods.



SUPPORT ADDITIONAL HOUSING CHOICES WHILE BALANCING DEVELOPMENT WITH CONSERVATION

Beaver County residents love their towns and praise the quality of life and services throughout their neighborhoods. From the charm and character of historic towns to the peace and quiet of rural living, diverse and affordable housing options have allowed many to stay within the County from childhood to retirement. However, housing and demographic trends have shifted in past decades. There is increased demand for housing stock that allows residents to comfortably handle the maintenance and upkeep costs while suiting their lifestyle and needs throughout stages of life. Investing in preserving and expanding safe, accessible, and diverse housing sizes and choices is a focus for the County, while



also following smart and sustainable land use patterns that balance development with conservation of natural and environmental resources. As new housing has trended towards larger homes in recent decades, increasing construction costs and home sizes have contributed to soaring prices: enabling and promoting smaller and varied housing types will reintroduce “missing middle” housing with lower price points that keep home ownership accessible to more residents.

Improved countywide collaboration on land use can guide how land is developed, how uses are dispersed and located, and how communities can grow incrementally, and how neighborhoods and downtowns can add capacity. Zoning and code updates that support the types of housing needed by the market will strengthen existing communities and support walkable communities near parks, schools, and retail.

Housing types also need to include both ownership and rental options, providing varied housing choices for newcomers, young adults, those who prefer the ease of renting as opposed to homeownership, and those saving up for an eventual purchase. County initiatives to support zoning reform can equip municipalities with information and resources on best practices and model language related to housing, green infrastructure, new and emerging uses, and farmland preservation. Further, supporting property owners through upgrades and renovations related to safety and accessibility allows residents to stay in their homes longer, including supporting seniors who prefer to age in place.

How does this connect to the other Community objectives?

More housing choices that meet the needs of the County's existing or perspective residents can improve the County's public perception and the willingness for residents to remain here and raise families in the County. The retainment of residents, and new rooftops, can help support economic development, provide, more support to improve the County's infrastructure, and increase the willingness for more community events and recreational opportunities.

Advancing multiple goals

- Added housing at reasonable costs contributes to fighting blight and vacancies.
- Lower costs attract more residents to Beaver County as prices rise elsewhere, and more residents bring tax revenue and spending potential to support new and expanded main street businesses as well.
- Lower housing costs also support living wage jobs, as high cost of living necessitate higher wages but housing choice enables workers to more readily stay or move into Beaver County.



CULTIVATE LIVING-WAGE JOBS

Inflation in recent years has impacted Beaver County residents, and wages must stretch further to maintain the same lifestyle and quality of life. Industry sectors and employment trends continue to shift as technology and global economic trends impact the local labor market. Residents want not only an expansion of job opportunities, but an expansion of quality jobs that offer a family-sustaining living wage.

To address this, Beaver County will nurture living wage jobs in growing industrial sectors including tourism, agriculture, healthcare, and technology. Leveraging sports and recreational facilities, offers an opportunity to connect parks and recreational assets with regional sports organizations and grow the County's profile as a sports and tournament destination. Attracting small businesses, including those owned and operated fully within Beaver County, can be supported through efforts to create and support incubator spaces and partnerships to nurture new startups.



Focusing on key corridors with high traffic and a large market to pull from is another strategy. Target areas include the I-376 airport corridor, where a coordinated development strategy would bring economic growth to the southern part of Beaver County. Similarly, identifying brownfield sites aligned with state economic development goals will position the County to attract and finance targeted redevelopment and new industry growth.

Agriculture benefits from increased technology access that enables modern processes and techniques, and farmers can reach into larger markets through focused efforts to expand access to regional markets and food distribution hubs. Agrotourism is a growth area for the County that complements a focus on being a destination known for its regional heritage and natural resources.

How does this connect to the other Community objectives?

Living-wage sustaining jobs are the backbone to any successful economic ecosystem and can help retain highly skilled and educated residents. In turn, this can drive new housing development while also fostering the revitalization of the County's main streets.

Advancing multiple goals

- Living wage jobs complement housing choice at reasonable prices to attract new residents to move into Beaver County in pursuit of an affordable and quality lifestyle.
- A growing population increases the tax base, which supports improvement and rehabilitation of public services and infrastructure.
- Targeted reinvestment can serve as a catalyst to attract and support greater growth and new businesses in surrounding areas to support the influx of workers and residents.
- Nurturing small businesses helps build out main streets and can be paired with efforts to identify vacancies and combat blight.



IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND REHABILITATE DECLINING INFRASTRUCTURE

Public services and infrastructure are the foundation necessary to achieve any of the previous objectives: housing, recreation, commerce, and tourism all rely on adequate infrastructure and services. Residents expressed a desire for increased reliability of public services, investment in high-speed broadband connectivity, and improved infrastructure. Transit and education offerings were specifically identified by the public.



To address this goal, the County has identified several areas of focus. First, by expanding high-speed internet connectivity with investment in broadband and cellular infrastructure, the County has already begun to lay the foundation to support population and business growth into the future. High-speed internet supports commerce, education, and social connectivity as well as access to public services and information. Beaver County is well underway with this investment that will carry increased capacity and innovation into the future as the county grows.

Improved collaboration and communication across the county will streamline how services are deployed and reduce the individual burdens on municipalities, particularly improving service delivery and operations at municipal edges. This includes streamlining the countywide network of facilities and related properties, as well as the service network for fire, EMS, and other public services.

Investment in education and school facilities is a commitment to the future: ensuring quality education for the next generation not only attracts families to raise their children there, but positions them to succeed in continued education and careers as they grow until adults. Policies and facilities that support education help Beaver County remain a desirable place to live and invest at all stages of life and helps retain population. The County will pursue these goals through continued investment in the highly successful broadband connectivity program, support and collaboration with municipal services to increase efficiency, continued investment in high quality educational facilities, and ongoing maintenance of county infrastructure to serve and power the activities and operations of all of Beaver County.

How does this connect to the other Community objectives?

Ensuring that the county's infrastructure, from parks, to bridges, to broadband, are able to meet the County's needs can serve as a catalyst for economic development, help to attract and retain residents, and may stimulate other opportunities throughout the County.

Advancing multiple goals

- Reliable, high-speed broadband is essential to supporting modern systems used in effective and responsive public services and tracking the allocation of public resources and utilities to meet need and demand.
- Broadband also is essential to business operations and increasingly is required for successful operations from retail to manufacturing to agriculture.
- Education is supported also with broadband access, and helps prepare the next generation to work for the businesses that drive the County's economic growth.
- Effective and efficient public services keep towns and parks neat, clean, and safe, benefitting residents and visitors alike.

FUTURE CHARACTER AREA MAPS

The *Beaver County FOCUS* Future Character Areas Map is designed to guide the land use, growth, and preservation of Beaver County communities over the full duration of the comprehensive plan.

The intent of the map is to promote development in areas that can accommodate growth, preserve areas with natural resources, and protect open space and farmland. The map draws upon and the associated Action Plan while also recognizing the following:

- The Future Land Use Map from the Beaver County 2010 Comprehensive Plan
- Areas of existing development or recent growth
- Proximity to major transportation corridor, existing community facilities, and important economic areas
- Protected/preserved land
- Overarching community objectives

The map breaks Beaver County's land into seven "character areas," or unique types of land use in the county. These Character Areas are grouped into the following three Character Area Groups:

- **Growth Areas:** These are areas that should be prioritized for future infrastructure upgrades and extensions, future development, and infill development. There are three subcategories of Growth Areas in Beaver County.
- **Enhancement Areas:** These areas should not be substantially changed but should instead be areas of future investments to maintain the existing character of these areas. There are two subcategories of Enhancement Areas in Beaver County.
- **Preservation Areas:** These areas should be protected and undeveloped as much as possible. Should development take place, it should be low-impact and sensitive to its context, the environment, and the surrounding natural features. There are two subcategories of Preservation Areas in Beaver County.

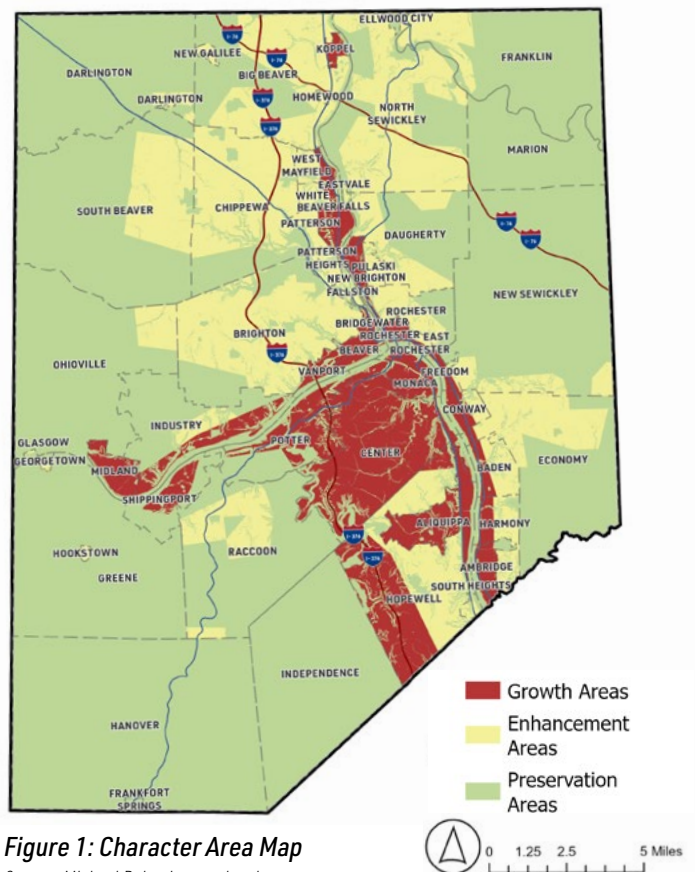


Figure 1: Character Area Map

Source: Michael Baker International.

These Character Areas are intentionally conceptual and are not designed to replace or change any existing land use regulations or apply to specific properties. Instead, they are designed to help guide future land use and zoning decisions made by the County, and more importantly, its municipalities.

Growth Areas

Growth Areas contain infrastructure—or the potential for infrastructure—to accommodate new development and redevelopment. Although environmental, water quality, and infrastructure considerations may preclude development or redevelopment on specific sites, they are generally suitable areas. But the goals to provide an overarching approach to certain areas within the County. The specific Growth Areas area as follows:

Commercial Corridors: These areas are along major County corridors, such as I-376 and Ohio River Boulevard, and are generally located near existing communities. They provide services and amenities. Many are suitable for both commercial and residential uses.

Core Communities: These are existing municipalities within Beaver County that are central gathering places for the community, with services and amenities. These areas are generally more walkable and have existing infrastructure to support new housing and infill development.

Development Centers: Development Centers are locations that are designed to accommodate future growth and infill development at higher densities than other areas throughout the County. These locations, also subject to site-specific conditions, are appropriate for development activities such as new business growth, healthcare, or other economic development initiatives that could bring high quality jobs to Beaver County. These areas are a combination of different new development areas from the 2010 Future Land Use Map.

Enhancement Areas

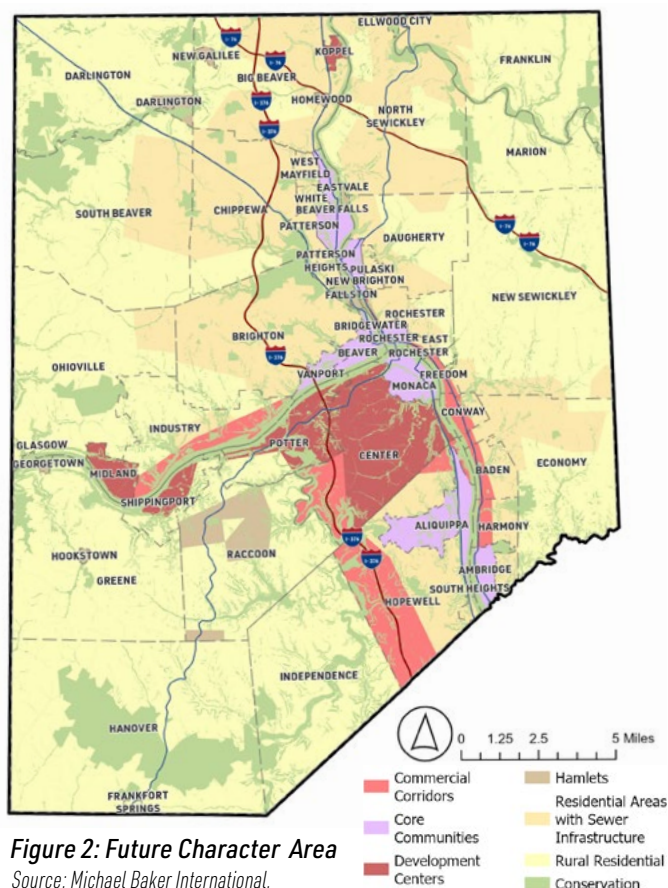
Hamlets: These are existing pockets of development throughout the County that provide some services and amenities. Due to the surrounding environment and lack of infrastructure, they are not suitable for future growth, but the existing communities should be maintained.

Residential Areas with Sewer Infrastructure: These areas have existing sanitary sewer infrastructure. The existing utility infrastructure already in place makes them suitable for potential growth.

Preservation Areas

Rural Residential: The portions of the County that are not protected and do not fall within the identified Growth Areas or Enhancement Areas are designated as Rural Residential. These areas are primarily rural in character with low densities of residential uses. In some cases, residential uses are clustered on smaller lots.

Conservation: These areas include protected and preserved land, steep slopes, waterways, and floodplains. As such development should be avoided in these areas without careful consideration of development impact and typology.



ZONING

Zoning regulations are the primary mechanism for controlling the use of land and shaping the built environment. These regulations often dictate the types of permitted operations and development on a property, such as residential, industrial, or commercial uses. They also include provisions for signage, open space requirements, parking, landscape buffers, and various other types of land use controls. These controls are critical in preserving the character of neighborhoods, ensuring safety, and promoting orderly growth.

Along with a subdivision and land development ordinance, which provide more technical controls over the process to subdivide land and more specific engineering standards, these two sets of regulations help to achieve the planning objectives identified by Pennsylvania’s municipalities through their own comprehensive plans. These objectives often reflect the community’s vision for future growth and development, balancing economic needs with environmental and social considerations.

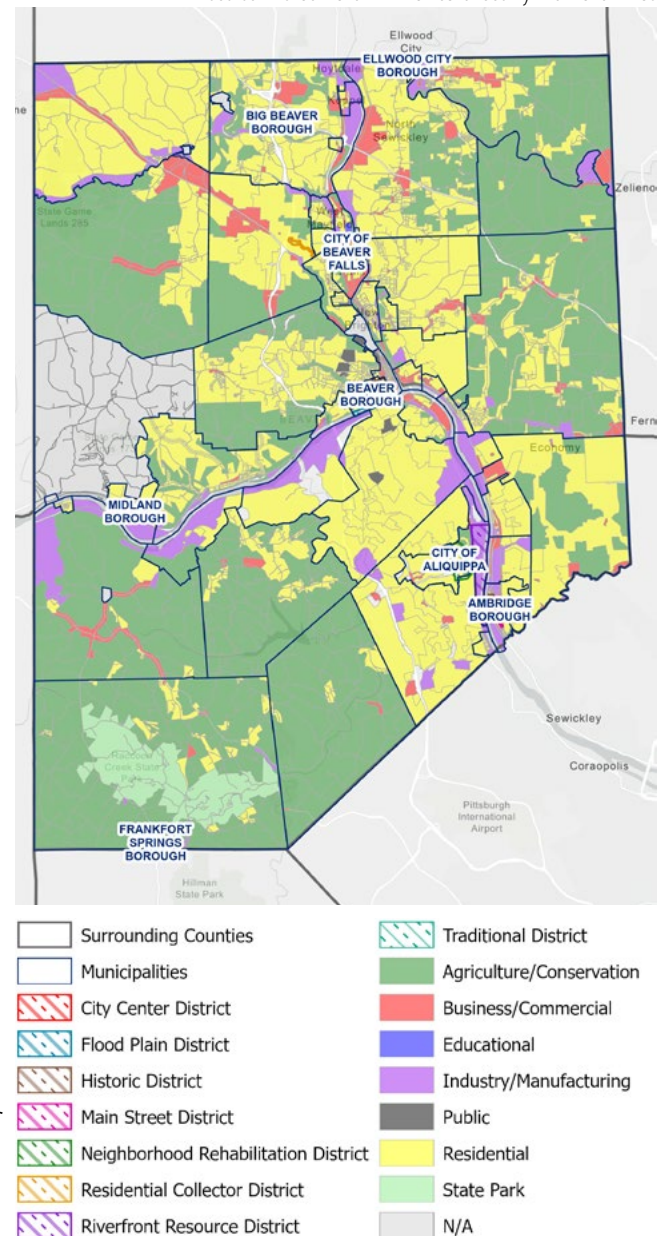
In Pennsylvania, the General Assembly has largely delegated the most direct amount of power and land use controls to local governments. This power is generally passed through the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), which serves as the guiding document for municipalities and counties throughout the Commonwealth on how to develop zoning ordinance regulations, adopt resolutions, prepare comprehensive plans, and facilitate public meetings associated with the various planning processes. With control being administered by each individual municipality, this leaves them to govern their own land use regulations.

However, the Character Area maps established herein can serve as guidance for future local land use and zoning decisions. These maps are a strategic tool that reflects the desired pattern of development and conservation within the County. When municipalities make decisions that align with the adopted County Comprehensive Plan, it helps maintain compliance with the MPC and can place them in an advantageous position when attempting to secure grants from various funding sources. It also fosters a cohesive approach to regional planning, ensuring that individual municipal actions contribute to the broader goals of the County.

Zoning designations and regulations are constantly shifting to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. The following map is only a snapshot of the current zoning throughout Beaver County. For inquiries about local zoning decisions, it is recommended to contact the respective municipality or review their regulations, which are often available online, to understand what is permitted on a property. Staying informed about these changes is crucial for developers, homeowners, and businesses alike to navigate the regulatory landscape effectively.

Figure 3: Zoning of Beaver County

Source: Michael Baker Intl. via Beaver County Information Atlas



DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Trends and Projections

The population of Beaver County's 54 municipalities totaled 168,215 in the 2020 Census, a 1.4% decrease from 2010. This is a smaller decline than 2000-2010, when population decreased by 6%. Population growth within the County has been concentrated in its river towns and along the I-376 corridor. The municipalities with the highest population growth were Glasgow Borough with an increase of 18% and Georgetown Borough with an increase of 19.5%. The County's rural areas are growing smaller. In particular, the boroughs of Shippingport and South Heights saw population decreases of approximately 25% and 19%, respectively. Looking ahead, these trends indicate growth opportunities and increased usage of services and amenities along the Beaver River spine.



Population by Age

The median age in Beaver County is roughly 45 years—significantly older than both state and national medians. In 2020, 18.4% of Beaver County's population was above the age of 65. This increased to 23% of the population in 2022, and the proportion of retirement-aged residents is projected to further increase over the next decade.

Beaver County's aging population is concentrated in rural areas. Some of the most populated towns within the county have the smallest populations of retirement aged citizens. Yet, rural areas with lower populations overall see higher numbers of those above the age of 65 years. Glasgow and Georgetown boroughs, which are the least populated within the county, have the smallest number of residents at retirement age.

Many residents are enjoying Beaver County well into retirement. Growing our population for future generations needs to be balanced with ensuring a healthy community that allows residents to continue aging comfortably in our county. Municipalities with higher proportions of older residents are concentrated within rural municipalities such as Marion, New Sewickley, and South Beaver Townships.

Year	Total	% Change 5 year	% Change 10 year
2000	181,412	-	-
2010	170,567	-	-6%
2015	168,871	-1%	-
2020	164,781	-2%	-3%

Figure 5: Population Change in Beaver County (2000-2020)

Source: US Census

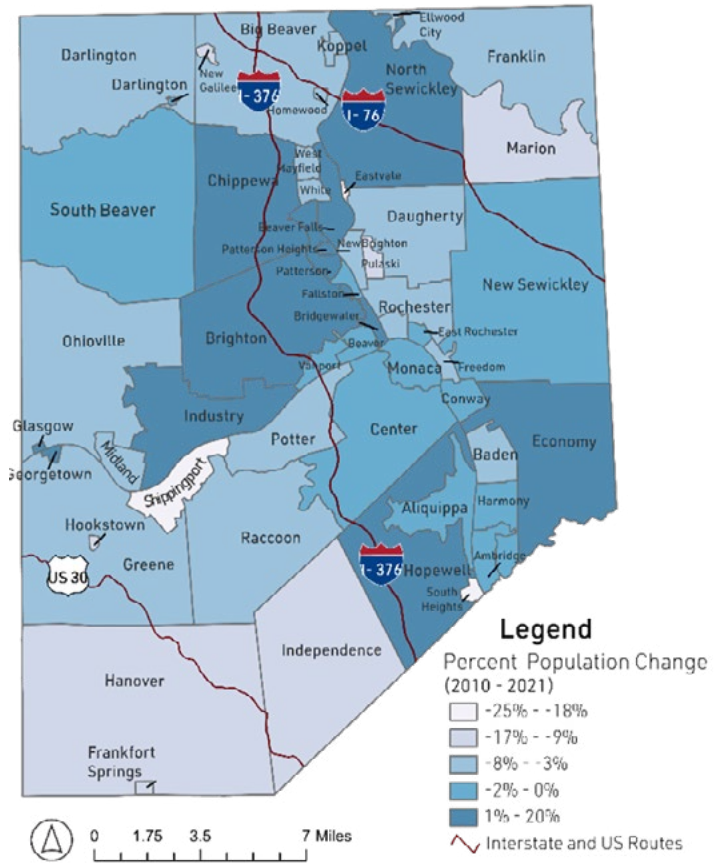


Figure 4: Population Change in Beaver County (2010-2021)

Source: US Census

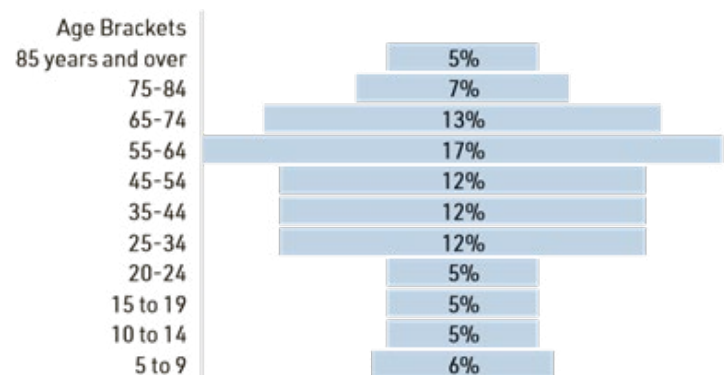


Figure 6: Age Breakdown of Beaver County's Population (2021)

Source: US Census

Dependency Ratio

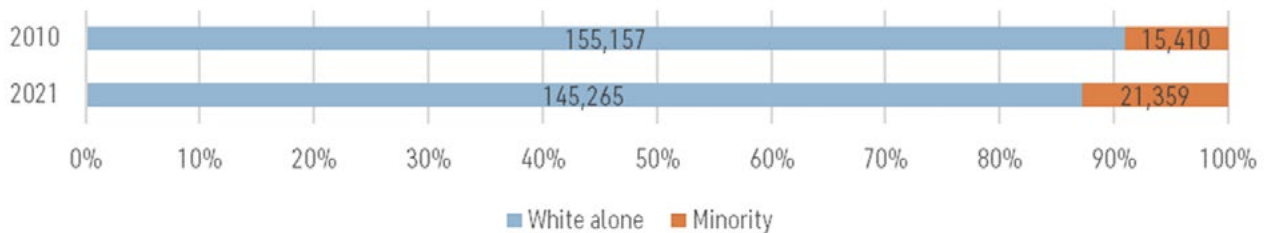
As the population within the county continues to age, the dependency ratio also increases. The dependency ratio is defined by the number of non-working residents (ages 0-14 and 65+) compared to the total population. In 2010, the dependency ratio was 63.6, which was 4 points above the state level. In 2020, the age dependency ratio sits at 71.2, 5 points above the state level. When comparing the County's dependency ratio with the population pyramid for the county, it shows that Beaver County's dependents are mostly seniors, not children. The old-age dependency ratio (including only residents ages 65+) is now 38, 8 points above what it was in 2010.

Population by Race and Ethnicity

In 2000, the minority (defined in this Plan as non-white, non-Hispanic) population in Beaver County was 4% of the total population. Today, the County is about 13% non-white, with 2% of Beaver County being Hispanic/Latino (Hispanic ethnicity is reported independently of race). Minority populations are concentrated in river towns, and the most ethnically diverse municipalities are Aliquippa and Beaver Falls. This population increase reflects a positive trend towards increasing our county's population into the future.

Figure 8: Diversity in Beaver County (2010-2021)

Source: US Census



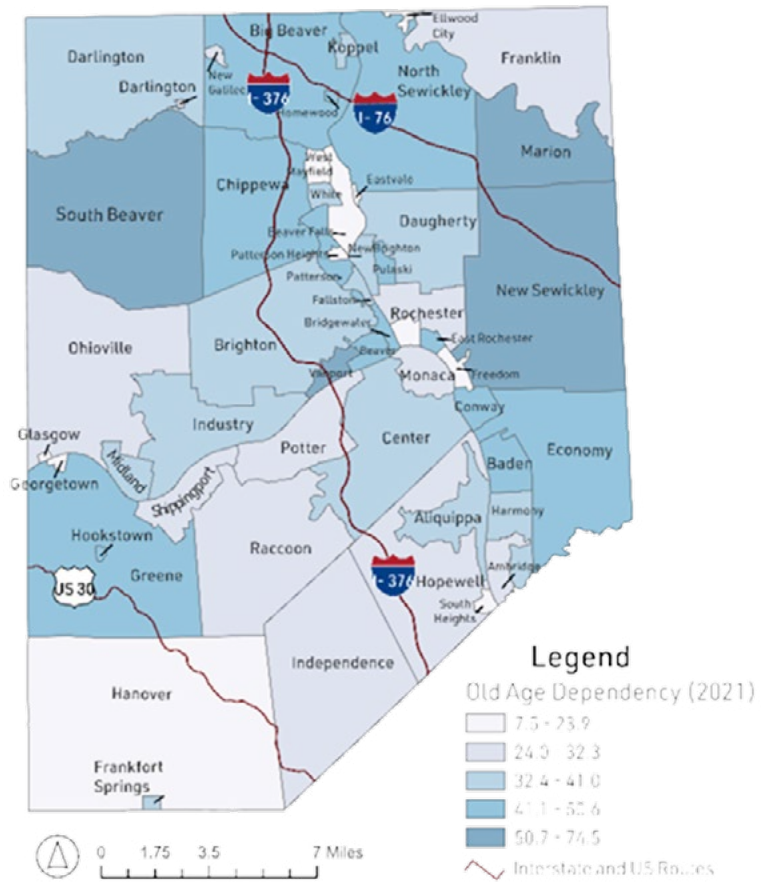
Educational Enrollment

Beaver County has 14 school districts, three charter schools, and one intermediate unit, not including Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School. These 18 facilities had a combined enrollment of 23,967 K-through-12 students in the 2022-2023 school year.

Total enrollment declined 11.2% amongst all K-12 educational institutions between the 2010-2011 and 2022-2023 school years, amounting to 2,732 fewer students in the system. Student decline was higher amongst the school districts (as opposed to charter schools, cyber schools, and intermediate units), which declined by 15.3% in the same period. Hopewell, New Brighton, and Freedom School Districts shrank the most, though it's worth noting that these districts continue to be amongst the largest in the county.

Figure 7: Old Age Dependency in Beaver County

Source: US Census



Beaver County's school districts are relatively small compared to the rest of Pennsylvania. Although there is no standard size for school districts, most districts in suburban counties throughout Pennsylvania have a student population between 3,000 and 8,000 students. This number of students provides the enrollment numbers and tax base necessary to maintain facilities and provide specialized programming. Blackhawk School District, the largest school district in Beaver County, had just 2,327 students in the 2022-2023 school year. Three school districts in the county had under 1,000 students in their K-12 program. While our small schools allow a focused student environment, into the future this reflects the continued need to attract young families to support our local school districts and maintain quality education and programs.

Figure 9: Student Population Change in Beaver County (2010-2022)

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education

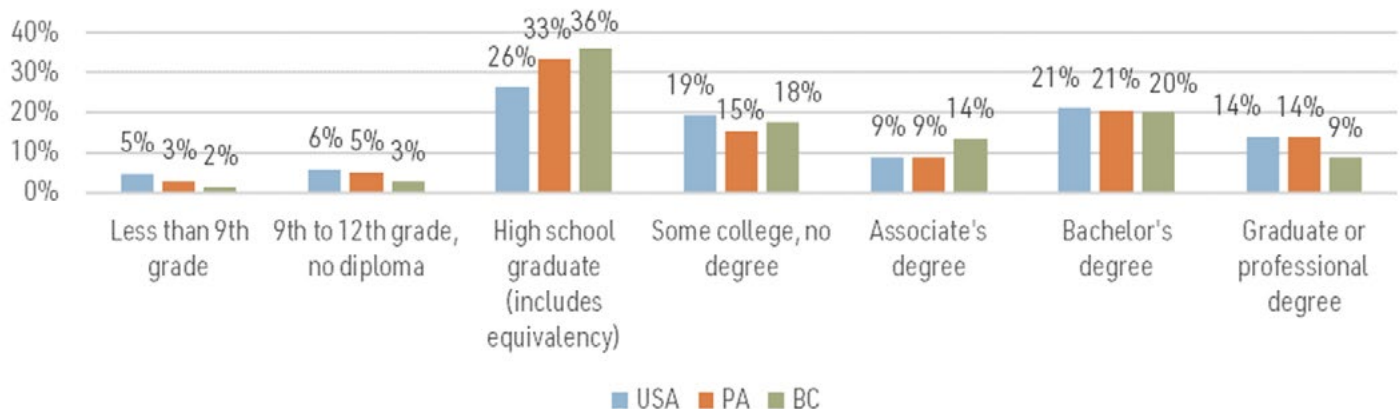
Local Educational Agency	Type	10-'11 Population	22-'23 Population	Population Change	% Change
Aliquippa SD	SD	1,199	949	-250	-20.9%
Ambridge Area SD	SD	2,785	2,254	-531	-19.1%
Baden Academy CS	CS	N/A	586	N/A	N/A
Beaver Area SD	SD	1,984	1,973	-11	-0.6%
Beaver Valley IU 27	IU	175	231	56	32.0%
Big Beaver Falls Area SD	SD	1,721	1,666	-55	-3.2%
Blackhawk SD	SD	2,535	2,327	-208	-8.2%
Central Valley SD	SD	2,405	2,203	-202	-8.4%
Freedom Area SD	SD	1,573	1,217	-356	-22.6%
Hopewell Area SD	SD	2,503	2,063	-440	-17.6%
Lincoln Park Performing Arts CS	CS	545	699	154	28.3%
Midland Borough SD	SD	358	211	-147	-41.1%
Midland Innovation & Technology CS	CS	-	110	110	-
New Brighton Area SD	SD	1,705	1,304	-401	-23.5%
Riverside Beaver County SD	SD	1,575	1,411	-164	-10.4%
Rochester Area SD	SD	880	726	-154	-17.5%
South Side Area SD	SD	1,235	937	-298	-24.1%
Western Beaver County SD	SD	789	726	-63	-8.0%
Total		23,967	21,593	-2,374	-9.9%

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in Beaver County across all levels of education is comparable to both the state and national levels. Compared to state and national levels, the County has a slightly higher rate of high school graduates and associate degree holders, but lower levels of college degrees.

Figure 10: Educational Attainment in Beaver County

Source: US Census



HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

Housing Units

As of 2021, there was a total of 79,146 housing units within Beaver County. This is a 1.2% increase from 2010, showing minimal net growth. Of these total housing units, 76% are owner-occupied, which is slightly higher than both the state and national levels. Additionally, 7,696 units (9.7%) are vacant, reflecting existing capacity and opportunities to strengthen the alignment between housing units and resident needs.

Most rental units are in the County's river towns. Vanport Township currently has the largest percentage of rental units at 63.9%. The municipality with the lowest percentage is Harmony with 5%. New Brighton Borough is nearly 1:1 in its owner-to-renter ratio.



Household Types

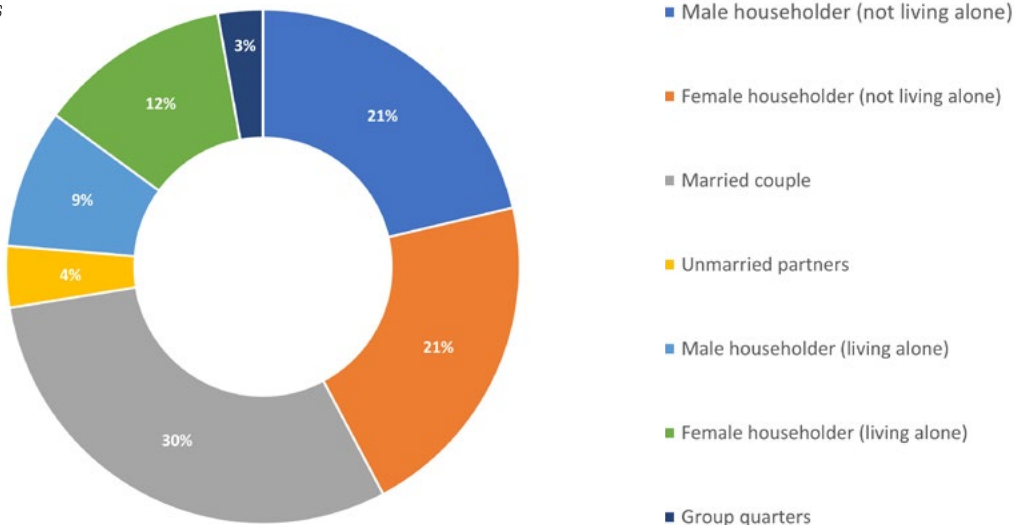
Households are different from housing units in that they represent the number of occupied homes. In 2021, there were 71,450 households within Beaver County. Although the County's population has decreased, the number of households has remained relatively steady. This follows the national trend of smaller household sizes. Of these households, 27% are households with one or more people under the age of 18. This is 11 percentage points lower than the total number of households with one or more people 65 years of age or older. Of the households with individuals 65 or older, 17% of them are living on their own.

Year	Total Housing Units	Percent Increase of units	Percent Vacant	Owner-Occupied Units	Renter-Occupied Units
2010	78,199	-	10.8%	50,540	19,250
2021	79,146	1.2%	9.7%	54,476	16,974

Figure 11: Housing Units in Beaver County (2010 vs. 2021)
Source: US Census

Figure 12: Household Types in Beaver County

Source: US Census



Housing Age

The largest share of Beaver County's housing stock--about 23.4%--was built in 1939 or earlier, which is the oldest group of housing age tracked by the Census. This older housing is predominately found along the county's two main rivers. More than half of the housing within the county was built in 1960 or earlier, and 9.4% of housing units have been built since 2000.

Home Values

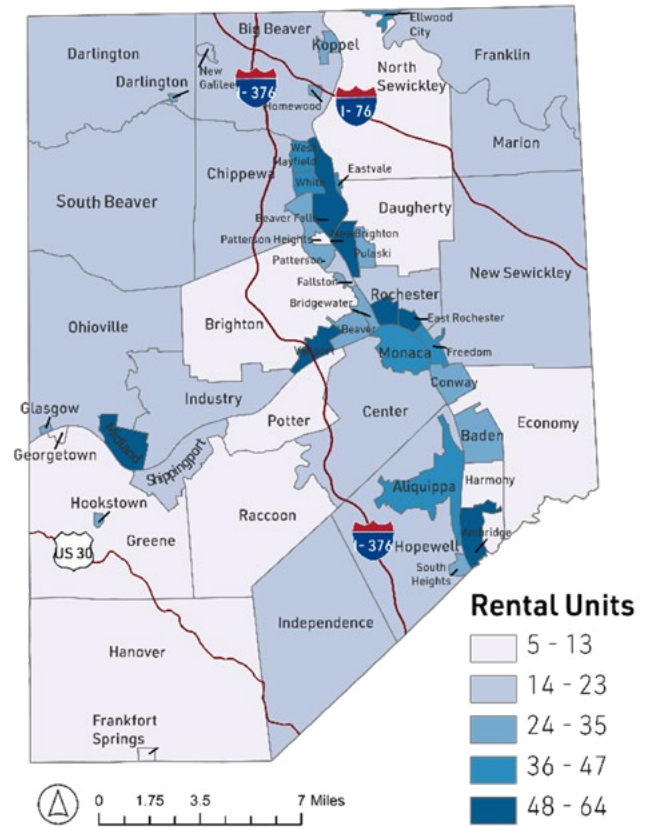
The median estimated home sell price in the county lies at \$169,700, which is considerably lower than the state median of \$222,300, reflecting affordable prices for buyers. However, prices county-wide are increasing at a faster rate than the state. In the past 10 years, home prices increased by 47% in Beaver County compared to 35% at the state level, reflecting increased property values and tax revenue.

Median Monthly Cost

Throughout Beaver County, median monthly home costs have been rising at a rate of 14% over the past 10 years. This is almost three times faster than the state average. The median rent in Beaver County is \$508 and the median mortgage is a little over double the median rent at \$1,226. Growing property values while keeping housing costs accessible is critical to retain and attract residents to the county.

Figure 13: Rental Units in Beaver County

Source: US Census



COMMUNITY SURVEY

This section analyzes the 961 survey responses received as part of the Comprehensive Plan’s public outreach. A first step in developing the Comprehensive Plan is understanding the community’s priorities for the future. To that end, a survey was distributed to the public through social media, coordination with local businesses and community groups, and by attending several community events. The online survey was open from early October through the mid-November 2023. The survey gathered public input about the overall state of Beaver County as well as priorities for the County’s infrastructure, housing, environment, commercial needs, community amenities, economic development needs, and recreational facilities.

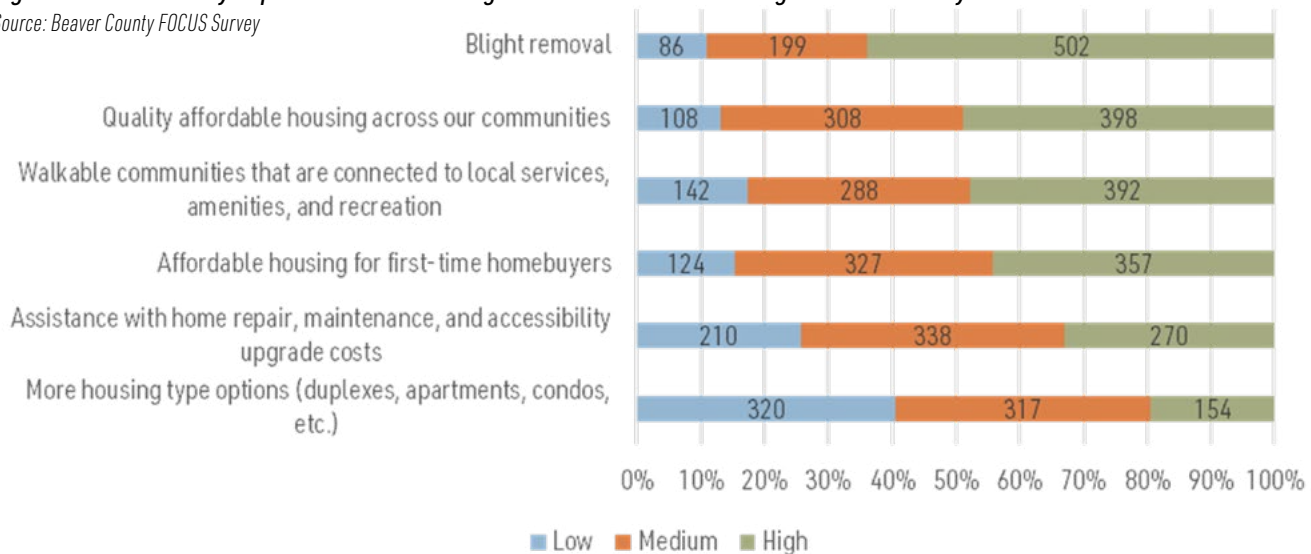
“There is a ton of potential in this region and plenty of other towns and cities to use as examples of how redevelopment can be undertaken in an inclusive, sustainable, community-centered way that builds on existing resources and best supports and enhances life in Beaver county.” -Quote from Community Survey Responses

Survey Responses: Housing

Respondents overwhelmingly expressed a need for blight removal within the county. Following blight removal, the next-highest priorities were walkable communities that are connected to local services and affordable housing for first-time home-buyers. Most comments in the long-form response emphasized either blight or affordable housing.

Figure 14: How would you prioritize the following activities related to housing in Beaver County?

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey

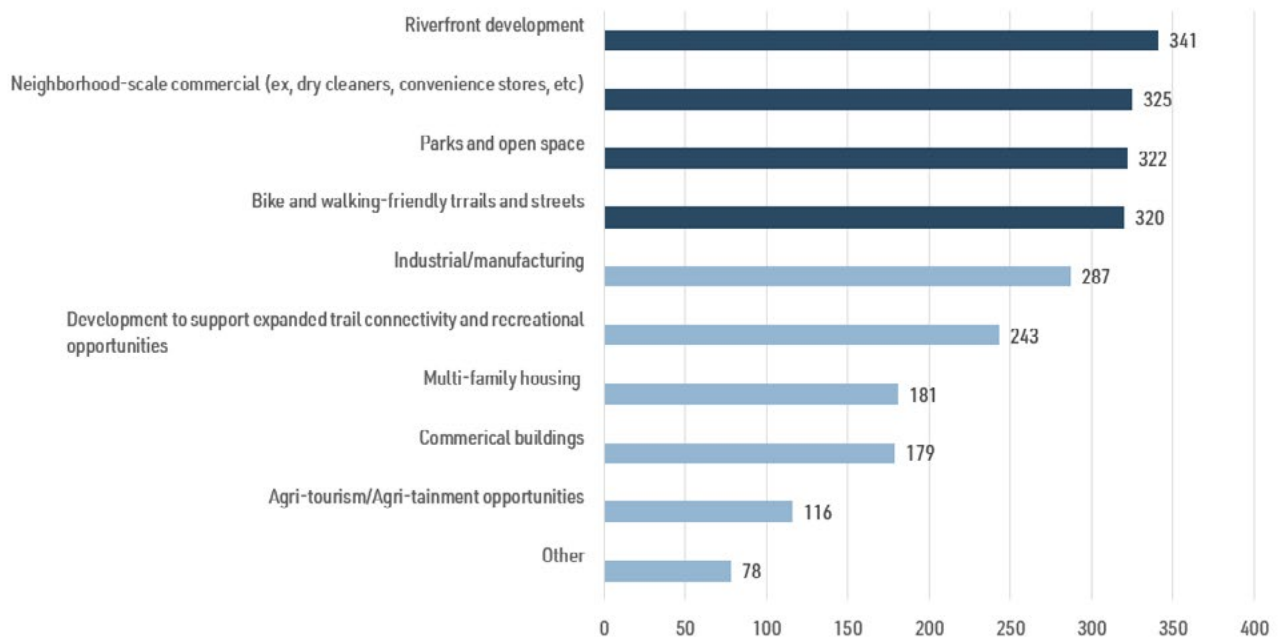


Survey Responses: Development

When asked about future development in the county, respondents wanted to see riverfront development, neighborhood-scale commercial, parks and open space, and bike/pedestrian-friendly trails and streets. Residents 65 and older found industrial/manufacturing development to be the most important, while multi-family housing development was the most important to minority residents. Additionally, community members who left a comment on the survey identified a shortage in the county for those with specialized housing needs, such as accessible housing for people with disabilities, primarily in the county's old industrial areas. Respondents similarly articulated a desire for more destination retail or community spaces.

Figure 15: In the next 10 years, what three types of development would you like to see in Beaver County?

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey

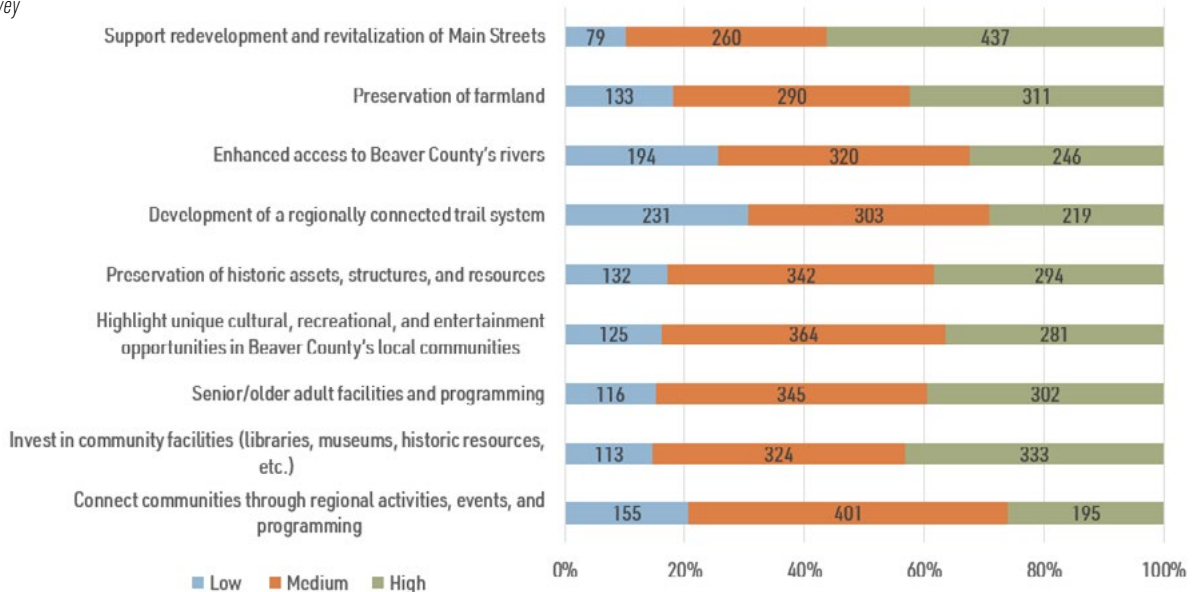


Survey Responses: Community Development

The leading community development priorities were main street revitalization, preservation of farmland, and investment in community facilities. These priorities were shared across all demographic indicators collected. Respondents who left a comment supported the redevelopment of the main streets (34%) or expressed a desire for better community events (31%).

Figure 16: How would you prioritize the following community development activities in Beaver County?

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey



ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

"We need to invest in development of jobs which offer family-supporting career paths."
 -Quote from Community Survey Responses

Beaver County's economic development strategy will focus on leaning into its strengths. The county will focus on cultivating its existing competitive advantages, particularly in the fields of:

- Health care
- Light and advanced manufacturing
- Energy
- Tourism and agri-hospitality

These jobs tend to cluster in corridors, such as the I-376 corridor and along the Ohio and Beaver Rivers. This is reflected in the Character Areas Chapter of this plan. Beaver County will aim to develop its existing riverfronts and road corridors, typically through redevelopment of existing sites into more economically productive uses.

To create opportunity, it is imperative to link educational and vocational training with the county's economic development strategy. The county has many educational institutions that provide advanced training in these fields, the largest of which is the Community College of Beaver County (CCBC). These are valuable resources that position the county to excel in future economic growth and job creation.

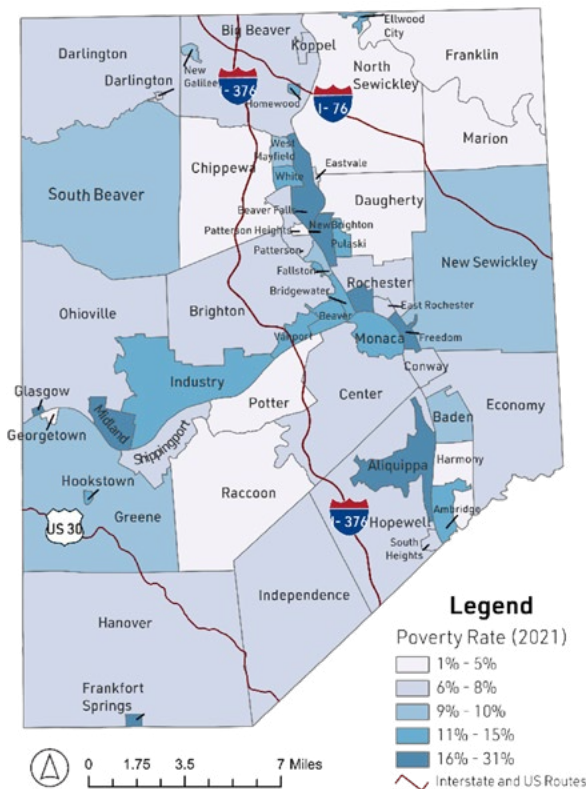
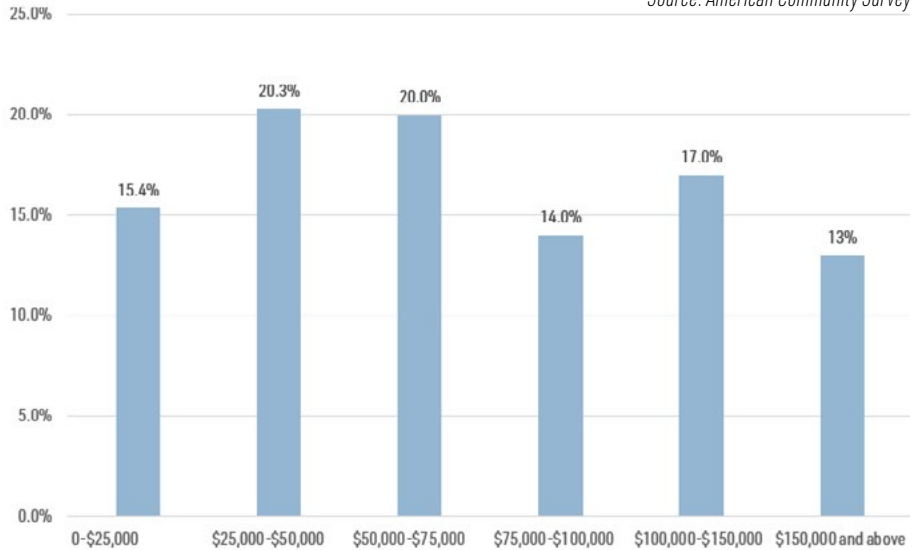


Figure 18: Poverty Rate by Municipality in Beaver County (2021) Source: US Census



Figure 17: Beaver County Median Household Income (2021)

Source: American Community Survey



Wages and Growth

Beaver County's median household income is \$67,350. This is 6% lower than the median Pennsylvania household income and 10% lower than the national median. When adjusting wages for inflation median household income has seen a slight growth in comparison to other cost of living factors. Over the past 10 years, median household income in inflation-adjusted dollars saw a 16% increase, rising from \$55,571 to \$65,003, and a 10% increase since 2015. While the state's median household income has remained slightly above the County's median, the rate of increase within the County has been steadily higher than the state with the 10-year change being about 6% higher.

Poverty

The county-wide poverty rate of 9.7% is lower than both the state rate of 11.8% and the national rate of 11.5%. Poverty in Beaver County follows the County's rivers, with the highest concentrations of poverty located in Beaver Falls (31%) and Rochester (28%). The municipalities with the lowest poverty rates are Franklin Township (1%) and Harmony Township (2%).

Employment Patterns

The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program is part of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau. As state and local authorities increasingly need detailed local information about their economies to make informed decisions, the LEHD program works to fill critical data gaps and provide indicators on employment patterns. LEHD data for Beaver County shows that in 2019 there were a total of 52,477 jobs located within the County. Figure 19 is a heatmap of job locations within the County. Areas with the lightest shade of yellow have the greatest number of jobs, which include the towns and industrial developments along the Ohio River, clusters in and around Beaver, Beaver Falls, and along the major highways of the County: I-377 and SR-51.

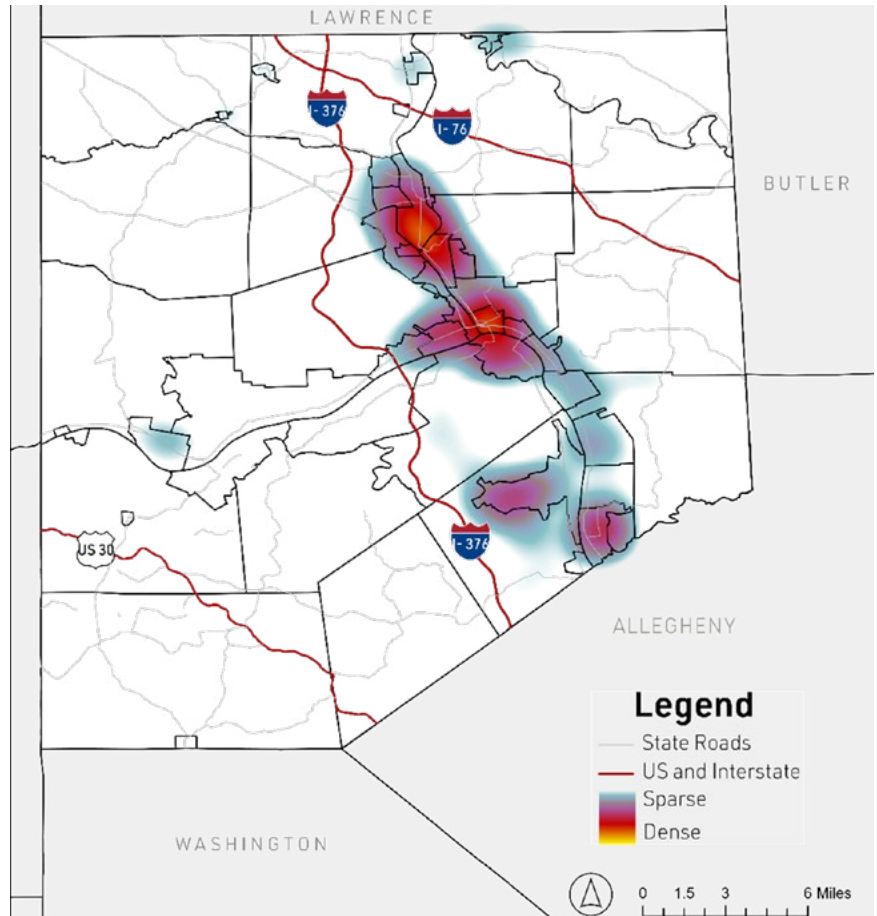
Beaver County has a diversified economy, with a mix of the industrial-sector and service-sector jobs. Health Care and Social Assistance is by far the largest employment category, with 19.8% of all jobs falling into this category.

Manufacturing (13.7%), retail trade (11%), and construction (10.4%) have the next-highest job counts. Amongst all workers, 44.3% of employees earn more than \$3,333 a month. Of the 72,912 people who live in Beaver County and are employed in the workforce, 62.2% are employed outside the County and 37.8% are employed in the County. Of the 52,477 workers employed within Beaver County, 52.5% live and work in Beaver County and 47.5% work in Beaver County but live elsewhere. These commuter flows fit into a suburban employment pattern: many residents live in Beaver County but are employed outside the county, a moderate number live and work within the County, and the smallest proportion are commuting into Beaver County from outside.

The distribution of where workers in Beaver County live is relatively dispersed. Workers employed in Beaver County do not come from centralized locations, but rather from across the larger region. There are a significant number of workers coming in from Lawrence County and Hancock County, WV, and Columbiana County, OH; indicating Beaver County's status as an economic draw for more rural counties in the tri-state area. Amongst workers who live in Beaver County, the top 10 most common destinations for work represented about 35.9% of all the jobs, indicating a relatively dispersed geographic job concentration. The most common destinations for residents of Beaver County to go work are the City of Pittsburgh (7.3%), Moon Township (5%), Cranberry Township (4.6%), and Center Township (3.6%).

Figure 19: Job Locations in Beaver County

Source: US Census



Industrial Composition

The data below shows location quotients for the major industries in Beaver County. Location quotients are a statistical tool that assess how many jobs there are in a particular industry relative to the country at large. A location quotient of 1 means Beaver County's number of jobs in this sector is equal to the national average. A location quotient greater than 1 means the concentration is higher than the national average, and lower than 1 means the concentration is lower.

Beaver County has a high concentration of manufacturing, goods production, and construction jobs relative to the United States, indicating its industrial economic base. Beaver County also has a concentration in trade, transportation, utilities and education and health services. The jobs in these sectors also pay wages higher than what is typical in the United States. The County has low concentrations in industries that tend to cluster in urban areas, such as professional services and finance, indicating potential leakage into Pittsburgh and Cranberry.

Between 2018 and 2023, most sectors experienced decreased employment numbers and increased wages, although at differing rates. Construction saw the largest decrease in jobs and wages location quotients, which may be associated with the completion of the Shell cracker plant. The largest gain in both location quotient and net jobs was the leisure and hospitality industry, which also saw some of the highest percentage increases in average weekly wage.

Figure 20: Major Industries in Beaver County (2021)

Source: US Census

Industry	Employment	Average Weekly Wage	Employment Location Quotient	Total Quarterly Wages Location Quotient
10 Total, all industries	41,268			
102 Service-providing	32,165	\$1,097	1	1
101 Goods-producing	9,103	957	0.94	0.83
1011 Natural resources and mining	91	1,578	1.3	1.69
1012 Construction	2,573	1,329	0.17	0.21
1013 Manufacturing	6,439	1,527	1.06	1.45
1021 Trade, transportation, and utilities	11,402	1,605	1.59	2.01
1022 Information	265	1,066	1.23	1.45
1023 Financial activities	1,181	901	0.27	0.11
1024 Professional and business services	3,666	1,291	0.43	0.32
1025 Education and health services	9,206	1,211	0.51	0.42
1026 Leisure and hospitality	4,933	1,063	1.23	1.33
1027 Other services	1,512	377	0.99	0.76

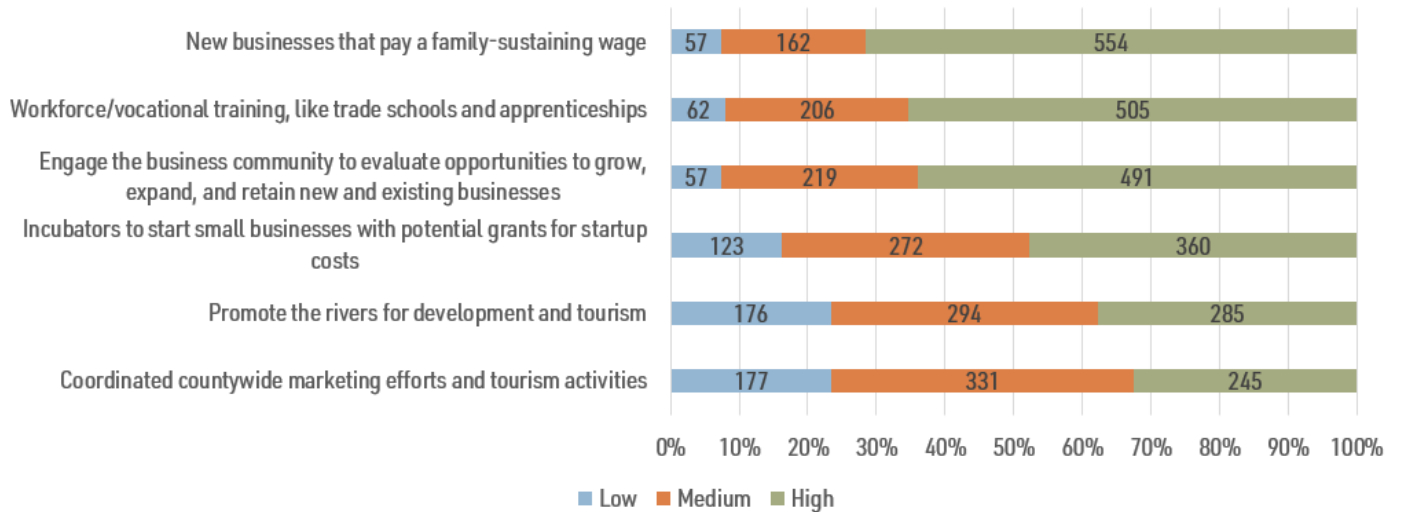


Survey Responses: Economic Development

When asked in the *Beaver County FOCUS* Community Survey about key economic development initiatives, respondents expressed that finding new businesses that pay a family-sustaining wage is their top concern. The next priorities for the community were establishing more workforce/vocational training and engaging the business community to evaluate opportunities to grow new and existing businesses. These top three priorities are primarily the same among all demographic groups, except students in Beaver County. According to the respondents, 83% of students in the County believe that the county needs to promote the rivers for development and tourism.

Figure 21: How would you prioritize the following economic development activities in Beaver County?

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey



TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Tourism

“Our biggest assets in this county are the rivers and our recreation facilities. Developing these areas will bring good people to our county and their money as well.” -Quote from Community Survey Responses

Per the consumer survey data found in the official PA Tourism report, direct spending from visitors in Beaver County amounted to \$284.5 million in 2021. Visitor spending rose about 29% in Beaver County since 2020, signaling a recovery toward pre-pandemic levels. Beaver County’s visitor spending is now at 91.2% of what it was in 2019. Economic impact modeling showed this supported 2,125 jobs directly, \$15.1 million in state and local taxes, and \$17.5 million in federal taxes. When considering the overall impact of tourism, including the economic ripple effects from this spending, employment impacts grow to 3,645 total jobs.

Per the same report, each day-only leisure visitor in the state spent an average of \$138 per day in 2021. Non-leisure visitors had similar spending amounts, averaging \$143 per day in 2021. About 31.2% of total leisure spending is on local transportation (gas, tolls, airfare), 25.4% is spent on retail, 19.9% is spent on food and beverages, 23.5% is spent on recreation activities.

When visitors spend the night at their destination, they spend more money. The average overnight visitor in Pennsylvania spent an average of \$303 on each trip. Among overnight visitors, 29.5% of this amount is spent on local transportation, 23.4% is spent on lodging, 18.3% is spent on food and beverages, 16.3% is spent on retail, and 12.6% is spent on recreation activities.

Although consumer survey data is only available statewide, Beaver County visitors likely spend in similar amounts and with similar categorical breakdowns.

Figure 22: Direct Spending from Visitors in Beaver County (2021)

Source: PA Tourism Report

Lodging	Food and Beverages	Retail	Recreation	Transportation	Total
\$26.7m	\$66.6m	\$51.6m	\$45.4m	\$94.2m	\$284.5m
9.3%	23.4%	18.1%	15.9%	33.1%	100%

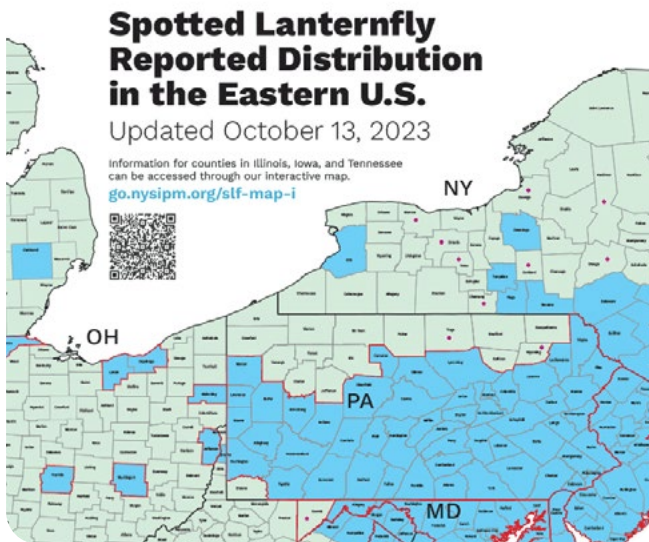


Invasive Species



A spotted lanternfly. Source: PNHP

Invasive species have proven to be a challenge to preserving natural resources and farmland, in particular the Spotted Lanternfly and the Emerald Ash Borer. The Spotted Lanternfly was first found in the United States in eastern Pennsylvania, and has since spread across the state, including Beaver County. The Spotted Lanternfly is an invasive species which spreads quickly and causes damage to agricultural crops and trees. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture estimates that the Spotted Lanternfly could cost Pennsylvania \$234 million and more than 2,800 jobs on an annual basis.



The Emerald Ash Borer is another invasive species in the County.



An adult emerald ash borer. Source: NPS

This beetle, and its larvae, cause damage to ash trees specifically. Damage done to ash trees has several consequences: it raises the mortality rate of affected trees, leads to negative economic impacts due to the loss of valuable trees and the costs associated with replacing them, disrupts the vital roles these trees play in their ecosystem, and reduces the availability of shade in urban and suburban areas where Ash Trees are commonly planted.

Flood Zones

Like nearly every county in the southwestern region of Pennsylvania, the topography of Beaver County is such that the FEMA identified 100 year flood zones throughout the County are located within close proximity to the bodies of water they are associated with.

As such, much of the County is outside of these identified areas of general flood concern, but many of the high population centers located along the Ohio or Beaver River could be located within or near the FEMA 100 year flood zones.

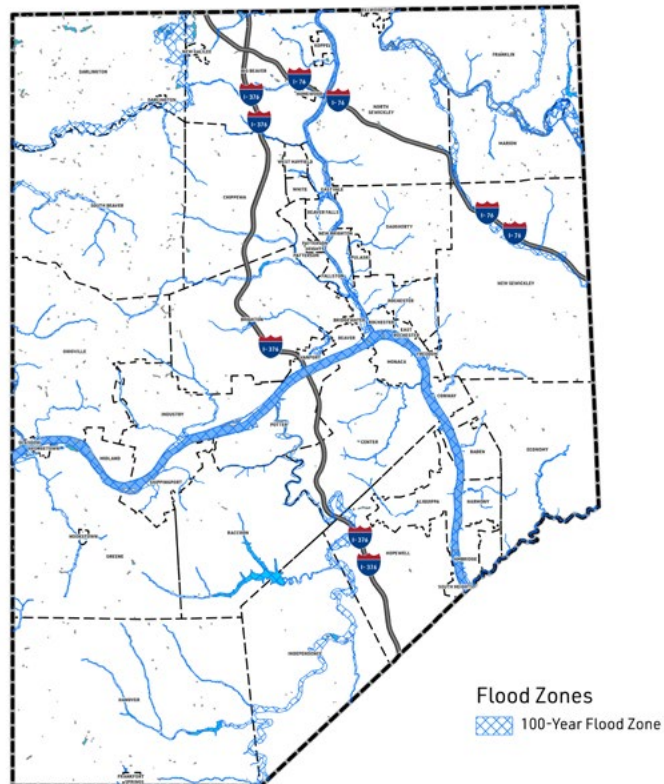


Figure 23: Beaver County Flood Zones

Source: FEMA: <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps>

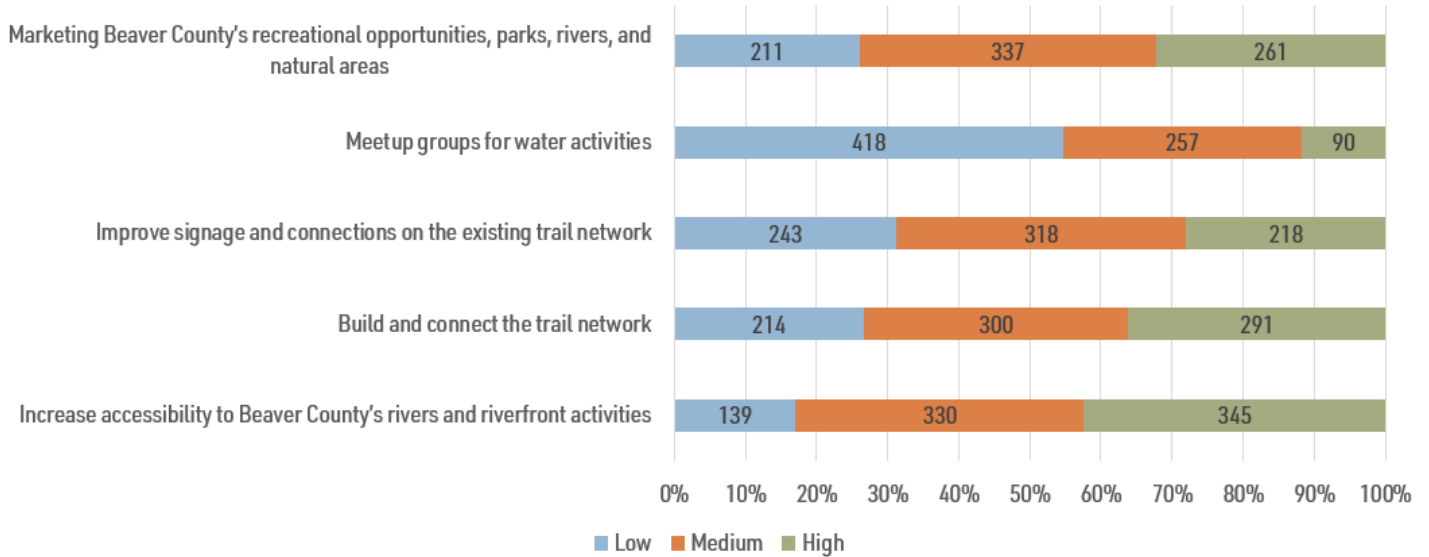


Survey Responses: Environment and Recreation

Respondents to the survey expressed that their top three priorities are increasing accessibility to Beaver County's rivers, marketing Beaver County's recreational opportunities, and building and connecting the trail network. However, these priorities are not the same among all demographic groups. Increased accessibility is the most important to those 65 and older, and marketing Beaver County's recreational opportunities is the top priority for students in Beaver County. The comments left by survey respondents further affirms these top three priorities with 30% requesting better marketing for recreation areas, 27% asking to improve the trail network, and 22% asking for other active recreation options.

Figure 24: How would you prioritize the following activities related to the environment and recreation in Beaver County?

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey



INFRASTRUCTURE

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) recognizes around 400 bridges located within Beaver County. Of those, approximately 270 are under the maintenance responsibilities of PennDOT, around 30 are required to be maintained by the County, and the remaining 100+ are the responsibility of various municipalities and other organizations.

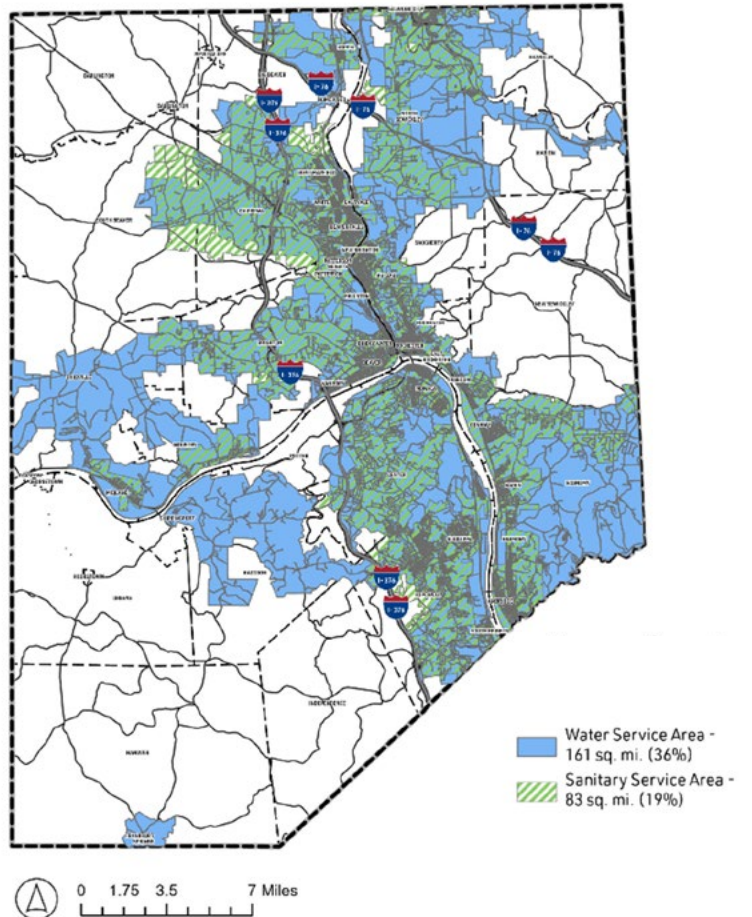
The County's mass transit needs are currently served by the Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA). BCTA offers four bus routes throughout the County, including transportation into Pittsburgh via Route 60, which can be accessed from several park-and-rides.

The County also owns a public airport (BVI), operated by the Beaver County Airport Authority, located three miles northwest of Beaver Falls, which provides for a single asphalt runway and several hangars for either private or commercial rental.

Replica, a source of mobility data that compiles road traffic, mobile location data, and financial transaction data, estimates that there are around 540,000 total trips throughout the county on the average weekday throughout the year. Of those trips, approximately 370,000 (68.5%) are private auto trips, with auto passenger trips being the next largest amount at approximately 100,000 (18.5%) trips. Walking trips make up about 65,000 (12%) of the overall trips, with the remaining trips being either public transit or biking trips.

A portion of Beaver County is served by several sanitary sewer and water services areas. As shown in Figure 21, and with Beaver County being a total of 444 square miles in area, 36% of the County has public water availability, and 19% of the County is within a sanitary sewer service area.

Figure 25: Beaver County Water and Sanitary Sewer Service
Source: Michael Baker Intl. via Beaver County Information Atlas

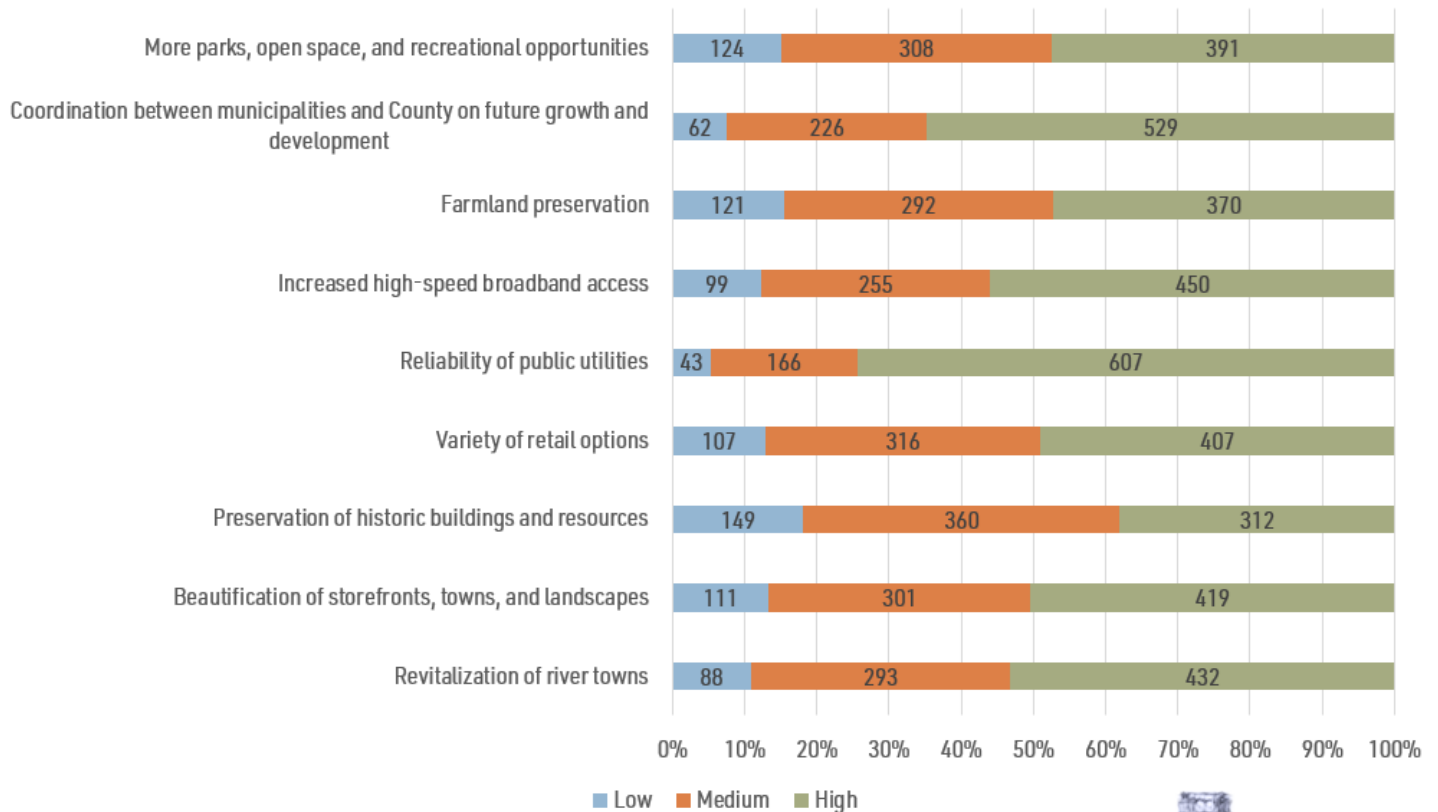


Survey Responses: Infrastructure

Community members had a high desire to increase the reliability of the county's public utilities, improve coordination between municipalities and the county on future growth and development efforts, and increase high-speed broadband access. The top three identified priorities were primarily the same among all demographic indicators, except for minority populations asking for better coordination between municipalities at a higher rate than other groups. Of respondents to the survey who left a comment, over 35% expressed a need for more recreation offerings, especially for residents who are elderly or grade school age, with 40% of residents aged 65 and older making up the share of commenters.

Figure 26: How would you prioritize the following activities related to infrastructure and development in Beaver County?

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey

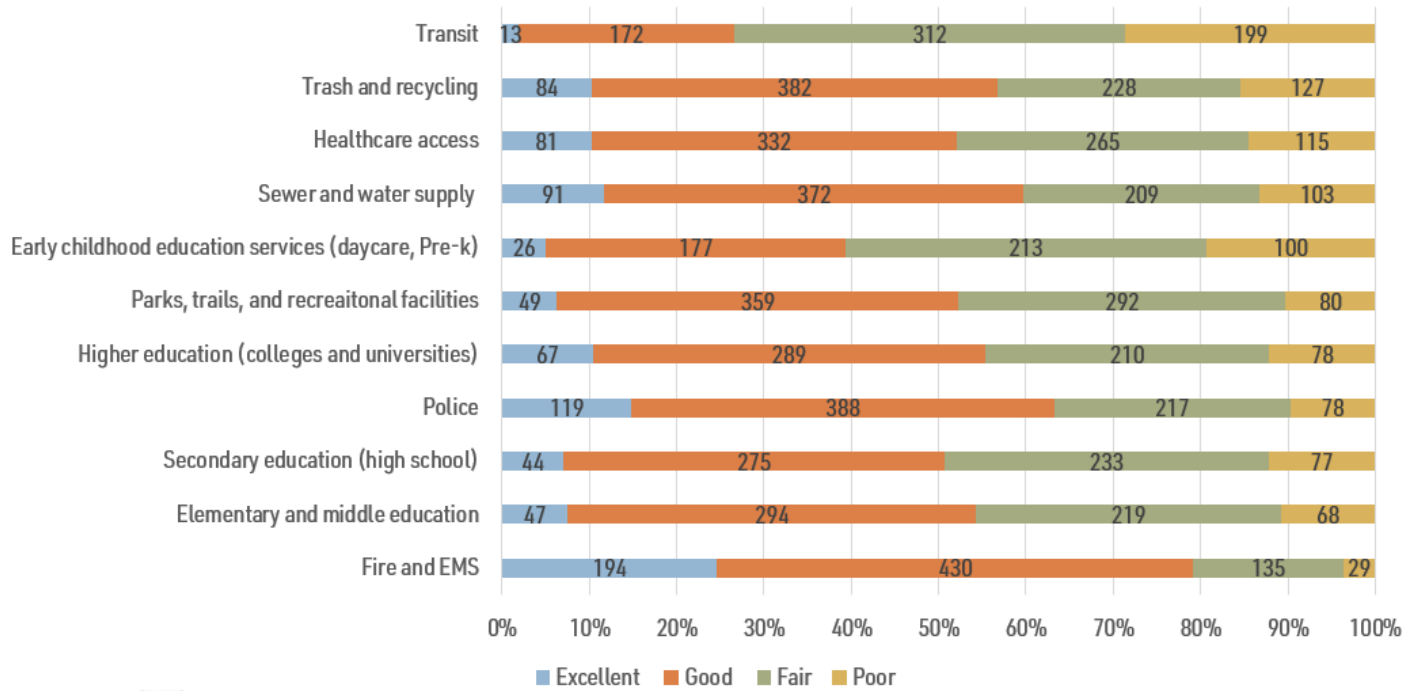


Survey Responses: Services

When asked about how current service offerings are meeting the needs of their community, residents identified that services providing early childhood education services, transportation, and secondary education are the least satisfactory within the county. The services that residents had the highest satisfaction with based on feedback from the survey included, fire and EMS, police, and trash and recycling. These trends for both the most favorable and least favorable were consistent among all demographic indicators. Additionally, respondents to the survey who left a comment further explained their dissatisfaction with healthcare offerings within the county: over a third of the comments mentioned limited access to care.

Figure 27: Please assess how the existing services meet the needs of Beaver County.

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey

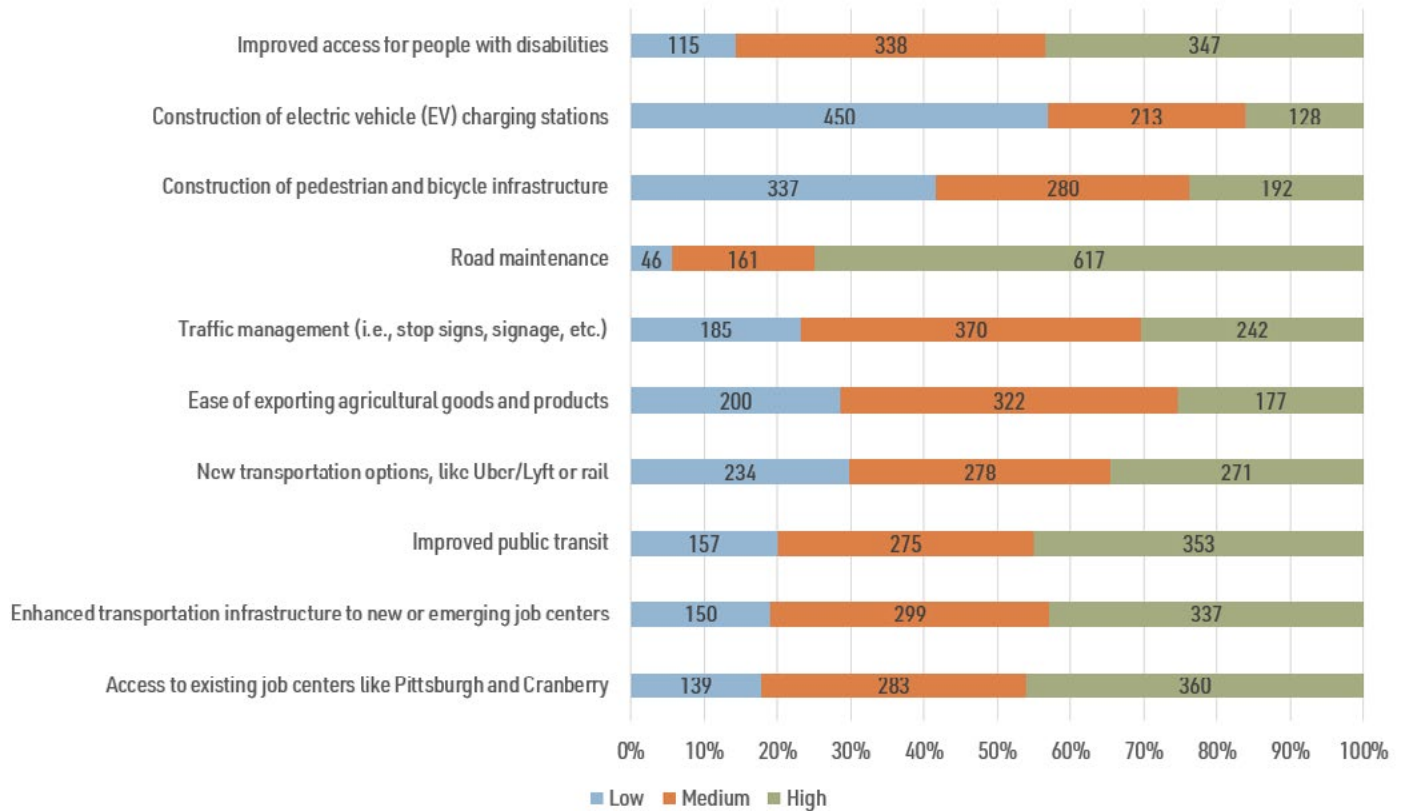


Survey Responses: Transportation

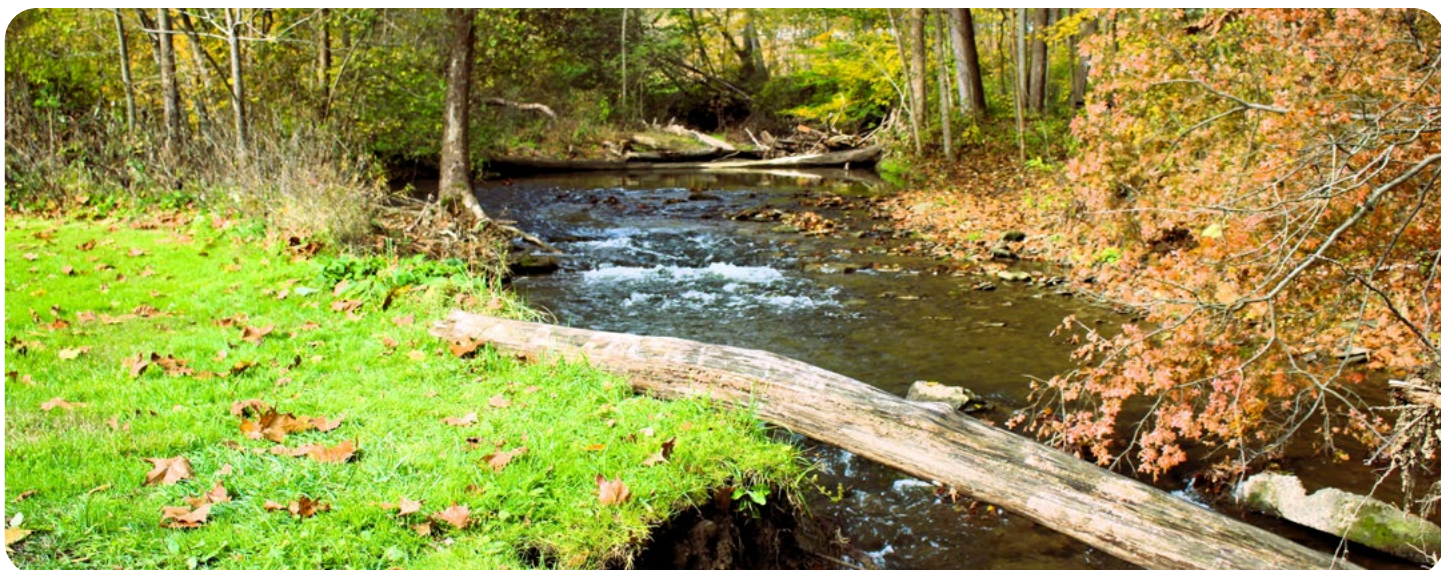
Respondents to the community survey expressed an overwhelming need to improve overall road maintenance with the following high priorities, improved access for people with disabilities and improved public transit, all of which aligns with the overarching theme of improving the existing transit services in the county. The highest priority remained the same across all demographic groups. The largest share of respondents expressed a desire for better public transit, primarily through BCTA or via a rail connection to Pittsburgh. Among the respondents, 32% mentioned the need for improvements to existing infrastructure, such as improved roadway conditions and pedestrian infrastructure.

Figure 28: How would you prioritize the following activities related to transportation and mobility in Beaver County?

Source: Beaver County FOCUS Survey



PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES



PUBLIC WATER

Water sources are the places where water comes from, while water systems are the facilities that provide a source of water. Beaver County is nearly 100% reliant on surface water to meet its water needs. These water sources account for all water used for industrial, mining, wastewater collection and treatment, and commercial and industrial uses. The county draws an average of 116.5 million gallons per day from 115 different water sources.

There are 35 water systems in Beaver County, the largest being the Beaver Falls Municipal Authority, which serves 41,147 people.

PUBLIC WASTEWATER

The majority of wastewater systems in Beaver County fall within municipalities that run along the Beaver and Ohio Rivers. The largest systems are in and around the City of Beaver Falls. Since the time of the last comprehensive plan, significant additions to public wastewater infrastructure have been made in and around the municipalities of Midland Borough and Hopewell Township. The farther away from the spines of the rivers, the less likely municipalities are to have public wastewater access. Areas without public wastewater systems include many municipalities in the southwestern portion of the County, such as Hanover and Independence Township.

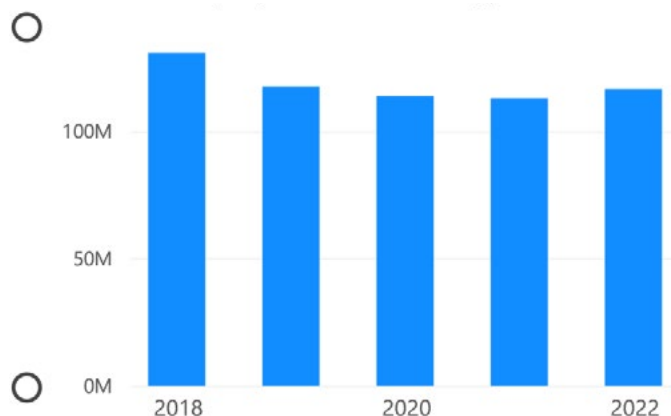


Figure 29: Beaver County Total Water Withdrawals (2018-2022)

Source: Penn Dept of Environmental Protection

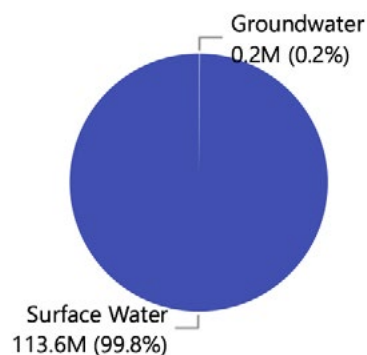


Figure 30: Beaver County Water Withdrawals Source 2020

Source: Penn Dept of Environmental Protection



WASTE MANAGEMENT

The County's municipal waste stream is generated by residences, businesses, institutions, and farms. It includes wastes destined for disposal as well as a wide range of recyclable materials. Due to the County's location, it is common for waste generated within Beaver County to be deposited in three out-of-state landfills (two of which are in Ohio and one in West Virginia). At the time of the last waste management plan in 2015 (<https://www.beavercountypa.gov/getmedia/507a2907-8f0b-4631-8cec-9db8f3faf63e/2015-Solid-Waste-Plan.pdf>), roughly 32% of waste was placed in out-of-state landfills. Most municipal waste that went to in-state facilities was hauled to the JJ Brunner Landfill and the Arden Landfill in Beaver and Washington Counties, respectively.

RECYCLING

In accordance with Pennsylvania Act 101, which mandates that larger communities in the Commonwealth establish curbside recycling, 21 of the 53 municipalities in Beaver County are mandated to have recycling programs. Nine communities in Beaver have reported as not having a curbside collection program. These municipalities include Daugherty, Green, Hanover, Independence, Industry, Mario, New Sewickley, Ohioville, and Raccoon. The collection and processing of recyclable waste is performed by private companies. For those in the communities without curbside or drop-off, the county owns and operates a recycling center in Brighton Township.

BROADBAND

Broadband planning has been a prominent initiative in Beaver County. In 2021, the *Connect Beaver County* initiative kicked off a series of countywide investments to establish new broadband service and strengthen existing internet connections. A broadband study was conducted to document the true availability of broadband, defined as high-speed internet offering a minimum of 25 Mbps of download speed and 3 Mbps of upload speed (25/3). Building upon this data collection, Beaver County acknowledged that high-speed internet was still lacking in some areas of the county and also understood that closing this gap positions the county for the needs of a 21st century economy and community. The *Connect Beaver County* initiative identified 5 key actions steps that the county has been pursuing in the past few years.

FIVE KEY ACTIONS

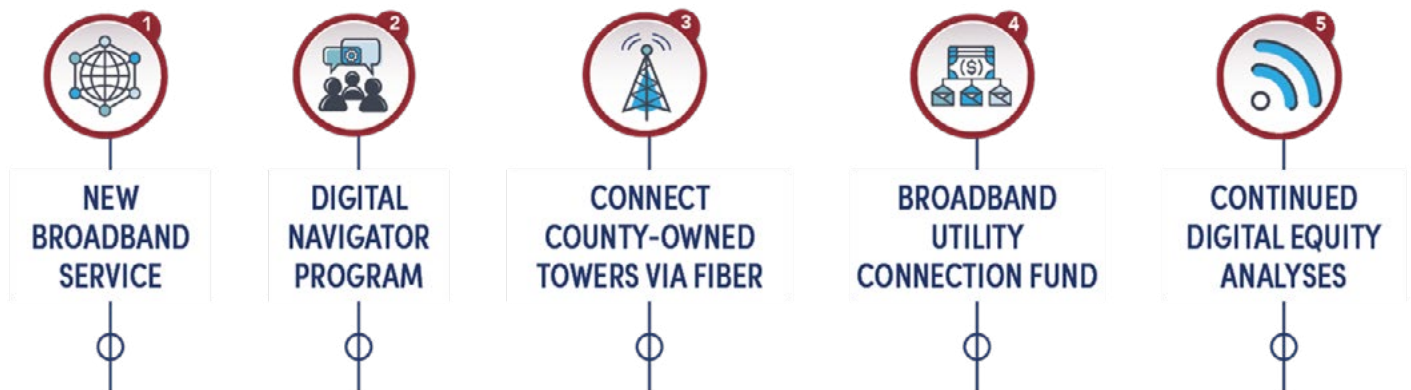


Figure 31: Beaver County Connect Key Actions

Source: Connect Beaver County

Importantly, the county is working to expand broadband infrastructure to every address in Beaver County with the goal of ensuring access to high-speed internet for every resident. The data collection looked at types of broadband infrastructure available, including fiber, cable, and DSL. The county has actively invested in expanding cable and fiber lines, which have the capacity to provide the higher speeds necessary for modern usage: from education, work, healthcare, socialization, and more accessed online. Fiber-optic cables are crucial to strengthening internet connection by connecting to coaxial cables to bring internet signals in and out of the home.

Since 2021, Beaver County has identified 2 Early Action areas where the county invested in bringing new service to previously unserved areas. A household or location is unserved if it is without access to internet with speed meeting the 25/3 threshold. These Early Action projects are now complete, and additional expansion underway to continue implementing a fully connected Beaver County.

As of May 2024, 125 miles of cable have been placed or replaced across Beaver County. There are 70 miles of cable remaining to be placed or replaced, demonstrating a rapid rate of progress towards completion. The Connectivity Tracker dashboard available on the [Connect Beaver County: About](#) the Program website gives regular updates on the status of this important infrastructure investment. Notably, Beaver County initiated this effort in advance of increased national attention and investment into broadband starting in 2022 and is positioned ahead of much of the state in closing the gap and achieving a countywide network giving every resident access to reliable broadband service.

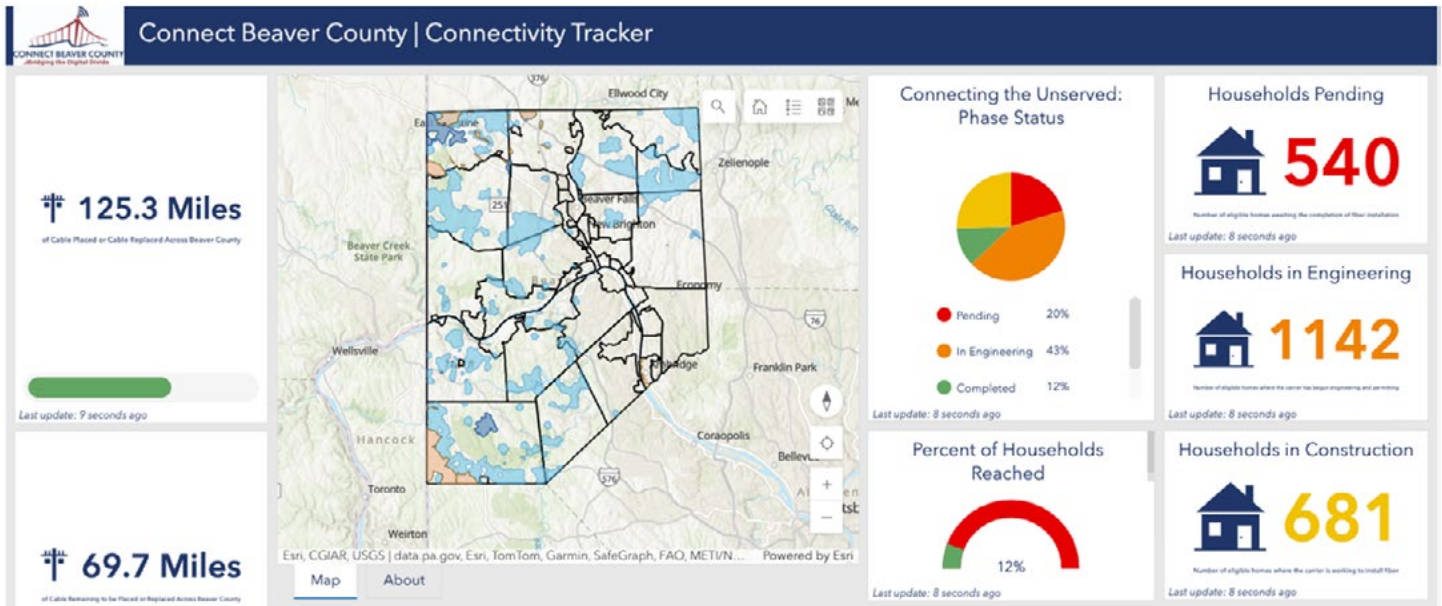


Figure 32: Depicts the status of the county's broadband projects, shown on the Connectivity Tracker as of May 21, 2024.

Source: Connect Beaver County

Beyond the infrastructure investments and service provider partnerships that were developed, the Connect Beaver County initiative also explored further barriers to internet access, such as affordability, and prepared resources to assist residents in navigating low-cost options. Further steps explored include connecting county towers with fiber and continuing analysis of unserved locations that are hard to reach – both of which reflect Beaver County's focus on planning ahead to secure modern and reliable communications infrastructure in support of our emergency services, residents, and economic opportunity.

TRANSPORTATION

ROADWAYS

The roadway network throughout Beaver County consists of over 10,000 roadway segments of local roads totaling approximately 1,500 miles of roadway, and over 1,600 segments of state-owned roads totaling approximately 730 miles in length. I-376 and I-76 are the two interstates that traverse through the County.

TRAFFIC PATTERNS

The most heavily traveled roadways, in terms of average daily trips, in Beaver County are I-376 and Route 65, each with an average daily traffic count between 8,000 and 16,000 trips. This is not an unexpected finding, as these are likely the most prominent major corridors in the County, but it does reinforce their importance in the long-term success of the County.

TRANSIT

The Beaver County Transit Authority (BCTA) is the primary provider of transit in Beaver County. Their network has four routes, two of which go to Pittsburgh and are used by commuters. The BCTA also runs a specialized Medical Assistance Transportation Program, which assists residents in getting to medical appointments.

Transit patterns changed significantly before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for Route 1 and Route 4, the commuter-oriented routes going into Pittsburgh, has shrunk by about 75%. The focus for BCTA will be realigning transit services to non-traditional commuter patterns or to serve non-work trips. As of 2024, the BCTA was in the process of conducting a formal study on service realignment.

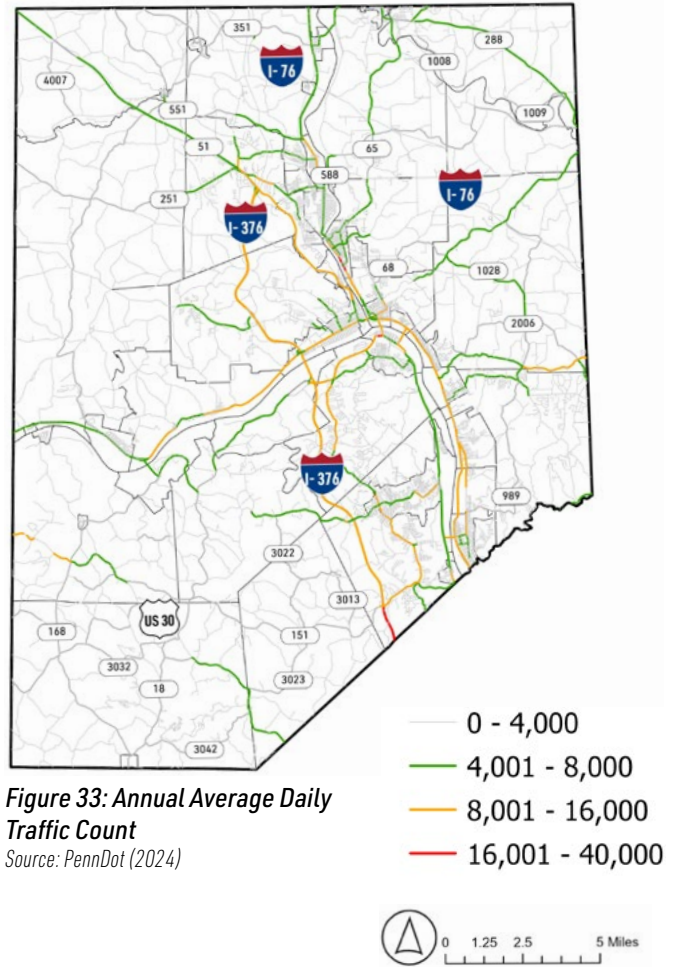


Figure 33: Annual Average Daily Traffic Count

Source: PennDot (2024)



NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT, PARKS, AND RECREATION

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL AREAS

There are approximately 12,979.6 acres of parks, recreational space, and open space within the County. The largest recreational area is Raccoon Creek State Park, which is currently the County's only state park facility. It protects a total of 7,432.3 acres, comprising over half of all recreational space. The largest county-run park is Brady's Run, which has a total of 2000 acres.

TRAILS

In addition to the state and county parks, there are also five trails part of larger networks in the region totaling 120 miles. Most notable is the North Country Trail, which spans from North Dakota to Vermont. Beaver County also has one BicyclePA Route A and the Ohio River Water Trail.

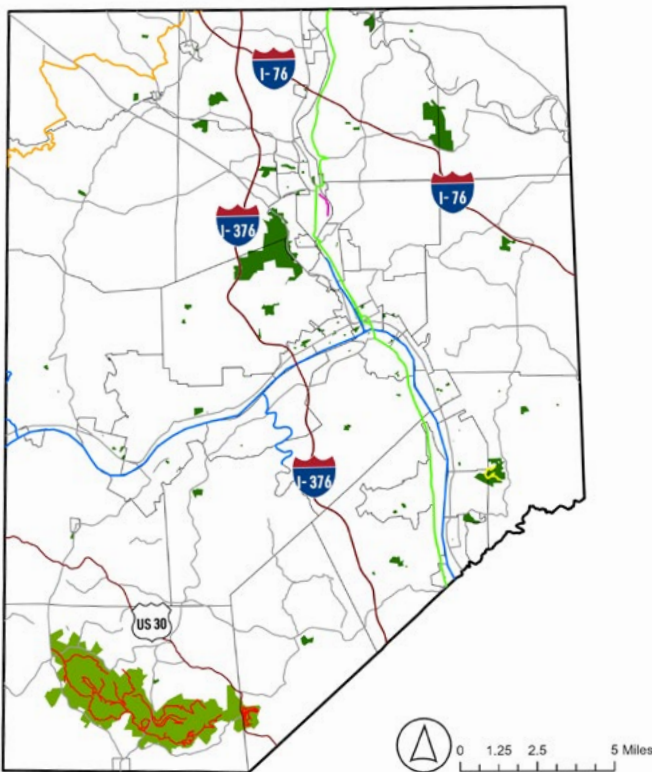


Figure 34: Park and Trails Map
Source: PA DCNR (2024)

- Beaver River Trail
- BicyclePA Route A
- Legionville Trail
- North Country Trail
- Ohio River Water Trail
- Raccoon Creek State Park Trails

Plan Interrelationship: The Plan's objective to create quality living-wage jobs discusses expanding the tourism industry by capitalizing on Beaver County's world-class public and recreational spaces.

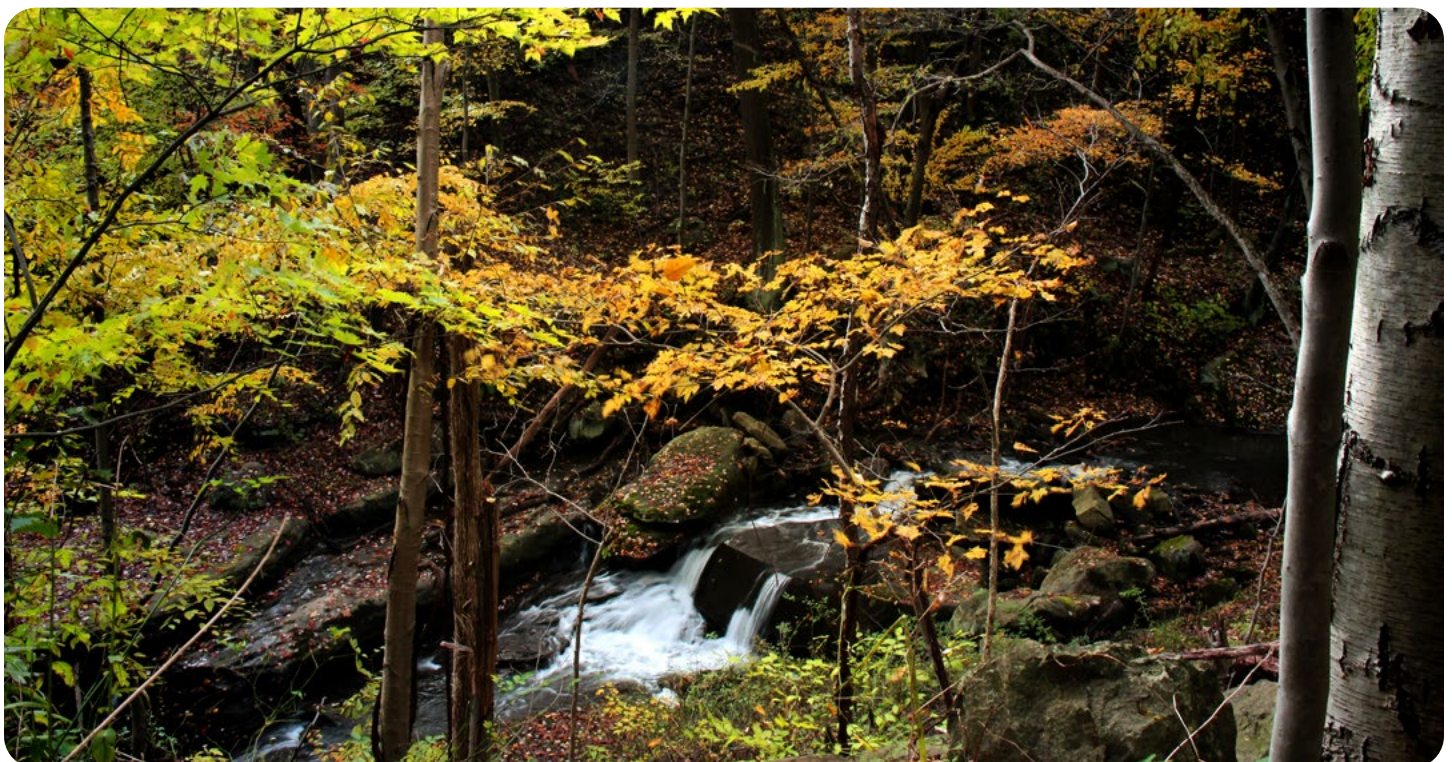
Trail Length in Miles <i>(Source: PA DCNR (2024))</i>	
Trail	Length
Beaver River Trail	0.88
Bicycle PA Route A	33.8
Legionville Trail	1.3
North Country Trail	15.7
Ohio River Water Trail	33.1
Raccoon Creek State Park Trails	35.1
Total	119.88

SOURCE WATER AND GROUNDWATER

Surface water is water that collects on the surface of the earth, in lakes, rivers, streams, oceans, seas, and wetlands. All of Beaver County's water, whether for consumption or commercial use, is drawn from the surface and comes from 111 different sources. Currently, 61% of surface water is used for thermoelectric power. The public water supply is responsible for 26% of withdrawal. This is consistent with the statewide number for water usage.

Total Withdrawals by Use Category <i>(Source: PA DEP (2022))</i>	
Use Category	Withdrawals
Thermoelectric Power (Thermo)	56,269,496
Industrial (Ind)	36,879,125
Public Water Supply (PWS)	23,162,248
Oil and Gas (O&G)	140,881
Irrigation (Irrig)	35,895
Commercial & Institutional (Comm)	11,706
Mining	0
Total	116,499,352

Source water protection is the practice of protecting a source of drinking water. Because Beaver County's drinking water comes from surface water, it must be protected. Methods of surface water protection relevant to Beaver County include riparian zone restoration, streambank stabilization, land protection, and education for local industry, businesses, and citizens on pollution prevention and source water protection. Public water suppliers are required to follow state guidelines on water quality for their customers. This means it is regularly tested and reported. These protocols and procedures will be maintained as part of Beaver County's plan to ensure a safe and reliable supply of water for its communities.



FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Beaver County has a rich history of farming. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, 539 farms are occupying 49,276 acres of land. This is an 8% decrease in farmland since 2017 and an even larger decrease of 27% since the last comprehensive plan in 2010.

The largest concentration of farmlands is found in the northeastern and southwestern portions of the County. The primary use of the current farmland is cropland at about 51%, with another 28% being designated as woodland, 12% as pastureland, and the remainder as other uses.

Agriculture brings in an average of \$3.6 million in net cash farm income. This is a 52% change since 2017. Although farm production is not a major source of revenue for the County's economy, it is well known that having rural and natural environments can be a driver for tourism, as residents from nearby metropolitan areas come to the County looking for recreational and natural environments.

As the County continues to develop or grow, residents who make up the agricultural community will face increased pressure to develop or sell their land as the desire for open land and prime development sites remains steady.

Land in Farms by Use <i>(Source: Census of Agriculture (2022))</i>		
Farmland Type	Acreage	Percentage
Cropland	25,156	51%
Woodland	6,127	28%
Pastureland	14,023	12%
Other	3,970	8%

To help preserve agricultural land, Beaver County is an active participant in the statewide Agricultural Security and Agricultural Land Preservation Programs. This program utilizes state, county, and local funds to purchase agricultural conservation easements from landowners on active farms. As of 2023, a total of 3,342.6 acres of farmland has been preserved on 32 farms through this program (US Census of Agriculture 2022).

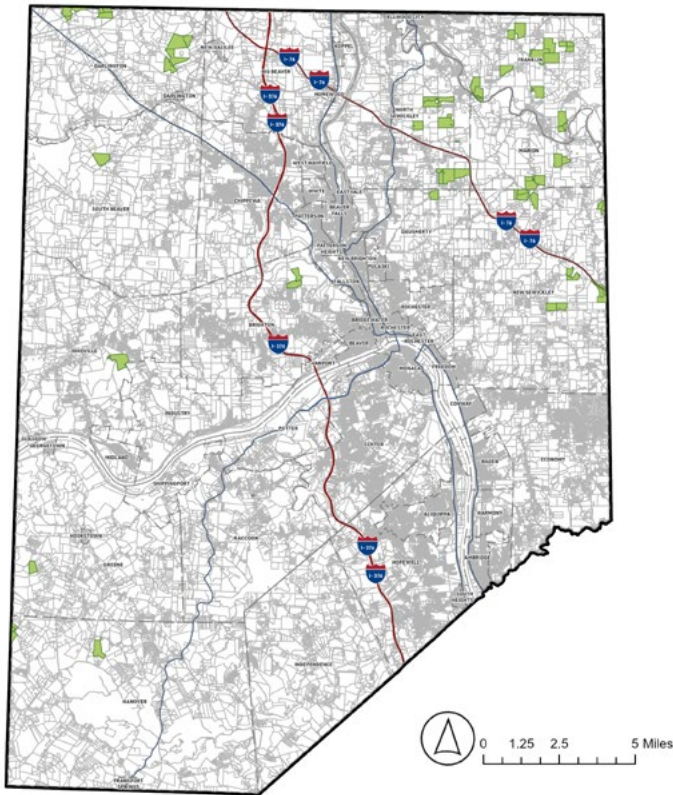


Figure 35: Agricultural Security Areas Map

Beaver County
Agricultural Security
Areas
ASAs

Beaver County also encourages farmland preservation by supporting its countywide system of farmers markets. In addition to providing an established marketplace to sell goods, the farmer's markets also provide marketing and promotional space for farms. This can increase agritourism and brand recognition for small farms.

These practices will be maintained as a method of preserving farmland in Beaver County.



HISTORIC RESOURCES AND PRESERVATION

Beaver County has a rich historical legacy both within the region and greater American history. In the 1750's, George Washington journeyed through the county as part of his exploration of Western Pennsylvania during the French and Indian War. This journey is preserved as Washington's Trail, which runs through Beaver County. The Ohio River served as a major route for enslaved African Americans to escape to freedom on the Underground Railroad. Today, a number of properties within the County can find its history entangled with the abolitionists and the beginnings of the civil rights movement. In the industrial era, Beaver County's proximity to the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area and the Beaver and Ohio Rivers made it an important economic area for mills, factories, and the associated goods, particularly limestone and coal.

The historical strength of the rivers promotes the development of the tourism industry in the region. The National Parks Service's Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, which commemorates the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1805 to 1806, also runs through Beaver County and is a popular route for outdoor and history enthusiasts alike.

There are 22 properties and districts listed on the National Registry in the county. Three additional sites are also designated as National Historic Landmarks. Beaver County works with organizations such as the Little Beaver Historical Society.

Currently, there are about 15 historical organizations in Beaver County dedicated to preserving and sharing its history. The Beaver County Genealogy & History Center serves as a resource and research hub, founded collaboratively by the Beaver County Commissioners and the Carnegie Free Library of Beaver Falls. The Beaver Area Heritage Museum offers a historic overview of the county from several time periods of development.

The Captain William Vicary House hosts a large historical archive of texts and photographs, as well as teaching classes on quilting, sewing, apple butter production, and other historical activities. In addition to physical locations, the Beaver County History Online website provides archival information and photographs, making it a valuable source for local historical research.



GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL COORDINATION

County Government

Beaver County follows a commission model of county government for both legislative and executive functions. The Board of Commissioners is responsible for governing Beaver County. It consists of three commissioners who oversee county operations and make policy decisions.

Land use, development, and zoning is controlled at the municipal level. Beaver County does not have overarching land use and development ordinances.

Office of Planning and Redevelopment

The Office of Planning and Redevelopment handles operations and administration-related planning tasks. This includes undertaking countywide plans such as this one, writing letters of consistency or support, coordinating state and federal grants for major redevelopment projects, managing redevelopment projects, managing the ongoing broadband initiative, and providing GIS analysis and assistance with the Assessment Office.

Municipal Coordination

Beaver County has two incorporated third-class cities (Aliquippa and Beaver Falls) and 52 boroughs and townships. The county's townships tend to be more rural than its boroughs. Each municipality controls their local zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance, budget, police department, and fire department.

Multi-municipal coordination is an important consideration for fiscal sustainability in Beaver County. By combining resources for assets, small municipalities can provide higher-quality amenities and higher standards of public service provision to their residents.

Additionally, many issues that are important to residents, such as transportation, economic development, and the housing market, operate across municipal boundaries. Ways that multi-municipal coordination can be increased are noted in the Action Plan later in this document.



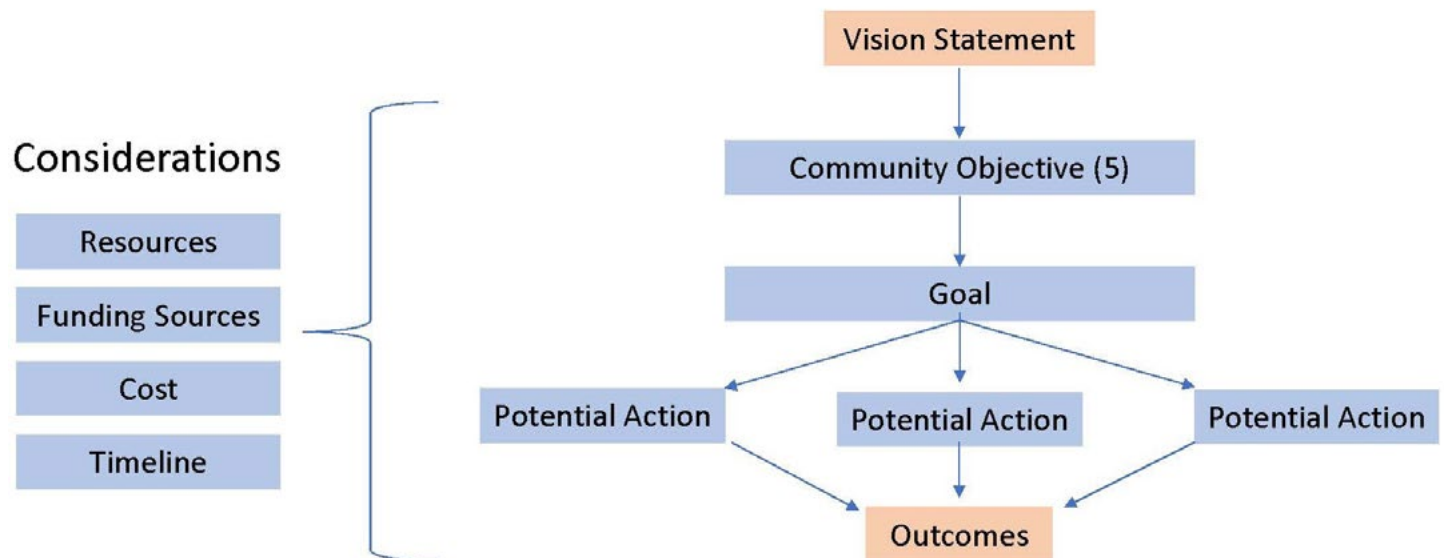
IMPLEMENTATION

The County will strive to support the implementation of *Beaver County FOCUS* goals by utilizing its Action Plan. The Action Plan is grouped by the five overarching Community objectives of *Beaver County FOCUS*:

-  Restore Blighted Communities and Vacant Main Streets
-  Provide More Community Events and Recreational Opportunities. Connect them to the Riverfront and Trail
-  Support Additional Housing Choices while Balancing Development with Conservation
-  Cultivate Living-Wage Jobs
-  Improve Public Services and Rehabilitate Declining Infrastructure



Action Plan Hierarchy



This chapter provides a complete list of the Community objectives and corresponding goals and actions to achieve them. These goals use a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goals approach to advance the comprehensive plan’s vision. The numerical order of the goals and actions does not infer implementation priority. The Action Plan also includes the following information:

Outcomes: If the key action is implemented, the result will include but is not limited to the listed outcomes.

Potential Resources: Organizations, municipalities, and other stakeholders identified as partners in implementation with the County.

Funding Sources: Potential funding sources have been identified for each key action. The inclusion of the funding source does not mean that the funds have been earmarked or secured.

Cost: the magnitude of cost for each action is a rough cost estimate. A full cost analysis will need to be conducted at the time of implementation. The magnitude of cost is indicated by one of the following:

- \$ <\$50,000
- \$\$ \$50,001 to \$250,000
- \$\$\$ \$250,001 to \$1,000,000
- \$\$\$\$ \$1,000,000 or more

The Beaver River is not commercially navigable and provides beautiful recreational opportunities and tourism opportunities. Increasing connectivity to the larger park system is a challenge this plan aims to improve.



Key sites along the riverfront should be redeveloped into productive use.



ACTION PLAN

To support the community objectives, the County has identified the following goals and established targets for community outcomes. Details for the implementation of each goal are further described in the following pages, which are prepared to enable periodic updates to track progress toward each goal over the next 10 years.



RESTORE BLIGHTED COMMUNITIES AND VACANT MAIN STREETS

Goal	Outcomes
<p>Develop a placemaking program that activates underutilized space with history-evoking murals and amenities such as lighting and benches, multimedia art, and beautification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five quality multimedia installations or amenities across five municipalities, driven by the visions of each municipality. • High-quality park or bench installations installed in at least two historic main streets. • Users feel an enhanced positive sense of place.
<p>Create a list of the top five highest-impact blighted corridors and initiate one-on-one work towards mitigation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County and municipal collaboration and map of target areas, as part of a Rivertown Blight Inventory Program. • Understanding between the County and Municipalities on capacity and ability to remediate blight. • Municipalities create a blight action plan
<p>Create a funding strategy for Beaver County's blight removal plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding strategy white paper. • County and municipal collaboration to develop a remediation report that outlines key objectives, strategies, funding sources, and blight remediation criteria.
<p>Track blighted properties with GIS. Develop targeted redevelopment areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaver County Atlas will include a GIS layer for blighted properties, provided by municipalities. • Blight conditions are recorded and made accessible to stakeholder and partners.
<p>Make it easy for prospective businesses to find main street properties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR materials are created. • Available Main Street properties database is marketed through the Realtors Association and other large stakeholders.
<p>Make Beaver County attractive to younger generations of all races, ethnicities, and walks of life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaver County identified as a quality location for relocation. • A group of organizations throughout the County will and able to assist in relocation efforts.



**PROVIDE MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.
CONNECT THEM TO THE RIVERFRONT AND TRAIL**

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Goal	Outcomes
<p>Improve signage along trail systems, and make Beaver County residents aware of it as a multi-municipal trail system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope for signage and wayfinding project. • Improved trails map.
<p>Expand Beaver County Boom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase of vendors and community involvement by 25% in the next 2 years. • Multiple new events throughout the County. • Quantifiable economic impact through tourism spending.
<p>Program the Underground Railroad Trail for year-round use, launching in February for Black History Month</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place-specific- programming.
<p>Promote Beaver County's historic resources as a recreational opportunity and placemaking initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical site promotional materials are integrated into County promotional materials. • Centralized GIS inventory of historic and recreational resources.
<p>Develop a funding plan for parks and recreation, including long-term state and federal grant asks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County and municipalities collaborate on a funding strategy and grants outline for recreational initiatives.
<p>Improve connections along the Beaver River and around Bridgewater Crossing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties map for potential properties. • Implementation plan for multi-modal and accessibility improvements along the river parks.
<p>Make Beaver County attractive to younger generations of all races, ethnicities, and walks of life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaver County identified as a quality location for resettlement. • A group of organizations throughout the County will and able to assist in resettlement efforts.



SUPPORT ADDITIONAL HOUSING CHOICES WHILE BALANCING DEVELOPMENT WITH CONSERVATION

Goal	Outcomes
Support the implementation of land use and zoning policies that allow for “missing middle” housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public support for “missing middle” housing policies.• Guidelines or toolkit regulations that allow for “missing middle” housing types and/or form-based zoning.
Offer on-demand assistance to municipalities to assist them with land use reform when requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A dedicated level of support from the County Planning Commission to support municipalities on land use regulations.• Template Agricultural Residential District and SALS0 language.
Reach out to mixed-use property owners and determine why apartments above businesses remain vacant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stakeholder focus groups.• Key on-demand technical assistance for municipal zoning and Uniform Construction Code (UCC) navigation and education• Marketing strategies for the County’s main streets.
Provide guidance to municipalities on reasonable accommodation programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect residents, contractors, community groups, and municipalities to home maintenance workshops and accessibility programs.• Grant assistance referrals and letters of support for housing accessibility programs.





CULTIVATE LIVING-WAGE JOBS

Goal	Outcomes
<p>Look for ways to create new low-rent incubator spaces for small local businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 20 property owners directly engaged with and pitched the short-term lease concept. • An expanded resource library within the BCED for small-businesses and new business owners. • Fill long term vacant storefronts with at least 10 new small-business tenants throughout the County's main streets. • Work to identify a small business incubator program.
<p>Market Beaver County's outstanding athletic facilities and competitive advantage in youth sports tourism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business plan with a focus on the scheduling of facilities and marketing of youth sports activities. • Additional information in the Beaver County Experience Guide about the county's recreational facilities. • The county's recreational facilities listed within the PA Sports venues listing as well as other out-of-state sporting organizations. • A softball or baseball tournament is hosted in Brady's Run or another Beaver County facility.
<p>Partner with regional stakeholders on a commercial development strategy for the I-376 airport corridor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-376 Corridor Market Analysis and Strategic Plan. • Support targeted Zoning changes identified within the County's municipalities as needed.
<p>Connect Beaver County's farmers to larger markets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the agricultural community to develop a countywide business strategy for farmers. • Half of Beaver County's rural municipalities establish "agritourism" as a permitted land use. • By 2030, 75% of Beaver County's farmers have access to high-speed internet.
<p>Connect Beaver County's brownfield sites to Pennsylvania's State Economic Development Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with municipalities to inventory developable sites. • Develop a strategic plan for brownfield remediation and redevelopment. • Collaborate with property owners to redevelop several sites. • Advance several sites for state grant applications, potentially in collaboration with the private sector.



IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND REHABILITATE DECLINING INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal	Outcomes
Expand access to broadband and cellular connectivity throughout the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Broadband and cellular access is available for 100% of serviceable households in Beaver County.
Encourage voluntary multi-municipal collaboration when practical, including police, fire, snow plowing, and EMS departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The County will provide resources, when appropriate and requested by municipalities, to improve the outcomes of multi-municipal collaborations.Hold one multi-municipal roundtable per year to explore how county can support collaboration.Volunteerism and recruitment efforts increase.Increase recruitment in fire and EMS.
Incentivize municipalities to use public buildings more efficiently, combining departments when appropriate. Encourage consolidation rather than new construction as a best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Two buildings are put on the tax rolls for non-public use.
Improve perception of Beaver County's school districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhance knowledge and perception of schools with real estate agents.Develop a highlight video for schools that is promoted on posters hanging around the county.Increase exposure of schools to the private sector and investors in the region.
Encourage non-member municipalities to join the Regional Council of Governments. Encourage the COG to promote the efficiency of public services and provide on-demand technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Heightened municipal involvement in the COG and County cooperation.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR MUNICIPALITIES

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code requires county planning commissions to publish advisory guidelines to promote general consistency with the adopted county comprehensive plan. Below is a list of guidelines for municipalities to promote consistency with *Beaver County FOCUS*:

1. Municipal plans and land use regulations should consider the recommendations for housing, transportation, community development, natural resources and recreation, and infrastructure and utilities in *Beaver County FOCUS*. Municipalities are specifically encouraged to evaluate land use regulations concerning:

A. Housing use types and location of permitted housing types.

B. Business use types and location of permitted business uses.

C. SALDO requirements for sidewalks and water/sewer infrastructure in Commercial Corridors, Core Communities, Development Centers, Hamlets, Residential Areas, and other types of development outlined on the *Beaver County FOCUS* Character Areas Map.

2. Municipal plans and land use regulations should consider the land uses and development patterns of adjacent municipalities, using the *Beaver County FOCUS* Character Areas Map to ensure consistency and appropriateness of development.

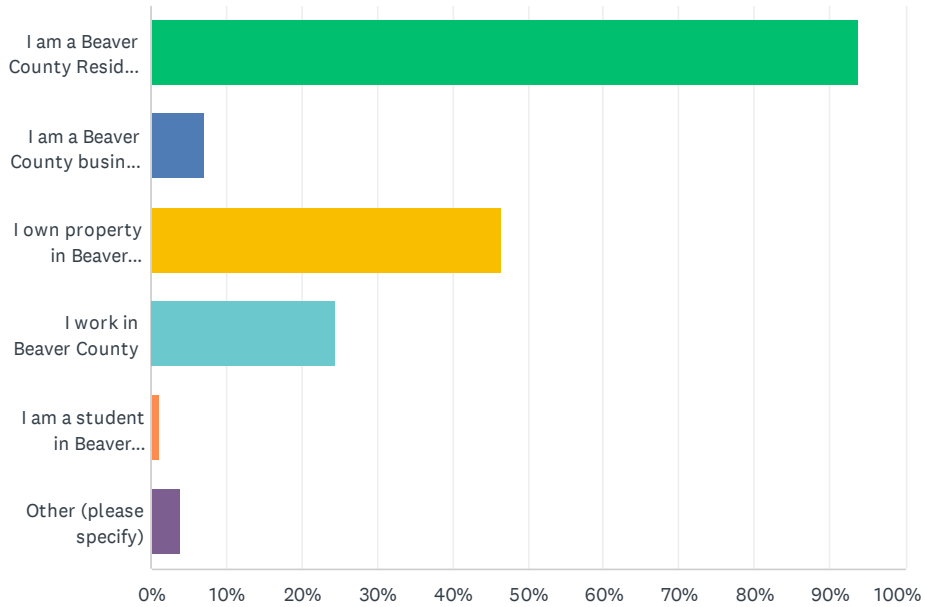
3. Municipal infrastructure projects should align with the character areas outlined in the *Beaver County FOCUS* Character Areas Map.



APPENDIX B: SURVEY INFORMATION

Q1 Which statement(s) best describes you? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 957 Skipped: 4



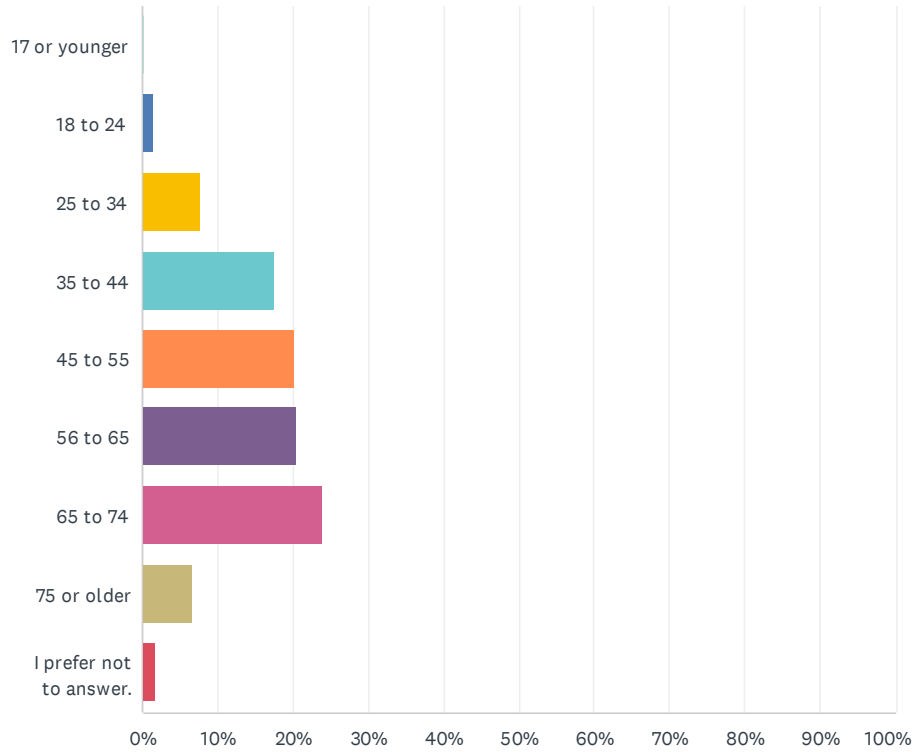
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
I am a Beaver County Resident	93.73%	897
I am a Beaver County business owner	7.11%	68
I own property in Beaver County	46.39%	444
I work in Beaver County	24.45%	234
I am a student in Beaver County	1.04%	10
Other (please specify)	3.76%	36
Total Respondents: 957		

Q2 What community do you live in?

Answered: 927 Skipped: 34

Q3 How old are you?

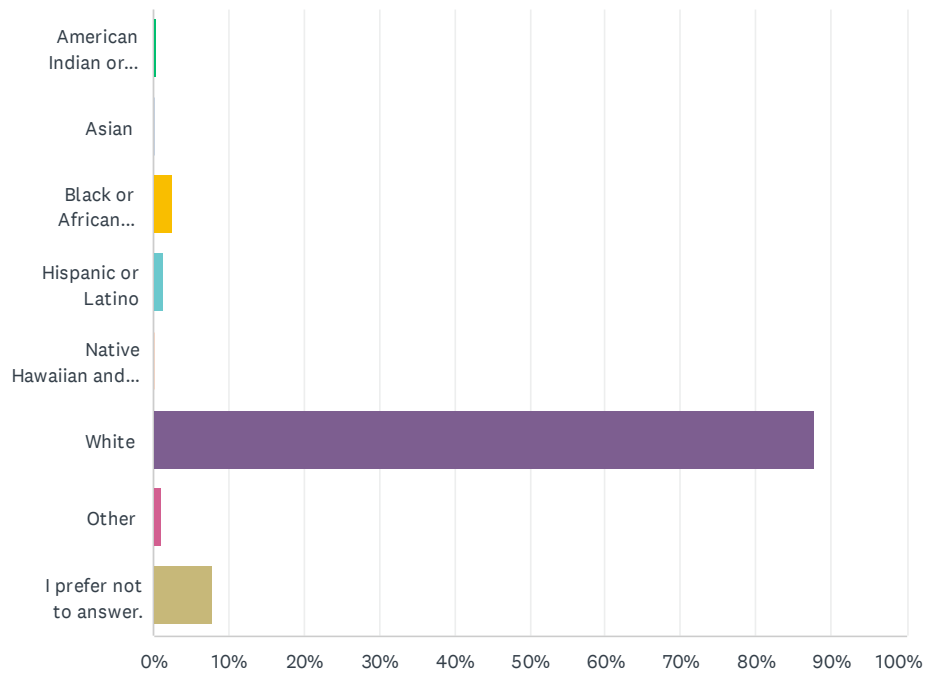
Answered: 954 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 or younger	0.21%	2
18 to 24	1.57%	15
25 to 34	7.76%	74
35 to 44	17.51%	167
45 to 55	20.23%	193
56 to 65	20.55%	196
65 to 74	23.79%	227
75 or older	6.60%	63
I prefer not to answer.	1.78%	17
TOTAL		954

Q4 What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

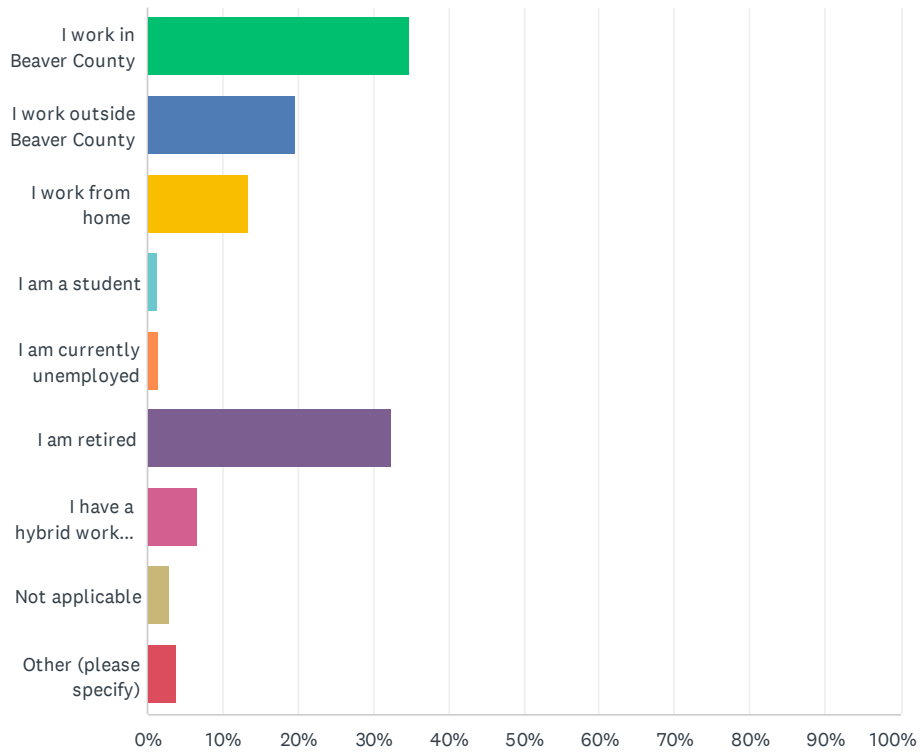
Answered: 950 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.42%	4
Asian	0.32%	3
Black or African American	2.63%	25
Hispanic or Latino	1.37%	13
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.21%	2
White	87.79%	834
Other	1.05%	10
I prefer not to answer.	7.79%	74
Total Respondents: 950		

Q5 Where do you work? (Select all that apply)

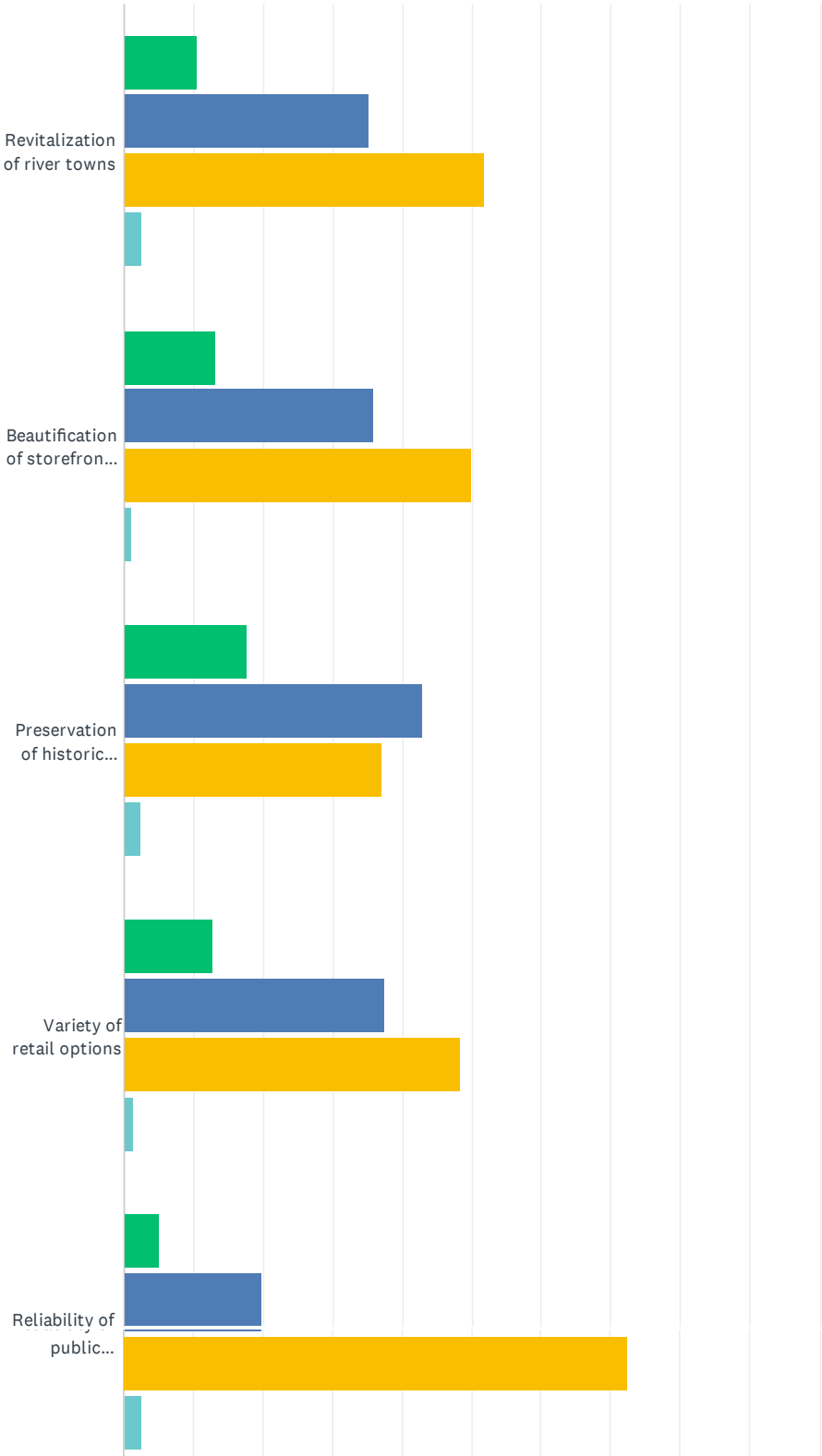
Answered: 953 Skipped: 8

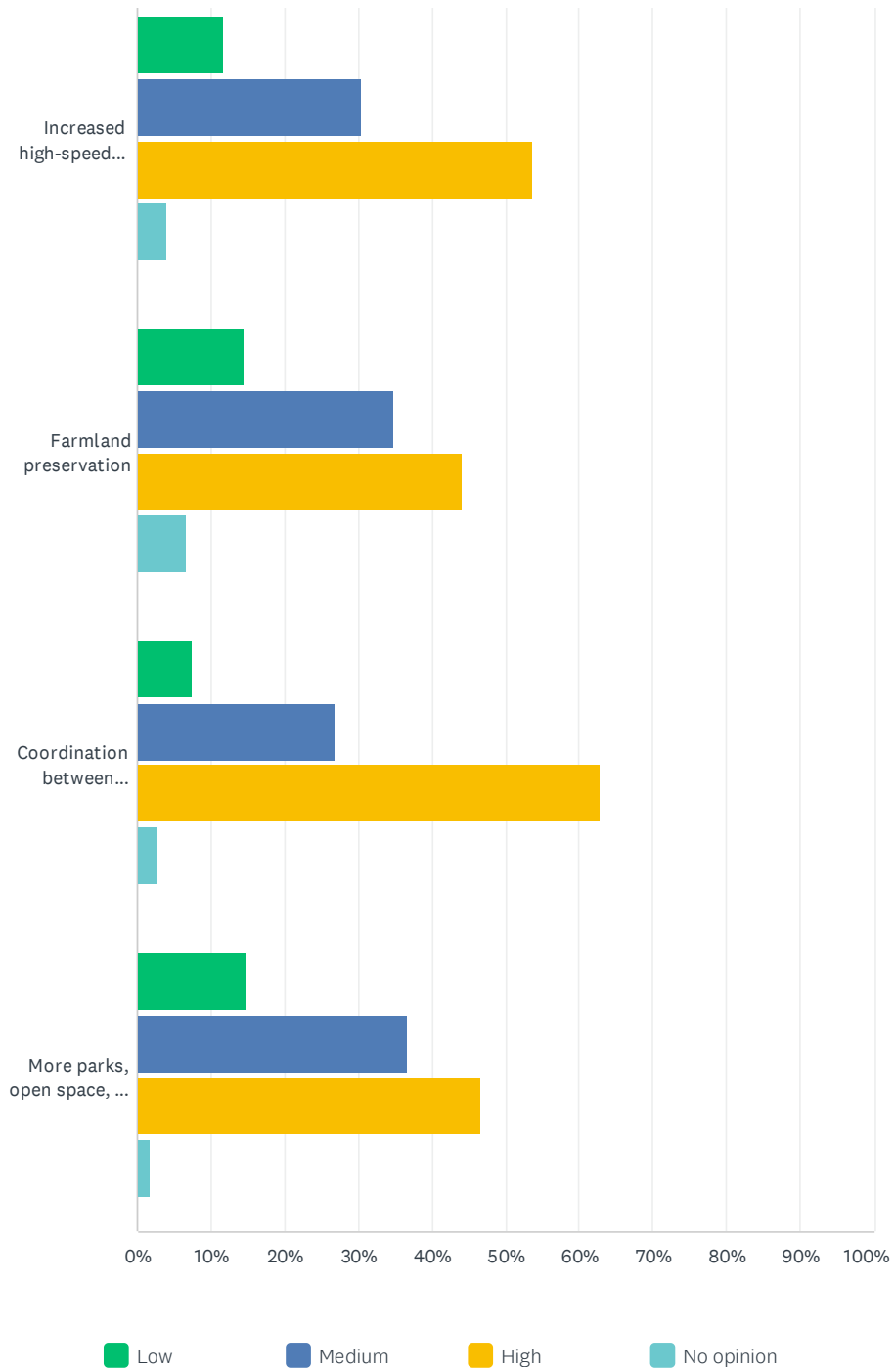


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I work in Beaver County	34.73%	331
I work outside Beaver County	19.52%	186
I work from home	13.33%	127
I am a student	1.26%	12
I am currently unemployed	1.57%	15
I am retired	32.32%	308
I have a hybrid work schedule (i.e., remote and in office)	6.61%	63
Not applicable	3.04%	29
Other (please specify)	3.78%	36
Total Respondents: 953		

Q6 Infrastructure and Development: How would you prioritize the following activities related to infrastructure and development in Beaver County?

Answered: 843 Skipped: 118

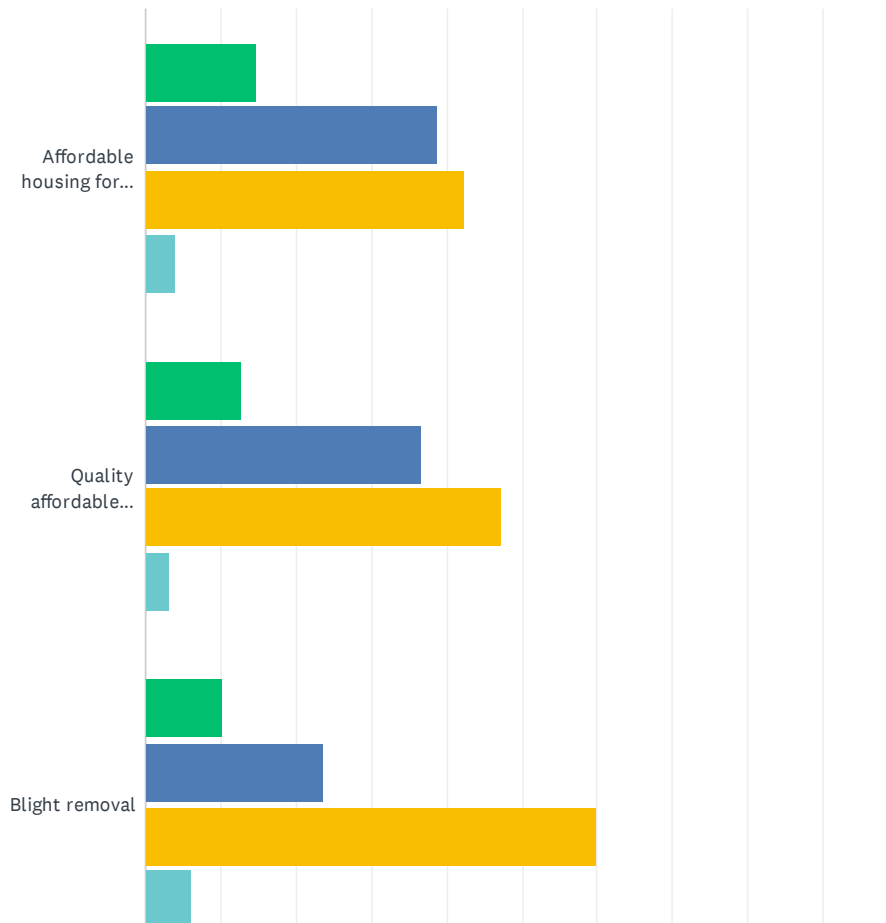


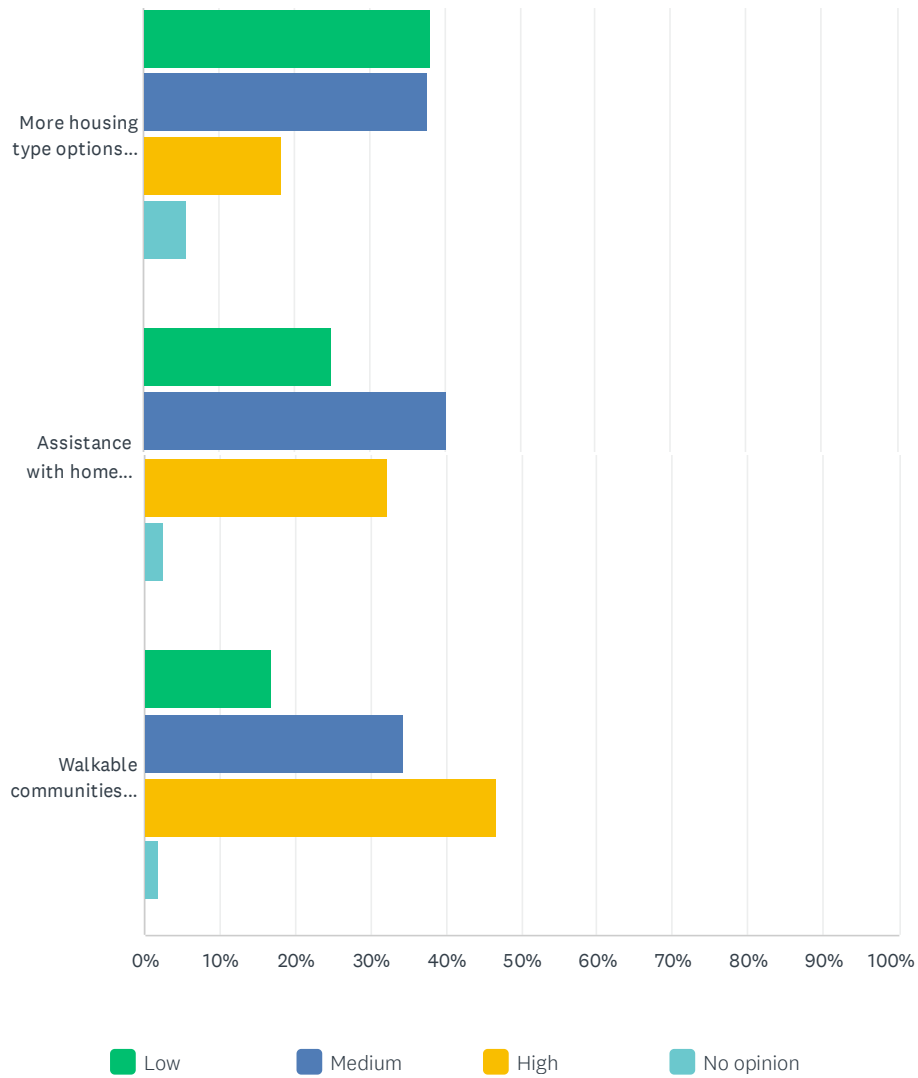


	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Revitalization of river towns	10.54% 88	35.09% 293	51.74% 432	2.63% 22	835	2.46
Beautification of storefronts, towns, and landscapes	13.21% 111	35.83% 301	49.88% 419	1.07% 9	840	2.39
Preservation of historic buildings and resources	17.72% 149	42.81% 360	37.10% 312	2.38% 20	841	2.24
Variety of retail options	12.74% 107	37.62% 316	48.45% 407	1.19% 10	840	2.38
Reliability of public utilities	5.14% 43	19.83% 166	72.52% 607	2.51% 21	837	2.72
Increased high-speed broadband access	11.81% 99	30.43% 255	53.70% 450	4.06% 34	838	2.50
Farmland preservation	14.42% 121	34.80% 292	44.10% 370	6.67% 56	839	2.43
Coordination between municipalities and County on future growth and development	7.38% 62	26.90% 226	62.98% 529	2.74% 23	840	2.61
More parks, open space, and recreational opportunities	14.80% 124	36.75% 308	46.66% 391	1.79% 15	838	2.35

Q7 Housing: How would you prioritize the following activities related to housing in Beaver County?

Answered: 843 Skipped: 118

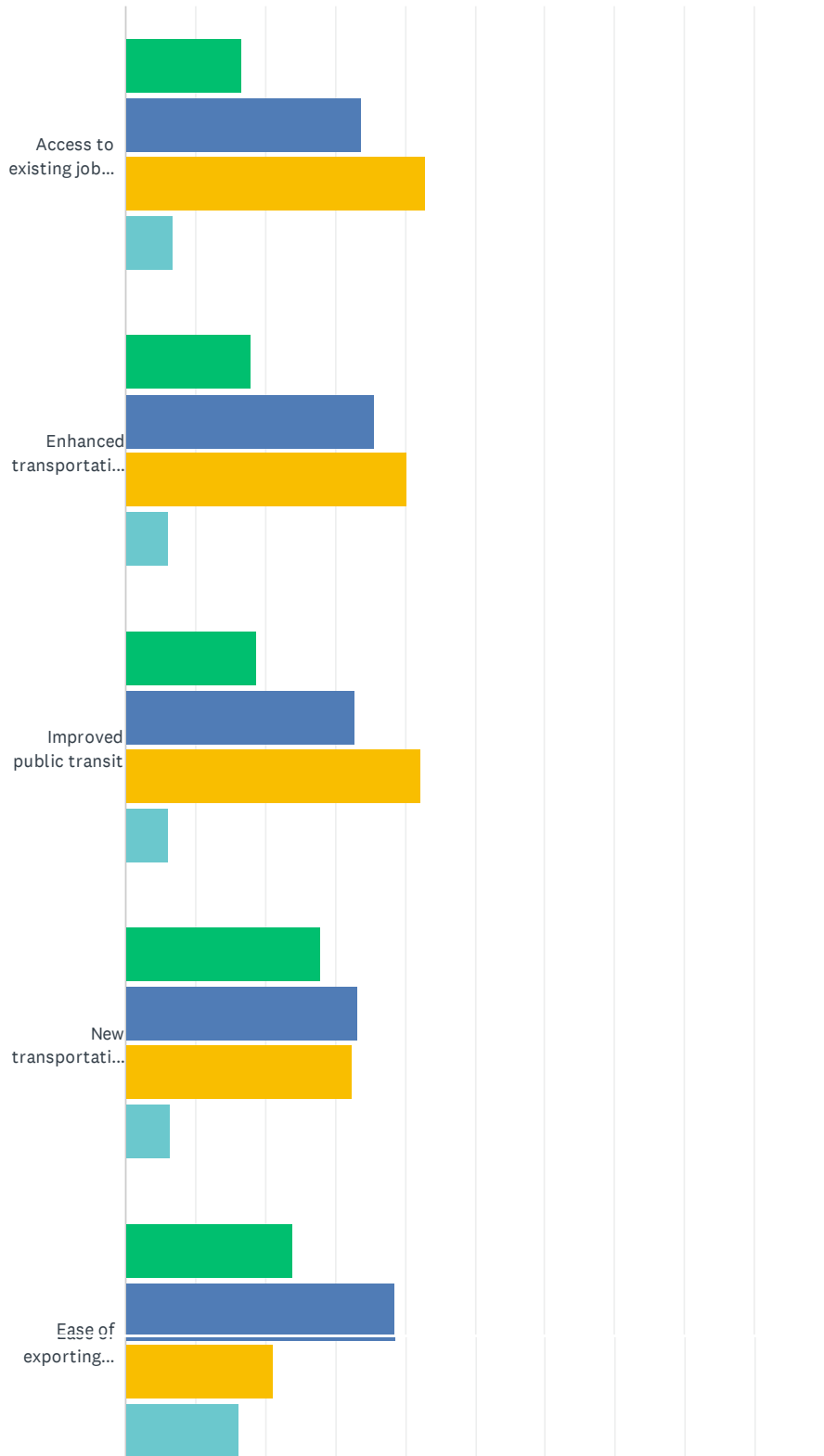


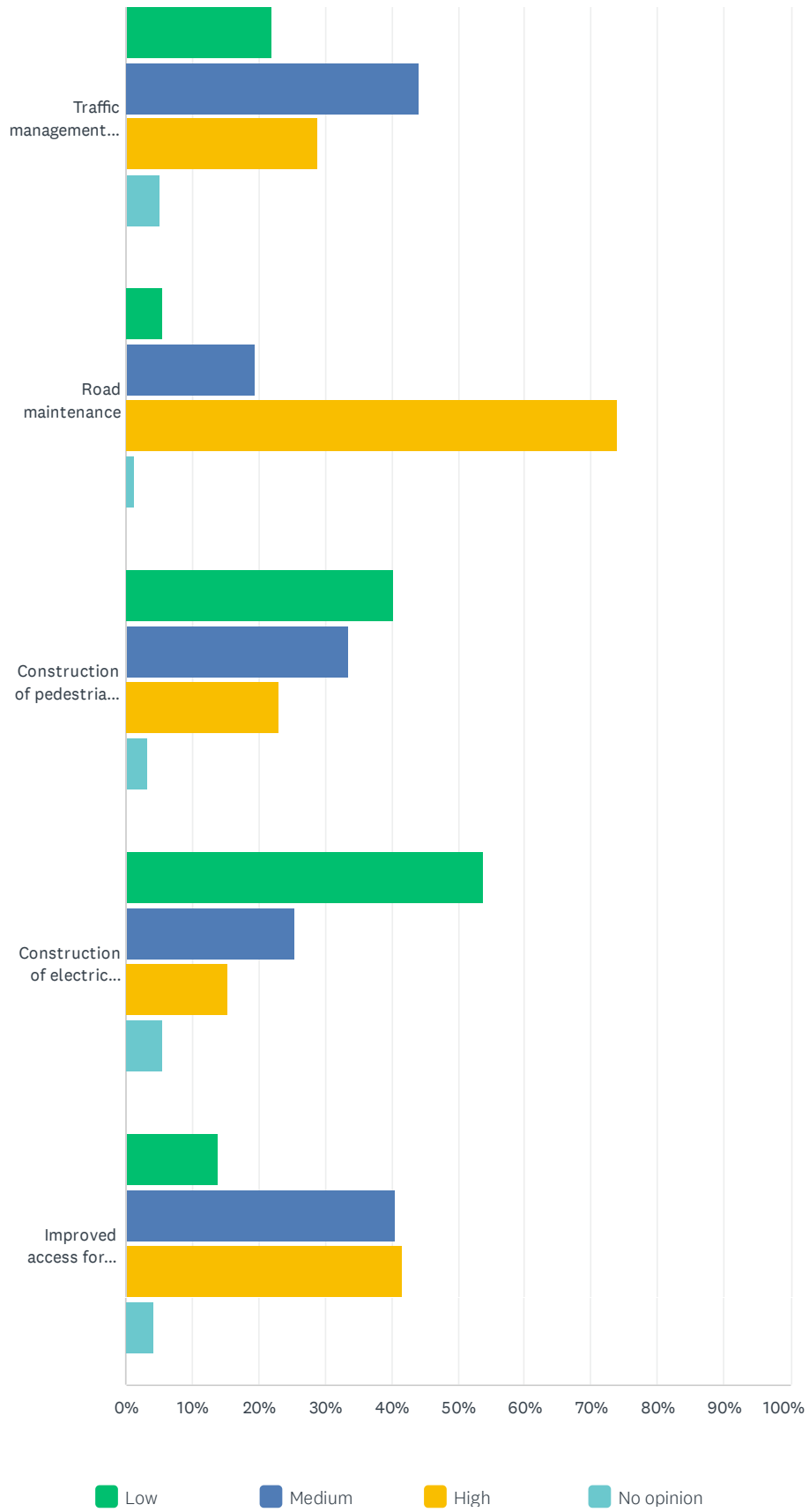


	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Affordable housing for first-time homebuyers	14.73% 124	38.84% 327	42.40% 357	4.04% 34	842	2.36
Quality affordable housing across our communities	12.86% 108	36.67% 308	47.38% 398	3.10% 26	840	2.41
Blight removal	10.25% 86	23.72% 199	59.83% 502	6.20% 52	839	2.62
More housing type options (duplexes, apartments, condos, etc.)	38.10% 320	37.74% 317	18.33% 154	5.83% 49	840	1.92
Assistance with home repair, maintenance, and accessibility upgrade costs	25.03% 210	40.29% 338	32.18% 270	2.50% 21	839	2.12
Walkable communities that are connected to local services, amenities, and recreation	16.95% 142	34.37% 288	46.78% 392	1.91% 16	838	2.34

Q8 Transportation: How would you prioritize the following activities related to transportation and mobility in Beaver County?

Answered: 842 Skipped: 119

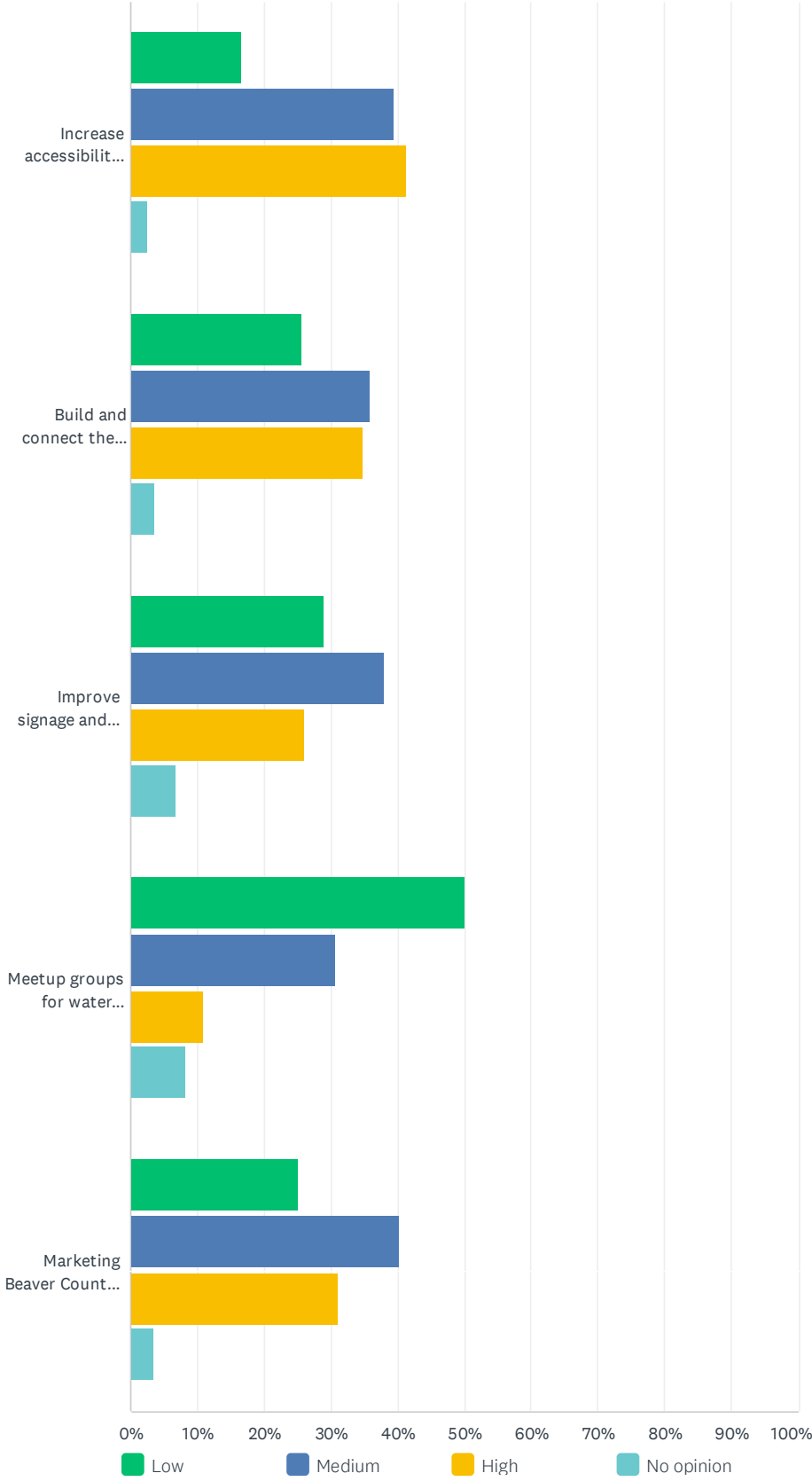




	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Access to existing job centers like Pittsburgh and Cranberry	16.55% 139	33.69% 283	42.86% 360	6.90% 58	840	2.40
Enhanced transportation infrastructure to new or emerging job centers	17.90% 150	35.68% 299	40.21% 337	6.21% 52	838	2.35
Improved public transit	18.78% 157	32.89% 275	42.22% 353	6.10% 51	836	2.36
New transportation options, like Uber/Lyft or rail	27.96% 234	33.21% 278	32.38% 271	6.45% 54	837	2.17
Ease of exporting agricultural goods and products	23.95% 200	38.56% 322	21.20% 177	16.29% 136	835	2.30
Traffic management (i.e., stop signs, signage, etc.)	22.02% 185	44.05% 370	28.81% 242	5.12% 43	840	2.17
Road maintenance	5.52% 46	19.30% 161	73.98% 617	1.20% 10	834	2.71
Construction of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure	40.31% 337	33.49% 280	22.97% 192	3.23% 27	836	1.89
Construction of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations	53.70% 450	25.42% 213	15.27% 128	5.61% 47	838	1.73
Improved access for people with disabilities	13.77% 115	40.48% 338	41.56% 347	4.19% 35	835	2.36

Q9 Environment and Recreation: How would you prioritize the following activities related to the environment and recreation in Beaver County?

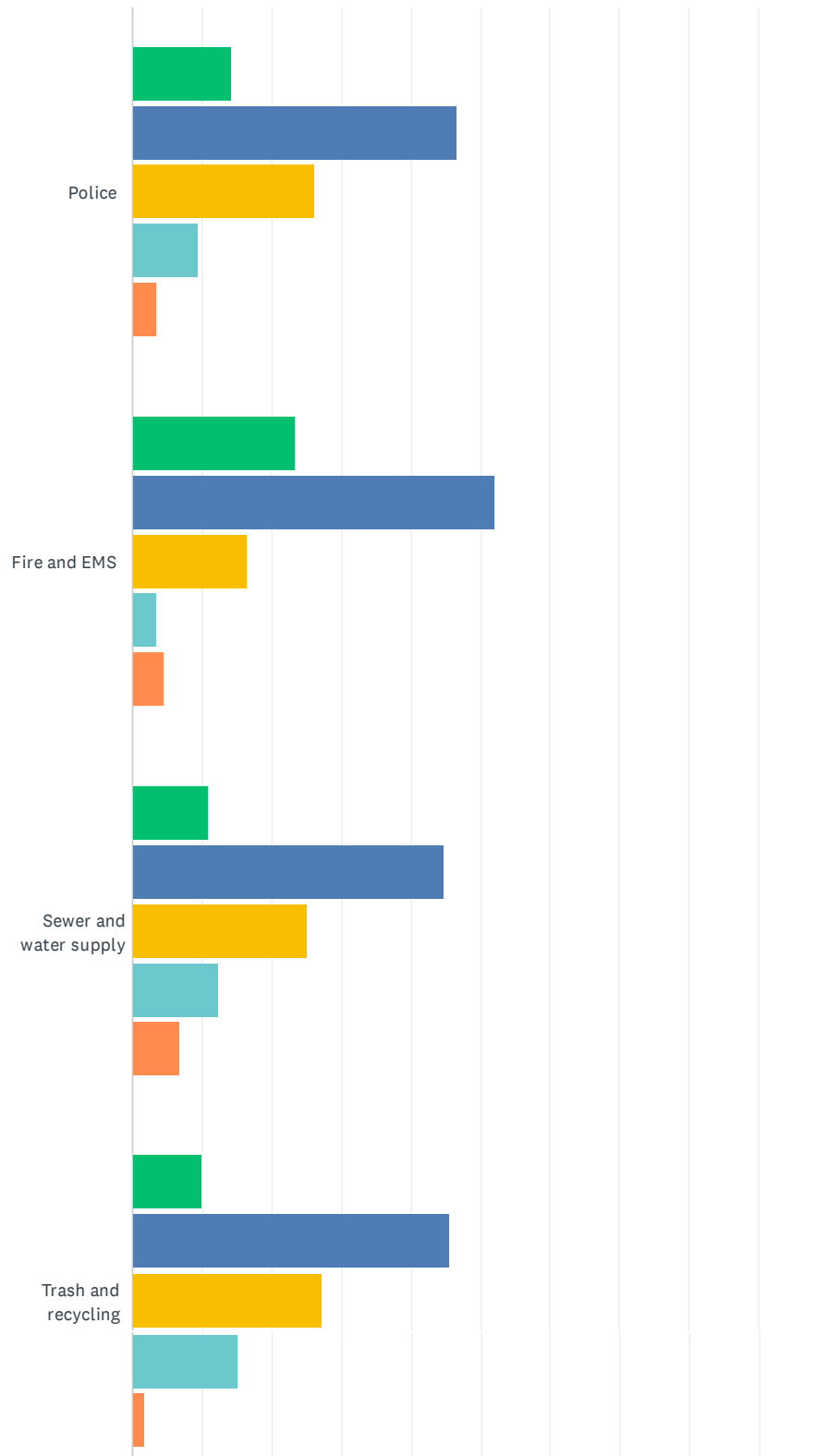
Answered: 839 Skipped: 122

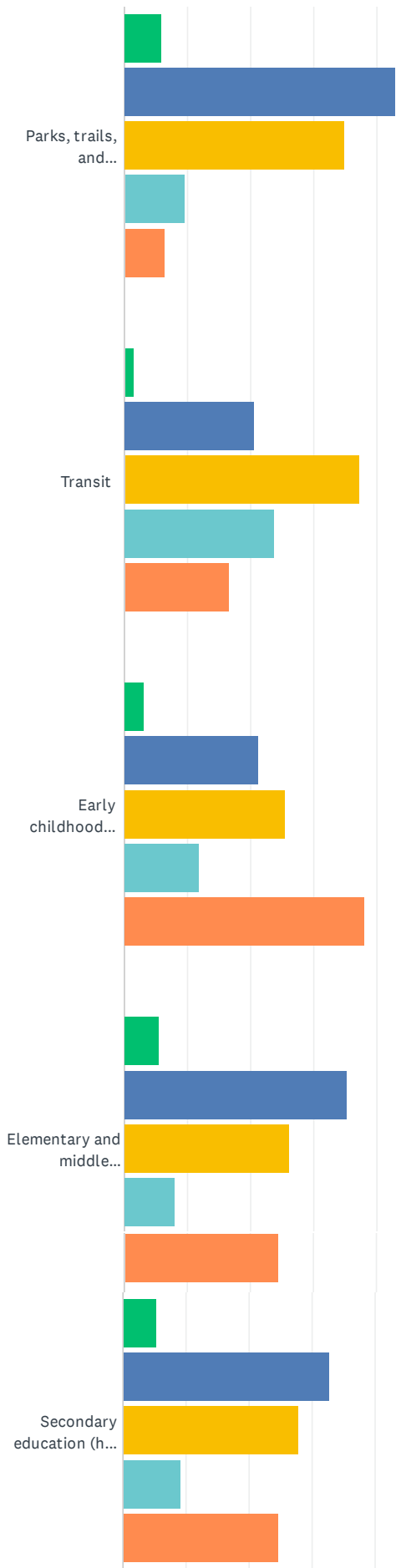


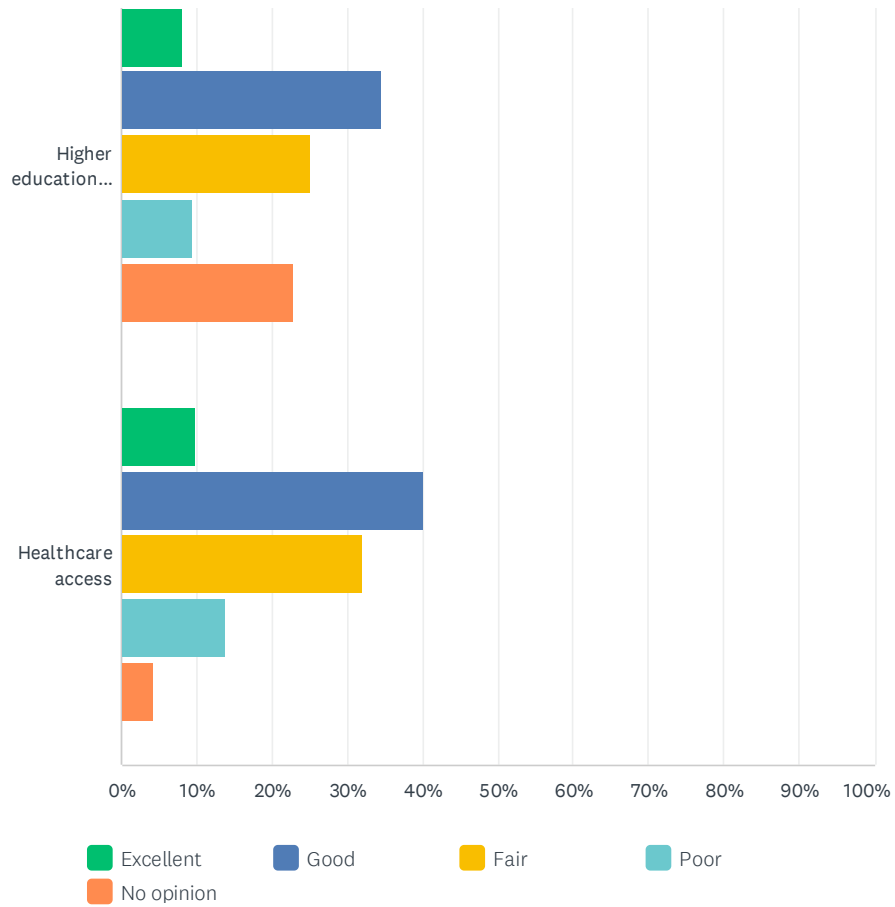
	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Increase accessibility to Beaver County's rivers and riverfront activities	16.65% 139	39.52% 330	41.32% 345	2.51% 21	835	2.30
Build and connect the trail network	25.60% 214	35.89% 300	34.81% 291	3.71% 31	836	2.17
Improve signage and connections on the existing trail network	29.03% 243	37.99% 318	26.05% 218	6.93% 58	837	2.11
Meetup groups for water activities	50.06% 418	30.78% 257	10.78% 90	8.38% 70	835	1.77
Marketing Beaver County's recreational opportunities, parks, rivers, and natural areas	25.21% 211	40.26% 337	31.18% 261	3.35% 28	837	2.13

Q10 Please assess how the existing services meet the needs of Beaver County:

Answered: 842 Skipped: 119



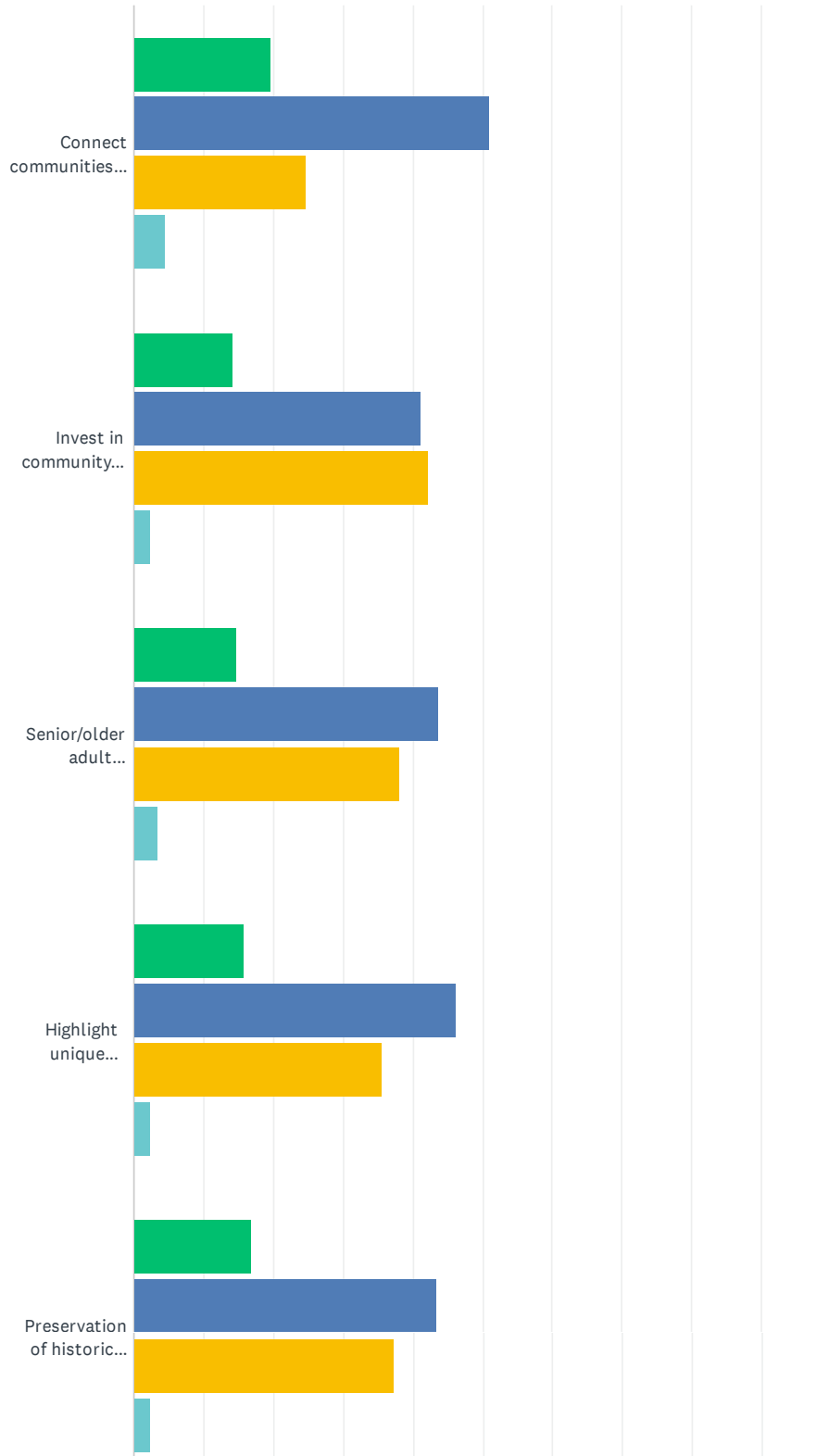


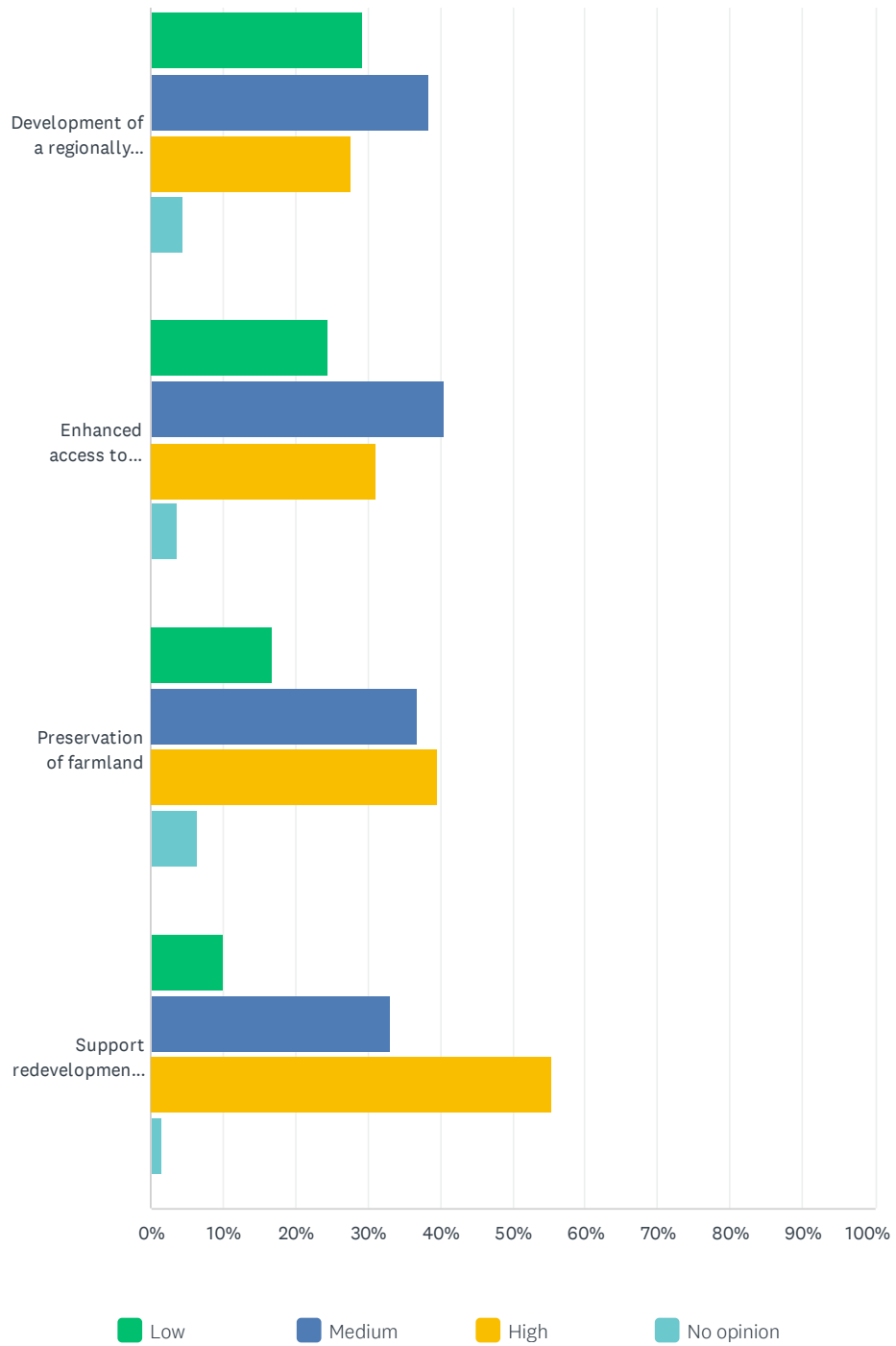


	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Police	14.34% 119	46.75% 388	26.14% 217	9.40% 78	3.37% 28	830	2.41
Fire and EMS	23.52% 194	52.12% 430	16.36% 135	3.52% 29	4.48% 37	825	2.13
Sewer and water supply	10.94% 91	44.71% 372	25.12% 209	12.38% 103	6.85% 57	832	2.59
Trash and recycling	10.05% 84	45.69% 382	27.27% 228	15.19% 127	1.79% 15	836	2.53
Parks, trails, and recreational facilities	5.88% 49	43.05% 359	35.01% 292	9.59% 80	6.47% 54	834	2.68
Transit	1.56% 13	20.62% 172	37.41% 312	23.86% 199	16.55% 138	834	3.33
Early childhood education services (daycare, pre-K)	3.12% 26	21.22% 177	25.54% 213	11.99% 100	38.13% 318	834	3.61
Elementary and middle education	5.64% 47	35.29% 294	26.29% 219	8.16% 68	24.61% 205	833	3.11
Secondary education (high school)	5.27% 44	32.93% 275	27.90% 233	9.22% 77	24.67% 206	835	3.15
Higher education (colleges and universities)	8.02% 67	34.61% 289	25.15% 210	9.34% 78	22.87% 191	835	3.04
Healthcare access	9.77% 81	40.05% 332	31.97% 265	13.87% 115	4.34% 36	829	2.63

Q11 Community Development: How would you prioritize the following community development activities in Beaver County?

Answered: 792 Skipped: 169

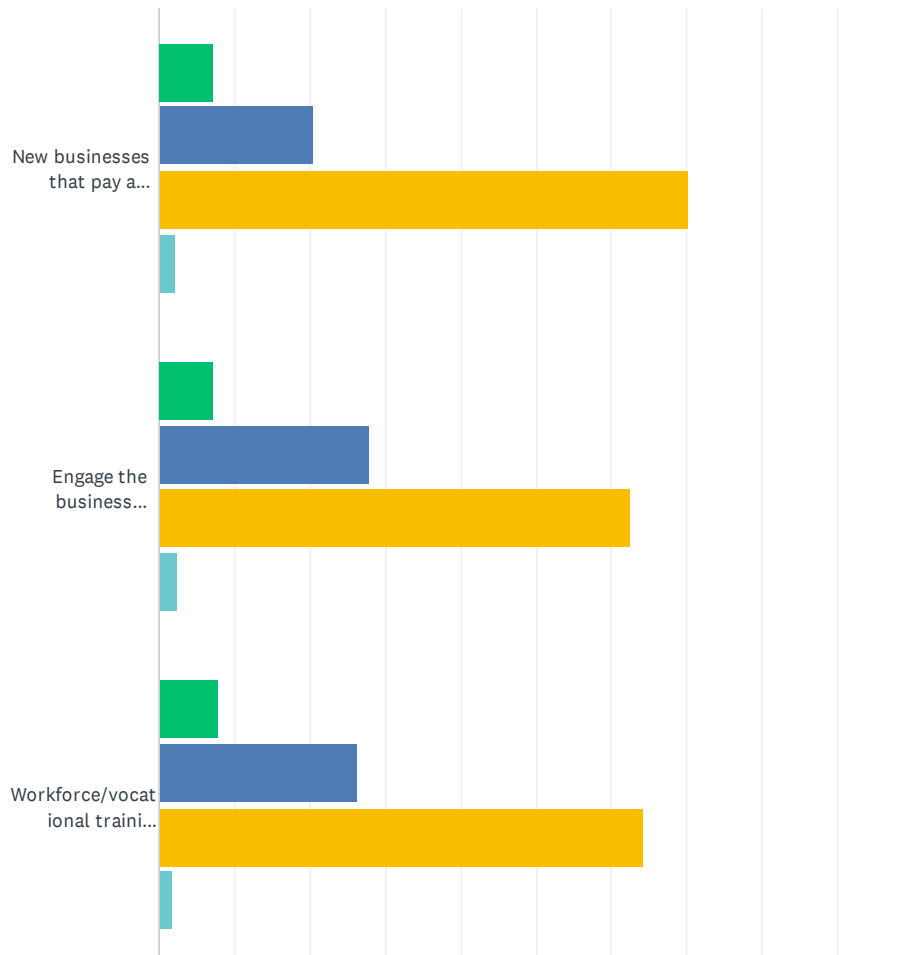


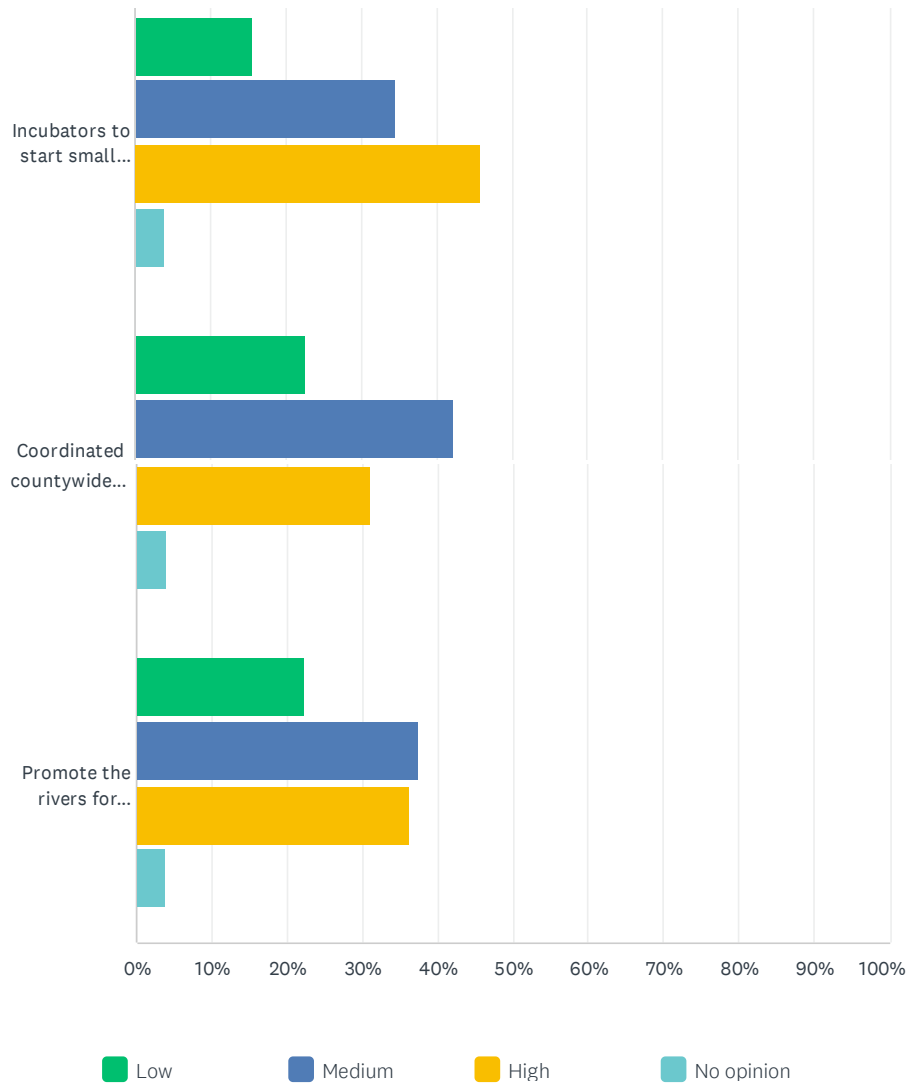


	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Connect communities through regional activities, events, and programming	19.70% 155	50.95% 401	24.78% 195	4.57% 36	787	2.14
Invest in community facilities (libraries, museums, historic resources, etc.)	14.34% 113	41.12% 324	42.26% 333	2.28% 18	788	2.32
Senior/older adult facilities and programming	14.68% 116	43.67% 345	38.23% 302	3.42% 27	790	2.30
Highlight unique cultural, recreational, and entertainment opportunities in Beaver County's local communities	15.86% 125	46.19% 364	35.66% 281	2.28% 18	788	2.24
Preservation of historic assets, structures, and resources	16.77% 132	43.46% 342	37.36% 294	2.41% 19	787	2.25
Development of a regionally connected trail system	29.31% 231	38.45% 303	27.79% 219	4.44% 35	788	2.07
Enhanced access to Beaver County's rivers	24.62% 194	40.61% 320	31.22% 246	3.55% 28	788	2.14
Preservation of farmland	16.94% 133	36.94% 290	39.62% 311	6.50% 51	785	2.36
Support redevelopment and revitalization of Main Streets	10.03% 79	32.99% 260	55.46% 437	1.52% 12	788	2.48

Q12 Economic Development: How would you prioritize the following economic development activities in Beaver County?

Answered: 790 Skipped: 171

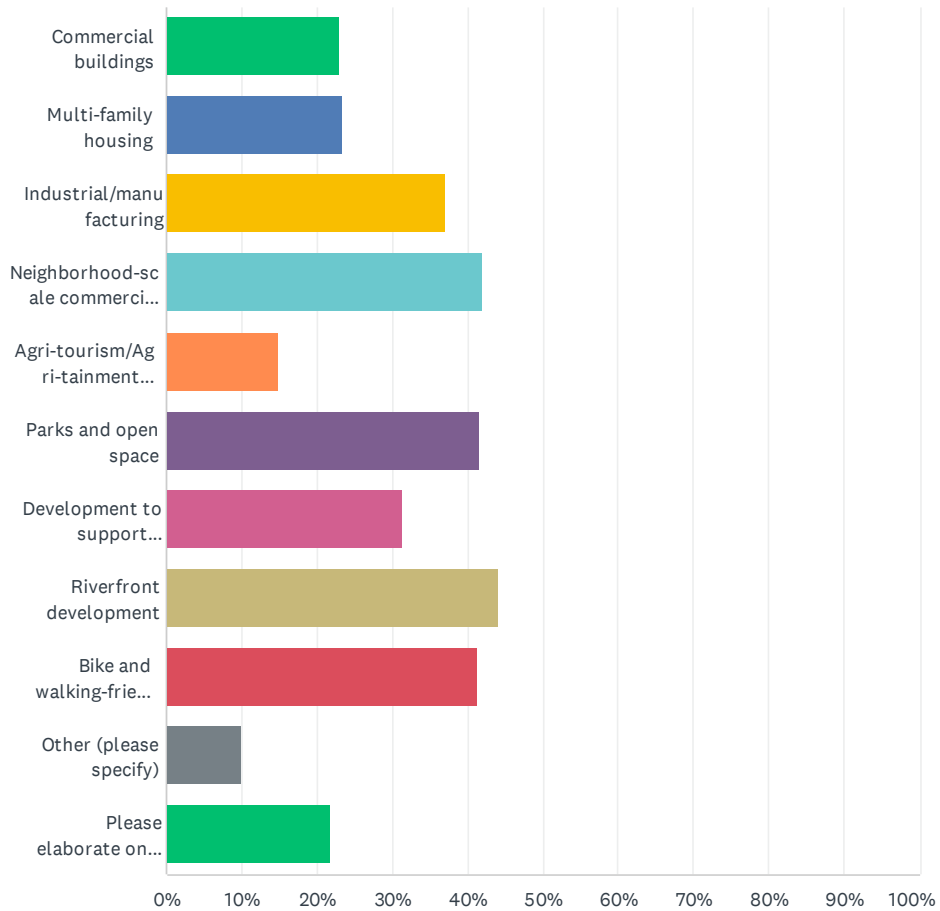




	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	NO OPINION	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
New businesses that pay a family-sustaining wage	7.22% 57	20.53% 162	70.22% 554	2.03% 16	789	2.67
Engage the business community to evaluate opportunities to grow, expand, and retain new and existing businesses	7.25% 57	27.86% 219	62.47% 491	2.42% 19	786	2.60
Workforce/vocational training, like trade schools and apprenticeships	7.88% 62	26.18% 206	64.17% 505	1.78% 14	787	2.60
Incubators to start small businesses with potential grants for startup costs	15.65% 123	34.61% 272	45.80% 360	3.94% 31	786	2.38
Coordinated countywide marketing efforts and tourism activities	22.55% 177	42.17% 331	31.21% 245	4.08% 32	785	2.17
Promote the rivers for development and tourism	22.42% 176	37.45% 294	36.31% 285	3.82% 30	785	2.22

Q13 In the next 10 years, what three types of development would you like to see in Beaver County?

Answered: 774 Skipped: 187



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Commercial buildings	23.13% 179
Multi-family housing	23.39% 181
Industrial/manufacturing	37.08% 287
Neighborhood-scale commercial (ex: dry cleaners, convenience stores)	41.99% 325
Agri-tourism/Agri-tainment opportunities	14.99% 116
Parks and open space	41.60% 322
Development to support expanded trail connectivity and recreational opportunities	31.40% 243
Riverfront development	44.06% 341
Bike and walking-friendly trails and streets	41.34% 320
Other (please specify)	10.08% 78
Please elaborate on your responses if you like.	21.71% 168
Total Respondents: 774	

Q14 Was there anything you wanted to share that wasn't asked in the survey?

Answered: 248 Skipped: 713

Q15 If you would like to receive updates on the Beaver County Comprehensive Plan, please enter your email below to receive future updates:

Answered: 253 Skipped: 708



APPENDIX C: REFERENCES

The following sources were references in this plan:

Beaver County. Beaver County Comprehensive Plan. (2010). (<https://www.beavercountypa.gov/departments/planning-commission/annual-reports-comprehensive-plans>)

Beaver County. Beaver County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. (2018). (<https://www.beavercountypa.gov/departments/planning-commission/annual-reports-comprehensive-plans>)

Beaver County. Connect Beaver County: Bridging the Digital Divide. (<https://connectbeavercounty.com/>)

PennDOT. Annual Reports. (2016-2021) (<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/p3forpa/Pages/Annual-Reports.aspx>)

PennDOT. One Map. (2021) (<https://gis.penndot.gov/OneMap/>)

PennDOT. Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool (PCIT). (2022) (<https://crashinfo.penndot.pa.gov/PCIT/welcome.html>)

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. PA Water Use Summary. (2024) (<https://www.dep.pa.gov/DataandTools/Reports/Pages/Water.aspx>)

Pennsylvania Spatial Data Access (PASDA). Open GIS Data for Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. (2024) (<https://www.pasda.psu.edu/>)

Beaver County. Municipal Solid Waste Management Plan (2015). (<https://www.beavercountypa.gov/getmedia/507a2907-8f0b-4631-8cec-9db8f3faf63e/2015-Solid-Waste-Plan.pdf>)





**BEAVER
COUNTY**

FOCUS

BEAVER COUNTY FOCUS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
