



**NORTHERN PENNSYLVANIA
TRI-COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

MCKEAN POTTER
CAMERON

**CAMERON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
DRAFT 2019 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

OCTOBER 2019

Resolution

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Introduction to the Plan

Northern Pennsylvania Tri-County Comprehensive Plan

The *Northern Pennsylvania Tri-County Comprehensive Plan* serves as the official policy guide for short-term and long-term decision making relative to priority investments in Cameron County over the next 10-years. At its core purpose, a county comprehensive plan is intended to answer the question, “what is our game plan moving forward?”. Throughout the planning process, comprehensive plans allow public officials, staff, and residents to take a step back and look at the big picture to form a strategic plan for county initiatives and investments.

Unique to this Plan, Cameron County partnered with McKean and Potter Counties to facilitate the planning process. This approach has provided one unified strategy for the region supported with county-specific actions. The three plans were developed in 2018 and 2019 with extensive public outreach and engagement. Based on public input, five prominent areas of focus, or “issues”, were identified as regional priorities and validated throughout plan development. The issues are stated as goals with action items for each county in the individual plans and are not listed in any priority order.

Northern Pennsylvania Tri-County Comprehensive Plan Goals

- **Workforce Development**
Regional expansion of local, statewide, and national employee recruitment efforts to attract talent to the region.
- **Economic Base**
Business attraction and retention to provide high-quality jobs and living wages for the region’s residents.
- **Communities**
Invest in communities to enhance quality of life for residents, employers, and visitors.
- **Infrastructure/Environment**
Deliver reliable, cost-effective infrastructure to support a high quality of life for residents, employers, and visitors.
- **Public Health**
Ensure access to healthcare, including mental health and substance abuse services.

Recognition of Existing County Efforts

The action items as presented are based on public input as well as input from businesses and community and economic development partners received during the planning process. The actions are areas all stakeholders believe the County can and should continue to improve its existing efforts. As one stakeholder framed it,

“If we simply “continue to do” what we have done in the past, nothing will ever change. We need new radical ideas.”

For each of the five goal statements, the action items will require a fresh look and likely revisions to existing policies, programs, and efforts; many identified in Cameron County’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan. This should not be disconcerting, but rather encouraging as the community recognizes the importance of the work performed by the county and its partners.

Planning Horizon

On a final note, the Comprehensive Plan is long-range in nature. The action items need to be prioritized, focusing on a few at a time and addressing the remaining items as capacity allows. The Plan is also a living document; it should be updated each year to reflect measurable progress and refine approaches as may be warranted by ongoing trends and conditions.



Planning Process

The *Northern Pennsylvania Tri-County Comprehensive Plan* was funded by the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (North Central) with matching funds provided by Cameron County, McKean County, and Potter County. The regional approach to the planning process, under the leadership of North Central, provided synergy, substantial cost efficiencies for the three counties, and reduced the overall investment of taxpayer dollars. In total, Cameron County's financial contribution to the plan was 11,500. The overall Plan, for all three counties, totaled \$115,000.

The consultant team, Michael Baker International and Vernon Land Use, was engaged under an existing contract with the North Central. The project team guided the overall planning effort, which was based on robust public engagement, to understand the desires of the community and visions for the future. Under the direction of North Central and the three counties, the planning process also reflected the Commonwealth's guidance on implementable comprehensive plans, focusing on fewer, but more relevant community issues.

Steering Committee

Through the leadership of the county planning departments, a diverse Steering Committee was convened to help guide the comprehensive planning process. The 44-member Steering Committee consisted of county residents and a diverse range of community stakeholders and community leaders to provide a strong grassroots foundation and champions for the plan's successful implementation. At the onset of the planning process, the Steering Committee was critical in identifying relevant issues affecting the Northern Pennsylvania region and supporting public outreach efforts. In addition, the Steering Committee helped analyze the public input received and was responsible for finalizing the list of goals that serve as guiding framework for this plan.

Focus Groups

The project team facilitated focus groups early in the planning process to gather initial public input regarding the top issues in the region as well as in each of the three counties. In total, 75 individuals participated in four focus groups presenting a broad range of interests. The list of attendees invited to participate was developed in close coordination with Cameron, McKean, and Potter County as well as the Steering Committee. Focus group participants included concerned citizens, farmers, tourism



professionals, education professionals including school superintendents, resource extraction representatives, municipal officials, and healthcare professionals, among others. Through the four focus groups, attendees identified specific opportunities and challenges in Cameron, McKean and Potter Counties and provided local knowledge and insight surrounding socioeconomic and industry trends.

Online Public Survey

An online survey was made available for a one-month period to provide residents and interested stakeholders the opportunity to give detailed input for the *Northern Pennsylvania Tri-County Comprehensive Plan*. The survey was developed to highlight and expand upon the top issues discussed during the Steering Committee meetings and focus groups, and was widely advertised through social media, news media, Solomon’s Word, e-mail, and through the counties and Steering Committee. In addition, a simple random mailing sample of 1,500 property owners was administered to ensure the public-at-large was represented in the survey. In total, 2,374 public participants completed the survey across the three counties, offering valuable insight on a number of important topics and issues.

Interviews with Major Employers

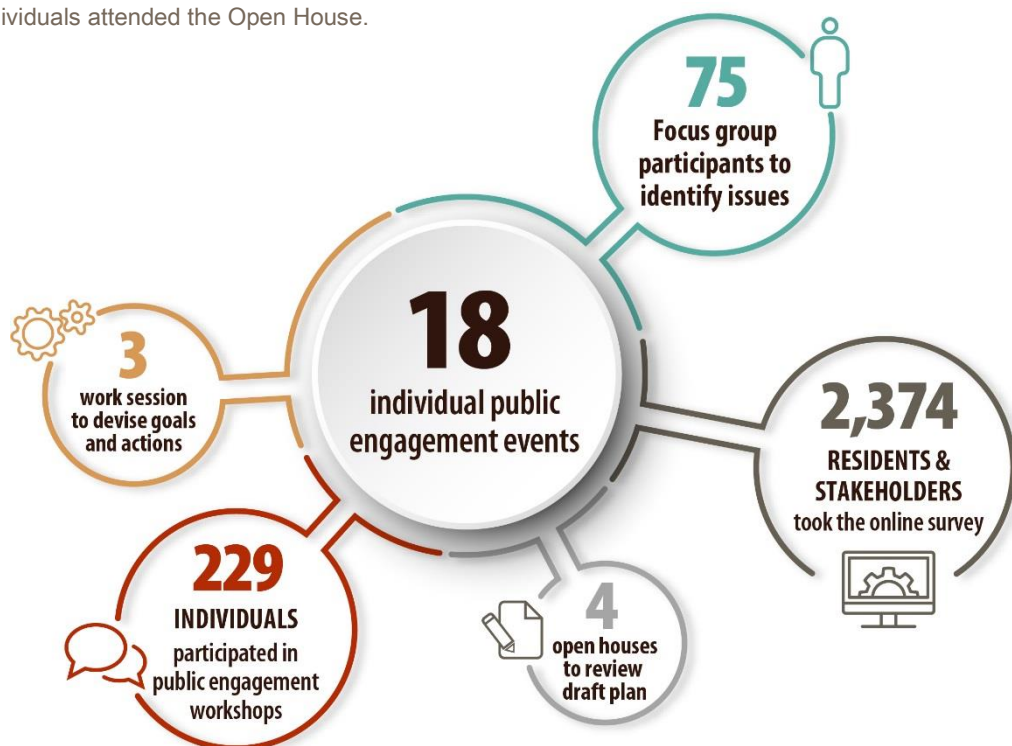
Concurrently with the online survey, the consultant team conducted one-on-one interviews with major employers in the region. In total, 13 companies participated representing manufacturing, healthcare, resource extraction, and telecommunications. The purpose of the interviews was to gather insights and observations about the region’s top employers and their recommendations to improve the region’s business climate. Many of the employer concerns echoed input received via the Steering Committee and focus groups specifically related to workforce availability, infrastructure, and telecommunications. Businesses contacted for the interviews included private sector employers in each of the three counties identified by county.

Public Open House

A public open house was held on June 27, 2019 at Port Allegany High School and was widely advertised and promoted via social media, news media, Solomon’s Word, email, and through the counties and Steering Committee. The event was held to:

- Inform the public about the comprehensive plan and offer an opportunity to provide feedback, ideas, and suggestions directly to the project team;
- Showcase existing condition findings to the public and describe historical and projected trends in the region;
- Share the public input findings obtained through the Steering Committee, focus groups, business interviews, and online survey; and
- Facilitate meaningful dialogue with members of the public, property owners, and stakeholders to generate consensus on the goal statements and initial strategies that were developed based on public involvement.

In total, 57 individuals attended the Open House.



An Overview of Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties

The Tri-County region includes Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties located in north central Pennsylvania. Together, the three counties are home to 63,758 residents and 19,605 jobs.

Encompassing 1.5 million acres of land, Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties are located within the heart of the PAWilds, one of the best outdoor recreation destinations in North America. The region is largely rural and forested, has a rich history and unique small-town culture, and offers breathtaking beauty and fresh air. Among other visitor attractions, the three counties and the larger PAWilds region is known internationally for its:

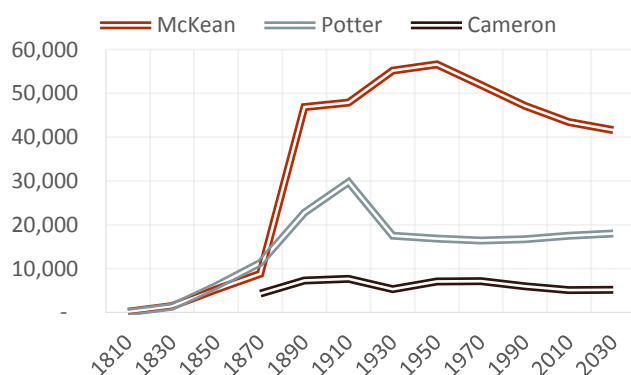
- Dark Skies
- Allegheny National Forest
- Elk Scenic Drive
- Kinzua Skywalk

Population Trends

Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties were generally first settled in the 19th century to make use of the local natural resources of timber and fossil fuels, both of which continue to play a key role in the local economy. The expansion of the railroad and discovery of oil in the late 1800s and early 1900s resulted in strong population growth. Throughout the 1900s, all three counties experienced slight shifts in population, growing during certain periods and contracting in others.

Since approximately 1980, however, the population of the three counties has experienced a decline, decreasing from 75,035 residents in 1980 to an estimated 63,758 residents in 2018. Potter County’s population has remained the most stable, while McKean County has lost the most residents (a loss of 8,610 residents between 1980 and 2018). McKean County is forecasted to lose additional residents through 2040, while Cameron and Potter County are forecasted to remain relatively stable.

Historical and Projected Population Shifts, 1810-2030



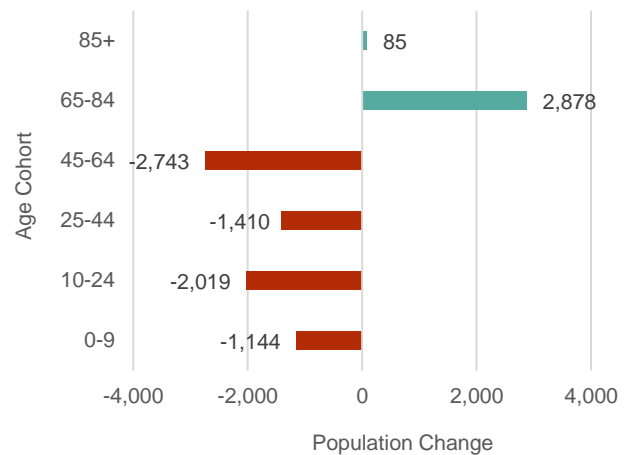
Tri-County Population, 1960-2040

Year	Population	% Growth
1960 (Actual)	78,586	
1970 (Actual)	75,406	-4.0%
1980 (Actual)	75,035	-0.5%
1990 (Actual)	69,761	-7.0%
2000 (Actual)	69,990	0.3%
2010 (Actual)	65,992	-5.7%
2020 (Estimated)	65,460	-0.8%
2030 (Projected)	64,690	-1.2%
2040 (Projected)	63,240	-2.2%

Age Distribution

Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties have an aging population and, when compared to the Commonwealth, is one of the oldest regions in the state. Cameron County has the oldest population of the three counties with a median age of 50.6.

Tri-County Absolute Population Change by Age Cohort, 2010 to 2023



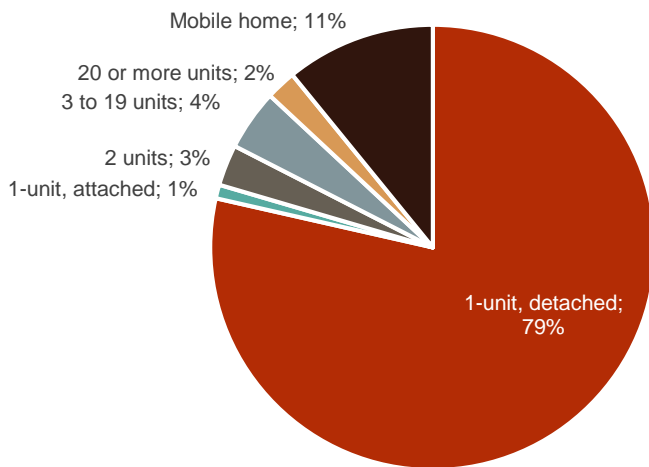
These types of age distribution trends are occurring across the country as America’s baby boomer generation is in retirement or reaching retirement age. However, this trend is more pronounced in the rural Tri-County region and will have implications for housing, workforce development, transportation, and overall economic resiliency.

Housing Trends

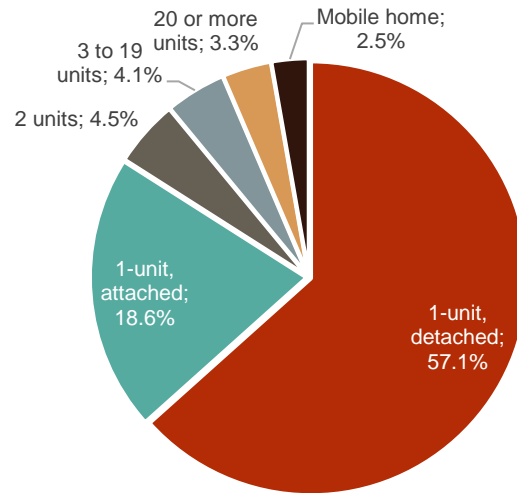
Housing Overview

Based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates (2018), the primary housing stock in the Tri-County region is 1-unit detached homes. The second most common housing type is mobile homes. This differs from statewide averages as many communities have an abundance of 1-unit and multi-unit attached homes, which are less common in Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties.

Tri-County Housing Units by Structure Type, 2018



Pennsylvania Housing Units by Structure Type, 2018



Housing Units by Value

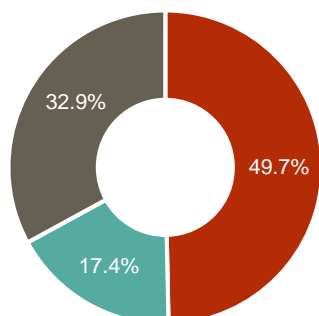
Based on 2018 data, the majority of home values (70% of all homes) in the Tri-County region range between \$50,000 and \$150,000, with an average home value of \$133,509. Potter County has the highest median home value in the Tri-County region at \$114,844. In comparison, the median 2018 home value in Pennsylvania was \$185,452.

Housing Type

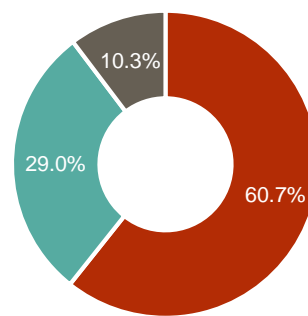
Based on 2018 data, there are an estimated 38,563 housing units in the three counties. Of these, 49.7% are owner occupied, 17.4% are rented, and 32.9% are vacant. Vacant housing is most prevalent in Cameron County and Potter County, which currently have a vacancy rate of 52.5% and 45.3%, respectively. McKean County's vacancy rate is 21.2%. Statewide, 10.3% of housing units are vacant.

Unique to the region, a large percentage of vacant housing in the three counties is due to camps. Data from the 2010 census (most recently available) shows that over 85% of vacant homes in Cameron and Potter Counties are used seasonally and for recreational use. In McKean County, that number is 57.9%.

Tri-County Housing Units by Type, 2018



Pennsylvania Housing Units by Type, 2018



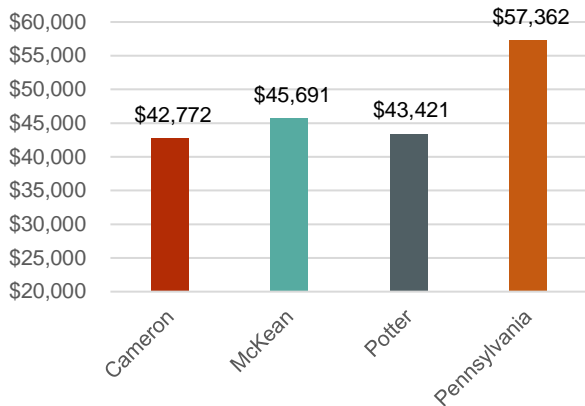
■ Owner Occupied ■ Renter Occupied ■ Vacant

Income and Employment Trends

Median Household Income

The median household income in the Tri-County region was \$44,788 in 2018 and is projected to increase to \$51,498 by 2023. The region’s median household income is lower than the statewide average of \$57,362.

Tri-County Median Household Income, 2018



Labor Force and Unemployment

The Tri-County’s labor force, defined as resident individuals age 16 and older who are employed or are seeking employment, is 27,400 individuals. Approximately 95% of the region’s labor force are employed and 5% are unemployed. Potter County has the highest unemployment rate of the three counties at 5.7%.

Unemployment spiked regionally, statewide, and nationally in 2008, 2009, and 2010 due to the recession, but has trended downward since 2011. The Pennsylvania statewide average unemployment rate is 4.1%.

Labor Force and Unemployment Rate, 2018

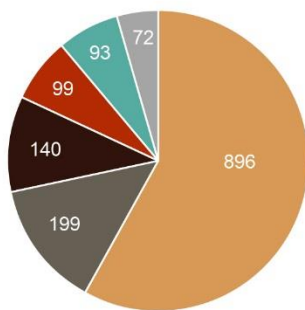
Year	Labor Force	Unemployment
Cameron	2,100	4.9%
McKean	18,100	4.9%
Potter	7,200	5.7%

Employment Trends

Beginning in the 1980-1990s, the nation began to witness a shift in its economic base where the manufacturing sector began to decline, and the service sector began to grow. This shift was due to multiple factors, including automation, off-shoring, and recessions; but the shared result has been a decrease in manufacturing jobs. In rural Pennsylvania, including Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties, this national trend has impacted the manufacturing industry, which continues to experience declines in employment. Since 2010 alone, the Tri-County region has lost more than 865 jobs across all sectors.

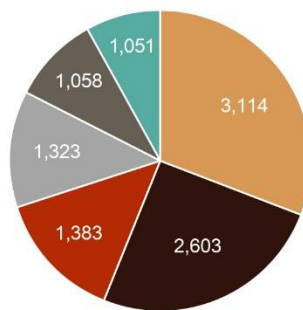
Today, there are 19,605 jobs located within Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties. The top employing sectors are Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, Educational Services, and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities in the region.

Top Industries by Employment, 2018



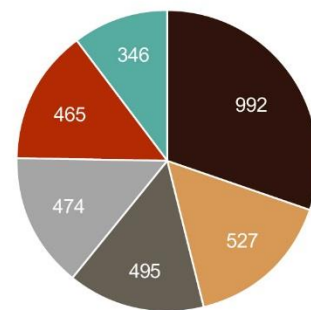
Cameron Top Industries, 2018

- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Public Administration
- Other Services (except Public Administration)
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Accommodation and Food Service



McKean Top Industries, 2018

- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Construction
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Accommodation and Food Service

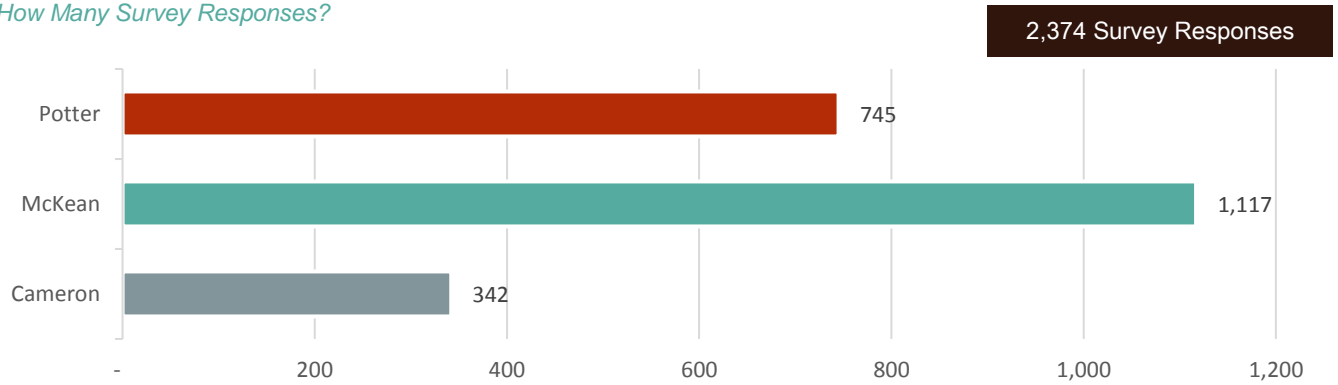


Potter Top Industries, 2018

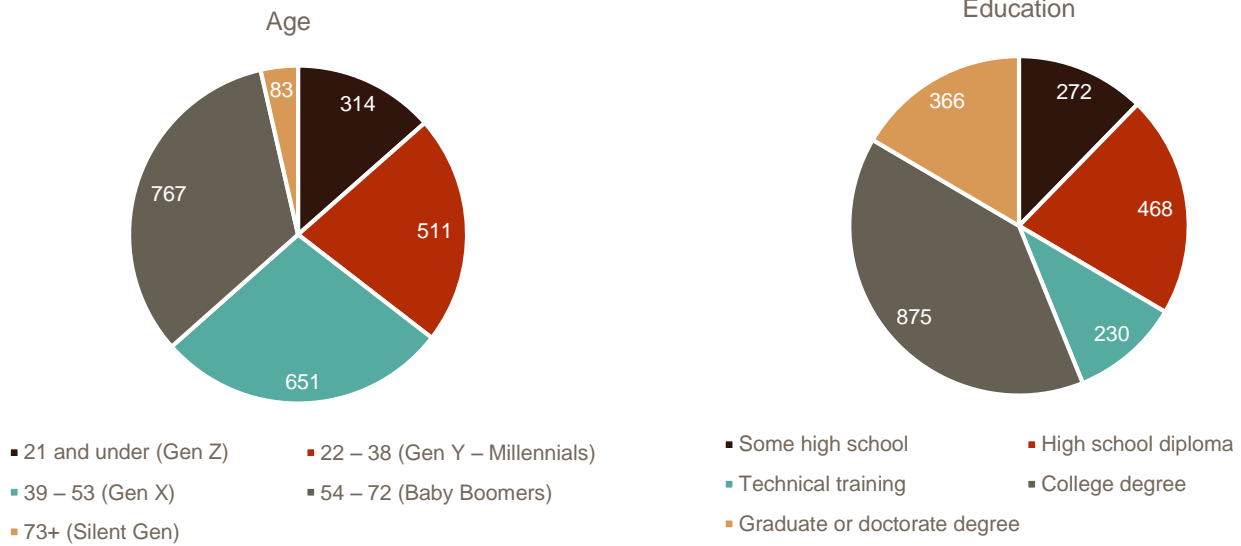
- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Educational Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Information

Survey Results at a Glance

How Many Survey Responses?

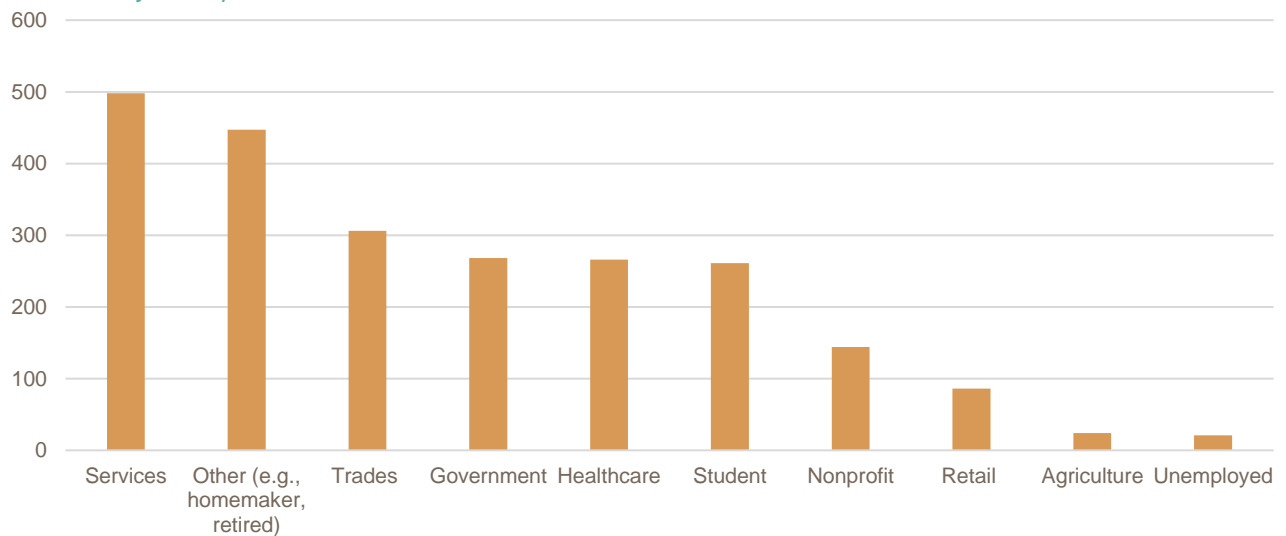


Who Completed the Survey?

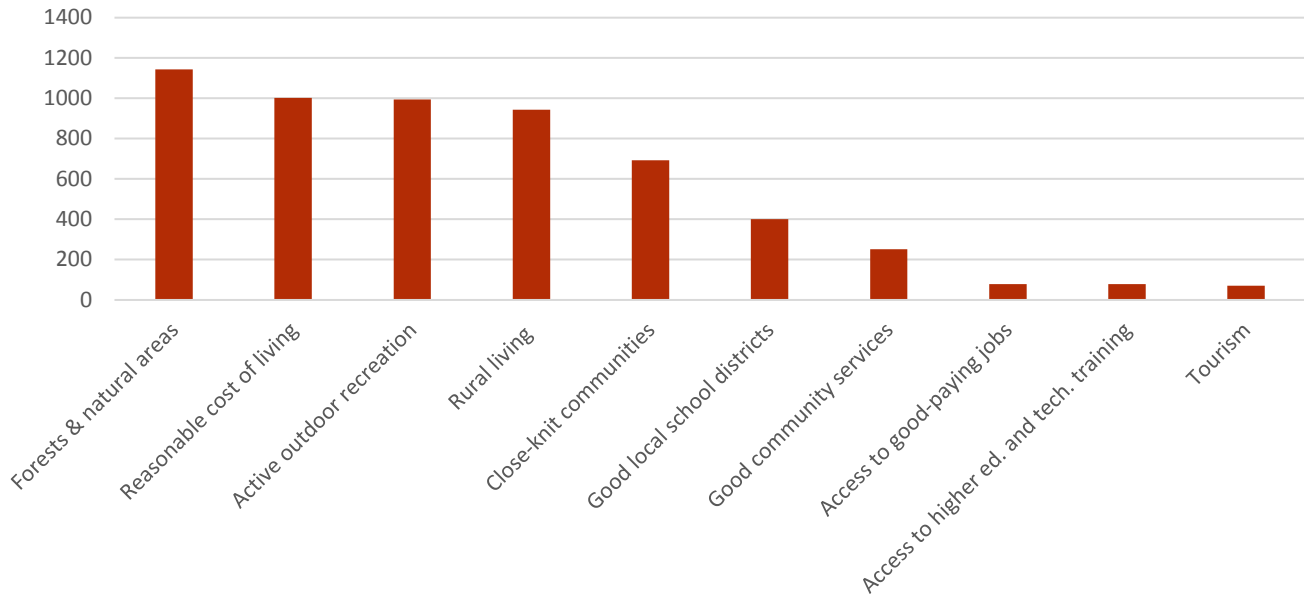


Where do Survey Participants Work?

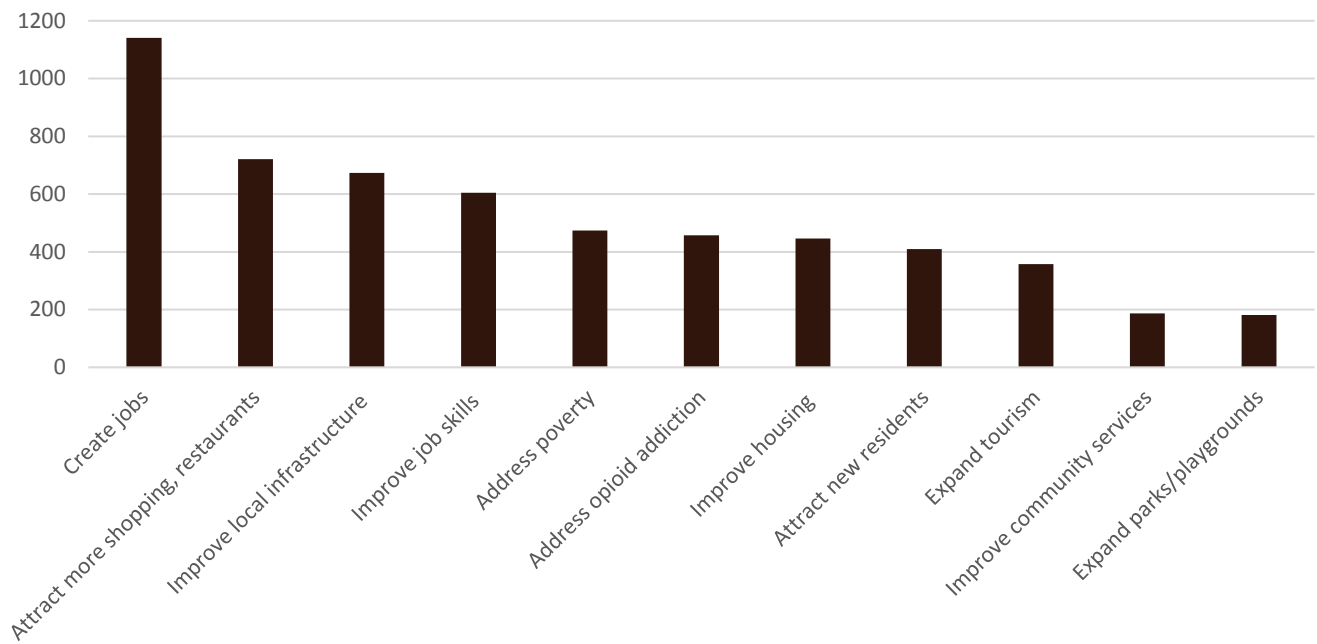
Industries of Survey Participants



What Makes your County a Great Place to Live?



Where Should Taxes be Invested in the Future?



Workforce Development

The Challenge

Since the 2008 recession, Pennsylvania's economy, like the nation's, has rebounded. Unemployment is at its lowest level in 45+ years, employment in the Commonwealth reached a record high in 2019, and total jobs in Pennsylvania were up 30,300 with gains in the majority of industry sectors. But as the economic picture has improved over the past 10 plus years, a workforce shortage has emerged.

Statewide, Pennsylvania's workforce is retiring as the Baby Boomer generation reaches 65+ years of age. In fact, 17.1% of the Commonwealth's population is over age 65, making Pennsylvania the 5th oldest state in the nation. The aging workforce is also coupled with low unemployment throughout the state, creating a tight labor market where there are often more jobs than qualified candidates. According to the PA Chamber of Business and Industry's most recent Economic Survey, employers have identified difficulties finding skilled and qualified employees to fill positions as the biggest problem facing their company today.

In manufacturing, which has historically been the backbone of the Tri-County region, workforce shortages are also driven by a skills gap. The Manufacturing Institute reports the manufacturing industry contends with the following challenges:

- Today's workforce lacks the computer skills, programming skills, digital skills, working with tools, and critical thinking needed to be successful.
- During the past academic year (2018-2019), only 81.4% of seats available to high school students were utilized in career and technical education facilities. Additionally, there are anecdotal stories of high-scoring students being steered away from career and technical education opportunities because school districts want students to remain in the traditional classroom to complete standardized tests, often associated with state funding.
- Many manufacturers depend on outdated approaches for recruiting the right people, developing their employees' skills, and improving performance.

... only 81.4% of seats available to high school students were utilized in career and technical education facilities in 2018-2019.

Primary Goals for Workforce Development

The Commonwealth has prioritized workforce development under the Wolf Administration and is advancing several prominent initiatives including PAsmart, the Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center, and the Statewide Workforce, Education, and Accountability Program (SWEAP). The programs are anticipated to provide grant funding for education and workforce development initiatives throughout the state and help provide guidance and best practices for the regional and local levels.

At the county level, Cameron County can continue to support the North Central Workforce Development Board implement its initiatives and continue to build collaborative partnerships with industry leaders. The Comprehensive Plan has outlined the following priority goals for workforce development.

Regional expansion of local, statewide, and national employee recruitment efforts to attract talent to the region.

- Close the training gap in the region's workforce
- Enhance marketing and employee attraction
- Increase student interest in the trades and promote technical training

Close the training gap in the region's workforce

Workforce development is under the purview of three primary organizations in Cameron County, including the North Central Workforce Development Board, CareerLinks, and DISCOVER Partnership. From a planning outlook for Cameron County, it's

beneficial to understand how these organizations are providing workforce development and, based on existing efforts, how the County can be an active partner to further cultivate a highly skilled workforce.

North Central Workforce Development Board: The North Central Workforce Development Board serves as the primary facilitator of workforce development for a six-county region that includes the counties of Cameron, McKean, Potter, Clearfield, Elk, and Jefferson. The agency, which is federally funded and mandated, is led by the private sector. For this reason, private sector representatives from all six counties (including Cameron, McKean, and Potter) serve as the majority on the Board of Directors and are responsible for overseeing programming. In addition, the Workforce Development Board has agreements in place with the six county governments outlining roles and responsibilities. A commissioner from each county sits on the Board and attends meetings on a quarterly basis. County representatives are to serve as a liaison and should be updating respective staff and county agencies of ongoing efforts and opportunities. All meetings are open to the public.

At the core of its mission, the Workforce Development Board strives to meet the human capital needs of employers by providing resources for job seekers. The organization has recently updated its FY 2017-2020 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Multi-Year Local Area Plan outlining trends, strategies/programming, strength and weaknesses, and vision and goals. In addition, the Workforce Development Board participated with Workforce Solutions and Manufacturing, Education, and Employee Advancement, Inc. (MEEA) to complete a regional action plan for workforce solutions. These documents are up to date, detailed, and provide a strategy for advancing workforce development.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

One area of success for the Workforce Development Board has been the Business and Education Connect Program. In Cameron County, the Workforce Development Board partners with two education councils to go into the schools and provide a variety of career exploration workshops and activities. The program's goal is to make all youth aware of the available occupations in the region so they can make an informed career decision.

Among other programming, the organization is overseeing three active Next Generation Sector Partnerships in the region supporting Manufacturing, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Building and Construction industries. The top priorities of each partnership are summarized below:



MANUFACTURING

- Develop Technical Training
- Metal Working Hub
- School to Work
- Best Kept Secret: Marketing of Our Region



HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Policy Changes
- Technology
- Prospective Employees - Recruitment and Retention



BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION

- Educating pre-high school students on trades and skilled-labor occupations and opportunities
- Business partnering with education

OTHER WORKFORCE PROVIDERS

PA CareerLink:

PA CareerLink is a statewide initiative that assists individuals with finding a job in Pennsylvania. In the tri-county region, PA CareerLinks operates in conjunction with Workforce Solutions for North Central Pennsylvania and operates a branch office in each county. The primary function of PA CareerLink is to serve as a job-matching system where employers post jobs and candidates can apply online.

DISCOVER Partnership:

The DISCOVER Partnership, managed by the Community Education Center of Elk and Cameron Counties, is a business and education partnership that provides programming to education residents and young individuals about career opportunities in Cameron and Elk Counties. The Partnership goes into the schools and provides a wide variety of programming, including company tours, guest speakers in the classroom, mock interviews, job shadow opportunities, and career awareness and advisement among much more.

The Comprehensive Plan's actions call for communications planning with the region's economic development, workforce, and tourism agencies/partnerships to outline a collaborative approach to ongoing coordination and communication. In addition, actions include:

- Increasing Cameron County's participation in the Workforce Development Board Meetings each quarter.
- Coordinating with the Workforce Development Board to offer the quarterly meetings in two locations as opposed to the one current location. Given the geographic size of the six-county region, conducting meetings with a smaller subset (e.g., three counties) may help improve private and public sector participation by minimizing travel time.
- Embracing an ambassador role where Cameron County actively conducts outreach to its private sector businesses to increase the number of Workforce Development Board members and, therefore, representation of Cameron County.
- Attract technical workers from other countries through employment-based visa programs. The County has an interest in exploring opportunities to attract foreign workers to the County through employment-based visa programs. Given the high business expense of sponsoring workers through a visa program, the County may have to consider an incentive or cost-sharing mechanism to implement this item.

Enhance marketing and employee attraction

One of the items the County heard consistently during public engagement was the need to increase marketing of the region to students and prospective employees. On one hand, the public input process revealed that worker attraction is a major challenge in Cameron County. It was noted schools, private businesses including manufacturers and healthcare providers have difficulties finding employee candidates even for good paying jobs. Likewise, residents, business owners, and community leaders are passionate about Cameron County's natural beauty and recreational offerings, low cost of living, and close-knit communities. With advances in broadband, living in rural North Central Pennsylvania but remaining connected to metropolitan areas and jobs is more feasible.

Attracting new residents, both for jobs as well as for the region's natural rural landscape, requires improvements with how the County is marketed. Like workforce development, the Comprehensive Plan recommends communications planning sessions with the region's economic development, workforce, and tourism agencies/partnerships to outline a collaborative approach for marketing. To avoid duplication of resources, a planning process will help outline the best platform for a targeted marketing campaign geared towards recruiting students and workers to the region. In addition, providing technical resources for employers relative to employee recruitment was identified as an opportunity.

Increase student interest in the trades and promote technical training

Over the last few decades, the United States has experienced steady increases in educational attainment. According to the US Census, while just under 1 adult in 20 completed at least 4 years of college in 1940, that ratio rose to 1 in 4 by 2000. Today, 89% of people 25 years and older have completed high school and 60% have studied beyond the high school level. The value society has placed on education attainment has led younger generations to often think of skilled labor career paths as outdated or "dark, dirty, and dangerous" work involving repetitive tasks.

The public input process uncovered a need to help students think strategically about their career path in the Tri-County region and diminish the stigma that currently surrounds technical training. Technological advances have changed the factory floor. Today, manufacturing provides a range of highly skilled, high paying jobs and a strong ladder for career advancement.

To help students better explore career paths in the trades, the Comprehensive Plan offers two primary action items.

- Expose students to the trades beginning in middle school and extending through high school to garner interest in and awareness of the region's technical career opportunities. This action item is already being coordinated through the Workforce Development Board's Business and the DISCOVER Partnership, but Cameron County can help support increased coordination with the local school districts.
- Expand capacity of Seneca Highlands Career and Technical Center (CTC) to service Cameron County residents and heighten regional promotion of the CTC's programs.

Economic Base

The Challenge

Beginning in the 1980-1990s, the nation began to witness a shift in its economic base where the manufacturing sector began to decline, and the service sector began to grow. This shift was due to multiple factors, including automation, off-shoring, and recessions; but the shared result has been a decrease in manufacturing jobs. In rural Pennsylvania, including Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties, this national trend has greatly impacted the local manufacturing industry. Since 2010, the Tri-County region has lost more than 865 jobs.

The local economic base was one the most prominent discussion items during all stakeholder and public engagement events during the planning process. Residents and community leaders recognize the need to diversify the economy to promote job growth, while also supporting and adding value to the region's legacy industry base. Tied directly to Workforce Development, as previously discussed, attracting workers to the region to fill jobs is also a critical priority.

Primary Goals for Economic Base

The goal statement for economic base is to support "business attraction and retention to provide high-quality jobs and living wages for the region's residents". For existing businesses, the action items outlined are intended to increase awareness of the resources and support Cameron County and local economic development organizations provide, as well as to provide pad-ready sites that can support business attraction and retention for larger companies. Equally important, there are specific action items for supporting cottage industries and tourism.

Business attraction and retention to provide high-quality jobs and living wages for the region's residents.

- **Promote the County's economic development resources**
- **Leverage natural resources and focus on economic diversification**
- **Grow tourism**

Promote the County's economic development resources

Today, the top employment sectors in the Tri-County region are Manufacturing, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, Retail Trade, Education Services, and Accommodation and Food Service. These industries, along with others, currently employ a total of 21,562 individuals in the Tri-County region, of which 1,621 are in Cameron County (based on 2018 second quarter employment data). In Cameron County, the two top industries are Manufacturing and Public Administration. GKN Sinter Metals is the largest employer in the County.

Since 2000, Cameron County's economy has lost a total of 930 jobs, largely during the 2008 recession but job losses have continued through 2018. Between 2010 and 2018, the County lost 207 jobs.

To promote continued job growth in the County, the Comprehensive Plan recommends two key action items: First, increase awareness of available business resources and, second, continue to identify and market the County's opportunity sites and offer incentives to expand existing businesses or attract new ones. The County and its economic development partners already offer local businesses a wide range of support services, but improvements can be made relative to technical assistance with brand development, job posting and recruiting techniques, and funding incentives. An example of funding assistance is UPMC Cole's use of the Pennsylvania Primary Health Care Loan Repayment Program, which has helped the hospital in Potter County attract health care professionals by repaying education loans for those working for a period of two years. As a second example of funding incentives, the County can leverage Commonwealth programs to identify and market a priority site for development. Providing pad-ready sites, subsidized through grant funding, is a strong mechanism for supporting a business expansion or relocation project.

Leverage natural resources and focus on economic diversification

The community recognizes the value of cottage industries, a business or manufacturing activity conducted in a person's home, as an excellent way to diversify job opportunities. Cottage industries support the region's tourism market and leverage natural resources, often providing hand-crafted, local products. In addition, maximizing the region's forest and timber products has been identified as an opportunity to leverage natural resources.

In terms of economic diversification, investing in arts, culture, and music is identified as a priority item. Supporting the establishment and growth of cultural establishments will support thriving, downtown communities while also providing jobs. Currently, county employment data shows 0 existing jobs in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry.

Grow tourism

Cameron County is part of a 12-county region marketed as Pennsylvania Wilds, an area promoted for its untouched forests, world-class stargazing, and outdoor recreation. Based on a 2017 Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism in Pennsylvania, travelers spent nearly \$1.8 billion in the region, a 3.6% increase over 2016, and accounting for 10.7% of the region’s employment.

Compared to its neighbors in the Pennsylvania Wilds region, Cameron County ranked 12 of 12 in terms of visitor spending. To further capture tourism activity in the County, the Comprehensive Plan recommends increased marketing and the identification and completion of high priority tourism projects such as the Emporium Trail Feasibility Study.

In terms of marketing, there are several tourism organizations in the region providing high quality promotion and branding. As shown below, many of the organizations have overlapping coverage areas, which may be confusing to a visitor trying to access a single, comprehensive resource for planning a trip. The Comprehensive Plan, accordingly, recommends a communications planning effort to ensure resources and initiatives are not duplicative and continued collaboration and communication.

Prominent Tourism Agencies in Cameron, McKean and Potter Counties

PA State Tourism Office Region Initiative



Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties + 10 additional counties

Local Official Tourism Promotion Agencies and Destination Marketing Agencies



Cameron County + 4 additional counties



*TRAIL CENTRAL
McKean County*



Potter County + 1 additional county

Additional Tourism Agencies in the Region



Cameron, McKean, and Potter Counties + 12 additional counties



McKean and Potter Counties + 9 additional counties

Communities

The Challenge

The population of the Tri-County region has declined, decreasing from 75,035 residents in 1980 to an estimated 63,758 residents in 2018. Cameron County's population has started to decrease again since 2000, decreasing from 5,974 in 2000 to 4,652 in 2019. Projections through 2024 show a continued decrease to 4,392 over the next five years.

From a national outlook, the population in the United States continues to urbanize and 81% of all residents now live in urbanized areas. Millennials, born between 1977-2000, have continued the trend. As one NPR article describes,

“With Wi-Fi and telecommuting, young people theoretically could dodge overpriced real estate and ugly commutes and opt instead for a spacious house with a big yard and a broadband connection. But it turns out the millennial generation is only accelerating the demographic shift.”

The national population trends create a challenging path forward for Cameron County. Based on public input, 57% of survey respondents reported population decline needs to be addressed. As part of the same narrative, 62% of residents reported that amenities, shopping, and restaurants in the region need to be improved to help retain and attract residents. Finding ways to retain the region's youth and attract new residents is a priority outcome of the Comprehensive Plan.


Primary Goals for Communities

As part of the previous comprehensive plans, each of the three counties adopted a Future Land Use map that identified areas for population growth and development. In Cameron County, Emporium was the only identified Designated Growth Area, with the surrounding area identified as a Future Growth Area. Contextually at this time, “designated growth” may not translate into high increases in population or new development. What it can translate to, however, is concentrated investments in community amenities to create a strong sense of place in Cameron County's county seat of Emporium, focusing on restaurants, cultural attractions, night life, and, quite simply, things to do.

The strategies in this Comprehensive Plan address building deterioration and blight, housing, investments in streets and façade improvements, and short-term visitor lodging as important areas for reinvestment to support community development. Making these improvements will, over time, help curb migration trends out of the region while also attracting visitors.

Invest in communities to enhance quality of life for residents, employers, and visitors.

- Address building and property deterioration and blight
- Bolster well maintained, vibrant downtown communities
- Expand short-term visitor lodging

Only **9.5%** of the **261 high school students** responding to the  community survey indicated they will stay in the region after high school graduation.

Address building and property deterioration and blight

Based on data collected during the focus groups, property deterioration and blight are a top concern in the region and residents would like to see the three counties combat deteriorating conditions and blight throughout all municipalities.

While each of the three counties has addressed blight to some degree, improving code enforcement at the county level is recognized as necessary. Enforcing building codes improves safety and helps retain property values by regulating the safety, sanitation, and appearance of the interior and exterior of structures and all exterior property areas. Another tool to address blight is Pennsylvania Act 152-2016 which amends Act 87-1982, the Recorder of Deeds Fee Law. It allows counties to enact a fee for the recording of deeds. The collected fees may then be used to fund the demolition of blighted properties. Establishing a county land bank under the provisions of Pennsylvania Act 153-2012 is another tool to return vacant, abandoned properties to productive use.

Cameron County has already adopted provisions of Pennsylvania Act 152-2016 and has recently formed a Blight Committee to focus on effective code enforcement and how to pay for it. In addition, Cameron County has also used CDBG funds to demolish blighted buildings.

To address deterioration before blight conditions persist, Cameron County established a Homeowner Rehabilitation Program in 2000. The program is targeted towards the County's seniors and disabled citizens and is currently funded using HUD HOME funds administered by DCED. Rehabilitation projects have included improvements such as windows, roofing, siding, and plumbing. To date, approximately 160 homes/homeowners have benefitted from the program. Homeowners from Emporium Borough, Driftwood Borough, and from around the county have participated.

To further enhance its efforts, the Comprehensive Plan recommends formally adopting a county-wide code enforcement program, to include hiring a code enforcement staff member, and providing training for local officials on ways to address blight such as the use of tool lending programs. Addressing illegal dumping in the County is also a top priority recommendation.

Bolster well maintained, vibrant downtown communities

As described above, cultivating investment in Cameron County's downtowns is a priority outcome of the Comprehensive Plan. Investment will help maintain and create vibrant communities with a variety of shopping, restaurants, and things to do to retain residents, attract new residents, and leverage visitor spending. While real estate market conditions play a key role in private sector investment, the public sector can help create a positive environment that is attractive for investors. Public improvements to be considered should include well-maintained, attractive streets with new sidewalks, consistent branding and wayfinding signage, street trees, and pedestrian fixtures. These improvements will also create an excellent gateway and first impression and help encourage visitors driving through to stop and spend time in each community.

Housing

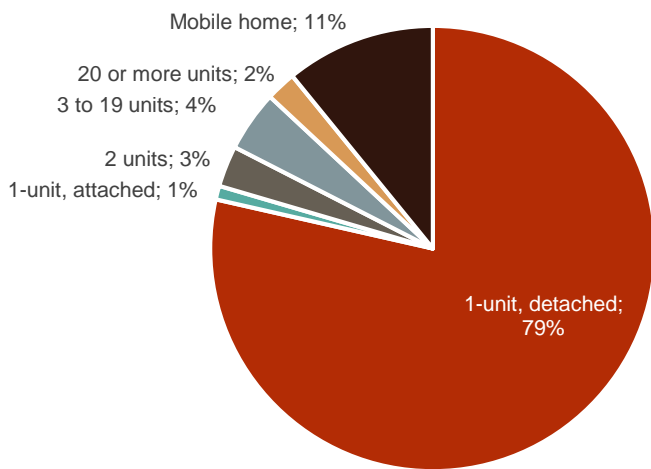
Offering a variety of high-quality housing stock is the foundation of healthy, vibrant communities. Communities need a mix of detached, attached, and multi-family homes of varying sizes providing affordable, workforce, and higher priced housing stock to meet all income levels.

In the Tri-County region, the current mix of housing is predominantly limited to 1-unit, detached homes. While generally sold at lower than statewide averages, these existing single-family homes are large and typically have not been updated by owners, requiring substantial investment to renovate and maintain. For example, during the focus groups young professionals reported that while they would like to purchase their first home, they are unwilling to invest in the large single-family homes on the market. Instead, they would prefer smaller, but more upgraded detached units.

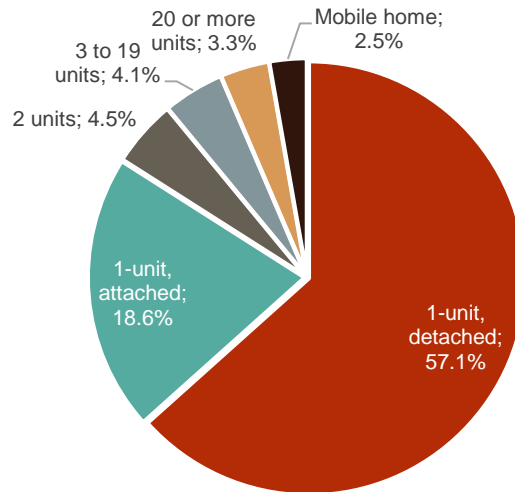
Statewide, 18% of all housing is 1-unit attached homes. In the Tri-County region, just 1% of housing are 1-unit attached homes, demonstrating how limited the housing stock is in terms of variety. In addition, the region has a higher proportion of mobile homes. While offering an affordable option for low-income families, mobile homes are more vulnerable to natural disasters and present hazard mitigation concerns.

A key action item in the Comprehensive Plan is to work with local developers to rehabilitate housing stock and/or convert large homes into two or more units. In addition, Cameron County should consider developing a financial model to incentivize market-rate apartments, townhouses, and ADA-accessible single-family homes.

Tri-County Housing Units by Structure Type, 2018



Pennsylvania Units by Structure Type, 2018



Expand short-term visitor lodging

In terms of supporting the region’s tourism industry, the planning process revealed a shortage of short-term visitor lodging. Currently, there are no chain-affiliated hotels in the Tri-County region (e.g., Hilton, Best Western, Radisson, etc.), which is often a preferred lodging type for visitors. For this reason, anecdotally, residents and tourism professionals indicated visitors often travel to St. Marys in Elk County which offers several chain-operated hotels including Cobblestone Inn & Suites, Holiday Inn Express, and Best Western. Why is this important? Limited lodging accommodations detract from the region’s ability to capture visitor spending on lodging and food. Pennsylvania estimates that 35% of all visitor spending is on lodging and food and beverage and, by not offering a variety of places to spend the night, Cameron County’s tourism industry isn’t capturing a third of its potential revenue. By category, visitors to the Pennsylvania Wilds spend less on lodging than in any other region in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania estimates that **35%** of all visitor spending  is on lodging and food and beverage and, by not offering a variety of places to spend the night, Cameron County’s tourism industry isn’t capturing a third of its potential revenue. By category, visitors to the Pennsylvania Wilds spend less on lodging  than in any other region in Pennsylvania.

Based on discussions with county officials, staff, tourism professionals, and residents, the Comprehensive Plan recommends updating the hotel market study for the purposes of attracting additional tourism lodging options to the region. If feasible, the County should also identify investors and grant funding to support the construction of a hotel. For example, the Commonwealth awarded \$3 million in state grant funding to support a hotel project in St. Marys in 2010.

In addition to hotels, visitors today also prefer to stay in short-term rentals, often provided through online platforms like Airbnb and Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO). Short-term rentals are a good opportunity for the Tri-County region as nearly one third of all housing units in the region are identified as vacant due to the large number of camps. Census 2010 data (the most recent available) shows that over 85% of vacant homes in Cameron and Potter Counties are used seasonally and for recreational use. Online interfaces for renting homes, such as Airbnb, are an excellent opportunity to generate income for home owners, as well as county and state taxes, while also meeting the need for visitor lodging.

Infrastructure/Environment

The Challenge

Modern, reliable infrastructure is foundational to quality of life and economic development in the Tri-County region. Infrastructure includes physical and organizational structures that allow communities to operate effectively and efficiently. Transportation infrastructure includes roads and bridges, which enable the movement of people and goods, while water and sewer infrastructure support the health and growth of communities. In the 21st century, transferring information through telecommunications infrastructure (e.g., internet and cellular service) plays a significant role in the livelihood of communities across the country. Providing efficient emergency services is also part of the infrastructure that communities rely on every day.

Rural communities in Pennsylvania are adversely impacted by deteriorating physical infrastructure, dwindling resources for emergency management, and a lack of reliable communication channels. Residents in the Tri-County region understand these impacts and see a need for critical, focused infrastructure investments. When asked which public infrastructure improvements local governments should invest more tax revenue in, the top two responses from Comprehensive Plan survey respondents included road and bridge improvements and expanded internet/cell service.

Primary Goals for Infrastructure/Environment

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has demonstrated a commitment in recent years to bringing its critical infrastructure into a state of good repair. In 2013, the state legislature signed into law House Bill 1060, also known as Act 89, creating Pennsylvania's most comprehensive state transportation funding package in decades (approximately \$2.3 billion invested over 5 years). Act 89 also established a special fund within the state treasury called "Fee for Local Use Fund". This new revenue source is generated by a County-adopted \$5 vehicle registration fee and can be used for a variety of transportation improvements, including upgrading local bridges. Beyond transportation, a Pennsylvania Broadband Initiative was launched in 2018 with the goal of providing high-speed internet access to every household and business in the state. In total, \$35 million in financial assistance was made available to private providers to incentivize expanded service throughout the state.

Infrastructure improvements, such as the extension of water and sewer, are critical items for future development in a community. While many people in the Tri-County region voiced that improved infrastructure of all types would be beneficial, some members of the community expressed concern surrounding growth and would rather focus on conservation. Clearly, a balanced approach is needed to ensure a state of good repair of the region's public infrastructure while protecting the region's expansive wilderness.

Deliver reliable, cost-effective infrastructure to support a high quality of life for residents, employers, and visitors.

- Expand broadband and cellular service
- Improve local roads, bridges, and 4-digit state routes
- Attract additional volunteers for emergency services
- Upgrade water and sewer infrastructure
- Protect water quality and environment

Expand broadband and cellular service

According to the latest 2019 estimates from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), over 800,000 Pennsylvania residents do not have access to broadband connectivity. Broadband speeds are generally faster in urban areas like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, while residents in rural areas like North Central

Pennsylvania pay higher rates for internet speeds that do not meet the federal or state definition of broadband. Several important factors limit the expansion of broadband connectivity in rural areas, including:

- The topography and landscape of rural counties, specifically dense tree canopies and widespread areas with no land development;
- The cost of building and maintaining last-mile broadband infrastructure to businesses without immediate demand for service; and
- Access to capital and financial resources.

“If you want to generate business growth, you need to improve the internet infrastructure in the County. I would not bring business to an area without reliable fiber.”

This lack of high-speed internet puts the Tri-County region at a disadvantage in an increasingly interconnected, knowledge-driven economy. To position itself to meet the challenges of the 21st century and embrace new opportunities for not only growth but simply retention of businesses and competitiveness, the Tri-County region must develop and support a cellular and broadband deployment strategy to proactively engage service providers and identify potential anchor customers. Cameron County can assist in this effort by participating on a broadband deployment task force, which is a key recommendation of this Comprehensive Plan.

Improve local roads, bridges, and 4-digit state routes

Rural roads and bridges in Pennsylvania often do not receive adequate and timely maintenance, and motorists are nearly three times as likely to die on rural roads in the state, according to a 2019 study titled *Rural Connections: Challenges and Opportunities in America’s Heartland*. In addition to an entirely rural road network, over half of the Tri-County region’s road system is locally-owned as shown in the table below.

Linear Miles of Roadway, 2018

County	Local	State	Total
Cameron	124.8	152.9	277.7
McKean	479.1	541.9	1,021.0
Potter	639.9	451.1	1,091.0
Tri-County Region	1,243.8	1,145.0	2,389.7

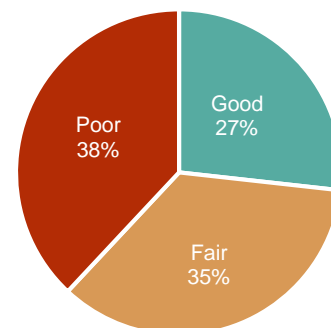
“One of the biggest issues is the condition of our local roads. It will be easier to attract new industry when our infrastructure is brought up to date.”

Statewide, local bridge conditions are improving. Since 2008, the number of locally-owned bridges (greater than 20 feet long) in Pennsylvania rated “poor” in condition decreased from 2,131 to 1,863 (representing a 12.6% change). However, extensive investment is required to bring many local bridges in the Tri-County region into a state of good repair. Shown below, nearly 40% of all local bridges across the three counties are in “poor” condition.

Local Bridge Conditions, 2018

	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Cameron	4	5	7	16
McKean	22	29	30	81
Potter	12	16	17	45
Tri-County Region	38	50	54	142

Local Bridge Conditions in the Tri-County Region, 2018



Bridges by Local Jurisdiction, 2018

	County	Township	City/Boro	Other	Total
Cameron	5	11	0	0	16
McKean	5	58	17	1	81
Potter	0	38	7	0	45
Tri-County Region	10	107	24	1	142

Rural roads and bridges are critical links within the local economy, providing access to natural resources, agriculture, manufacturing, and many other economic drivers. Several state and federal transportation investments in the Tri-County region have been made since 2013 and address rural road and bridge conditions. As of Spring 2019, over 165 projects totaling nearly \$300 million have either been constructed, are underway, or have been planned.

Act 89 Transportation Projects in the Tri-County Region, Completed as of Spring 2019

	Projects	Cost (000s)
Cameron	12	\$46,325
McKean	62	\$120,796
Potter	91	\$126,901
Tri-County Region		\$294,022

To begin addressing local road and bridge conditions, Cameron County must first engage and educate its municipalities on the need for capital improvement planning and programming. This can be accomplished by offering training programs to local

officials on capital improvement plans and their benefits. After local transportation needs are documented, Cameron County will be better equipped to coordinate with the North Central RPO and PennDOT District 2-0 to improve local transportation infrastructure.

Attract additional volunteers for emergency services

In 2018, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania issued a Senate Resolution 6 Final Report on the current condition of fire and emergency management services (EMS) services statewide. According to the report, two primary challenges in delivering critical emergency response services must be addressed: the lack of funding for EMS providers and the decrease in the number of volunteer firefighters. As reported by stakeholders, emergency response professionals in the Tri-County region are burdened by service and training demands, staffing issues, and a lack of proper resources available to address increasingly complex emergencies.

The most critical component of the emergency response system is the use of volunteers to provide life-saving services. While Pennsylvania has taken an active role in offering funding assistance to volunteer emergency service organizations, much more remains to be done to assist in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. The Senate Resolution 6 Commission, in its 2018 Final Report, contended that a public safety crisis is unfolding due to the continuing decline in the ranks of Pennsylvania emergency service volunteers. To begin addressing the volunteer shortage, the Commission recommends over 20 resolutions. As recommended by the Comprehensive Plan, the following resolutions, among others, could be advanced within the Tri-County region:

- Continuing word of mouth recruitment, as it is still the most effective way to find individuals interested in volunteering.
- Implementing career and technical education training in each county through public safety programs.
- Identifying alternative funding for organizations that provide state-approved first responder training in order to reduce the burden on volunteer systems.
- Exploring the feasibility of junior/explorer programs.
- Advocating for the proposed First Responder Loan Forgiveness Program, which proposes student loan forgiveness up to \$16,000 for college graduates after serving four years with a volunteer fire company, rescue company, or emergency medical services agency.

Upgrade water and sewer infrastructure

Communities across Pennsylvania are struggling to maintain their aging water infrastructure. The 2018 Report Card for Pennsylvania graded the state's water and wastewater systems at a D and D-, respectively. Infrastructure receiving a D grade are in poor to fair condition and mostly below standard, with many elements approaching the end of their service life. County officials and stakeholders echoed this, reporting there are severe deterioration of many systems in the County that need to be addressed in the short and long term. Increasing environmental regulations, older systems, and costs to operate are some of the constraints associated with operating Cameron County's existing water and sewer systems.

Deferring needed investments in Cameron County will only result in greater expenses in the future and pass a greater burden on to future residents. Comprehensive studies of water and sewer service areas are needed to determine the needs of the systems and allow for effective capital planning. Service expansion is also needed to meet growing tourism demands, particularly in Elk country. Driftwood Borough in Cameron County was cited in both focus groups and the community as an example.

In terms of funding, which is a critical constraint, the County needs to proactively pursue state and federal funds for its priority water and sewer projects. The U.S. Department of Agricultural, Rural Development, is a primary resource securing grant and low-interest loan funds.

Protect water quality and environment

Pennsylvania is a water-rich state, with approximately 85,000 miles of streams and rivers connecting over 700,000 acres of lakes, bays, and wetlands. Additionally, the state has the highest density of stream miles per acre in the continental United States. Unfortunately, a quarter of those stream miles are listed as impaired and unsafe for their intended use, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. These intended uses range from drinking water supplies to sustenance fishing to recreation. Many agencies are charged with watershed protection but lack the resources to fully address threats to water quality and comply with state and federal clean water laws. Collectively, the counties have over 24,000 water wells. Pennsylvania state law does not require private well testing and regulatory agencies do not routinely monitor the private water quality. Accordingly, periodic water testing is the only way owners of private wells can be ensured water is safe to drink.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends organizing a team to identify areas that are in greatest need of source water protection and determine potential sources of contamination in those areas.

Health Services

The Challenge

The opioid crisis is a public health emergency in Pennsylvania. The crisis impacts all areas of the state and nation, and is contributing to addiction, overdose emergencies, and deaths for people of all ages. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, there were more than 70,200 drug overdose deaths in the U.S., or 21.7 per 100,000 residents. Overdose deaths in Pennsylvania exceed the national average, totaling more than 37.9 per 100,000 in 2016 and a staggering 44.3 per 100,000 in 2017.

As awareness of the opioid crisis has reached the national stage, the state and nation are beginning to see a drop in the number of opioid prescriptions prescribed. In Pennsylvania, providers wrote 57.7 opioid prescriptions for every 100 persons in 2017, compared to the average U.S. rate of 58.7 prescriptions. This represents more than a 30% decrease from a peak of 83.3 opioid prescriptions per 100 persons in 2012. Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania Department of Health have also ushered in several core initiatives in recent years to stem the crisis. These initiatives have included:

- Issuing a **statewide disaster declaration for the heroin and opioid epidemic** to enhance the state response and increase access to treatment.
- Obtaining funds for **45 Centers of Excellence (COE)** throughout the Commonwealth to provide level-of-care assessment for substance use disorder.
- Establishing the **Pennsylvania Coordinated Medication-Assisted Treatment (PacMAT)** program, which expands access to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT).
- Strengthening **Pennsylvania's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)**, which enables health care providers to safely prescribe controlled substances to their patients.
- Increasing the **availability of life-saving naloxone**.
- Launching a **24/7 helpline** (1-800-662-HELP) for those who need immediate assistance with drug and alcohol problems.

Primary Goals for Health Services

While continuing to curb the availability of opioids is critical at the statewide level, so is providing the highest level of care locally for individuals fighting substance abuse. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, Inc. (ADAS) and finding ways to continue to support and expand services. ADAS serves as a Single County Authority (SCA) for Cameron, Elk, and McKean Counties providing inpatient, outpatient, intervention, prevention, and case management services, and is certified in co-occurring and gambling addictions.

Improve county mental health and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services.

- **Increase investment in priority services and treatment**

Increase investment in priority services and treatment

Looking forward, the priority action item is to review the County's existing mental health and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation centers and services to identify opportunities to strengthen existing resources as well as to attract new providers. In addition, a dedicated review will help ensure the County is leveraging state resources to the maximum extent possible.

Implementation Plans

About

To support the implementation of the comprehensive plan goals, the following pages provide a complete list of implementation strategies and corresponding action items. These strategies outline a tactical approach for advancing the Northern Pennsylvania Tri-County Comprehensive Plan vision by specifying tangible action steps that can be taken to ensure progress over the next 10 years. In addition to implementable strategies, this chapter also identifies key partners the Counties may collaborate with to support implementation. Partners include local, regional, and state entities, as well as qualified consultants who offer expertise in specific areas of need.

Measures

In the public sector, the program logic model is the preferred framework for measuring progress toward a stated goal. It's used to measure whether a specific public program is actually achieving the desired outcomes and is, therefore, an effective use of public resources.

The logic model, simply stated, clearly defines what a program does and what its intended results are to be. This includes the following indicators:

- **Resources:** The human and financial resources dedicated by the County for program activities.
- **Input:** The actual program activity that is conducted by the County.
 - Example 1: Code Enforcement
 - Example 2: Tourism Marketing
- **Output:** The direct yield of the program activity.
 - Example 1 Code Enforcement: The number of houses inspected in each municipality, the number of hours worked by the code enforcement officer; etc.
 - Example 2 Tourism Marketing: The number of paid advertisements issued in print, in social media, and in radio, the number of wayfinding signs installed, etc.
- **Outcome (short-term)**
 - Example 1 Code Enforcement: Improved housing conditions
 - Example 2 Tourism Marketing: Increased unique visitor views of websites
- **Outcome (long-term)**
 - Example 1 Code Enforcement: Increased home values
 - Example 2 Tourism Marketing: Increased visitor spending

For purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the measures identified are outputs. This is important. The County cannot achieve short and long-term outcomes without first providing the appropriate program activity inputs.

For purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the measures identified are outputs. This is important. The County cannot achieve short and long-term outcomes without first providing the appropriate program activity inputs. By concentrating first on inputs and outputs and then, in 3-5 years, looking at outcomes, Cameron County will be able to identify which actions are providing concrete results and which actions may need to be revisited. It is recommended that the County more clearly defined the targeted outputs as action items are more clearly defined and implemented.

Workforce Development

1

Regional expansion of local, statewide, and national employee recruitment efforts to attract talent to the region.

- Close the training gap in the region’s workforce
- Enhance marketing and employee attraction
- Increase student interest in the trades and promote technical training

Potential Funding:

1.1	<p>Action Conduct communications planning sessions with the region’s economic development, workforce, and tourism agencies/partnerships to outline a collaborative approach for regular communication and coordination.</p>	<p>Measure Completion of facilitated planning sessions to identify a clear structure for communication and collaboration.</p>	<p>Lead (Who and When)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron, McKean, and Potter County Boards of Commissioners • Economic development, workforce, and tourism agencies/partnerships <p style="text-align: center;">2020</p>
1.2	<p>Action Leverage regional marketing to highlight the County’s high quality of life and low cost of living to students and workers seeking employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Measure Develop a county specific Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA) and corresponding website.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Board of Commissioners <p style="text-align: center;">2021</p>
1.3	<p>Action Increase Potter County participation in the Workforce Development Board.</p>	<p>Measure Attendance at quarterly meetings and the number of meetings between Cameron County and private sector businesses to attract new members for the Workforce Development Board.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Board of Commissioners <p style="text-align: center;">2021</p>
1.4	<p>Action Educate businesses on work visa process to generate interest in hiring workers from other countries</p>	<p>Measure Engage legal firm with immigration experience to conduct a seminar. Identify one or more companies willing to participate.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development <p style="text-align: center;">2025</p>

1.5	Action Increase student exposure to the trades beginning in middle school and extending through high school to garner interest in and awareness of the region's technical career opportunities. Opportunities could include presentations, a job-shadow program, job fairs, and other school district-coordinated events to connect students with employers.	Measure Qualitative and quantitative expansion of school district awareness events.	Lead <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce Development Board (Business and Education Connect Program)• DISCOVER Partnership• Cameron County School District <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>
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DRAFT

Economic Base

2	<p>Business attraction and retention to provide high-quality jobs and living wages for the region’s residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the County’s economic development resources • Leverage natural resources and focus on economic diversification • Grow tourism
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Potential Funding:

2.1	<p>Action Participate in the DCED Engage! program to understand business needs.</p>	<p>Measure Regularly and proactively interact with targeted companies.</p>	<p>Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Industrial Development Authority • Cameron County Board of Commissioners <p style="text-align: center; color: #800000; font-weight: bold;">Ongoing</p>
2.2	<p>Action Convene training for local businesses on a variety of topics including recruitment and tourism marketing.</p>	<p>Measure Establishment of a training program for local businesses on a variety of topics.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Chambers of Commerce <p style="text-align: center; color: #800000; font-weight: bold;">2025</p>
2.3	<p>Action Continue to identify and market the County’s opportunity sites and offer incentives to expand existing business or attract new ones.</p>	<p>Measure Develop 1 shovel ready site or small industrial park.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Industrial Development Authority • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Cameron County Board of Commissioners <p style="text-align: center; color: #800000; font-weight: bold;">2022</p>

2.4	<p>Action Support a diversity of economic development efforts by focusing/investing in arts, culture, and music in support of regional vitality.</p>	<p>Measure Operating support to promote, advocate, and foster opportunities for arts organizations and audiences.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Elk County Council on the Arts • Cameron County Board of Commissioners <p style="text-align: center;">2025</p>
2.5	<p>Action Leverage the resources of the region's tourism agencies to market Cameron County as a tourism destination.</p>	<p>Measure Develop a county specific Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA) and corresponding website.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development <p style="text-align: center;">2021</p>
2.6	<p>Action Identify high priority tourism projects in Cameron County and develop a corresponding funding and implementation strategy (e.g., east end trail connector).</p>	<p>Measure Advancement of at least one priority tourism project and/or annual event to include funding for planning and implementation (may include state grant funding).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Project identification: 2022 Project Implementation: 2025</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitors Bureau • Cameron County Municipalities • Chamber of Commerce • West Creek Trail Association <p style="text-align: center;">2022</p>
2.7	<p>Action Participate in state advocacy to help shape Pennsylvania's legislative and policy initiatives for agricultural, forestry, timber, and energy industries.</p>	<p>Measure Formulation of proposed legislative strategies Number of advocacy events that provide information on legislative activities and provide opportunity to speak to and hear from legislators and representatives</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA State Senators and Representatives • Cameron County Board of Commissioners <p style="text-align: center;">Ongoing</p>

Communities

3

Invest in communities to enhance quality of life for residents, employers, and visitors.

- Address building and property deterioration and blight
- Bolster well maintained, vibrant downtown communities
- Expand short-term visitor lodging

Potential Funding:

3.1	<p>Action Adopt and fund a county-wide code enforcement program.</p>	<p>Measure To include the hiring of a full-time code enforcement staff member and creation of local ordinances governing property maintenance.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Board of Commissioners • Cameron County Municipalities <p style="text-align: center; color: #c00000;">2020</p>
3.2	<p>Action Continue to leverage statewide programs to remove blight through property acquisition, building demolition, and other related activities (e.g., Act 152, CDBG etc.). In addition, identify and address locations of illegal dumping throughout Cameron County.</p>	<p>Measure Number of properties acquired and demolished, and the number of illegal dumping sites identified and addressed.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Board of Commissioners • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Cameron County Municipalities <p style="text-align: center; color: #c00000;">2025</p>
3.3	<p>Action Continue the operation of the Cameron County Housing Rehabilitation Program and develop a first-time homebuyer program.</p>	<p>Measure Number of housing units rehabilitated, and clients served.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Northern Tier Community Action Corporation <p style="text-align: center; color: #c00000;">2027</p>

3.4	<p>Action Expand the Emporium Downtown Facade Improvement Program to include streetscape improvements.</p>	<p>Measure Fund and develop a master plan.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Sylvan Heritage Council • Emporium Borough <p style="text-align: center;">2025</p>
3.5	<p>Action Support regional efforts to implement high quality wayfinding and signage as a way to brand and market the Region's growth areas.</p>	<p>Measure Number of municipalities improved with wayfinding.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingent on 1.1 findings to identify the best public-sector lead to facilitate wayfinding and signage • PA Departments of Transportation and Conservation and Natural Resources <p style="text-align: center;">2027</p>
3.6	<p>Action Update the 2016 hotel market study for the purposes of attracting a hotel to Emporium. If feasible, identify investors and grant funding to support implementation.</p>	<p>Measure Update the study and attraction of investors.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development <p style="text-align: center;">Hotel Market Study: 2027 Funding Strategy: 2030</p>
3.7	<p>Action Encourage the use of homes for tourist lodging and update ordinances to ensure municipalities and the County receive applicable taxes. In addition, explore the use of fairground or other privately-owned land to create new opportunities for visitor lodging.</p>	<p>Measure Completion of ordinances and an awareness campaign surrounding the county's need for tourist lodging by 2025.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • County Association of Township Officials • Homeowners <p style="text-align: center;">2025</p>

Infrastructure/Environment

4

Deliver reliable, cost-effective infrastructure to support a high quality of life for residents, employers, and visitors.

- Expand broadband and cellular service
- Improve local roads, bridges, and 4-digit state routes
- Attract additional volunteers for emergency services
- Upgrade water and sewer infrastructure

Potential Funding:

4.1	<p>Action Continue to develop and support a county and regional cellular and broadband deployment strategy.</p>	<p>Measure Convening of a taskforce that inventories existing infrastructure, identifies anchor customers, and proactively engages service providers by 2023. Expand coverage by 2030.</p>	<p>Lead (Who and When)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Central PA Regional Planning & Development Commission <p style="text-align: center; color: #c00000;">Ongoing</p>
4.2	<p>Action Convene training for local officials on a variety of topics including municipal adoption and use of capital improvement programming to address locally-owned transportation infrastructure.</p>	<p>Measure Establishment of a training program for Cameron’s local officials on a variety of topics, including of capital improvement programming. Measured by the number of training sessions held annually, and number of officials trained. Long-term, the number of municipal adoption and use of capital improvement programming.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • North Central <p style="text-align: center; color: #c00000;">2025</p>
4.3	<p>Action Improve coordination with the North Central Regional Planning and Development Commission (North Central RPO) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) District 2-0 to improve local bridges and roadways.</p>	<p>Measure Attendance at North Central RPO meetings and the number of projects on the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation of priority roadway and bridge projects, betterment needs, and other modal infrastructure. • Development of a regional bridge bundling program to address off-system 	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development • Cameron County Municipalities <p style="text-align: center; color: #c00000;">Ongoing</p>

		<p>bridges or locally-owned structures less than 20 feet in length.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization of the PennDOT Connects initiative to incorporate pedestrian and bicycle improvements. 	
4.4	<p>Action Implement actions from the <i>2018 Pennsylvania Senate Report 6</i> to address the shortage of volunteer first responders and consider use of county funds to help cover training and certification requirements.</p>	<p>Measure Number of actions implemented from the study; Total funding used to support first responders training and certification; and The total increase of volunteer first responder numbers between base year 2020 and target improvement 2025.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cameron County Office of Emergency Services Local Fire Stations/Companies <p style="text-align: center;">2020</p>
4.5	<p>Action Work with municipal water/sewer authorities to ensure appropriate capital improvement planning and assist with identifying grant funding (e.g., USDA Rural Development).</p>	<p>Measure Prioritization of one or more water/sewer infrastructure upgrade projects and the total amount of grant funding secured. This may include feasibility studies in select areas to determine if public water, sewer service, and natural gas can be extended (e.g., Driftwood Borough). Identify priority projects by 2023; advance implementation by 2030.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cameron County Office of Community and Economic Development Mid Cameron Authority Water/Sewer Authorities Driftwood Borough <p style="text-align: center;">2023</p>
4.6	<p>Action Organize a team to identify areas that are in greatest need of source water protection and determine potential sources of contamination in those areas.</p>	<p>Measure Number of studies completed/areas evaluated.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cameron County Conservation District <p style="text-align: center;">2023</p>

Public Health (including Mental Health and Substance Abuse)

5

Improve county mental health and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services.

- Increase investment in priority services and treatment

Potential Funding:

5.1	<p>Action Review the County’s existing mental health and substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation centers and services to identify opportunities to strengthen existing resources as well as to attract new providers.</p>	<p>Measure Complete review of existing services and outline needed investments and/or expansion of services.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameron County Board of Commissioners • Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, Inc. <p style="text-align: right; color: #c00000; font-weight: bold;">2020</p>
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