

# US ROUTE 219 CORRIDOR PLAN

Borough of Carrolltown

Cambria County, PA

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Prepared by:

The CAMBRIA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

401 Candlelight Drive, Ebensburg, PA 15931





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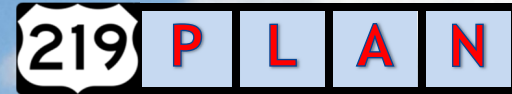
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# INTRODUCTION

How do we plan in small communities that are losing population, industry and their identity? This can be a nettlesome question for planners. Traditionally planning is an activity associated with communities that are growing, and the profession has an aversion to confronting the more difficult circumstances that come with community decline. There is little choice but to embrace this question and strive to find innovative answers that will support our communities.

A glance at the regional landscape reveals many places throughout southwestern Pennsylvania and Cambria County that quietly grapple with declining populations, tax bases and housing stock. Cambria County consists of sixty-three municipalities. Forty-five of those (71%) lost population from 2000 to 2010, according to the US Census. Additionally, twenty-four county municipalities (38%) have less than one thousand residents. Demographics of this nature challenge even the most resourceful and well intentioned regions. Although these statistics can be discouraging, locally they provide an opportunity for the Cambria County Planning Commission to fill a void.

Of the sixty-three municipalities in Cambria County, only one (City of Johnstown) has staff exclusively dedicated to planning, and very few in the northern half of the county where Carrolltown lies have any kind of staff. Over time, the Cambria County Planning Commission seized on the



opportunity to provide technical assistance and boost implementation capacity. Admittedly it is not an easy endeavor, and despite our successes in Carrolltown and other communities, there are many struggles.

Our approach to planning under such circumstances does not assume reduced expectations or that such locales possess a diminished capacity to determine their future. Our experience reveals that planners do not need to be overly creative to be effective. But in order to do so, the Planning Commission staff delves into planning at the local level in order to develop trust, establish relationships, and foster partnerships that uncover hidden potential. These are the messy parts of planning.



While Cambria County is most often associated with its metropolitan area, Johnstown, the northern half of the county takes on a rural character that is very different. From a land use perspective, agriculture, natural resource extraction and tourism activities predominate. Economically the area reflects the rust belt archetype.

Like many places in southwestern Pennsylvania, the communities in the northern half of Cambria County struggle to recover from global economic dynamics beyond their control. For decades after the manufacturing slide, conventional wisdom assumed highway construction was the answer to many ills that are in reality much more complex (discussed more on p. 9). And such complexities are steeped in changing market forces and demographics.

Carrolltown was established by the Benedictine order as a religious community, building on the efforts of Prince Demetrius Gallitzin, the first Catholic priest to bring the religion west of the Allegheny Front. Not weighed down as directly by an industrial legacy, Carrolltown now functions mostly as a bedroom community, though it too struggles with a small and declining population.

The Planning Commission selected Carrolltown for this planning process due in part to a renewed focus on smaller, more sustainable transportation projects that might be viable in this and other county communities. The Planning Commission hoped the planning process provided the opportunity for residents to engage in meaningful dialogue about community goals and guide future land use and transportation changes in coming years.





# THE BASICS

## PURPOSE OF THE CORRIDOR PLAN

### 219 PLAN GOALS

Actively engage the residents of Carrolltown in meaningful dialogue about the future of the community.

Concisely identify priority issues and shared goals.

Develop capacity and build partnerships within the community to implement action strategies to address community goals.

Follow through with community stakeholders and planning partners on the implementation of plan goals.

Promote planning objectives contained in the Cambria County Long Range Transportation Plan.

Ultimately, the purpose of this plan is to improve the quality of life in the Carrolltown area. More specifically though, this planning process aims to encourage, motivate and empower community members. An equally important goal is to simultaneously develop the capacity that will lead to the implementation of the plan.

As the planning profession shifts from producing passive plans that sit on shelves to plans that actively engage communities, this plan does not delve into detailed statistical analysis. That information can be found in the Cambria County

Comprehensive Plan, which was updated in late 2011. This planning process focuses specifically on a limited number of issues in each community, and capacity development and plan implementation for each.

Furthermore, this plan emphasizes concise goal setting. Time is a resource for everyone involved in the planning process. Goals in this plan may be less than a conventional plan, but our hope is they are considerably more realistic and attainable.

For local plans, the Cambria County Long Range Transportation Plan promotes a strong component of community input and dialogue. From the outset of this planning process, the Cambria County Planning Commission emphasized a robust dialogue that would provide the opportunity to “assess and address” community goals and matters of importance.

Carrolltown delivered in this regard. The CCPC hosted dozens of community forums and meetings with community stakeholders. Staff fostered dialogue with community officials and local residents to encourage participation, and for CCPC staff to develop a genuine appreciation for community dynamics.

Equally important, the CCPC intends to work closely with stakeholders in the community to implement action plans to accomplish the identified goals, following the publication of this document. The planning process WILL NOT end with the release of this document. Rather, this publication serves to capture the development of the process.





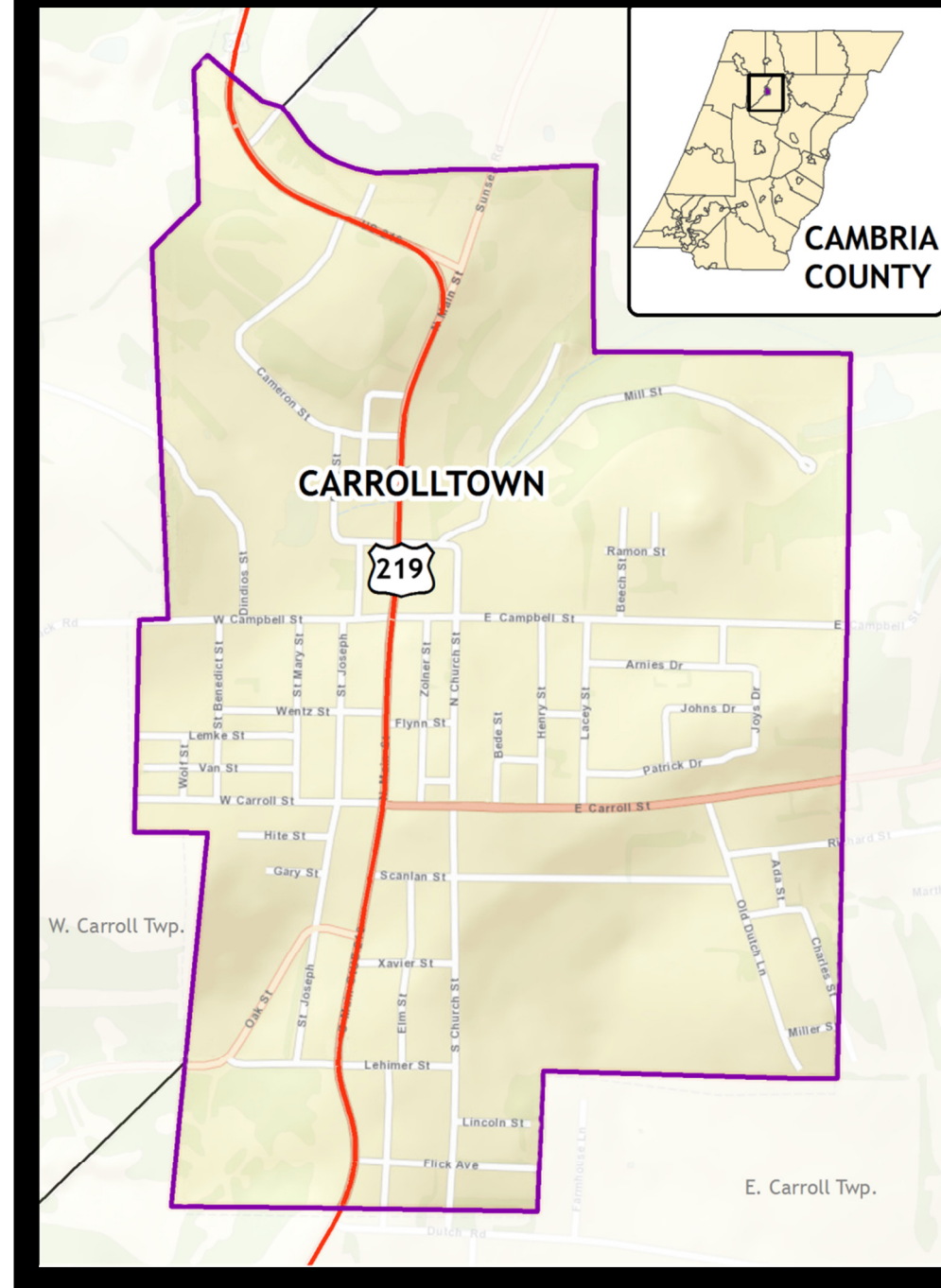
## GEOGRAPHY

The US Route 219 corridor is an important commercial, transportation and residential artery, which runs north-south from Rich Creek, Virginia to West Seneca, New York, a distance of 535 miles. In Pennsylvania, US Route 219 enters the state two miles south of Salisbury, and meets the New York border north of Bradford. The distance covered by US Route 219 in Pennsylvania is 207 miles.

The target area of the US Route 219 Corridor Plan is the northern alignment of US Route 219 through the Carrolltown area. The focus of the plan begins in East Carroll Township in the central part of the county, through Carrolltown Borough north to West Carroll Township. US Route 219 serves as the primary commercial corridor in Carrolltown where it is referred to locally as North and South Main Street.

Locally, efforts have been under way for decades to complete a four lane limited access US Route 219 from Interstate 68 in western Maryland, through Cambria County (and Carrolltown), north to Interstate 80 near DuBois, Pennsylvania.

However, unlike many other regional highways, US Route 219 is not a fully designated part of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS). This fact constrains the opportunities for future capacity improvements. South of Ebensburg, the county seat of Cambria County, the US Route 219 corridor is ADHS designated. But just north of Ebensburg is where the designation ends, leaving the rest of





US Route 219 at a funding disadvantage. The section of US Route 219 through Carrolltown is not ADHS designated.

To the south of Cambria County, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation recently began work to connect US Route 219 in Somerset to the four lane, limited access bypass in Meyersdale. However, the two-lane stretch from Meyersdale to Interstate 68 remains, as does most all of the alignment north of Ebensburg.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

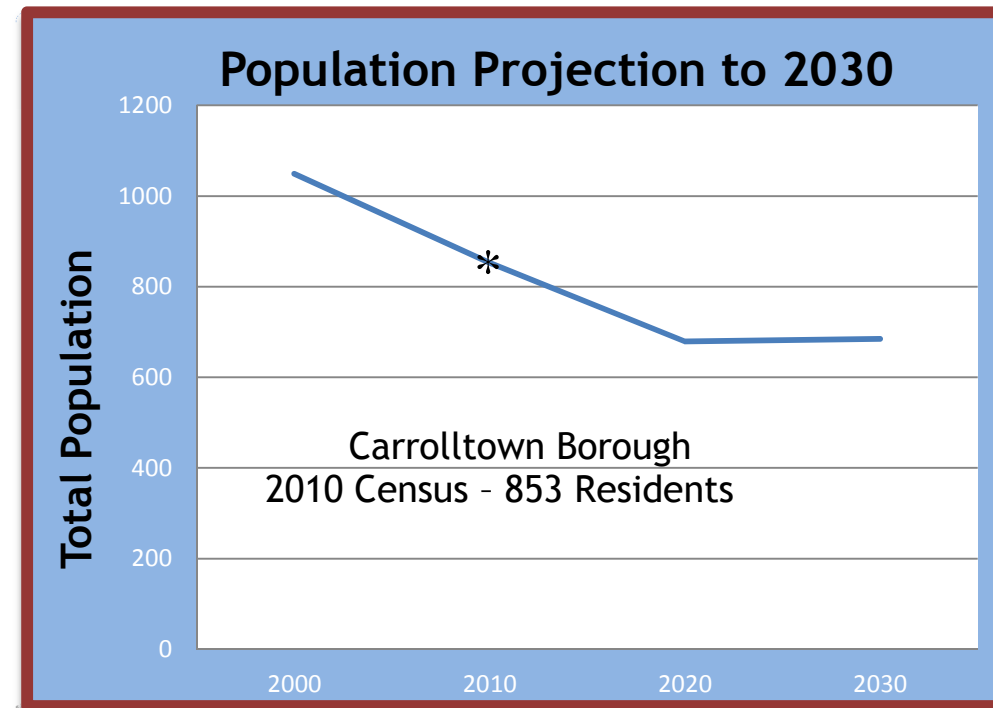
As previously mentioned, Carrolltown is part of a broader trend seen in most Cambria County municipalities of population decline and community aging. The familiar refrain is that individuals in younger age cohorts with an opportunity to leave the county most often do. Most head south or to urban areas seeking warmer climates, and more diverse employment and lifestyle opportunities.

According to the 2010 Census, Carrolltown Borough has a population of 853, down from 1,049 in 2000. Population estimates from the 2009-2013 American Community Survey five year estimates have the population down to 790 residents. Population figures from the Census Bureau for East Carroll Township and West Carroll Township, the two municipalities surrounding Carrolltown Borough, display a similar pattern.

Population projections from the Cambria County Comprehensive Plan predict further population declines.

Carrolltown Borough is projected to lose nineteen percent of its population by the year 2030, going from 853 residents in 2010 to 685 in 2030.

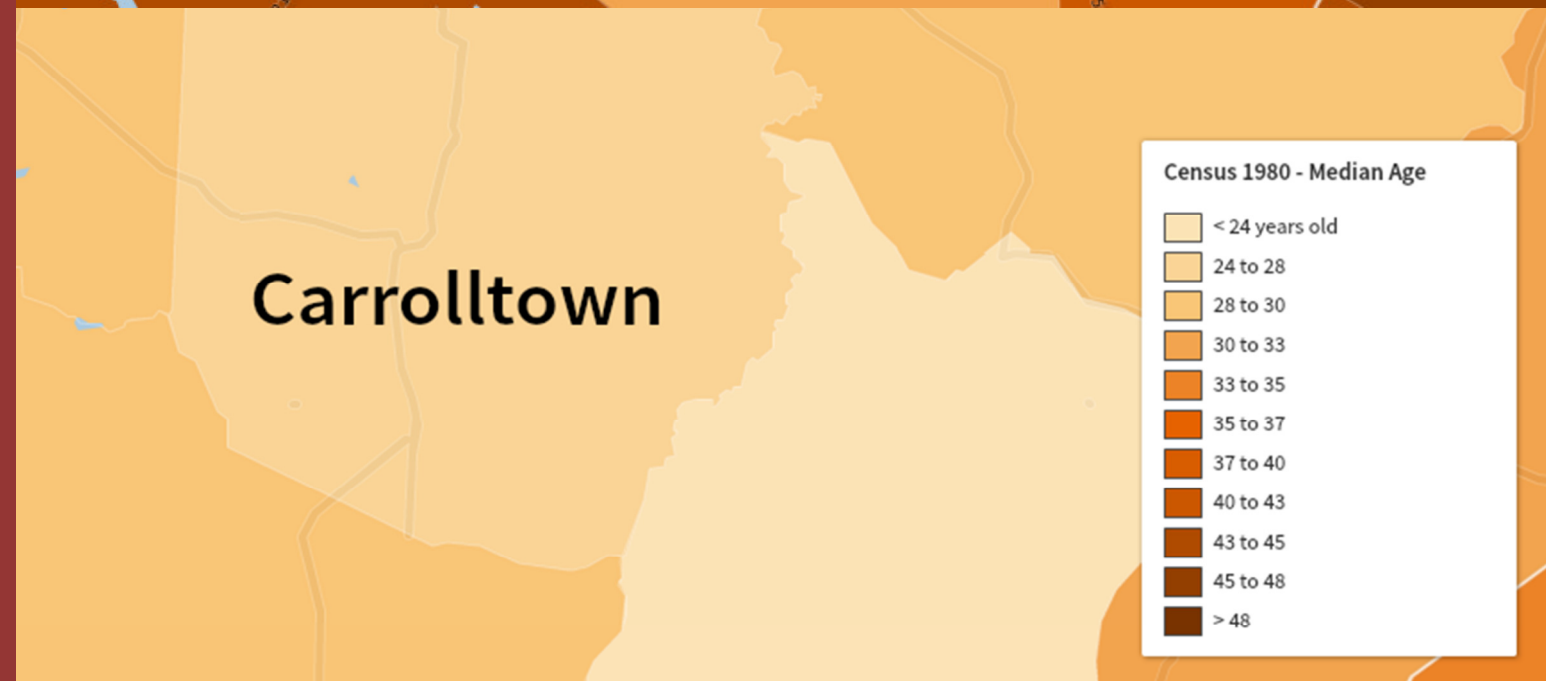
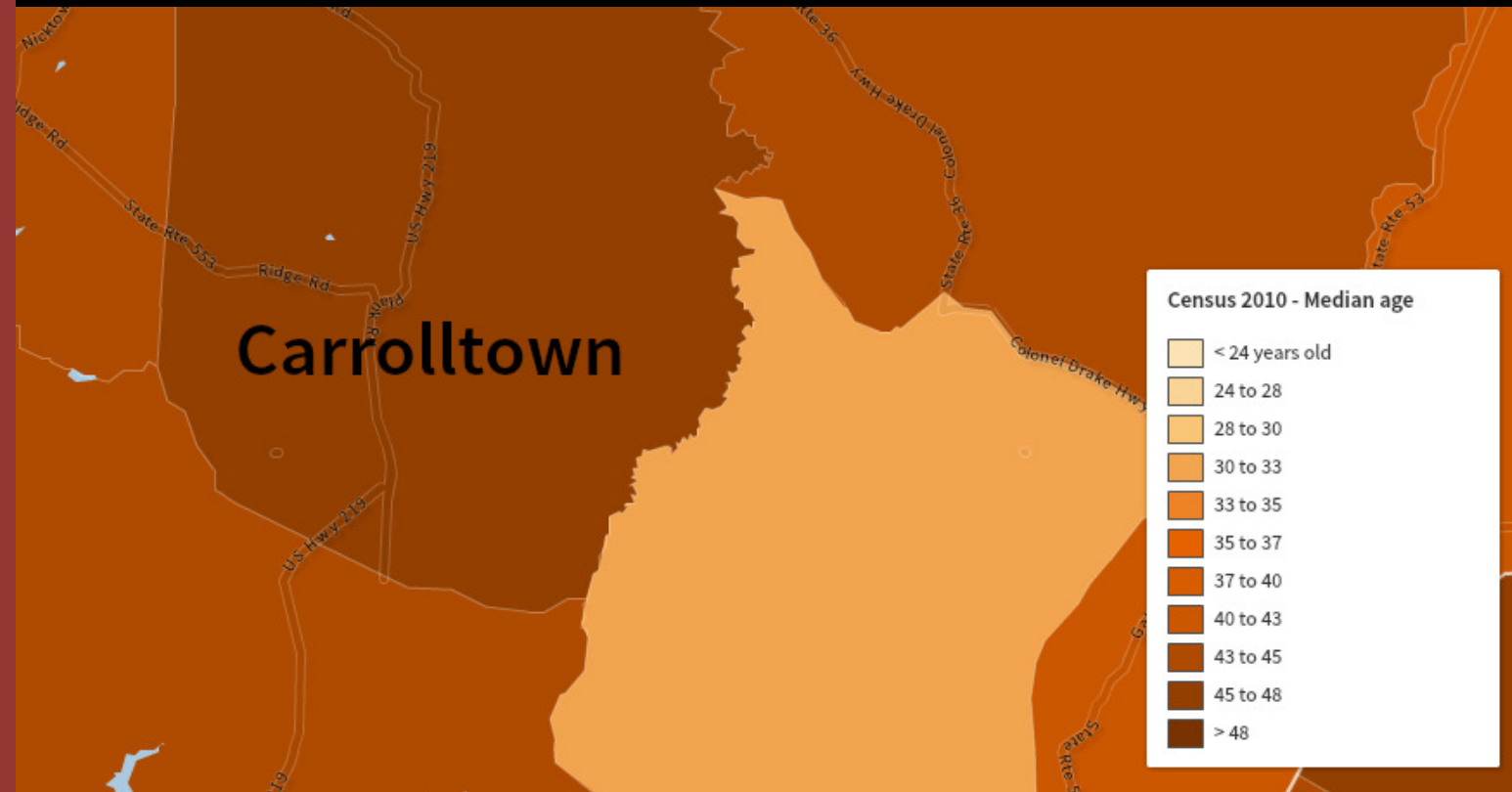
The aging demographics can be seen in the following graph and maps. Since 1980, the median age of the community advanced quite rapidly. The lightest shaded block in the middle of the maps is host to a federal correctional institute that skews true age of the resident population.



Source: 2011 Cambria County Comprehensive Plan



# Aging Population: Median Age in 1980 vs. 2010



The greying of the population corresponds with countywide trends of community aging.



## A NOTE ON PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED PLANS ALONG US ROUTE 219

An early obstacle that presented itself during the planning process was a sense of planning fatigue amongst community members. So many different plans for the US Route 219 corridor have come and gone over the years, with few resulting achievements, that community members were understandingly reluctant to embark upon another plan, even if it was implementation based and not exclusively focused on transportation related issues.

A retort heard commonly during the community forums sounded something like this, “They’ve been talking about a four lane highway since I was a kid!” The residents’ comments referred to near constant discussions in the 1980’s, 1990’s and early 2000’s of plans to construct a four lane US Route 219 that would connect with Interstate 80. Many participants in the community forums who proclaimed such a statement were advanced in years. The staff of the CCPC also heard similar comments while interacting individually with those involved in the planning process.

It is obvious that highway building captivated the northern part of Cambria County in the latter half of the twentieth century. With the decline of the coal industry, many county and local officials pinned their economic development hopes on the development of that four lane highway. Indeed, PennDot and other groups encouraged this thinking and proposed several different plans and alignments for a four lane US Route 219 through northern Cambria County.

Plans for the US Route 219 corridor literally do go back decades, and in the interest of brevity won’t be discussed in depth. The most recent plan to examine the corridor was conducted by the EADS Group on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in 2007. The purpose of this

plan was to examine alternate routes for the US Route 219 alignment and to further evaluate improvements proposed for the roadway at key intersections with SR 36 and SR 4013. Any interest in past plans would be satisfied by visiting PennDot Engineering District 9-0 in Hollidaysburg.

“They’ve been talking about a four lane highway since I was a kid!”

Somewhat predictably, the optimism that once surrounded the topic of US Route 219 has given way to pessimism. Other than a four lane extension of Route 219 four miles north of Ebensburg that was completed in 1989 under the height of Congressman John Murtha’s power, plans for a four lane highway through northern Cambria County have evaporated. Without a rise in the state gas tax since the 1990’s, and vehicle miles traveled peaking in the early 2000’s, PennDot’s revenue has fallen dramatically. At the same time, PennDot’s focus understandably turned towards maintenance of existing infrastructure. The funding simply isn’t available to construct a limited access highway that would serve less than 10,000 vehicles per day. CCPC staff and PennDot officials explained this scenario many times during the planning process.



## PLAN METHODOLOGY

**Overview** - Planning methodology is undergoing a significant shift. For many years, what qualified as a comprehensive, community or corridor plan was a physical document with an exhaustive compendium of background data, maps, statistical analysis and accompanying narrative, yet lacking in public participation and capacity development. Much of the information contained in these traditional plans is now available in online database form. Therefore, compiling data is no longer a planner's best use of time or resources.

Rather, the need that more preeminently presents itself, particularly in smaller municipalities confronting an era of declining municipal resources, is community engagement and empowerment. This is especially true in rural areas of Pennsylvania such as northern Cambria County. With dwindling grant resources and declining tax bases, more and more municipalities are finding it difficult to connect their needs with available resources. This is where planning has a valuable role to play.

No longer is it acceptable to leave a community behind after publication of the planning document. Rather, the plan document is only part of a more results oriented *process* that increasingly focuses on targeted community goals, objectives and implementation.

State organizations are also leading this trend. The Pennsylvania Chapter of American Planning Association is encouraging implementable plans, most recently through its

publication and marketing of a workbook that guides organizations through plan development that is implementation focused. The staff of the Cambria County Planning Commission borrowed heavily from this approach.

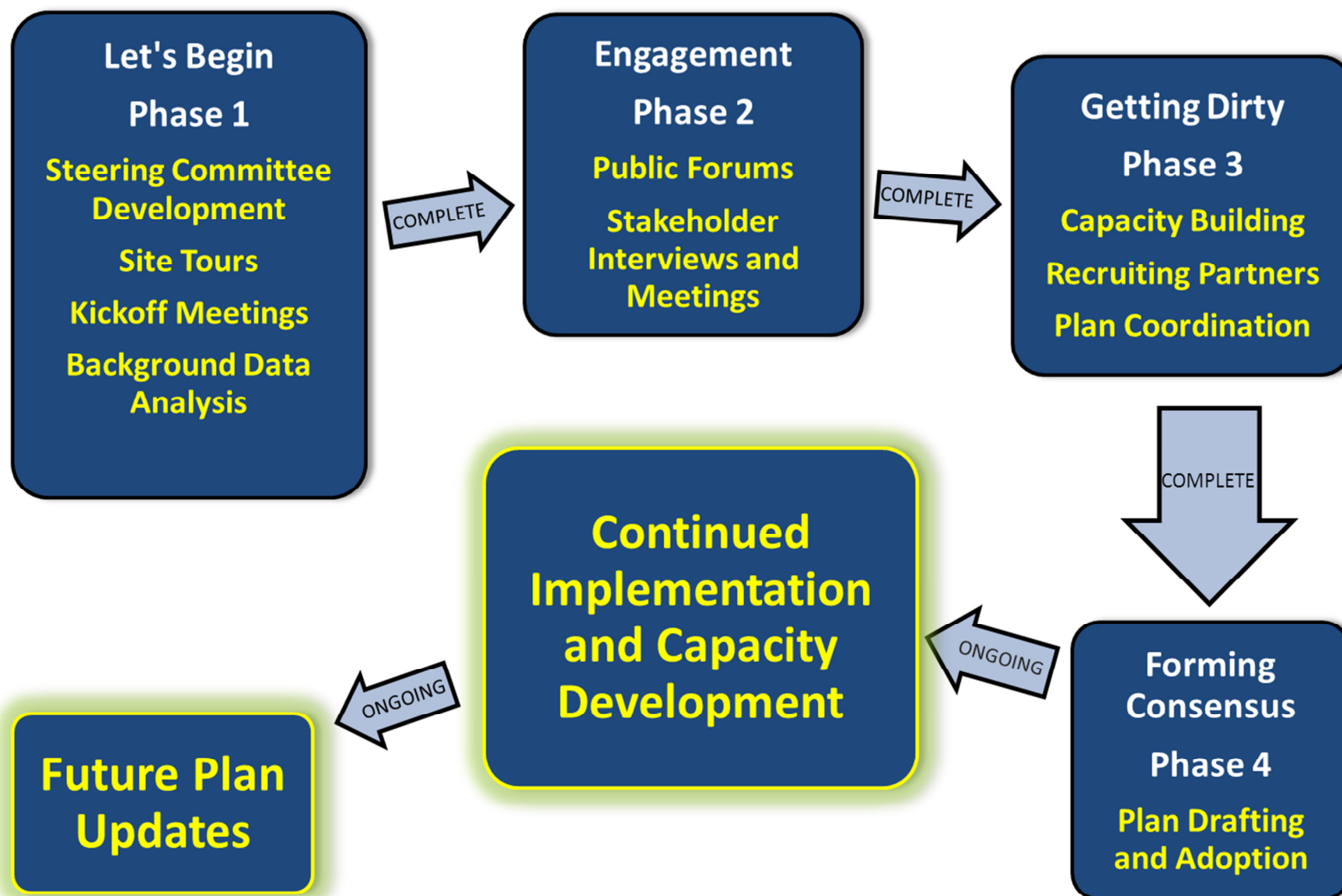
The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, which partially funded this plan through its annual work program with the Johnstown/Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization, is also encouraging more results oriented planning through its own initiative called Performance Based Planning. This approach stems from new requirements for federally funded planning efforts under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP 21) transportation bill that was passed in 2012.

**The Process** - The US Route 219 Corridor Plan is a result of a combined methodology that focuses on implementation (PA Chapter of APA) and also results and performance (PennDot). Goals for the plan were sought from the community during the public hearing process. After analyzing the public input and results of stakeholder meetings against previously collected background data, goals for action were selected based on several criteria. These included the likelihood of a successful outcome, available local resources and project partners, and what the municipality and other community organizations were willing and able to contribute, both financial and otherwise.

The plan goals have been divided into those where opportunities for action presented themselves more immediately, those that will require a longer term effort,



## Planning Process Chart





and those that are more aspirational in nature. Greater attention is devoted at the end of the document to describing actions currently underway towards accomplishing the identified goals.

The aspirational goals are those where there seemed to be community consensus about the importance of the goal but a road block or constraint exists that makes progress on that particular topic unlikely.

**Who Wrote the Plan?** - The planning process and resulting document was primarily facilitated, written and distributed by the staff of the Cambria County Planning Commission. There are advantages and disadvantages to such an approach. Certainly, CCPC staff has a greater familiarity with and access to the communities involved. Also, writing a plan with existing staff is considerably less expensive than hiring outside assistance. Though, it should be noted that Cambria County, with the assistance of the EADS Group, updated its Comprehensive Plan in December 2011. The recently updated comprehensive plan provided a sturdy foundation for this planning process.

One drawback to a staff written plan is that CCPC staff have many other responsibilities. This plan took longer to produce than what might have been possible if a consultant was hired. However, looking back on the process as it stands, the element of time was one that ultimately proved to be a resource. Almost a year and a half passed from the beginning of the planning process until the publication of the planning document. This gave staff the ability to capture a wide variety of public participation and digest the

high volume of comments received at various community meetings. It also presented the opportunity for deeper and more meaningful interaction with the community, which in turn resulted in better outcomes.

**Chatham University Partnership** - During the planning process the Planning Commission developed a unique partnership with the Chatham University Department of Landscape Architecture. This partnership resulted in the development of visualizations that depict what could be done to improve the aesthetics, pedestrian and vehicular safety along the US Route 219 corridor.

This was a mutually beneficial relationship. The graduate students from Chatham received valuable interactions in a community setting, while the CCPC received renderings, visuals and other design work that would have otherwise added significant cost to the project.

The process and events that led to this relationship is described in more detail in the following section





# Carrolltown



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

For a rural municipality of less than one thousand people, Carrolltown has initiative that belies its population. From the beginning of the planning process, the community eagerly embraced the opportunity to drive future land use and transportation decision making. It also honestly confronted challenges common to a municipality that accommodates a major highway corridor.

To kickoff the gathering of community input, the Cambria County Planning Commission held two community forums at the Carrolltown municipal building on July 11, 2013. To

generate interest, the Planning Commission advertised the public hearings through direct mailings to community businesses and organizations, local media, word of mouth and on the CCPC website.

Each community meeting had the same format. The meeting began with a brief explanation and description of the planning process, followed by an opportunity for community members to offer their input and have dialogue about the topics raised. The purpose of dual meetings on the same day was to give residents maximum chance to participate. Turnout at the community meetings was excellent for a small community, and much discussion was had involving a range of issues.

Based upon the input received at the community meetings, Cambria County Planning Commission staff held follow up meetings with community stakeholders such as the Cambria Heights School District (the largest employer in Carrolltown with Cambria Heights Elementary School), Carrolltown Borough, the Carrolltown American Legion, local sewer and water authorities and local business owners.

Planning Commission staff also recruited a steering committee comprised of Borough and Township officials, and PennDot staff.

In Carrolltown much of the community's input and energy focused on making improvements to the Main Street. Community members frequently discussed the issues of vehicular and pedestrian safety, aesthetics, community connectivity and economic development, as they relate to

the US Route 219 corridor, which also serves as Carrolltown's Main Street. There was general consensus that the US Route 219 corridor does not reflect the values of the community.

Realizing the future design and appearance of the Main Street would be a primary focus of the plan, the Cambria County Planning Commission made a decision to reach out to several academic landscape architecture departments within Pennsylvania for assistance. While the CCPC has the capacity to write and produce this plan, it required assistance for the more technical components that helped community members visualize many of the concepts and ideas discussed during the planning process.

As a result of this effort, the Cambria County Planning Commission developed a unique partnership with the Chatham University landscape architecture department. Chatham University is a small liberal arts college located in Pittsburgh. It has one of the few graduate landscape architecture programs in Pennsylvania.

Each semester, graduate students from Chatham University's landscape architecture program are required to complete a design studio class within a local community. The goal of the studio is for students to apply skills they have learned throughout their academic program to a real world setting. The Cambria County Planning Commission was fortunate that Chatham University agreed to hold its spring 2014 studio in Carrolltown.

Together with the Cambria County Planning Commission, the Chatham University graduate students hosted several focus groups to gather information about the community's vision for Main Street and the US Route 219 corridor. They also conducted numerous site visits to gain an understanding of the physical and cultural landscape.

On April 29, 2014, Carrolltown Borough Council hosted a special meeting where each of the Chatham University graduate students unveiled their ideas for the US Route 219 corridor. The meeting was open to the public, and all community members were encouraged to attend. The meeting began with each graduate student presenting his or her ideas, conceptual plans and renderings. After the presentations and a formal question and answer session, the meeting was opened up for more informal discussion between the Chatham University students and members of the public.

On July 24, 2014, the Cambria County Planning Commission facilitated a meeting with the Carrolltown Borough Council to discuss the Chatham University ideas, and prioritize steps for moving forward. This meeting was the final meeting held prior to initiating contact with PennDot. This meeting resulted in the community prioritizing its goals and then relaying those goals to PennDot for further consideration and discussion.

PennDot responded in September 2014 by announcing it hired consultant firm Gannett Fleming to further investigate issues raised during the planning process. Improvements to the corridor were also placed on the Cambria County TIP.



## PRIMARY GOALS

### 1. Parking Safety

Parking is always a concern in densely populated areas. The issue of parking safety in Carrolltown is compounded by the fact that Main Street serves a dual purpose. Regionally, US Route 219 is a vital transportation corridor, moving nearly nine thousand vehicles per day through northern Cambria County. However, locally Main Street (the local designation for US Route 219) is the focal point for commerce and other community institutions.

Despite heavy use, the downtown lacks a coordinated approach for the layout and allocation of parking spaces. In several places, parking spaces are delineated with painted lines. On other blocks vehicles are parked alongside of the street haphazardly. Most often there is no delineation between areas that are safe for pedestrians and parking spaces intended for vehicles.

The lack of a safe and orderly parking arrangement is also problematic from an economic development angle. There are several reasons the lack of safe and efficient parking is a reason for concern. Most customers who patronize Carrolltown businesses along the US Route 219 corridor arrive by vehicle. Walk up traffic exists, but population density is not sufficient for businesses to survive on that alone. The community expressed concerns that unorganized and unsafe parking arrangements deter potential customers.



Typical Street Parking Along US Route 219, Carrolltown



Secondly, the inconsistent and disorganized parking layouts present an image problem, and detract from the community's ability to market itself, an issue addressed in more depth under Primary Goal number three.

## 2. Reduce Traffic Speed

This goal is relatively straightforward. Taking measures to reduce the speed of traffic along US Route 219 is equally important to the community as the parking concerns. An overwhelming number of residents, including local police officers, expressed concerns about the speed of vehicles traveling through Main Street. The posted speed limit is 25-35 miles per hour. However, one only needs to stand beside the road for a few minutes to realize that most vehicles travel much faster.

Many design factors and characteristics encourage higher speeds through the corridor. The US Route 219 corridor is mostly straight, while several downhill stretches promote acceleration. The lack of street infrastructure such as sidewalk, curbing and street trees provides few subconscious visual cues to slow drivers. On many blocks, areas intended for parking blend seamlessly with the roadway, which creates the illusion of a wider roadway designed for higher speeds.

Much of the interaction between local residents and the Chatham University graduate students focused on the connection between physical infrastructure and travel speeds.



The lack of standard street and pedestrian infrastructure encourages higher speeds along Main Street.



### 3. Aesthetic Main Street Improvements

There are several conditions along US Route 219 in Carrolltown that give the impression of a tired community. The situation is rooted in an organic evolution rather than intentional neglect. Like many other Boroughs with arterial highways passing through them, the buildings lining the street have turned inwards, away from the noise, ugliness and safety concerns of high speed, high volume traffic moving through an area originally designed for something much different.

Sidewalks, street trees and parking are arranged in a haphazard fashion. Street infrastructure is in poor condition or altogether nonexistent. There are few streetlights, banners or other decorative elements. There appears to be little coordination amongst Borough policy and property owners to ensure a unified appearance, consistency and attention to detail. Many individual decisions with good intentions have resulted in a dysfunctional streetscape.

According to statistics from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, approximately nine thousand vehicles per day pass through Carrolltown's Main Street district. The current conditions of the Main Street district demonstrate the primacy of the automobile over aesthetic concerns, pedestrian and vehicular safety, storm water management and economic development interests.

With these issues in mind, residents and elected officials are aware the current state of affairs on Main Street is a poor reflection of the community. Area business leaders recognize the community's appearance is intertwined with its chance for future success. They are mindful of the connection to economic development.

Unlike the safety concerns contained within the first two goals, aesthetic concerns need to be justified and specified to a greater degree. There are several prominent reasons this issue is a priority:

1. With the recent development of Rock Run ATV Park in the northern part of Cambria County, Carrolltown would like to position itself to be the hub for Rock Run visitors. Visitors to Rock Run traveling from the south via US Route 219 must pass through Carrolltown. The Borough would like to seize on the opportunities presented by thousands of visitors with disposable income passing through the community.
2. Carrolltown identifies itself as a bedroom community. Carrolltown's housing market is one of the most stable in northern Cambria County. Local residents embrace this situation, though the Borough recognizes there are limitations. A deteriorating Main Street is a threat to the housing market.

There are signals a share of the stability in the housing market is a result of the Borough's proximity to Saint Francis University in Loretto and Mount Aloysius College in Cresson. Anecdotal evidence

suggests that both students and employees of these institutions are looking towards Carrolltown for low cost housing in a safe community. To this end, the Borough sees a sub market of university housing for both students and employees as a positive for the community.

3. The university connections are important because Carrolltown would like to develop more locally owned businesses. It sees an opportunity to leverage its budding relationship with the university communities to achieve this goal. In order to continue to retain residents, and begin to attract more business, the community needs to take ownership of its appearance. An attractive Main Street is critical to any recruitment and retention effort.

The appearance of the community and the Main Street in particular, will help drive an economic development strategy geared towards retaining residents, and encouraging a diverse mixture of economic activity.

This building has turned away from Main Street. Note lack of curb ramps, deteriorated sidewalk, and street trees growing in path of sidewalk. The front door steps to the house are removed.





## ACTION PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### PARKING SAFETY

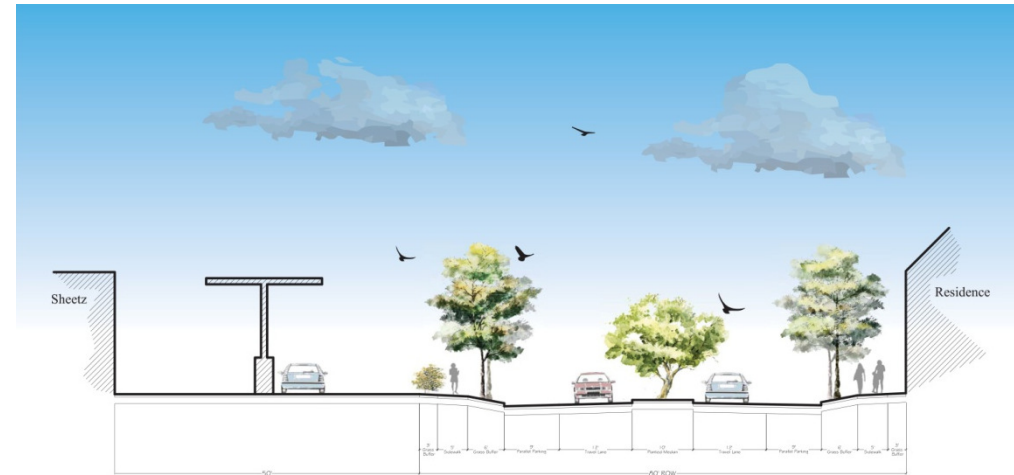
The collaboration with Chatham University gave birth to several ideas to formalize designs for a streetscape reconstruction project along US Route 219. Approximately \$950,000 has been appropriated for this project by the Cambria County MPO scheduled for 2016.

#### Actions Underway

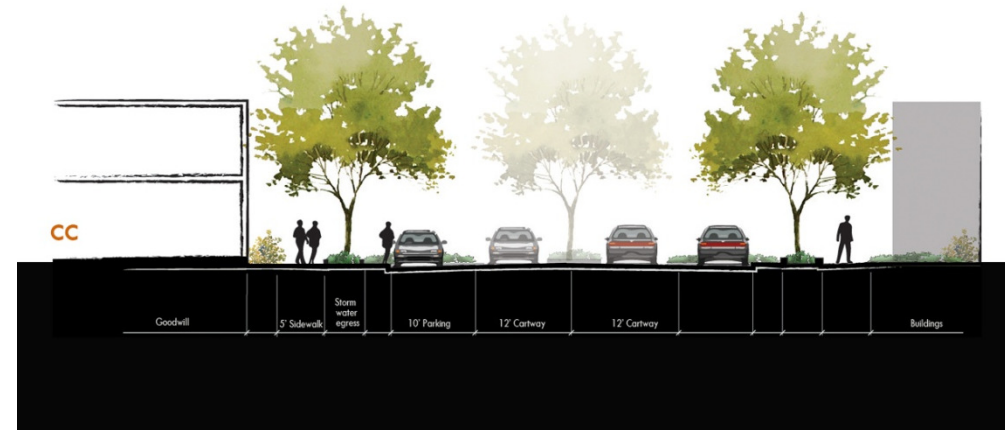
1. Partnered with Chatham University school of Landscape Architecture to develop site plans and renderings to address parking concerns along US Route 219 Corridor.
2. Communications underway with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in order to convey Borough priorities regarding site parking.
3. Parking improvements listed on the TIP, approved for funding by the Cambria County MPO in 2016.

#### Longer Term Considerations

1. Development of a committee of local business owners to provide continuous project feedback.
2. Continue to research and network with potential funding partners.
3. Proactively address future safety concerns with Carrolltown Borough Police Department.
4. Exchange ideas with other communities that have recently implemented downtown parking strategies.



Parking Alternatives Proposed for US Route 219



## Roundabout Design for the Intersection of US Route 219 and Sunset Road

The graduate students from Chatham University put forth a considerable amount of thought and energy towards accomplishing this goal. The students proposed design techniques and physical infrastructure treatments that would reduce the speed of traffic along the corridor. Chief among these is the visual pictured at left, a roundabout at the intersection of Sunset Road and US Route 219. This intersection is located at the north end of Carrolltown, where traffic enters areas of greater residential density.

Among the many benefits of a roundabout, it announces to incoming traffic that an urban area with reduced speed limits is ahead. It also acts as a physical barrier that actually requires drivers to slow down.

Residents and officials alike were impressed by this idea and the conceptual renderings. The graduate student who presented this idea came up with three alternative scenarios for the placement of the roundabout, since nearby homes and the Carrolltown American Legion Park could be affected by its location.

Currently, there are no roundabouts within the six county area that comprises PennDot District 9.

Other, more conventional traffic calming designs were also presented by the Chatham University students for intersections further south along US Route 219. These included street corner bulbouts, sidewalks, curb, and street trees.

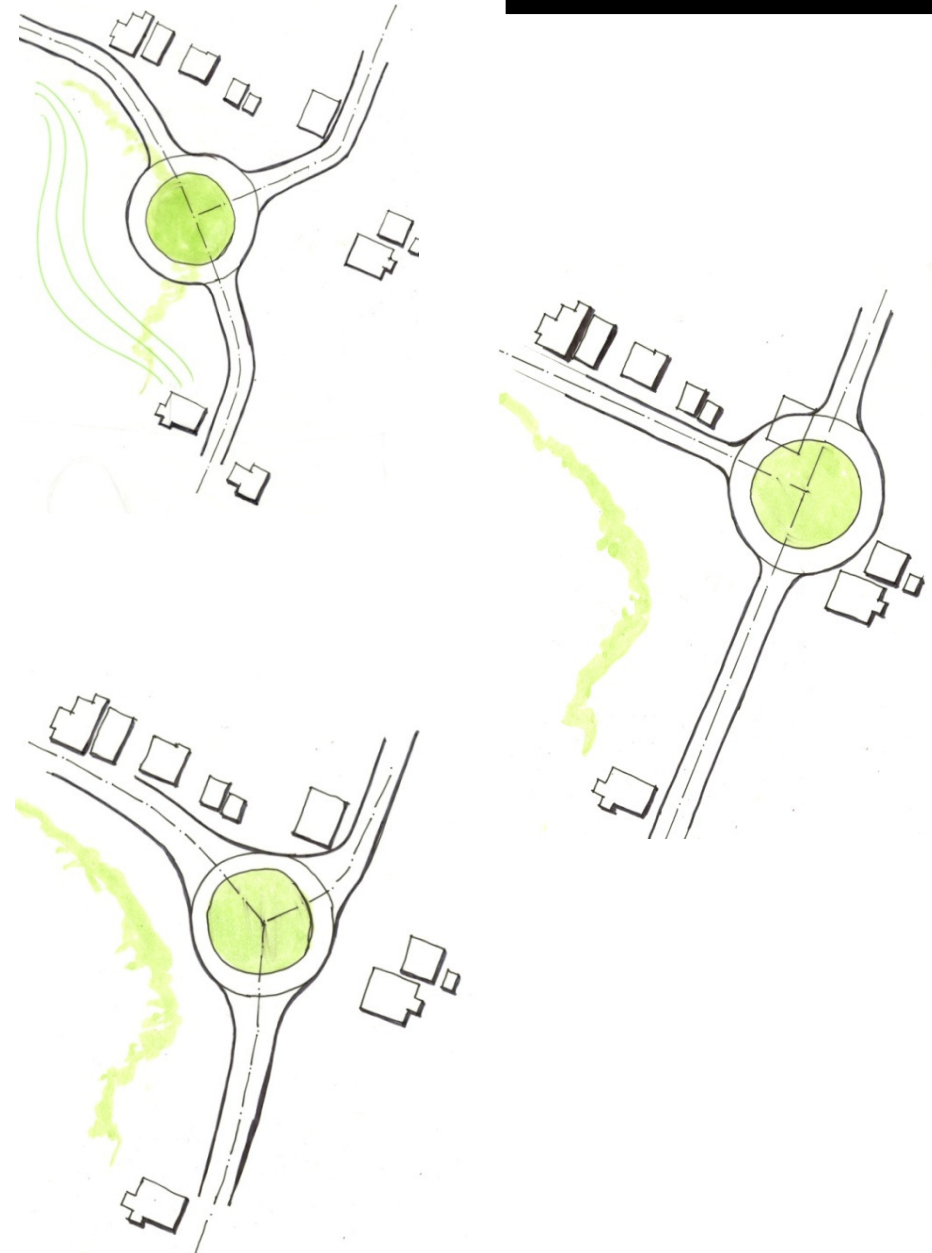


## Actions Underway

1. Analyze the impacts of each roundabout design alternative to adjacent and nearby properties.
2. Communicate with other municipalities in Pennsylvania that have roundabouts.
3. Evaluate the costs and measures needed to be taken for each design to be completed.
4. Communicate community goals, concerns and priorities regarding each roundabout design to PennDot.

## Longer Term Considerations

1. Determine which intersections along US Route 219 would most benefit from bulbouts and other traffic calming measures recommended by Chatham University.
2. Seek additional community input about roundabout and traffic calming designs once ideas are refined.
3. Identify a preferred alternative roundabout design.
4. Request a PennDot speed study along US Route 219.



Conceptual rendering of roundabout and other streetscape treatments approaching Sunset Road and US Route 219 from the north.





Current view of Sunset Road and US  
Route 219 from the north.





## AESTHETIC MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS

During the goal setting sessions of the planning process, community members felt that it was important to go beyond safety improvements to make improvements to the Main Street corridor that are geared towards appearance and the overall marketability of Carrolltown's Main Street corridor. With over eight thousand vehicles per day passing by on US Route 219, the opportunity exists to capitalize on some of this traffic volume, while building on the Borough's efforts to market the community as an attractive residential market and base for visitors to Rock Run ATV Park.

The highest priorities concerning this issue were sidewalk improvements and making an attempt to eliminate unsightly telephone poles that currently line most of Main Street. Both of these items would go a long way towards accomplishing the mutual goals of maintaining the Borough's residential housing base while attracting more business. Street lights are also something residents discussed as both a safety and aesthetic issue.

### Actions Underway

1. Planning for the development of new sidewalks along Main Street as a part of the PennDot US Route 219 Improvements Project.
2. Conduct a feasibility analysis to examine the removal of telephone poles along Main Street and subsequent underground utility location.
3. Work with PennDot officials to develop an effective street lighting plan.

4. Evaluation of other decorative streetscape elements to enhance the appearance of the corridor.

### Longer Term Considerations

1. Identify properties suitable for the development of a small business incubator.
2. Consider benefits and drawbacks of ordinances that specify sidewalk standards.
3. Conduct a housing market study to better understand Carrolltown's housing options, and the budding university housing submarket.
4. Planning for storm water management along major thoroughfares.





## ASPIRATIONAL GOALS

### **Sewer Service**

The Dutch Road area of Carrolltown Borough and East Carroll Township do not currently have sewer service. This is a situation the Carrolltown Sewer Authority would like to remedy because many of the existing connections and services are substandard, which poses a threat to the health and safety of residents and the environment.

However, there are many obstacles in the way of an upgrade. The cost of the project is extremely prohibitive, and neither the local sewer authority nor the Borough can afford to take on such an expense. There is a chance the area could qualify to use county Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, but residents have not returned income surveys to determine if the neighborhood would be eligible for the program. Further efforts to encourage return of the survey and/or individually contact property owners have been unsuccessful.

Both the Sewer Authority and East Carroll Township share this goal of upgrading the service to this area, but for now progress remains elusive.

### **Natural Gas Service**

Carrolltown area is not serviced by a natural gas provider. Residents use heating oil, coal or wood to heat their homes. Many residents expressed interest in obtaining natural gas

service as a more cost effective, reliable and convenient way to heat their homes.

Currently, the private sector controls this resource and does not see Carrolltown as an economically viable market. The nearest transmission line is over a mile away. Efforts have been made to discuss this issue with the local natural gas provider without success.

### **Bridge repair / flooding issues over tributary to Little Chest Creek**

Flooding is an issue throughout Cambria County. After all, Cambria County's largest municipality, Johnstown, suffered some of the worst and most significant flooding events in the nation's history. With that perspective, flooding and stormwater management issues are frequent topics of conversation at local meetings.

Carrolltown is host to a tributary that forms the headwaters of Little Chest Creek. The tributary runs east-west through the northern part of Carrolltown Borough, and underneath US Route 219. Numerous members of the public discussed a scenario where the tributary floods during periods of heavy rainfall. The culvert underneath US Route 219 is inadequate to handle the amount of water that passes through during a high level storm event, resulting in water pooling along US Route 219. PennDot is aware of the situation, but corrective action is predicted to be expensive and not under consideration at this time.

# Goals, Action Plans and Implementation

As previously discussed, this plan utilizes a hybrid approach to create goals and action plans that are both implementable and specifically measurable. This approach will continue to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the planning process as the implementation of the plan unfolds. The Planning Commission encourages those interested in the progress of the plan to visit a link on our webpage devoted to the US Route 219 Corridor Plan, where progress reports will be issued monthly, [www.cambriaplanning.org](http://www.cambriaplanning.org).

In rural Cambria County communities such as Carrolltown, it is often impossible to find baseline data at the micro level that would enable the use of true performance measure indicators that are frequently used in larger cities and municipalities. Nonetheless, the Cambria County Planning Commission and its partner organizations attempted to create action plans that are not only accountable to the agreed upon goals, but that are also extremely measurable. With the compilation of goals and action plans, it is a simple task to objectively monitor the level of progress made towards the achievement of each of them.

The plan goals are tailored specifically to the community input received during the planning process. Some of the specific actions are geared towards collection of the data

necessary to evaluate different options to achieve the plan goals. In that regard, this planning process is driven by data in a manner similar to a plan that is accountable strictly to strictly performance measures.

The implementation of this plan will be an ongoing process, not easily captured at this one point in time. Some of the implementation has already happened. Some of it is currently underway, progressing as this physical document is assembled. Some of it will take additional time and resources. The inability to easily capture and report on the results is one drawback of an implementable plan. But we hope the website updates will remedy that somewhat.

It is the stated goal of the Cambria County Planning Commission to evaluate and learn from this process, so that it a foundation is laid for future plans in other Cambria County communities. With sixty-three municipalities, there is no shortage of work to be done.





# CARROLLTOWN

Goal 1: Improve parking safety along US Route 219 / Main Street				
Short Term Actions	Implementation			Responsible Partners
	No Action	Underway	Complete	
Partnered with Chatham University School of Landscape Architecture to develop site plans and renderings to address parking concerns along US Route 219 corridor.			✓	Carrolltown Borough Chatham University Cambria County Planning Commission
Communicate Borough parking priorities to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and initiate follow up meetings with PennDot District 9.		✓ Meeting with PennDot and PennDot design consultant scheduled for 12/9/2014.		Carrolltown Borough Council Cambria County Planning Commission PennDot District 9-0 Gannett Fleming
Parking improvements project listed on the Transportation Improvement Program, approved for funding by the Cambria County MPO in 2016.			✓	Carrolltown Borough Council Cambria County Planning Commission Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Long Term Actions	Implementation			Responsible Partners
	No Action	Underway	Complete	
Exchange ideas with other PA communities that have recently implemented downtown parking strategies.	✗			Carrolltown Borough Council Carrolltown Community Development Committee

Continue to research and network with potential funding partners.	✓ Meeting held with County Grants Facilitator to present project goals on 11/24/2014.	Cambria County Grants Administrator Carrolltown Borough Cambria County Planning Commission
Development of a committee of local business owners to provide continuous project feedback.	✓ Idea presented and discussed at NCABA fall meeting on 10/23/2014.	Northern Cambria Area Business Alliance Carrolltown Borough Council Carrolltown Community Development
Proactively address future safety concerns with Carrolltown Borough Police Department.	✗	Carrolltown Borough Council Carrolltown Police Department PennDot

## Goal 2: Reduce traffic speed along US Route 219 / Main Street corridor

Short Term Actions	Implementation			Responsible Partners
	No Action	Underway	Complete	
Analyze the impacts of each roundabout design alternative to adjacent and nearby properties.		✓		Carrolltown Borough Local Property Owners Carrolltown American Legion PennDot District 9-0
Communicate community goals, concerns and priorities regarding each roundabout design to PennDot.		✓		Carrolltown Borough PennDot District 9-0 Cambria County Planning Commission
Evaluate the costs and measures needed to be taken for each roundabout design to be completed.		✓		Carrolltown Borough PennDot District 9-0 Gannett Fleming
Communicate with other municipalities in Pennsylvania that have roundabouts.		✓ Contacts made with Linglestown Borough.		Carrolltown Borough Council & Community Development Committee Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission



Long Term Actions	Implementation			Responsible Partners
	No Action	Underway	Complete	
Determine which intersections along US Route 219 would most benefit from bulbouts and other traffic calming measures recommended by Chatham University.		✓		Carrolltown Borough Council & Community Development Committee PennDot District 9-0
Seek additional community input about roundabout and traffic calming designs once ideas are refined.		✓		Carrolltown Borough Council Cambria County Planning Commission PennDot District 9-0 Gannett Fleming
Identify a preferred roundabout design and location.	✗			Carrolltown Borough Council Borough Residents PennDot District 9-0
Request a Speed Restrictions Engineering and Traffic Study from PennDot. This would be the first step needed to evaluate the appropriateness of reduced speed limits along the US Route 219 corridor.	✗			Carrolltown Borough Cambria County Planning Commission PennDot District 9-0

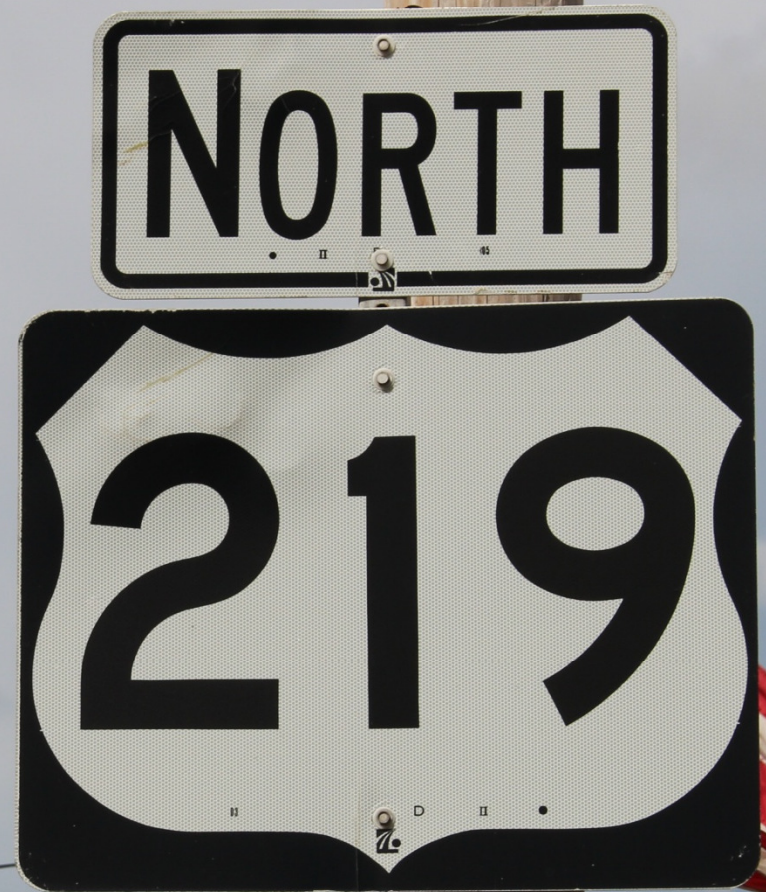
### Goal 3: Make aesthetic improvements along US Route 219 / Main Street corridor

Short Term Actions	Implementation			Responsible Partners
	No Action	Underway	Complete	
Planning for the development of new sidewalks along Main Street as a part of the PennDot US Route 219 Improvements Project.		✓		Carrolltown Borough Chatham University PennDot District 9-0

Conduct a feasibility analysis to examine underground placement of telephone poles along Main Street and subsequent underground utility location.	✓			Penelec Carrolltown Borough Council Cambria County Planning Commission
Work with PennDot officials to develop an effective street lighting plan. Evaluation of other decorative streetscape elements to enhance the appearance of the corridor.	✓			Penelec Carrolltown Community Development Committee PennDot District 9-0
Evaluation of other decorative streetscape elements to enhance the appearance of the corridor.	✓			Carrolltown Borough Borough Residents Chatham University
Long Term Actions	Implementation			Responsible Partners
	No Action	Underway	Complete	
Identify properties suitable for the development of a small business incubator.	✓ Initial site selection and conceptual plan begun by D. Fox, Chatham University			Chatham University Cambria County Economic Development Authority Carrolltown Borough Council & Community Development Committee
Consider benefits and drawbacks of ordinances that specify sidewalk standards.	✗			Carrolltown Borough Council & Community Development Committee
Conduct a housing market study to better understand Carrolltown's housing options, and the budding university housing submarket.	✗			Northern Cambria Area Business Alliance Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission Cambria County Redevelopment Authority
Planning for storm water management along major thoroughfares.	✓			Cambria County Conservation District Carrolltown Borough Council & Community Development Committee PennDot District 9-0



The Cambria County Planning Commission  
401 Candlelight Drive  
Ebensburg, PA 15931  
[www.cambriaplanning.org](http://www.cambriaplanning.org)



# APPENDIX A

## Borough of Carrolltown Adoption Resolution

### BOROUGH OF CARROLLTOWN

RESOLUTION #2015-001

#### ADOPTING THE US ROUTE 219 CORRIDOR PLAN

WHEREAS, the Cambria County Planning Commission initiated a partnership with the Borough of Carrolltown and other local organizations to develop a plan to improve conditions along the US Route 219 corridor; and

WHEREAS, the US Route 219 Corridor Plan is an active and ongoing process that aims to improve quality of life, foster community and economic development, and articulate the need for infrastructure improvements in the community; and

WHEREAS, the US Route 219 Corridor Plan undertook an extensive public involvement process that included the formation of a steering committee of representatives from the plan communities, public hearings, stakeholder meetings and continuing community dialogue; and

WHEREAS, those involved in the planning process established short term, long term and aspirational goals for the plan communities, while simultaneously working to develop the capacity to implement each goal; and

WHEREAS, status updates on the plan goals will be provided on the Cambria County Planning Commission website, [www.cambriaplanning.org](http://www.cambriaplanning.org).

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council of the Borough of Carrolltown, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, hereby adopts the US Route 219 Corridor Plan.

DULY adopted by the Council of the Borough of Carrolltown, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2015.



  
Tim Spangler, Borough Council President

  
Jim Erter, Mayor

ATTEST:  
  
Bernetta Julick, Borough Secretary



# APPENDIX B

## PennDOT Commitment Letter to Carrolltown Borough

DS-2A (1-13)



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

October 1, 2014

Lonnie Batdorf, Borough Manager  
Carrolltown Borough  
P.O. Box 307  
Carrolltown, PA 15722

RE: Carrolltown Main Street Project

Dear Mr. Batdorf,

Thank you for your letter dated August 12, 2014, updating us on your planning process for the Carrolltown Main Street Project.

We have received and reviewed the proposals for the US 219 corridor presented by Chatham University as well as your top three priorities for the area. We are looking forward to collaborating with the borough to design a quality project to alleviate the traffic concerns for the corridor, and would like to take this opportunity to update you on our project status.

We have assigned Nicki Donahoe, P.E. as the District Project Manager for the US 219 Carrolltown Improvements project. She will be the Department's main point of contact and will be coordinating with you throughout the project development process. She can be reached by phone at 814-317-1650 or by email at [ndonahoe@pa.gov](mailto:ndonahoe@pa.gov).

As per Ms. Donahoe's phone message left at your office on September 11, 2014, we are working towards the execution of an engineering agreement with Gannett Fleming, Inc. to provide design services for this project. Once the agreement has been executed, we will contact you to setup a meeting with you to discuss the borough's concerns, priorities and ideas.

RECEIVED

OCT 07 2014

CAMBRIA COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMISSION

Lonnie Batdorf, Borough Manager  
Carrolltown Borough  
Page 2  
October 1, 2014

Should you have any further questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Donahoe.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Prestash, P.E.  
District Executive  
Engineering District 9-0

cc: Ethan Imhoff, AICP, Executive Director  
Cambria County Planning Commission  
401 Candlelight Dr.  
Ebensburg, PA 15931