



Community Revitalization Plan
2016-2022

A program of
 **caclv**
Community Action Committee
of the Lehigh Valley, Inc.



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Executive Summary

Slate Belt Rising(SBR) is a neighborhood revitalization initiative designed to integrate and capitalize on the substantial assets of the individual Slate Belt communities. By leveraging the unique history, architecture, and culture of each municipality into a regional approach, SBR will use a Neighborhood Partnership Plan to foster comprehensive community and economic development. While SBR specifically targets the boroughs of Bangor, Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, and Portland, some initiatives promote development and the coordination of services for the entire region.

The mission of Slate Belt Rising (SBR), a program of Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley (CACLV), is to galvanize the boroughs of Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, and Portland to capitalize on their shared heritage and traditions, the natural beauty of the Slate Belt, and the commercial potential provided by the proximity to major roadways in order to increase economic opportunity in the region, reduce poverty, eliminate blight, and improve the overall quality of life.

SBR will work toward five major inter-connected objectives to revitalize the Slate Belt's boroughs of Bangor, Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, and Portland. These comprehensive priority areas include:

- Vibrant Economic Climate
- Regional Cooperation
- Neighborhoods and Housing
- Youth Engagement
- Sustainable Slate Belt Rising

About Our Community

The Slate Belt is the northern-most part of Northampton County, Pennsylvania, that includes 10 municipalities: the boroughs of Bangor, East Bangor, Pen Argyl, Portland, Wind Gap, and Roseto and the townships of Upper Mt. Bethel, Lower Mt. Bethel, Washington, and Plainfield. It is bordered by Monroe County to the north and the Delaware River and New Jersey to the east. It is bordered to the north by Interstate 80 and the west by State Route 33, which provides tremendous opportunity to capitalize on the cars and trucks that currently pass through without stopping. The Slate Belt is served by two school districts: Bangor Area School District and Pen Argyl Area School District.



The Slate Belt's rolling hills and fertile land were first home to farmers, but agriculture gave way to slate production after the discovery of the Martinsburg Formation in 1836. Quarries were mined across the region due to the high quality and malleability of the slate.

Immigrants from Wales, England, Germany, and Italy soon followed, drawn by jobs and opportunity. These immigrants remained, their traditions eventually overlapping and melding to create a vibrant culture that is the heart of the Slate Belt.

The turn of the 19th century brought the decline of the slate industry as the highest quality slate in the region was running out at the same time as slate was facing competition from new materials. In the face of this economic challenge, the people of the Slate Belt turned their energy to the silk and, later, apparel industries that brought new jobs and stability to the region.

However, by the end of the 1980s, the textile industry had left the region, leaving the community to reinvent itself yet again. Since that time, more and more residents are finding work outside of the Slate Belt and commuting to other parts of the Lehigh Valley, the Poconos, and even to New York City. A 2008 study from Lafayette College Technology Clinic titled "Intelligent Development of the Slate Belt" states that 76.6% of Slate Belt residents work outside of the towns in which they live. This has changed the fabric of the community.

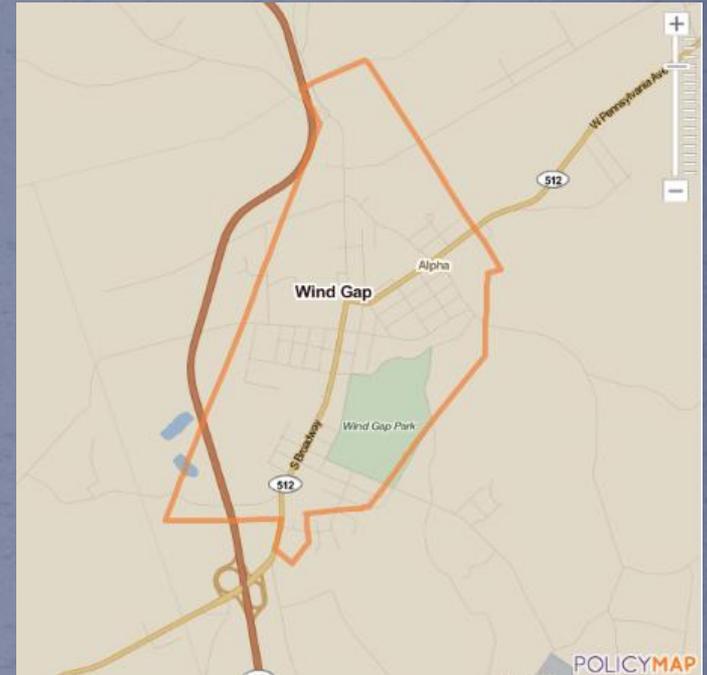
About Our Community



About Our Community: Wind Gap

Wind Gap is 1.37 square miles and was incorporated in 1893. It is the entrance into the Slate Belt from State Route 33 and is also known as the gateway into the Poconos. The “Gap” was a natural passage for Native Americans, settlers, and the military. It is a common stop for Appalachian Trail hikers.

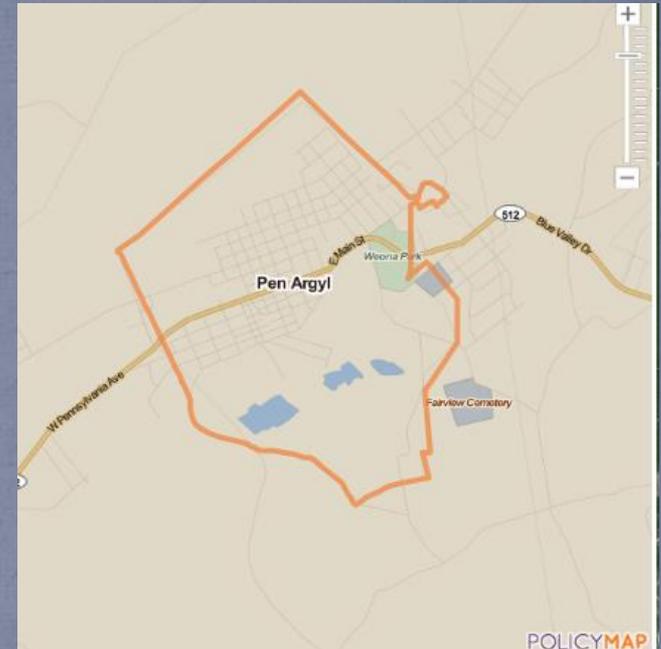
- More than 10% of Wind Gap residents have income below the federal poverty line
- A higher proportion of residents don't have a high school education (13.7%) when compared to Northampton County (10.5%).
- Over 38% of homeowners and 62.3% of renters are paying more for housing than they can afford, based on their income.



About Our Community: Pen Argyl

Pen Argyl is 1.40 square miles and was incorporated in 1882. “Pen” is Celtic for “mountain” and Argyl is Greek for “slate rock.” The Borough was originally part of the “walking purchase” in 1737. The first slate quarry opened in 1854, and the row homes and company stores followed to support the workers. There is currently one slate quarry still in operation.

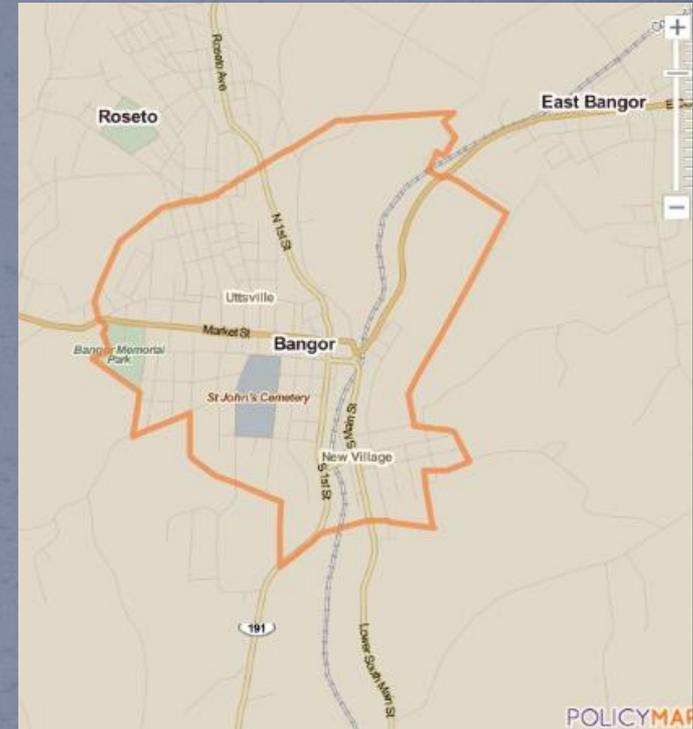
- Pen Argyl has an unemployment rate of 11.7%, which is significantly higher than Northampton County (8.2%).
- Over 15% of residents don't have a high school education (the percentage is 10.5% in Northampton County).
- Nearly 75% of its housing was constructed before 1939 and 41% of residents with a mortgage are paying more for housing than they can afford, based on their income.



About Our Community: Bangor

Bangor is 1.51 square miles and was incorporated in 1865. Settled around 1760, Bangor quickly changed from a farming community to the “center of commerce” of the Slate Belt — known internationally for slate roofing, blackboards, and floor tiles. Although a mixture of Pennsylvania German, Welsh, English, and Italian heritage — the Borough’s significant Welsh origins are still very evident in the historic stone walls and established gardens and other greenery.

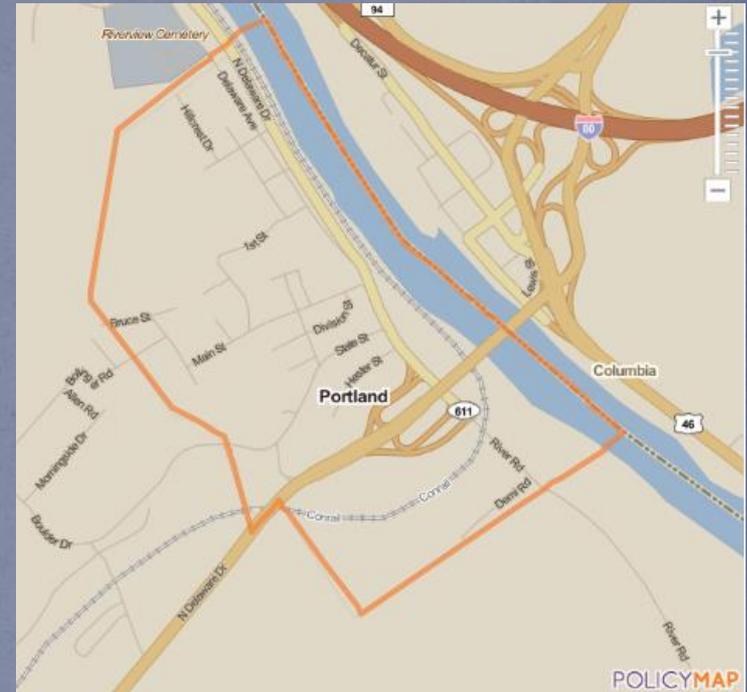
- Over 12% of Bangor’s residents are living below the poverty line (compared to 9.8% of Northampton County residents).
- At 11.4%, the unemployment rate is higher than Northampton County (8.2%).
- Over 65% of its housing was constructed before 1939. Nearly 40% of homeowners and almost 60% of renters were paying more for housing than they could afford, based on their income.



About Our Community: Portland

Portland is 0.58 square miles and was incorporated in 1876. Portland has a well-defined business district and a great respect for historic preservation. Its location along the Delaware River on Route 611 and direct pedestrian and vehicle links to New Jersey make this small borough a significant river town gateway into the Lehigh Valley and a prime location for eco-tourism.

- Twenty-one percent (21%) of Portland's residents are living below the poverty line (compared to 9.8% of Northampton County residents).
- At 16.1%, the unemployment rate is almost double that of Northampton County (8.2%).
- Over 73% of its housing was constructed before 1939 and more than 75% of homeowners are paying more for housing than they can afford, based on their income.



About Our Community

The Slate Belt has many assets, including a rich cultural history, the potential for eco-tourism due to gorgeous natural features (including trailhead access to the Appalachian Trail and Rails to Trail and access to the Delaware River for kayak, canoe and raft trips, which end in Portland), recreational facilities, walkable business districts, historic architectural structures, the potential for industrial parks, close proximity to major urban centers, and access to major thoroughfares. These assets provide a solid framework from which to strengthen the Slate Belt through community and economic development, as well as growth.

However, a look at the demographic data (detailed on the following pages) indicates that several factors combine to make the resurgence of the Slate Belt a challenge.



About Our Community: Economic Conditions

Median Household Income

According to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014), the median household income in each of the four boroughs that make up Slate Belt Rising lagged considerably behind Northampton County's median income of \$61,041: Bangor, \$47,349; Pen Argyl, \$55,094; Portland, \$45,250; and Wind Gap, \$32,106.

Poverty

The poverty rate in the four boroughs is higher than Northampton County's (9.8%): Bangor, 12.1%; Pen Argyl, 10.9%; Portland, 21%; and Wind Gap, 10.7%. Wind Gap is described in the Northampton County Consolidated Plan (2012-2017) as having a "disproportionate rate" of minority residents facing poverty.

Unemployment

The American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014) also showed that unemployment is higher in three of the four boroughs than in Northampton County (8.2%): Bangor, 11.4%; Pen Argyl, 11.7%; Portland, 16.1%; and Wind Gap, 5.8%.

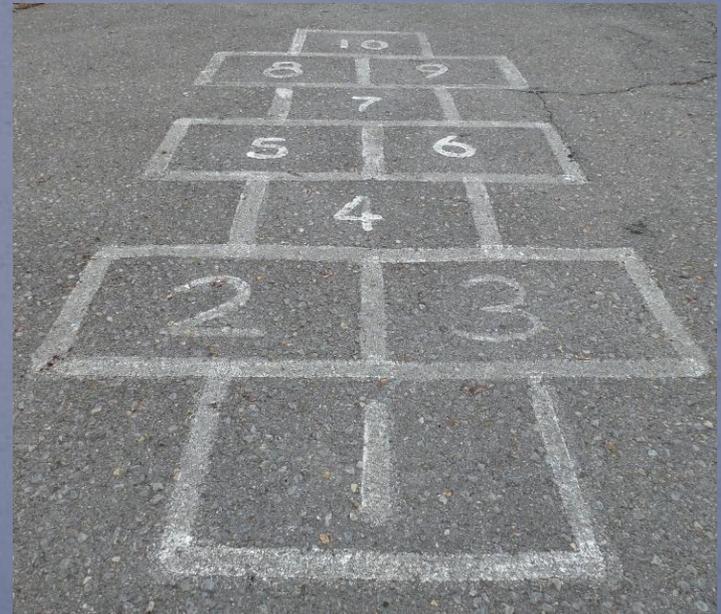
SSI, Cash Assistance, and SNAP

The American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014) indicated that in Northampton County, 5% of the population received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is defined by the Social Security Administration as being "designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income" and provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. An estimated 3% of the population in Northampton County received cash public assistance and 10% received SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, formerly known as Food Stamps, in the previous twelve months. These numbers are higher on all indicators in two of the four boroughs (see chart on page 15) that make up Slate Belt Rising and higher in enough areas of the other boroughs to be a cause for concern.

About Our Community: Education

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment, a key indicator for earning potential, is a matter of concern in the Slate Belt. According to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014), in Northampton County, 10.5% of the population over 25 did not have a high school diploma or equivalent. That number was higher in three of the four boroughs: Bangor, 12.7%; Pen Argyl, 15.6%; and Wind Gap, 13.7%. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate in 2013-2014 for the Bangor Area School District was 88.85%; in the Pen Argyl School District it was 86.51%. The graduation rate for students defined as “economically disadvantaged” in the Bangor Area School District was 72.51%; that number was 75% in the Pen Argyl Area School District. The Department of Education defines a cohort as, “students who together entered high school (defined by 9th grade) for the first time during the same school year.” The 4-Year Cohort is the official graduation rate according to school district data. According to the PA Department of Education, each school district defines what qualifies as “economically disadvantaged,” and data sources such as TANF or Medicaid cases or free/reduced price lunch may be used.



About Our Community: Housing Conditions

The type and quality of housing and how much people are paying for it can also serve as an indicator for the well-being of a community. Data from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2010-2014) indicated that the region faces challenges in relation to appropriate housing. Whether or not housing is affordable, safe, and appropriate can be determined by a variety of factors that include:

- Percentage of household income that is used for owner housing costs
- Percentage of household income that is used for gross rent
- Age of structure
- Presence of complete plumbing facilities
- Presence of complete kitchen facilities



About Our Community: Housing Conditions

Percentage of household income that is used for owner housing costs

Northampton County's Consolidated Plan (2012-2017) states that cost burden "is the single most prevalent housing problem for many households." According to the Consolidated Plan, families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered moderately cost burdened while those paying more than 50% of their income for housing are severely cost burdened. Families that are cost burdened may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. This lack of affordable housing is a significant hardship for low- and moderate-income households preventing them from meeting their other basic needs, such as nutrition and healthcare, or saving for their future and that of their families.

In Northampton County, 33.8% of homeowners with a mortgage paid more than 30% of their household income for housing. All four boroughs have a higher incidence than the county of homeowners with a mortgage who are housing cost burdened: Bangor, 39.4%; Pen Argyl, 41%; Portland, 75.5%; and Wind Gap, 38.1%.

Percentage of household income that contributes to gross rent

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the rental housing market is booming. Renters made up 36% of all households nationwide in 2013 and nearly a quarter of those were ELI (extremely low income) renters. In 2013, Pennsylvania had a deficit of 281,952 units available for renters at or below 30% of area median income.

Renting has become more attractive to people in all demographic groups, appealing broadly across age and income. Finding a decent, affordable apartment is a challenge for all renters, but the poorest households are the most likely to be locked out of the market entirely.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) listed the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton in 2015 as \$972 for a 2-bedroom unit. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition report titled "Out of Reach 2015", the income needed to afford the FMR for a 2-bedroom unit is \$38,880. The hourly wage needed to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at that FMR is \$18.69 an hour. A head of household would have to work 2.6 full-time jobs at minimum wage to afford a 2-bedroom FMR apartment.

In Northampton County, 53.7% of renters pay more than 30% of their household income for housing. Two of four the boroughs have a higher incidence of renters who are housing cost burdened: Bangor, 59.1%; Pen Argyl, 37.1%; Portland, 44.2%; and Wind Gap, 62.3%.

About Our Community: Housing Conditions

Age of structure

The age of housing has a direct impact on housing costs and housing affordability. The federal CDBG program has prioritized the provision of decent housing and suitable living environments. In addition, the Northampton County Consolidated Plan has established as a high priority the “provision of affordable and suitable housing for households with AMI of 30% or less experiencing severe cost burdens, including elderly residents, small households, and those in sub-standard conditions.” The Consolidated Plan has also established as a high priority to “improve housing conditions for both homeowners and renters.”

The Slate Belt has a significant number of houses that were built before 1939: Bangor, 65.8%; Pen Argyl, 74.8%; Portland, 73.4%. Wind Gap’s housing stock isn’t quite as old, with 22.2% being constructed before 1939.

Presence of plumbing facilities

In Northampton County, 0.8% of housing lacks complete plumbing facilities. When comparing the boroughs of Bangor, Pen Argyl, Portland, and Wind Gap to the County, Wind Gap at 2.3% has more housing that lacks complete plumbing facilities.

Presence of complete kitchen facilities

In Northampton County 1.3% of housing lacks complete kitchen facilities. Pen Argyl (2.3%) and Wind Gap (6.6%) have a greater number of housing units that lack complete kitchen facilities.



About Our Community

	Northampton County	Bangor	Wind Gap	Pen Argyl	Portland
Population	299,225	5,256	2,724	3,576	523
Median Household Income	\$61,041	\$47,349	\$32,106	\$55,094	\$45,250
Poverty Rate	9.8%	12.1%	10.7%	10.9%	21%
Unemployment Rate	8.2%	11.4%	5.8%	11.7%	16.1%
Senior Citizens with a Disability	35.4%	41.2%	59.6%	39.9%	67.4%
Occupied Housing Units	93.4%	94.3%	93.3%	86.7%	97.3%
Percent Owner-Occupied Housing Units	72.3%	54.7%	48.8%	58.6%	75.9%
Property Value under \$150,000	25.7%	47.6%	37.4%	63.4%	40.2%
Percent of Houses Built before 1939	27.9%	65.8%	22.2%	74.8%	73.4%
Percent that Moved since 2010	19%	27%	24.2%	18.4%	18.1%
Percent without High School Education	10.5%	12.7%	13.7%	15.6%	6.1%
Receive SSI	5%	3.7%	3.3%	7.4%	13.4%
Receive Cash Assistance	3%	1.5%	3.3%	3.4%	3.7%
Receive SNAP	10%	10.2%	8.7%	9.1%	17.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2010-2014

About Our Community

	SBR Target Area	Northampton County	Pennsylvania
Population	12,079	299,225	12,758,729
Median Household Income	\$46,114	\$61,041	\$53,115
Poverty Rate	11.8%	9.8%	13.5%
Unemployment Rate	10.4%	8.2%	5.4%
Senior Citizens with a Disability	47.8%	35.4%	34.9%
Occupied Housing Units	92%	93.4%	88.9%
Percent Owner-Occupied Housing Units	55.2%	72.3%	69.5%
Property Value under \$150,000	49.4%	25.7%	43.9%
Percent of Houses Built before 1939	57.7%	27.9%	26.9%
Percent that Moved since 2010	23.5%	19%	19.6%
Percent without High School Education	13.4%	10.5%	11%
Receive SSI	5.1%	5%	5.9%
Receive Cash Assistance	2.6%	3%	3.5%
Receive SNAP	9.8%	10%	12.5%

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2010-2014

About Slate Belt Rising

The mission of Slate Belt Rising (SBR), a program of Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley (CACLV), is to galvanize the boroughs of Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, and Portland to capitalize on their shared heritage and traditions, the natural beauty of the Slate Belt, and the commercial potential provided by the proximity to major roadways in order to increase economic opportunity in the region, reduce poverty, eliminate blight, and improve the overall quality of life.

The SBR Steering Committee includes representatives from each participating borough, borough residents, Northampton County Department of Community & Economic Development, CACLV, corporate funders, state legislators, and committee chairs from SBR's working committees.



Development of this Community Plan

This Slate Belt Rising plan is the result of comprehensive study and discussion about the challenges facing the Slate Belt, and possible solutions, with residents and community leaders. It was initiated as part of a continuing strategy to gain a Main Street Designation from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

A survey of 436 Slate Belt residents was conducted between November 2015 and January 2016 (see pages 19-20) to gauge their perceptions of their community.

In addition, business and residential districts surrounding the commercial cores in the four boroughs that span the Slate Belt (Portland, Bangor, Pen Argyl and Wind Gap) were examined. Existing plans were reviewed to ensure this plan's interrelationship with other projects (see pages 22-23).

Personnel at Northampton County, Totts Gap Arts Institute, Barry Isett & Associates, Inc., the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, borough officials, and staff from the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley participated in this process. The information gathered was analyzed and served as the catalyst for the Neighborhood Partnership Plan.

In June 2016, a public meeting was held in order to seek input from the community on the Slate Belt Rising Community Revitalization Plan. After this meeting, the plan was approved by the Slate Belt Rising Steering Committee and CACLV's Board of Directors.

Development of the Plan: Community Perception

Standard Community Perceptions Survey

(Analysis by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center)

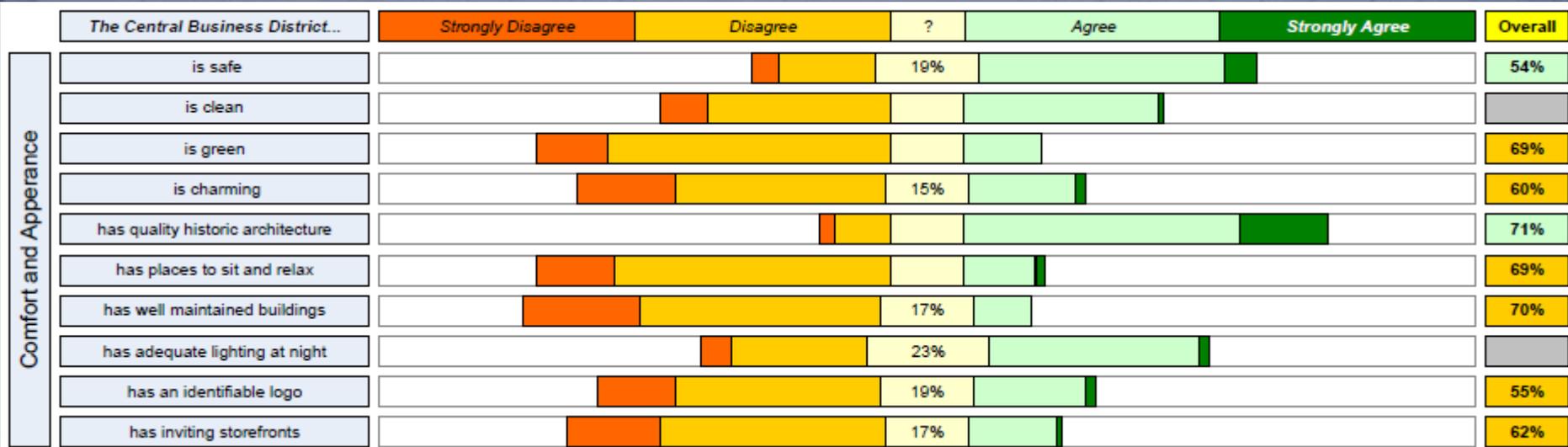
The community was asked to supply their opinion on a series of standard perceptual questions about their downtown. The purpose of this survey tool was to get a better idea of how people feel about common attributes that contribute to a “sense of place” within a community. The questions were based upon a matrix for what constitutes a “place” that was developed by the Project for Public Spaces.

The online survey consisted of participants responding by evaluating their feelings and opinions about 44 different factors in five major perceptual categories. These categories included Comfort & Appearance, Economic Uses/Characteristics, Sociability/Community Attitude, Activities, and Access/Linkages. Just as important as the individual factors was the extent to which the major categories were determined to be either a strength or a weakness within the community. It is important to note that for the purpose of this survey, undecided responses were counted as negative since it is an indication of a lack of familiarity with the central business district and as such, a negative result.

The online survey was promoted by email news blasts and press releases to the community and 436 individuals responded to the online survey from November 2015 through January 2016.

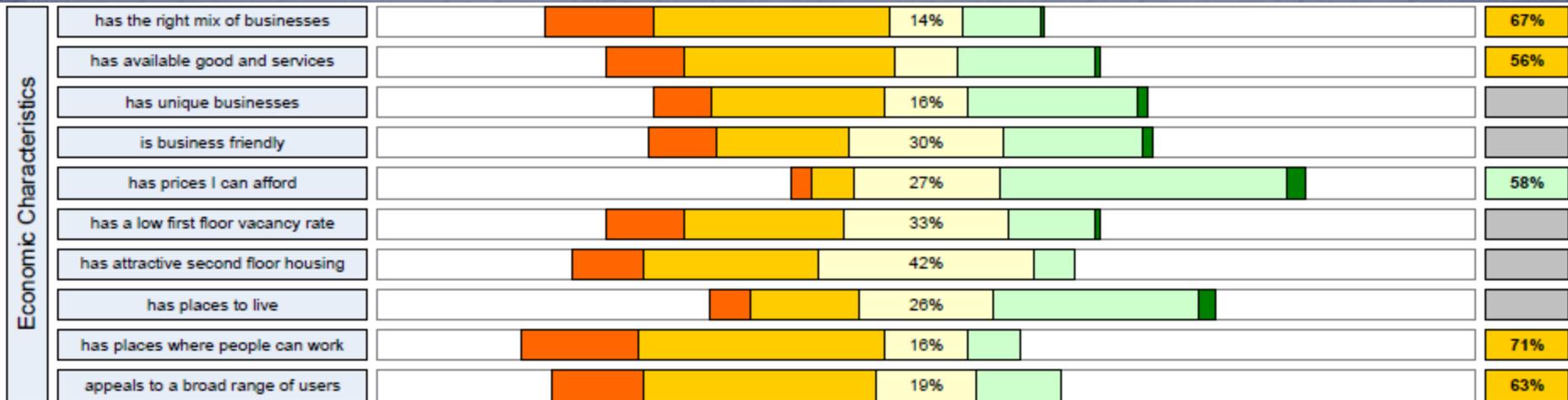
Development of the Plan: Community Perception

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SLATE BELT REGIONAL INITIATIVE – 436 Respondents (collected November 2015 – January 2016)



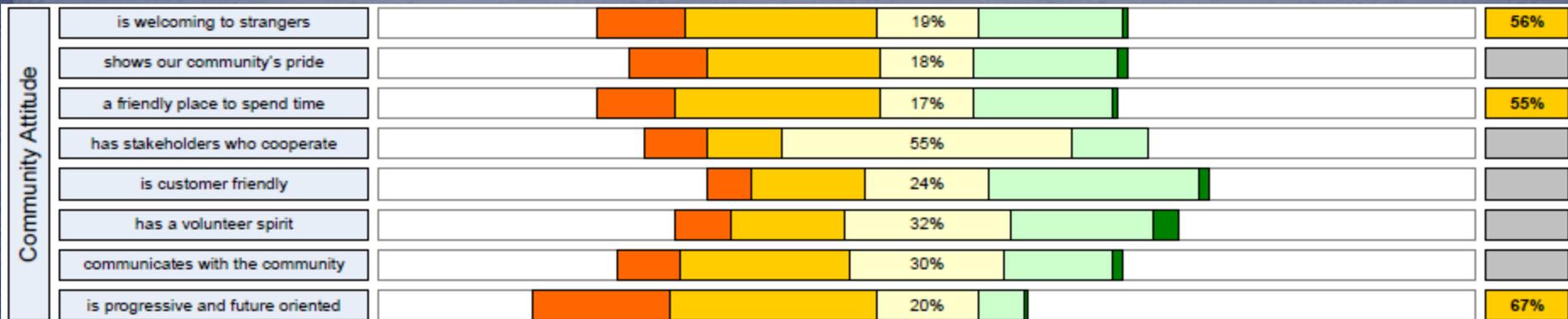
Development of the Plan: Community Perception

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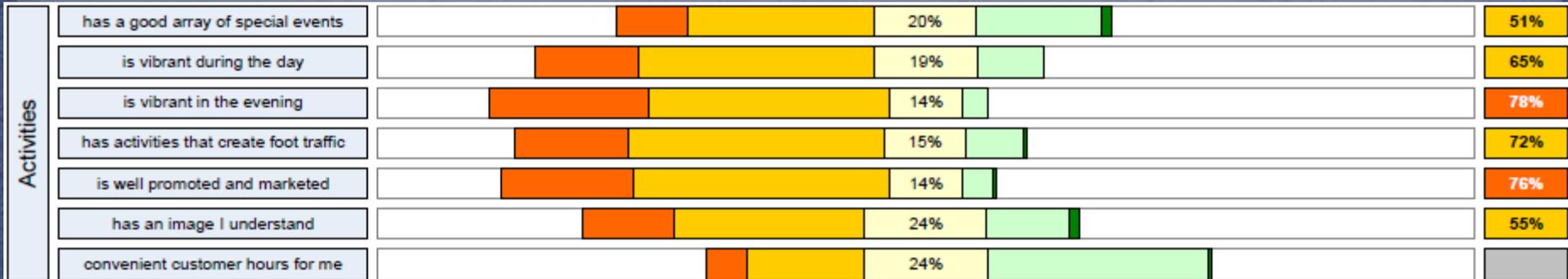
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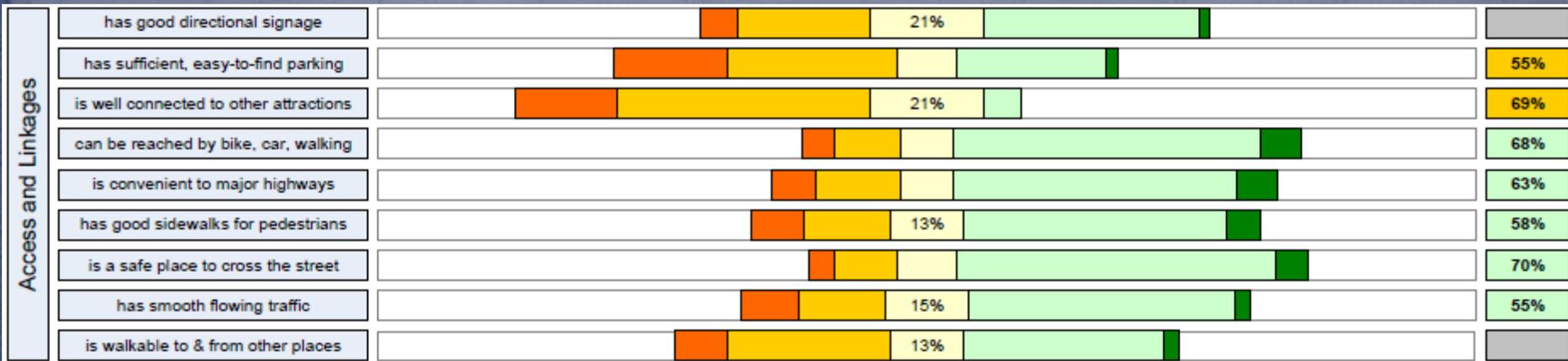
Development of the Plan: Community Perception

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SLATE BELT REGIONAL INITIATIVE – 436 Respondents (collected November 2015 – January 2016)



Development of the Plan: Community Perception

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE SLATE BELT REGIONAL INITIATIVE – 436 Respondents (collected November 2015 – January 2016)



Development of the Plan: Community Perception

In summary, the participants gave the Slate Belt Regional Initiative a mix of responses.

Nineteen out of 44 questions received moderately negative responses, two questions received strongly negative responses, nine questions received moderately positive responses, and 15 questions received an undecided response. All of the categories contained multiple negative responses - including Comfort and Appearance, Economic Characteristics, Community Attitudes, Activities, and Access and Linkages.

The 15 questions, or 34%, that received undecided responses were, as previously noted, considered as negative results for the purpose of this survey. This negativity points to communities that may be in transition, that while they may demonstrate opportunity also sharing the possibility of decline or the need for improvement. However, in this case, uncertainty can also be an indication of a lack of awareness or a perceived disconnect to the revitalization effort in the communities. It can also indicate that a revitalization effort is never done – it is an ever-changing endeavor that needs to reexamine its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Ideally, the plan should reflect action taken toward addressing the potential issues associated with the negative/undecided ratings, in addition to recognizing the areas that have received positive responses as areas of maintained activity.

This could be a critical time for the downtown revitalization efforts within the Slate Belt area and a time when great positive changes can be realized. This survey acts as a guide in providing direction at the initial stage of the revitalization process and at crucial junctures during the process.

Development of the Plan: Review of Existing Plans

Comprehensive Plan the Lehigh Valley....2030

The goals of this plan, developed by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, include to promote tourism activities that relate to the unique physical, historic and cultural features of the Lehigh Valley, provide an adequate supply of affordable housing, revitalize older housing and structures through cooperative efforts of public and private institutions, and provide and maintain adequate space and facilities to meet the recreation needs of Lehigh Valley residents.

Northampton County 2012-2017 5-Year Consolidated Plan

This plan, which was created to provide an assessment of housing and community development needs in Northampton County and develop strategies and goals to ensure support for programs and facilities that promote viable communities and address community development, infrastructure, and human service needs of urban and rural areas, identified job training, education, transportation, and food access as issues impacting the Slate Belt.

Portland Borough Comprehensive Plan 2014

Several goals of this award-winning plan dovetail with community input received for the SBR plan. These goals included: encourage a mix of business and commercial development in the Borough; provide for sound housing and all types of housing; provide for sufficient parks and recreational facilities; and promote historic preservation.

Lehigh Valley Return on Environment, 2014

This Lehigh Valley Planning Commission study found that: 1) an estimated \$795.7 million is spent on outdoor recreation each year in the Lehigh Valley. This represents the amount of money that residents in the Lehigh Valley spend on outdoor activities and their total impact on the economy; 2) recreational activity on open space in the Lehigh Valley creates an estimated 9,678 jobs both inside and outside the Lehigh Valley generating about \$58.9 million in state and local taxes; and 3) an estimated 25% of all tourism in the Lehigh Valley comes from recreation.

Development of the Plan: Review of Existing Plans

A Blueprint for Success: An Economic Development Strategy for the Lehigh Valley

This Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation plan suggests that the Lehigh Valley continues to build its strong foundation of economic development principles, namely effective use of available land and sites and developing workforce talent. Availability of suitable office space, low-interest small business loans, and recreational facilities were named as assets. These and other assets can be used to attract and retain businesses throughout the Lehigh Valley.

Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (Envision Lehigh Valley)

This report, prepared for Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation by WFN Consulting, recommends that Northampton County, and other CDBG entitlement communities, should continue to concentrate affordable housing funds, to the degree practicable, on rehabilitation that increases the quality of existing housing units.



Plan Objectives

Vibrant Economic Climate:

- Improve commercial districts to promote economic development and enhance community pride
- Develop the entrepreneurial talent of the Slate Belt and create opportunities for small business success
- Promote opportunities for shopping, dining, and recreation that leverage the history and authentic charm of the Slate Belt's boroughs
- Embrace and promote the arts as an engine for economic growth in the Slate Belt

Regional Cooperation:

- Promote regional planning, cooperation, and coordination of services throughout the Slate Belt
- Rebrand the Slate Belt to position it as a unique Lehigh Valley asset
- Improve the region's trail networks and river access to make the Slate Belt an ecotourism destination
- Organize community activities and events that highlight the region's heritage while providing opportunities for new and existing Slate Belt businesses
- Use the boroughs' history as the foundation to use the arts to tell the emerging Slate Belt story

Neighborhoods and Housing:

- Create strong, attractive neighborhoods with affordable and well-maintained housing options for both owners and renters

Youth Engagement:

- Create new artistic, educational, recreational, and vocational opportunities for youth

Sustainable Slate Belt Rising:

- Create a sustainable organization that can effectively mobilize the community to meet its diverse needs

Strategic Goals: Vibrant Economic Climate

- Develop a strategy to capitalize on the car and truck traffic from Interstate 80 and State Route 33
- Create and implement a walkability plan for the boroughs
- Improve sidewalks and streetscapes
- Develop traffic calming strategies and implement a regional parking study
- Facilitate a commercial façade and distinctive signage program
- Promote conversion of vacant buildings to commercial or mixed-use properties
- Facilitate connections between Slate Belt businesses and entrepreneurs throughout the Lehigh Valley
- Offer entrepreneurial training and one-on-one technical assistance to small businesses in the Slate Belt
- Facilitate partnerships to promote the region's agricultural trail and to make products produced by local farmers and wineries available through downtown businesses
- Develop a marketing strategy to attract eco-, heritage, and historical tourists and other visitors
- Recruit new and support existing businesses that provide goods and services to tourists
- Integrate the arts as a tool for community and economic development
- Promote opportunities for residents to learn trades such as slate roof restoration



Strategic Goals: Regional Cooperation

- Participate in planning efforts that encourage regional cooperation
- Host public meetings and planning sessions to promote regional cooperation
- Encourage business and residential growth in the town centers while promoting the preservation of the farming community and the natural environment
- Develop a strategy to rebrand the Slate Belt that includes community engagement, social and print media, and a unified signage program
- Incorporate public art into commercial districts and trail networks to tell the story of the Slate Belt
- Develop regional trail networks and river access, including exploring the feasibility of connecting gaps in the trails, delineating all trail and river access points, and constructing “park and bike/hike/boat” areas and other amenities
- Develop festivals, concerts, farmers’ markets, and other events designed to highlight the region’s heritage, unite the community, and attract diverse visitors
- Promote zoning ordinances that enhance the region’s ability to attract overnight visitors
- Leverage and promote the region’s artistic and historical legacy



Strategic Goals: Neighborhoods and Housing

- Educate landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities
- Encourage municipalities to enforce their building codes
- Explore the possibility of a multi-municipal code enforcement effort
- Promote employer-assisted housing in the boroughs with regional employers
- Promote the benefits of "town living" to both potential homeowners and renters
- Encourage building owners to integrate historic preservation when converting first floor commercial and upper floor residential spaces
- Provide homeownership counseling to prospective homebuyers
- Improve the housing stock through façade and other repairs
- Attract urban homesteaders through promotional materials



Strategic Goals: Youth Engagement

- Create opportunities for youth to be engaged in educational, artistic, recreational, and vocational activities
- Promote the Slate Belt's natural and recreational resources to youth throughout the region
- Engage youth as ambassadors for the Slate Belt region through arts and media projects
- Promote development of leadership skills by providing area youth with opportunities for community service
- Teach youth important life and job skills through entrepreneurial initiatives and education related to skilled trades



Strategic Goals: Sustainable Slate Belt Rising

- Develop organizational standards and processes
- Continue to develop an engaged Steering Committee and subcommittees that are made up of community residents, local and regional business owners, service providers, funders, borough representatives, and other stakeholders
- Engage local residents in the process of neighborhood revitalization by creating volunteer and leadership opportunities
- Develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy that is sufficient to meet the aims of the plan
- Continue to develop local and regional corporate partnerships with businesses that have a regional presence and that employ Slate Belt residents
- Partner with other organizations that share the aim of revitalizing the Slate Belt



Implementation Plan

Evaluation and measurement of success is rooted in this neighborhood plan as well as CACLV's Strategic Plan (2012-2017) that defines CACLV's mission, values, strategic assumptions, strategic direction, and strategy for mission implementation. SBR will develop an annual work plan to articulate how it will accomplish the goals of this plan and CACLV's strategic plan. The annual work plan will consist of measurable goals and performance targets that guide the program's services, projects, and activities. It will be evaluated twice a year to measure the effectiveness of services and program outcomes. This evaluation will be conducted by the SBR Steering Committee and the Program Development and Evaluation Committee of CACLV's Board of Directors; it will then be approved by CACLV's full board.

In addition to the work plan evaluation, the program will submit monthly summary reports of program activities to the Steering Committee as well as to CACLV's executive director for presentation to CACLV's Board of Directors. This provides a means to regularly monitor programs to ensure that achievement of objectives are on schedule.

Program participants will also be given the opportunity to evaluate the program in order for CACLV staff to measure its effectiveness. Residents will be periodically surveyed to assess satisfaction with the program, specific projects, and the status of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood-level measures will also be evaluated on an annual basis to determine progress that has been made. Primary data will be collected using tools such as Success Measures from NeighborWorks America. In addition, secondary data will be collected from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey.

Implementation Plan

Task	2016-2017	2016-2021	2021-2022
Approve and adopt 2016-2022 plan	X		
Reorganize subcommittees	X		
Conduct monthly Steering Committee meetings	X	X	X
Conduct monthly subcommittee meetings	X	X	X
Develop annual budgets that prioritize community needs	X	X	X
Evaluate emerging community needs and facilitate discussion to develop tangible, feasible solutions	X	X	X
Evaluate progress toward project goals and success of annual action plans	X	X	X
Communicate information about project outcomes with DCED and the community served	X	X	X
Engage the community in the process of developing a plan for 2022 and beyond			X
Secure funding to expand and continue revitalization efforts in the Slate Belt	X	X	X



A program of



Community Action Committee
of the Lehigh Valley, Inc.