



*#positively*  
**CORRY**

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COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN  
2021-2031



Prepared by czbLLC

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Prepared by  
czbLLC

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# Introduction and Background

In 2019, Impact Corry, a community benefit organization working for a



stronger Corry, PA, repositioned itself to coordinate the community improvement work of all relevant local agencies and stakeholder groups. Related to these efforts, Impact Corry recognized the need for a Community Strategic Plan that would point disparate efforts in the same direction, clearly outline critical initiatives, and determine the necessary action steps and resources.

Impact Corry's board, staff, and advocates endeavored to undertake this planning process during the first quarter of 2020, despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March. Under the leadership of a 23-person steering committee, the process and its community engagement work went on. The committee did its work virtually through the spring and into the summer, meeting via web-based video conferences. As the consulting team looked into the available community data, volunteers added to it with a windshield survey of more than 2,000 residential properties,

providing valuable information on the state of Corry's housing and neighborhoods. In-person committee meetings returned by the summer—outdoors and with social distancing requirements—as did facilitated conversations in the community and through surveys.

The process revealed a broad community consensus that Corry is a city with challenges—a struggling economy, rising poverty, declining neighborhoods—but also has assets to leverage—a pastoral setting, historic building stock, the grit and ingenuity of its residents. By tapping into its existing assets, making the most of what it has, and adapting to the 21st Century, Corry can overcome its challenges and become a community of choice.

This Community Strategic Plan is a promise Corry makes to itself to work together in a renewed spirit of collaboration, built upon the community's core values. Further, it is a promise to make principled community decisions and maintain a laser-like focus on the big things that will matter most in making Corry a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family.



2019

Impact Corry – working with public, private, and charitable sector partners – resolved to begin a planning process to align community improvement efforts.

The plan would reflect the values, priorities, and principles of Corry residents, who would develop and champion the effort. The plan would identify the best strategies to break Corry’s 50-year cycle of disinvestment and create a fertile environment for targeted growth.

Urban planning and community development firm czbLLC was selected to lead the effort. Their trademark approach of confronting hard truths and putting the community on the front lines of creative problem-solving made czbLLC the right choice for the direct, hands-on Corry culture.

2020

Local and regional businesses and non-profits endorsed the need for a community strategic plan, supplying the funds necessary to contract chosen planners, czbLLC.

In late February, the first US Covid-19 fatalities occurred in Washington. The pros and cons of beginning the planning process were deeply weighed. The vote was unanimous to proceed.

In March, czbLLC was officially contracted. A steering committee of 23, a technical committee of 10, and a regional advisory panel of 31 were assembled to lead and inform the planning process. Over 20 existing local reports, surveys, and studies along with significant demographic and statistical data was compiled, analyzed, and shared with committee members.

Planning meetings were held virtually throughout the spring.

Online surveys and other Covid-compliant means were used to collect community input throughout the planning process.

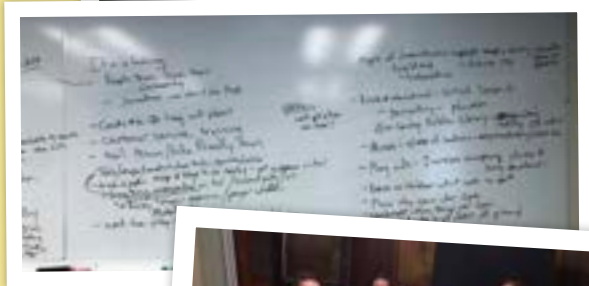
A windshield survey of more than 2,000 residential properties was conducted.

In-person, socially-distanced planning meetings, cook-outs, and stakeholder gatherings were held mid-summer through fall.

2021

Beginning in January, extensive community outreach efforts were conducted and additional plan champions joined in the work.

In April, the Corry Community Strategic Plan was approved by Impact Corry, and endorsed by the City of Corry



# The Way Forward

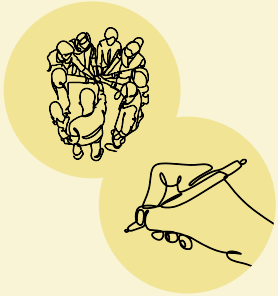
Addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities requires a new set of community agreements and a commitment to act on them. The following pages of this document describe the basis for a community commitment to a stronger Corry, the way the community will make decisions going forward, and specific initiatives that will help Corry claim the vibrant future possible if it is willing to do the necessary work.

We agree to make **a new pledge to ourselves** that we will honor the past but adapt to the future, working together for the common good by raising our own standards.



We agree on the **core values** that define us and the **principles** upon which we will make good decisions.

### Core Values



Planning Principles

We agree that there are many worthy endeavors to pursue, but that **five specific big things** should get all of our attention first.

### The Five Big Things Corry must get right

-  **Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods**
-  **Improve and Link Our Green Spaces**
-  **Ramp Up Our Connectivity**
-  **Activate Our City Center**
-  **Strengthen Our City's Balance Sheet**

# How to Use this Plan

In this plan, the Corry community agrees that **three things must change** over time.

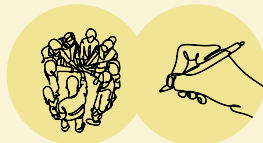
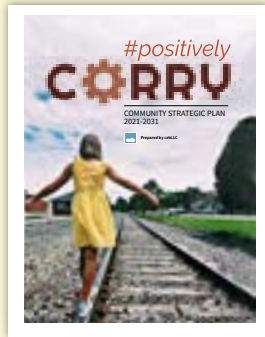
Residents should feel good about living in Corry and homeowners must feel that their investments will pay off.



Visitors to Corry must be able to imagine themselves living in town or opening a business here.



Local revenues must pay for local expenses without constant assistance and residents must have confidence that City Hall can lead fiscal stabilization efforts.



**Core Values**   **Planning Principles**



**Community Goals**



**Community Champions**

Adopting this plan is an agreement that the **values and planning principles** contained here have real meaning and the **goals** are worth working towards and have **champions** committed to their attainment.

As other issues arise (affordable housing, for example), the community must **use this plan to decide whether the issue is a priority** and how it fits into the work.

*Does addressing it link to fiscal stability? How? How does it affect residential quality of life? How does it connect to making Corry marketable?*

In this plan, considerable attention is given to articulating Corry's stated **core values and planning principles**. Fidelity to them is a must when deciding which issues become priorities. Given the fact that Corry will not have financial and other resources for every problem it wants to tackle, choices will have to be made by stakeholders and the Council working together with City staff and residents to weigh the tradeoffs.

If the priorities in this plan—fiscal stability, marketability, and quality of life—are ever determined to be no longer important, because something else is more important or the community has achieved them, it will be time to amend this plan. If other projects bubble to the surface and supplant these priorities too many times, that is an indication these priorities no longer have either the support of the community or champions to carry the ball.

# Our Pledge to Ourselves

## High Standards and Pride and Generosity to One Another

### We have work to do. A lot of it.

The economy has changed. Cooper-Ajax. Rogers Steel. Erie Plastics. Not everything, but a great deal of what was once made in the USA is now made abroad.

We, ourselves, changed. All of us grew older. Some of us stayed while some left town. Others passed on. Many of our children have found opportunities in other communities.

Our homes grew older too. Many changed hands. Most have been well-maintained. But some have grown tired and need attention.

Commercial life has changed. Then it was Fisher's Big Wheel and GC Murphy. Elmview Dairy. Ritz Chocolates. Today it is Village Thrift, Meerhoffs, and Wal-Mart.

With change comes the imperative to maintain our community - our streets and sidewalks, our parks and trails, our homes and yards, our storefronts and monuments and traditions.

As the world has changed, so have we. But in some respects, more is needed. It's time to get to work. These are all non-negotiable promises to ourselves that we must keep to assure the viability of our community.



Wendy Neckers

Brad Allen

Pat Goodsel

Chelsea Oliver

Rick Novotny

Brody Howard

Amy Allen

Bill Roche

Erin Passinger

Jason Biondi

Bev Weaver



Over the years, even while we have done a fantastic job of maintaining our small-town values, of being authentic, and remaining a good place to live and raise a family, we have come up short in important respects.

Corry has not kept up with the rest of world when it comes to standards of care, reinvesting in ourselves and our buildings, protecting our image, and making Corry all it can be. Recently, all of us haven't been headed in the same direction.

We recognize that we will not be able to catch up on these issues if we don't work hard and work smartly, if we aren't instilling pride in our work, and if we are not all rowing together, in sync.

At the same time, we also recognize that doing all these things is what's necessary, and not at all sufficient. For Corry to be all to be all it can be, these are the minimums.

**WE WILL  
WORK HARD**

**WE WILL BE  
PROUD OF THE  
WORK WE DO**

**WE WILL WORK  
TOGETHER**



Brad Russell

Sara Jukes

Jen Heiser

Bill West

Scott Fogle

Karen  
Croyle

Ben Speggen

Lisa Cox

Kimberly  
Hawkes

Kristy Elchynski

Dr. Doris  
Gernovich

Charles Eurydice Gray

A-O Wubba

Trail Irenic

# Corry in Context

## Challenges

Corry is a city in a long and slow transition. Like the rest of the region it inhabits, a changing economy—increasingly fewer rewards for resource-based industries like timber or farming as well as labor-intensive manufacturing—has eroded the city's economic reason for existence. Corry failed to find something new to fill the gap. Corry is certainly not alone in this regard; its regional neighbors are all in the same boat, as are many smaller rural communities across the country. The fact that the condition is shared, however, does not ease the impact on Corry.

### Education and Economics

The national economy is highly reliant on and structured to reward the educational achievements of individual households. The more formal education - from college to technical training - the greater the probability of higher earning power. This is true nationally as well as regionally and locally. Currently the percent of residents in Corry with a Bachelor's degree or higher is less than the Pennsylvania rate. This requires immediate attention to ensure high school graduates are encouraged to pursue a technical or professional career and then have an opportunity to use this knowledge in Corry. Attracting business hinges on the quality of the local workforce.

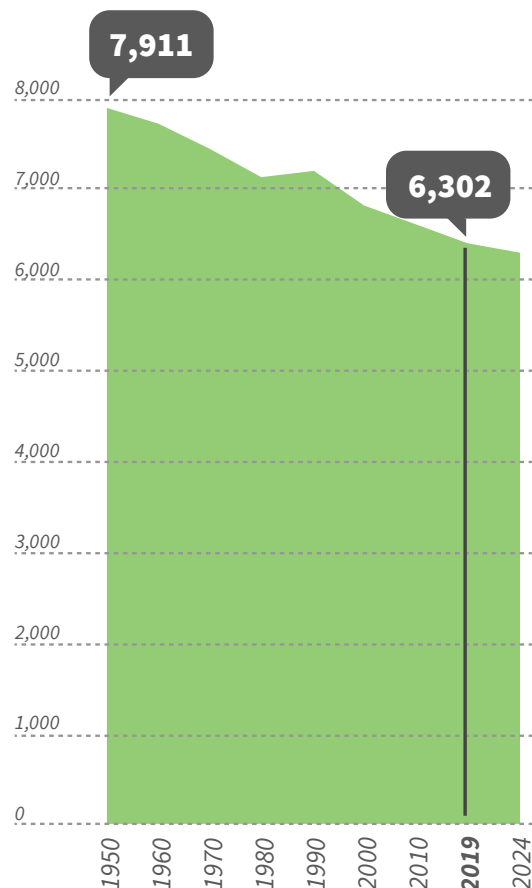
### Conditions and Image

Corry has quality housing and nearby access to some of the most beautiful outdoor space in the nation but it also has troubled neighborhoods with poorly maintained housing that do not appeal to young aspiring individuals or families. To Corry's credit, there is recognition that this has been a long neglected problem. This now requires immediate work to begin to turn around blighted housing that is stunting neighborhood and City growth and only serving to provide yet another reason for young people to move away.

### Corry's population is in steady decline.

The city's population peaked in 1930 and failed to register any growth in seven of the next nine decades. On its own, this means little as places that fail to grow or even those that decline can still be vibrant with the right adjustments. But these adjustments have not occurred in Corry, and the long-term loss of residents, their spending power, and their civic contributions are felt in distressing ways.

#### POPULATION CHANGE OVER THE DECADES

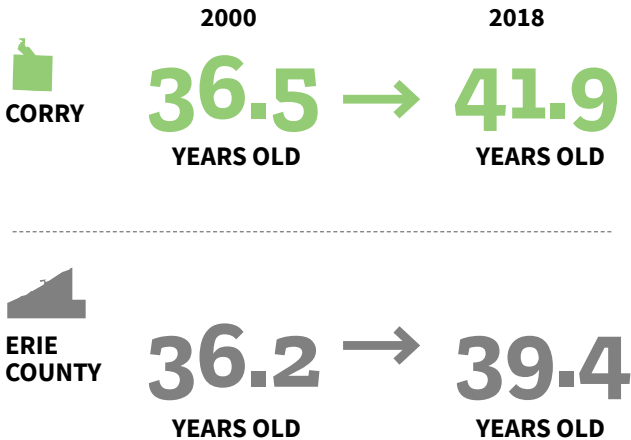


Source: ESRI, American Community Survey (ACS), 2019

## Corry's population is aging quickly.

In 2000, Erie County and Corry had roughly the same median age. The County's median was 36.2 and Corry's was 36.5. By 2018, however, their median ages had diverged, with the County at a median of 39.4 and Corry at a median age of 41.9. (For comparison, the median age in the United States in 2018 was 38.5.) These seemingly small differences hide an important story amongst the larger population of Corry—within a shrinking population, a growing percentage of residents are either in or headed to their retirement years. The remaining residents who are in their younger working and family formation years are not growing in number, and current trends suggest they will not be backfilled as they themselves age. This has workforce, housing market, and tax-base implications.

### MEDIAN AGE, 2000, 2018

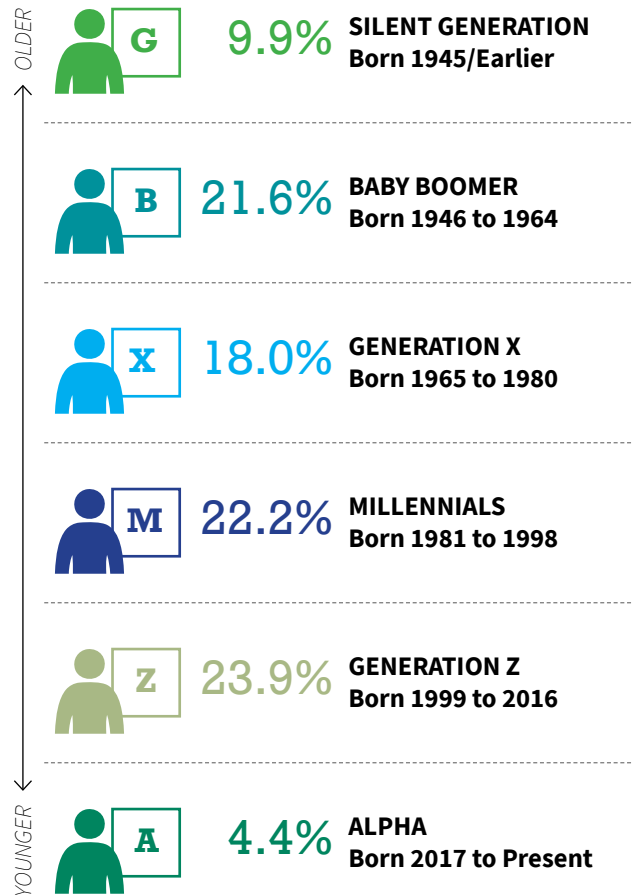


Source: ESRI, American Community Survey (ACS), 2019

## Those under 40 account for the greatest share of Corry's population.

While Corry's population is quickly aging, it is notable that more than 50% of Corry's population is less than 40 years old. This is an especially valuable resource for the future of the workforce and offers opportunities for renewed attention to civic engagement.

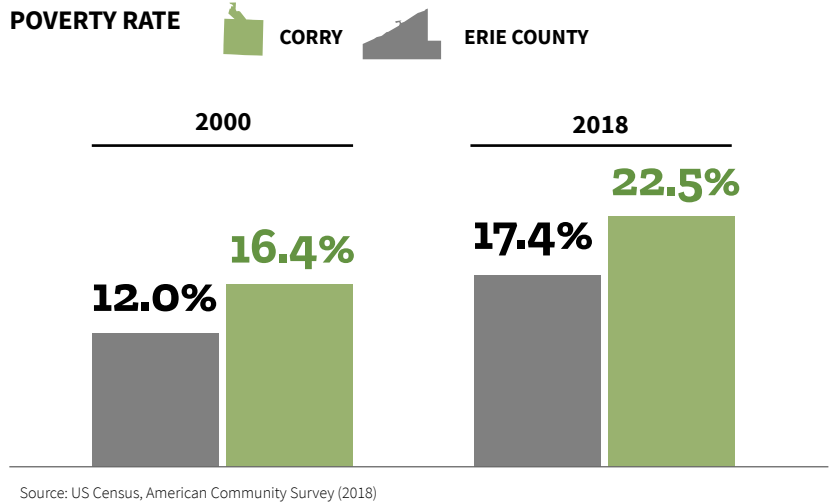
### CORRY POPULATION BY GENERATION



Source: ESRI, American Community Survey (ACS), 2019

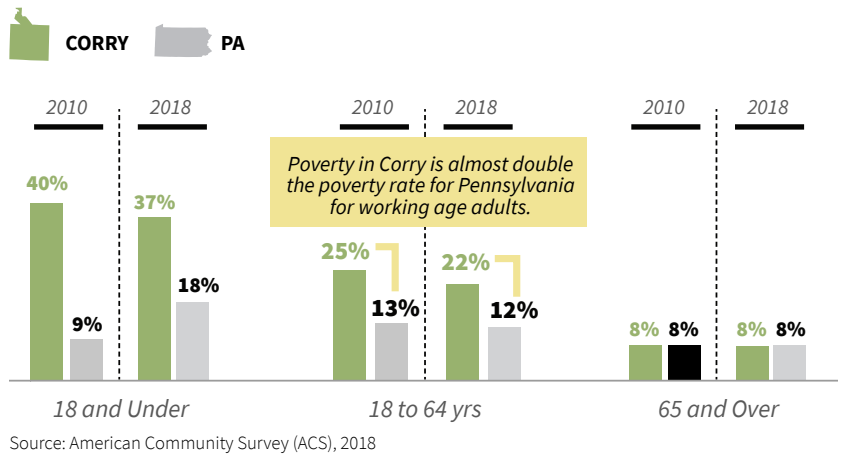
## Corry's poverty rate is rising.

Corry's poverty rate was more than a third higher than Erie County's in 2000 (16.4% vs. 12.0%) and that gap has not closed over time. Corry's rate of individuals living in poverty is now 22.5% while Erie County's is 17.4%. This is largely a function of a stagnant regional economy failing to support good employment options, an oversupply of low-cost housing in Corry, and a growing number of poor households finding their way to affordable housing options in the city. People experiencing poverty will generally have trouble finding and sustaining good employment, supporting the city's economy, and contributing to Corry's civic life.



While the poverty rate for nearly all age groups remains stubbornly high for Corry, and much higher than Pennsylvania's rate, the rates are slightly decreasing in Corry for all age groups under 65. Even with poverty rates slightly declining, the poverty rate for children and teenagers (those under 18) is 37%, more than double the rate for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

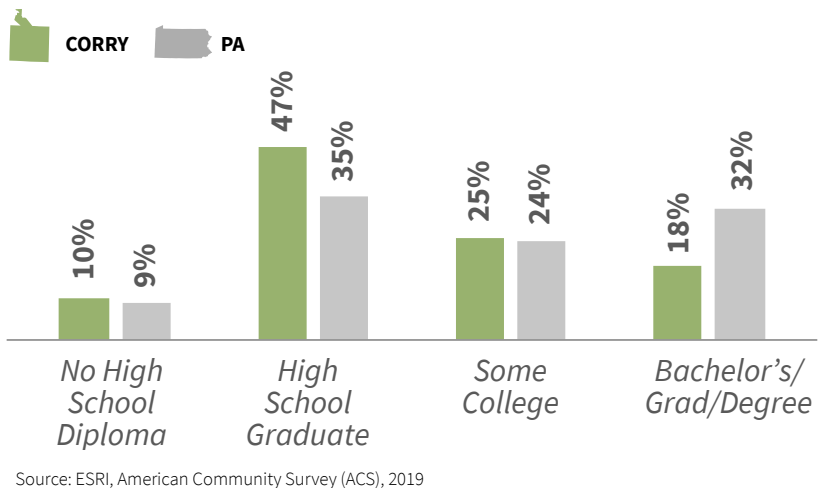
## % OF POPULATION IN POVERTY, 2010 AND 2018



## Corry has a lower percent of its population with a bachelor's degree or more.

The City has fewer college graduates as a percent of the workforce than is typical for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and conversely a higher percent of the workforce with only a high school diploma. A public-private workforce development and training program should be explored to begin to move more members of the workforce into the trained or educated segments.

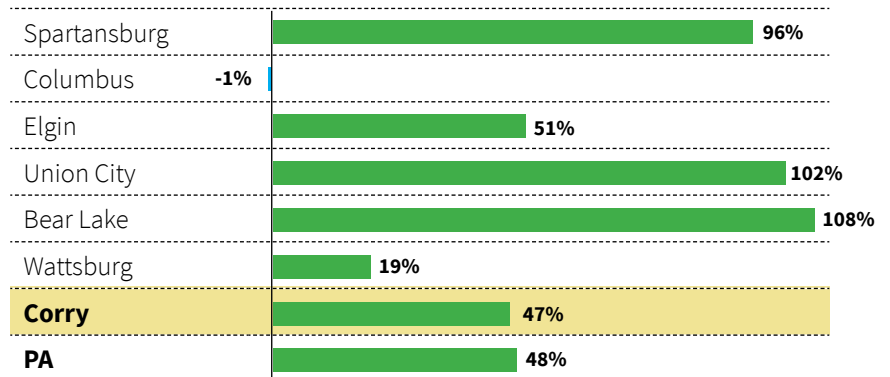
## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2019



## Household income is increasing.

Between 2000 and 2020, household income in Corry and the surrounding communities increased by 47%, approximately equivalent to the rate of increase for the Commonwealth. Yet gains in income have not translated into increased levels of reinvestment in homes, signaling that confidence in Corry by Corry residents is a real challenge.

### CORRY CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2000 - 2020



Source: American Community Survey (ACS), 2018

## Corry has a greater percentage of low-income households compared to the Commonwealth.

Over the past decade, the City has lost households earning more than \$100,000 but has an opportunity to turn this trend around through the creation of workforce development programs aimed at training and educating the relatively young population to ensure greater earning power in the near future.

### COMPARISON WITH PA HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME

INCOME RANGE	% OF CORRY	DIFFERENCE
<\$15,000	16.9%	+4.2%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	14.0%	+1.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	15.4%	+5.3%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	13.7%	+0.7%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17.7%	-0.4%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	13.5%	+0.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	7.1%	-5.3%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	0.2%	-4.0%
\$200,000 +	1.5%	-2.0%

Source: ESRI, American Community Survey (ACS), 2019

# Opportunities

## Corry offers small-town life.



Generally speaking, the late 20th century and early 21st century were a time when larger urban areas had demographic and economic advantages while smaller towns did not. But urban or suburban life is not what everyone is after. A slower daily pace, leafy neighborhoods of quiet streets, more space to live and move, and personal connections to neighbors are all attractive qualities for most people, assuming they can also earn a living if they choose such an environment. In Corry, a person can easily know a large portion of her fellow residents, and she can be involved in her community in a meaningful way.



In spite of its challenges, Corry is a community with assets. For those who are drawn to small-town living and a strong sense of community, there is a lot to like. Small towns, especially in rural areas, are not major job centers nor hubs of city-style nightlife. These are not the areas in which Corry should attempt to compete. Instead, a competitive Corry will be the best and most authentic small town that it can be. Small towns that have succeeded—absent something unique like a university or access to a special natural amenity such as the ocean—have taken this lesson to heart and leveraged their assets for resident quality of life with some tourism opportunities.

## Corry is within two hours of major urban areas.



Corry is a rural haven located in the center of it all. Drive 33 miles east for outdoor adventures in the PA Wilds and the Allegheny National Forest. Journey 30 miles northeast to play on Lake Chautauqua, browse lakeshore boutiques, or relax and renew at the Chautauqua Institution educational center and summer resort. Head northwest 33 miles to Erie to stroll the Bayfront, boat on Lake Erie, take advantage of world class health care facilities, or enjoy an urban outing. Travel just two hours north, south, or west and arrive in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, or Cleveland with nearly every cultural and commercial amenity that could be desired. Specialized shopping, museums and zoos, major universities, professional sports, and international airports are all on offer for a day or weekend trip. The miles fly even faster when traveling by private plane from the Corry-Lawrence Airport. Corry is the community for remote workers, country souls, artists, entrepreneurs, and anyone wanting to live a more connected, less hectic, more green, way of daily life a short distance from pristine wilderness and big city amusements.

## Corry provides easy access to nature.



Both the avid and casual outdoors person will find that opportunities abound for Corry residents and visitors. Lakes, rivers, reservoirs, swamps, mountains, trails, state parks, and beaches surround Corry at every point of the compass. Purchase your tags and head out to the state game lands. Take the family for rock-climbing fun at Rim Rock or Panama Rocks. Pick and taste your way through the seasons of produce from strawberries to apples along local produce trails. Tear along the single-track miles on the – soon to be – epic mountain bike trails at Jakes Rocks. Enjoy farm-to-table delights and delicacies. Or leave the car in the garage to bike, hike, snowshoe, or cross-country ski miles on the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and Industrial Heartland Trails...all in Corry. Fish for native trout in Corry's amazingly pure waters. Enjoy wacky outdoor events or just a day on the playground or pavilion at Mead Park and Lake Alice. Explore the local swamp or dive into a swimming hole. Journey with the Tri-County Snowblazers or with your own posse over miles of snowmobile trails. Have a picnic in City Park and enjoy live concerts or shop for produce at the weekly Farmer's Market. Golf or walk the breathtaking courses of North Hills and the Corry Country Club. Stroll the streets of historic downtown Corry to find treasures while touring Victorian architectural gems and vibrant pocket parks. In Corry, the outdoors begin in your backyard.

# Who We Are

## What we will accomplish together

So many places in America today have no soul. They either had it and paved over it, or they were soulless to begin with.

Like hundreds of post-industrial communities, Corry lost its boom-town allure, but Corry never lost its soul.

### Today – as always – Corry is:

A place of small-town values in an era of fractious speed and self.

Quirky and historic in a world of bland subdivisions and predictable franchises.

A haven of walkable streets where kids romp like wild things and neighbors gather.

An outdoor paradise of retreat and recreation a short drive from everything else.

Corry is what you remember.

Built on ingenuity and creativity, Corry is authentic. It is a town brimming with invention, energy, and grit. The makers, artists, entrepreneurs, professionals, craftspeople, and laborers that live in Corry support one another and roll up their sleeves to get things done.

Corry may get knocked down, but it always gets back up.

### Corry is the comeback community you want to come back to.

And **we welcome you back**. Whether you already live here and have become jaded by the challenges we face. Or used to live here and are contemplating a return. Or never lived here but are looking for opportunity and community in a rural town determined to rise.

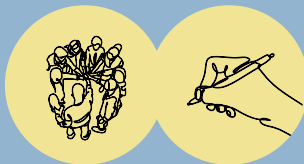
This plan identifies the root causes of decline that threaten Corry. It calls out the hard truths and systemic challenges that - if not addressed here and now - will cause Corry's demise. It identifies the work we must do to save our city. It doesn't suggest slapping a coat of paint on a crumbling edifice. It doesn't promote feel-good projects that don't move the needle. It identifies the difficult work of change necessary to save our amazing city. It asks us to again prove that Corry always gets back up. **This plan is a promise that if we roll up our sleeves and work together, we will engineer a sustainable, desirable rural community of abounding opportunity, ingenuity, and soul.**



Community members took part in a branding exercise for Corry.

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# Our Values and Principles



Core Values

Planning Principles

An agreed upon set of core values and planning principles assure that future decisions are made in a consistent and coherent manner. They are durable guideposts that will aid in evaluating whether an action aligns with what the community believes in and is trying to achieve. The core values and planning principles presented here were developed early in the community planning process to serve as a foundation for the plan.







# CORRY

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# Our Values



Our core values are deeply-held, widely-shared beliefs that serve as building blocks for our vision of the future. They reflect **what we are willing to defend and fight for.**

---

## We will be fiscally prudent

We will first look to ourselves to find a way to pay for what we need.

When we spend, it will be for the long haul, for our children and our children's children.

---

## We will be community-minded

We will aim our efforts, our money, and our policies towards making Corry great.

We will prioritize the public realm.

---

## We will exhibit pride in Corry

The world is too negative these days, and a constant emphasis on fixing problems can make us forget our many strong points; we will strengthen our balance sheet by making a priority of keeping our focus on what works and what we do well.

A history of disinvesting has weakened us somewhat, so it's imperative to turn that around; we will see to it that it makes sense for residents and business owners in Corry to invest their time, energy, and money in their homes and in their community.

# Our Planning Principles



Our planning principles are a basis for making decisions about our community that align with our values, our vision for the future, and the strengths that we are building from.

## ✓ Invest in our strengths and **focus on what works.**

Corry has great bones. We will preserve and upgrade our historic architecture, our grid, our compaction, our density, and our height - traditional 19th century town planning virtues. These went out of vogue after WWII but the world is realizing what we have in Corry is special.

## ✓ Capitalize our resources in a collaborative manner to **move forward together.**

Similar to almost any small town in America, there are always going to be differences of opinion when it comes to how to move the community forward. Those differences have in many cases set Corry back decades in terms of its ability to compete with other cities or regions that have overcome this common obstacle. It's not to say there will be 100% agreement, but looking ahead we must find compromise or agreement to aggregate our limited financial and human resources for the sake of Corry holistically.

## ✓ **Be respectful and inclusive of our surrounding communities** and approach land use sustainably.

Our fidelity to traditional town planning means we will maintain our boundaries unless we attempt to annex land for the purpose of conserving that land. Our fidelity to environmental stewardship means we will apply the precautionary principle when considering public expenditure, preferring to re-use than to consume new, in intent and effect, to do no harm.

## ✓ Incorporate traditional town planning principles for **decisions on design and form.**

We will favor preservation and redevelopment over new development unless new development builds on and extends our vernacular form.

We will encourage appropriate interpretation of existing patterns and building placement, design, and public spaces to suit modern living needs.

We will recognize and emphasize the hierarchy of form in Corry, culminating on Center Street, taking care to preserve the rural-urban transect in the process, maintaining our edges, working to ensure walking connections are vibrant, culturally prominent buildings are visible, cars and their storage are de-prioritized, and streets are beautiful, walkable, and tree-lined.

# C R R Y

## The Big Things We Must Get Right

*If we fail to get these five big things right,  
nothing else matters.*

*If we succeed, we have a chance to turn  
things around.*

---

### **Corry must make progress on numerous fronts.**

Corry must be **connected via high-speed internet** to the world, enabling education, medicine, and commerce. Corry must **rightsize its housing market and raise standards**. Corry must **polish the core and turn downtown into a true gem**. Corry must **transform and link its parks**. And Corry must become **fiscally sustainable** as a municipality. Each of these are as achievable as they are going to be difficult to attain, and each are going to be as difficult to attain as they are necessary.

**Necessary as each is, none of them by themselves is going to be sufficient.** Stabilizing the Corry housing market without achieving high-speed broadband in Corry is not an option. Obtaining broadband but failing to polish downtown is not an option. Addressing downtown but failing to upgrade the parks, and Corry remains stuck. Obtaining broadband but failing to polish downtown, and Corry is not a viable retail destination. Addressing downtown but failing to upgrade the parks, and Corry remains lacking in appeal.

### **Bottom line? Each of the BIG THINGS is necessary, and none by themselves will be enough.**

*This is a plan to work methodically on five fronts,  
weaving together incremental gains in each, in  
parallel fashion.*



## Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods

pg 24



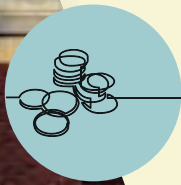
## Improve and Link Our Green Spaces

pg 36

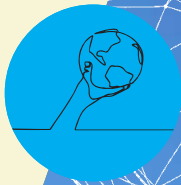


## Strengthen Our City's Balance Sheet

pg 60



All Five **Big Things** Are Interdependent for Corry's Future



## Ramp Up Our Connectivity

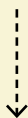
pg 44



## Activate Our City Center

pg 48

# Getting the Big Things Right Across Corry



*Understanding the Geography of Strategies for a Stronger Corry*



## Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods

Near-downtown residential blocks need to be stabilized in order to establish minimum standards for residential properties in Corry and to support City Center revitalization. Corry should also begin a citywide exterior property inspection program and home investment incentives to overcome appraisal gap.



**Corry's Core**



## Improve and Link Our Green Spaces

The city features parks and recreational amenities that could shine as a single interconnected system, but they are disconnected from each other. Enhancing existing connections, improving existing parks, and establishing new ones is critical to bring Corry's parks and trails fully to life.

- **Proposed Trails**
- **Existing Greenway Trail**
- ★ **Trailhead**
- **Park**
- **Cemetery**
- **Golf Course**



## Ramp Up Our Connectivity

Corry's location in the verdant farmlands and foothills of the Alleghenies comes with a cost. Connectivity is complex and expensive. But not being connected is no longer an option. Universal, high-speed, wired connectivity is essential for Corry to overcome its rural remove to be competitive in the virtual economy. Only the accessibility standard of 100 Mbps to all will provide residents and small businesses alike with the needed bandwidth for remote work, job training, education, virtual markets, tele-medicine, and future growth.

- **Planned Fiber**
- Phase 1:** Free WiFi Mobile Hot Spot Network & Service
- Phase 2:** Over 60 Miles of Fiber Citywide
- Phase 3:** High Speed Internet Access for the School District



## Activate Our City Center

Activating the City Center requires a focus on the core of the business district at Center and Main, polishing the Center Street corridor, dramatically improving the entry to the City Center at the intersection of Center Street and Columbus Avenue, and creating a virtual and brick-and-mortar small business ecosystem.

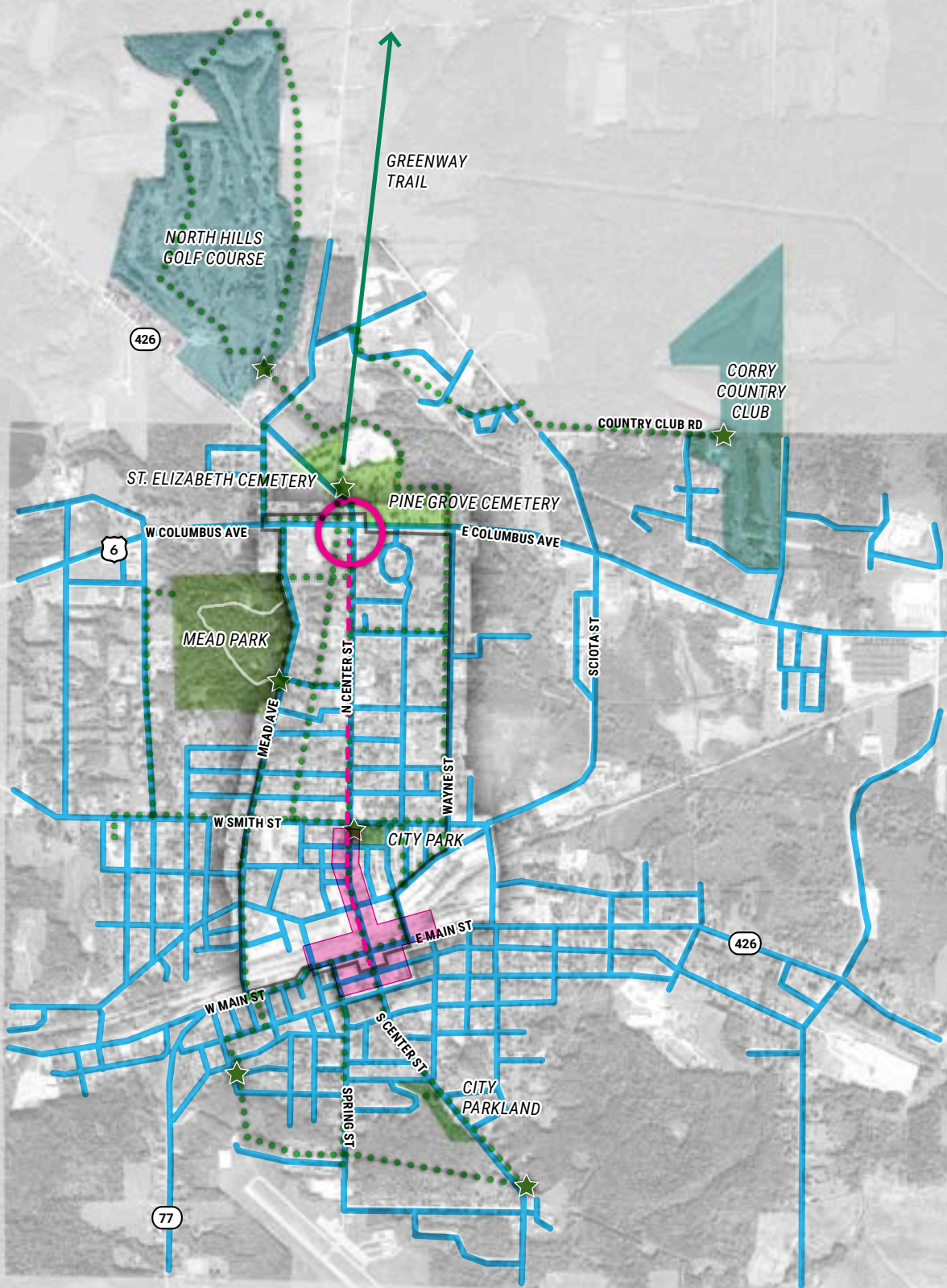
- **Entryway to Corry** (Rte 6 and N Center St)
- - - **Center St Corridor**
- + **Business District** (Center and Main St)



## Strengthen Our City's Balance Sheet

Addressing the City's structural fiscal challenges requires new ideas for the reuse or lease options for assets such as the North Hills Golf Course and the Corry-Lawrence Airport. It will also require balance sheet savings and revenue generation.

- **North Hills Golf Course**
- Airport Policing Infrastructure**



# Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods



## WHY IT MATTERS

The best insurance policy for maintaining healthy neighborhoods is tending to the matter of everyday norms and expectations before a transition arrives. As Corry's employment base declined, some people left. But conditions on blocks they were leaving were not inspiring enough for others to want to move in and upgrade. Instead, homes flipped to subsequent generations of ever less neighborly residents, as measured by level of upkeep. It is always easy to criticize the new tenant as not quite as desirable as the previous one. But this neglects the reality that a decline in resident quality is always a response to the standards in place beforehand. Corry's standards have simply been too low for too long. For Corry to dig out of the near-distressed conditions afflicting so many blocks, raising standards will be essential. Communicating pride will be non-negotiable.

Corry also suffers from significant negative equity, meaning that a property is effectively worth less than zero to its owner. Consider a \$100,000 house purchased in 2010 that has not appreciated, in spite of capital improvements that cost \$25,000. If the owner sells in 2020 for \$100,000, she will lose \$25,000. If she had not made the improvements, perhaps the house would be worth \$90,000 in 2020 and she would take a loss of \$10,000. This dilemma—invest in upgrades to your home and lose money or do not invest and lose a bit less—is common in Corry and guarantees that neighborhoods do not get better. Overcoming this challenge will require a financial product to fill the financial gaps that occur in a soft market.

## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

Revitalizing Corry's neighborhoods, raising its property maintenance standards, cultivating neighborhood pride expressed through heightened upkeep standards and taking steps to cure negative equity will require multiple lines of work. Strategic targeting of neighborhood improvement activities will be required in specific areas in the near-term, even as other new practices must be implemented across the entirety of the city. At this time, Corry should focus its efforts on the **stabilization of near downtown blocks**, begin a **citywide exterior property inspection program**, and develop a **forgivable loan product** and other subsidies to help address negative equity.



HEALTHY ←-----→ UNHEALTHY



# Understanding Neighborhood Dynamics in Corry **Healthy Neighborhoods**

A healthy neighborhood is a place where it make sense for residents and owners to invest their time, energy, and money.

The four factors that move together in a self-reinforcing cycle to determine neighborhood health are market, capacity, conditions, and image. When demand for living in a neighborhood exceeds the supply, the cycle spins in a positive direction, keeping the neighborhood strong. But it can also move in a negative direction, further eroding an already weakened neighborhood.

## MARKET

*Who is living in the neighborhood*

The **MARKET** must be strong.  
Demand must exceed supply and prices must be rising.

## CAPACITY

*Ability and willingness to manage home and neighborhood*

Resident **CAPACITY** must be high.  
Residents must demonstrate they are managing the neighborhood.

## IMAGE

*Perception of the neighborhood by broader market*

Neighborhood **IMAGE** must be positive.  
Signals sent by conditions have to communicate pride and instill confidence.

## CONDITIONS

*Resulting level of care and investment*

Housing and neighborhood physical **CONDITIONS** must be good.  
Residential blocks appeal to the regional market.

**Healthy Neighborhoods**

# What Property Conditions Reveal About the Health of Neighborhoods Across Corry

## FIELD SURVEY OF 2,031 PROPERTIES ACROSS CORRY

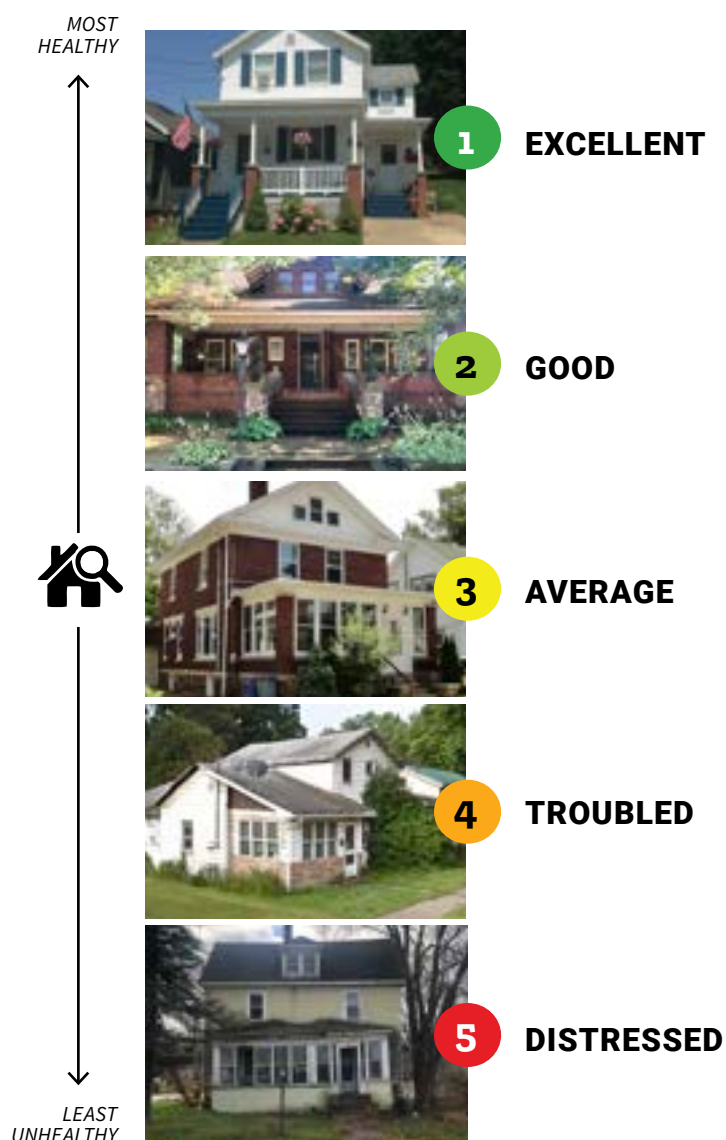
When it comes to selecting parts of a neighborhood in which to pursue revitalization work, it is common for government and nonprofits to attack conditions prior to issues, as conditions are the most

**The housing conditions survey is a windshield assessment of over 2,000 properties citywide.**

outwardly visible signs of a neighborhood’s market health. Poor conditions—peeling paint, overgrown grass, sagging porches, garbage cans stored in front of the house, clearly vacant or abandoned buildings—are only a symptom of the underlying problem. Fixing distressed conditions provides only temporary relief of the underlying problem – the weak market – if the weak market is not addressed as well. It is always a better use of limited resources to invest in leveraging existing resident capacity, and increasing it. Boosting capacity helps to facilitate positive and lasting change.

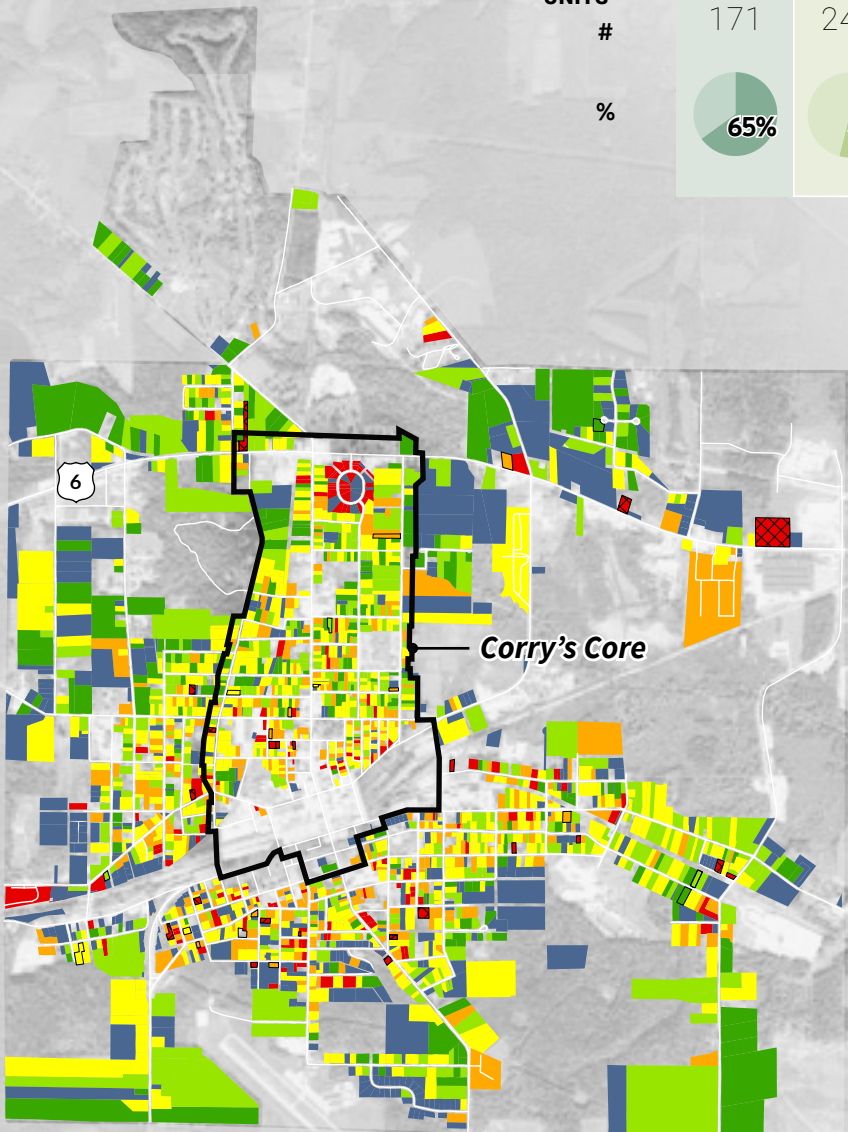
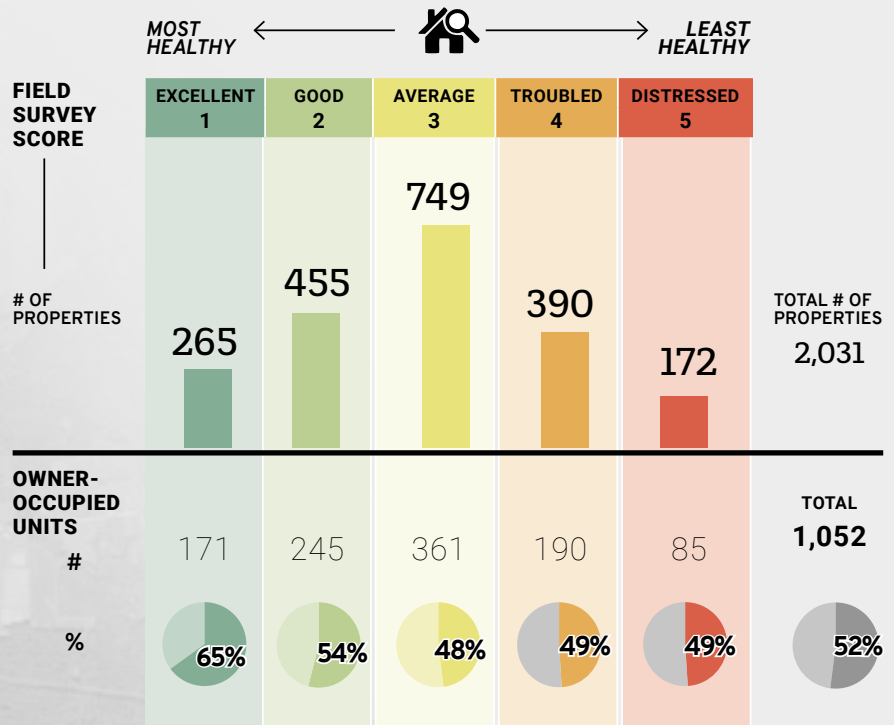
Property conditions are key data in understanding what is working and what is not working in different neighborhoods. In 2020, Corry residents volunteered to complete a field survey of property conditions which supports the analysis and recommendations in this section of the plan. **The field survey scores reveal patterns of market health, highlight the locations of troubled properties, and help inform appropriate interventions for specific blocks and neighborhoods.**

Properties were scored on a range from 1 to 5



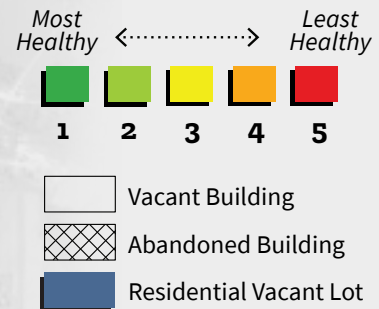
The most common score in the field survey is three; over a third of Corry properties are average. Just over one third are either good or excellent and just over a quarter are either troubled or distressed. This is a typical bell shaped distribution.

Among the excellent condition properties, 65% are owner-occupied. Just over half of good condition properties are owner-occupied. For average, troubled, and distressed properties, the split between owner-occupied and rental properties is just about even.



© czbLLC

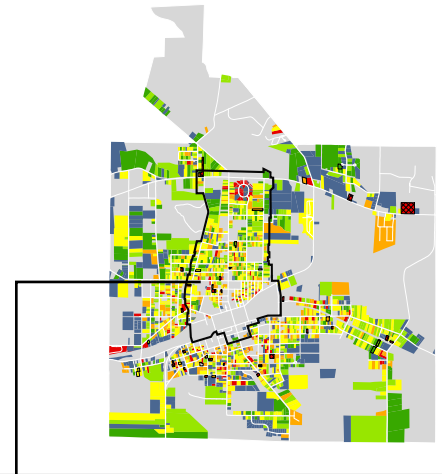
### Corry Properties Surveyed





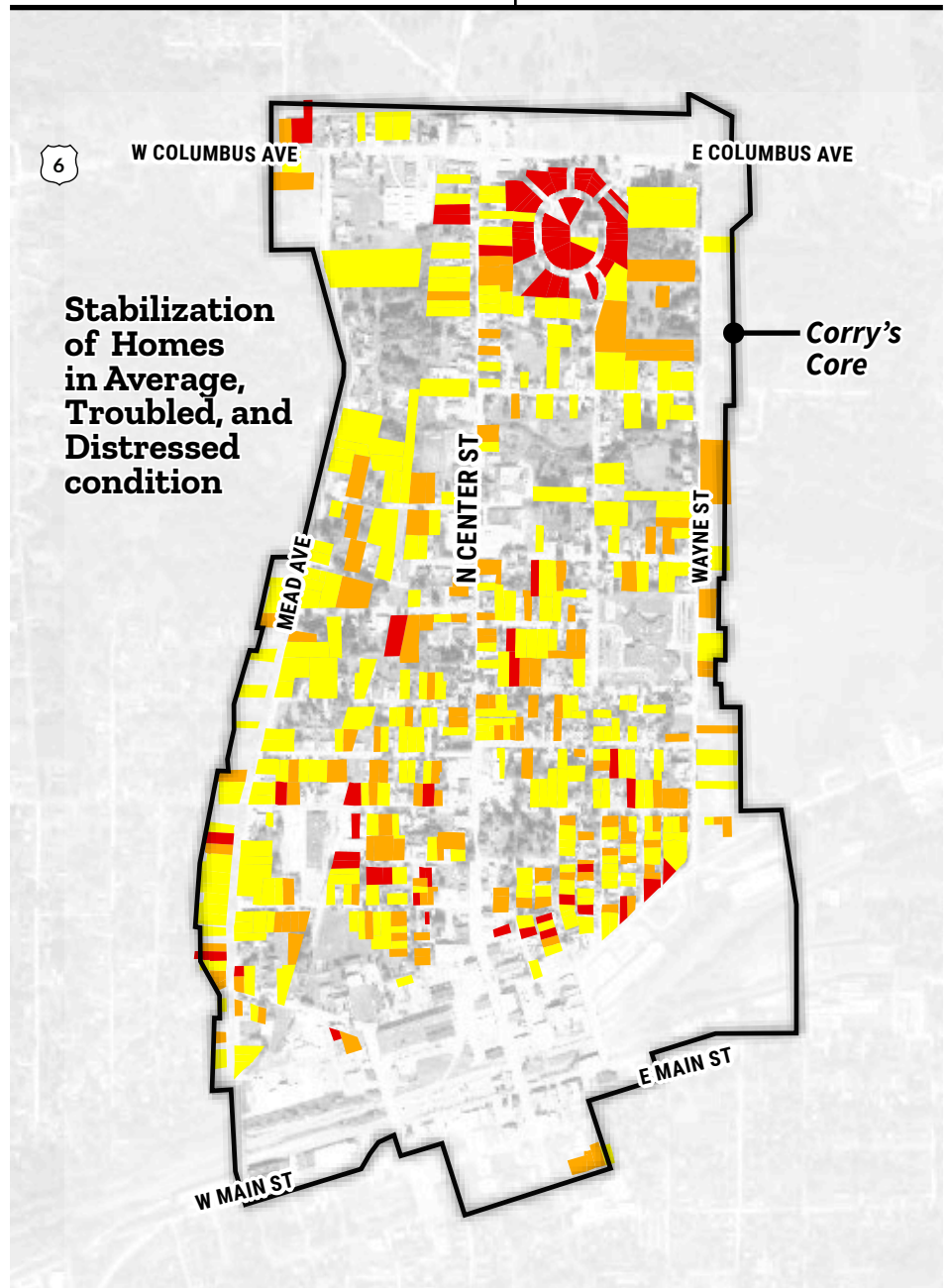
**Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods**

# Stabilization of Near-Downtown Blocks in Corry's Core



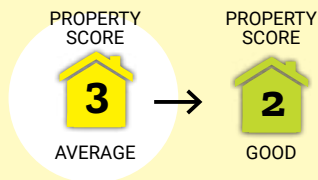
To be truly effective, Corry will have to rightsize its housing market, aggressively and surgically thin obsolete structures, successfully manage resulting open space pockets, help seniors make upgrades, and demonstrate unshakable resolve in the face of resistance to higher standards by a small cadre of toxic property owners. This is a massive undertaking and cannot occur all at once. Nor can it all occur everywhere at once. **Corry will have to start where the return makes fiscal sense and that means on blocks that are already fairly stable and directly impacting downtown, the city's core asset.**

Improving housing and neighborhood conditions on these blocks requires a two-pronged approach. The first is motivational investment, in the forms of **small financial incentives and joint work amongst neighbors**, for those homeowners truly committed to maintaining their homes and wanting to achieve even better standards. Much of this work will overlap with ongoing Renaissance Block efforts and Paint-The-Town programs. The second is **City enforcement of building codes** for properties that have not been properly maintained and appear in poor condition.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Upgrade 261 Average Properties

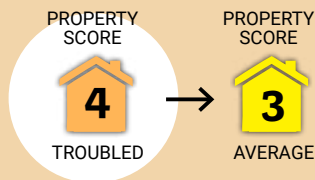


There are 261 average properties—those with a score of three—in the core. Over ten years, all of them should be improved to good condition, which means they should minimally achieve a score of two. On average, **26 properties each year need to be upgraded.** Small financial incentives (with maintenance requirements) will be the main tool in improving these properties.

*The primary focus should be homeowners.*



### Upgrade 137 Troubled Properties

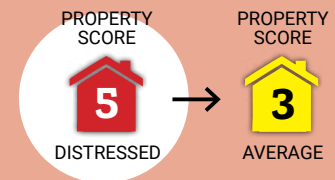


There are 137 troubled or weak properties—those with a score of four—in the core. Over ten years, all of them should be improved to average condition, which means they should minimally achieve a score of three. On average, **14 properties each year need to be upgraded.** Code enforcement will be the main tool in improving these properties, though small financial incentives (with maintenance requirements) will also play a part.

*The primary focus should be homeowners, but rental properties should also receive attention.*



### Upgrade 69 Distressed Properties



There are 69 distressed condition properties—those with a score of five—in the core. Over ten years, all of them should be removed or improved to average condition, which means they should either be remediated and returned to viable use or minimally achieve a score of three. On average, seven properties each year needs to be addressed.

**Code enforcement** will be the main tool in improving these properties with strong assistance from the **Erie County Land Bank** and its tools that include an acquisition/disposition fund. In addition to the Land Bank, the **Property Acquisition/Disposition Fund, Corry Pride Certified** upkeep standards, and a possible program to **address negative equity** should be utilized as resources to address and improve properties.



Timeline: **Phase 1**  
(Annually for 10 Years)



## Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods

# Citywide Exterior Inspection Program

Changing the community's expectations relative to standards of maintenance will require a turnaround in how City Hall addresses code enforcement. The current system is complaint based and, by design, addresses only a fraction of the the most egregious issues citywide. A system that only reacts to the concerns of some neighbors cannot begin to resolve the scale and scope of the housing issues in Corry. The approach must be methodical, proactive, and indicative of Corry's new path forward—one with property maintenance expectations reflecting a renewed commitment to city pride.



**Four quadrants, each fully inspected over a six month period**

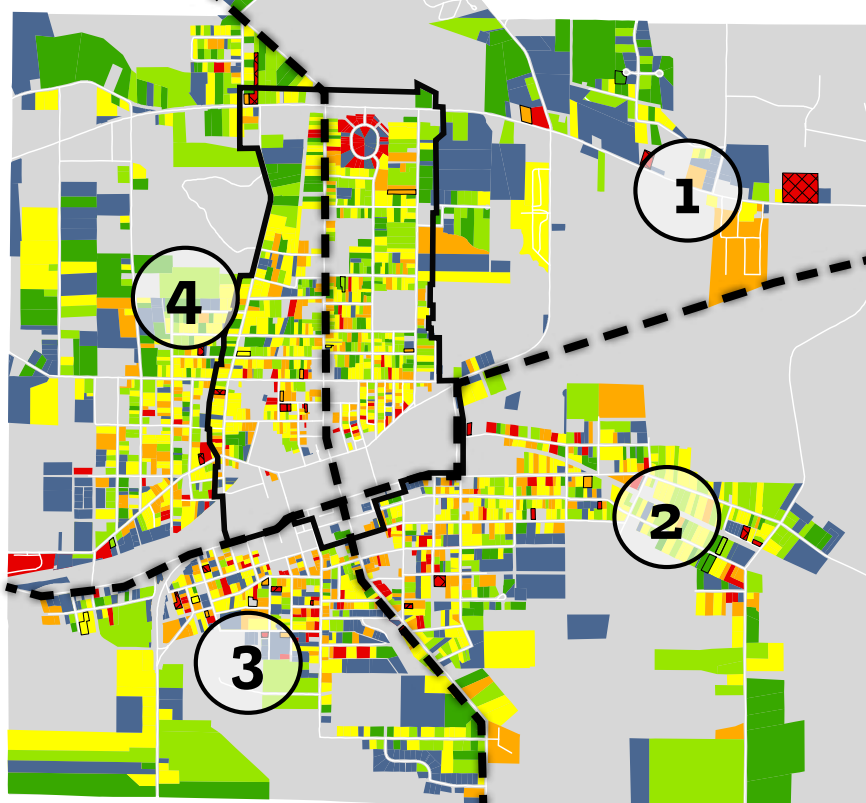
### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The City should conduct an exterior inspection of all properties, owner- and renter-occupied, every two years. The city should be divided into four quadrants for this purpose, and each quadrant fully inspected in six months. Within two years, all properties in Corry will have been inspected and a new cycle ready to begin.

Timeline:

#### Phase 2

*(begin the rotational cycle in January, 2023)*





## Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods

# Citywide Forgivable Loan Product

A soft market is where there is too little demand. A key challenge for soft markets is the problem of negative equity. (This is also sometimes referred to as appraisal or market gaps.) As population has declined across the region, and quite considerably in Corry, fewer households have been chasing a fixed, and sometimes growing, number of housing units. When demand falls and supply does not, values cannot grow. It therefore becomes questionable to buy in Corry because the longer one owns a home, the harder it becomes to sell, or the lower it must be priced before it does sell.

The way this plays out for existing owners is that they gradually but continually defer maintenance and choose not to upgrade unless absolutely necessary. In a deflating market, substantial investments in one's home do not make much financial sense. Over time the lack of maintenance and investment begins to show, and entire blocks and streets suffer. Overcoming this dynamic requires the market gap be filled by a loan that may convert to a grant if the homeowner meets certain conditions that will benefit Corry and its neighborhoods.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- A new financial tool should be developed by the community, working with its corporate and philanthropic partners, modeled on aspects of the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) effort in 2008. The objective of NSP was to close the gap for houses that were deemed “toxic assets,” meaning the amount of debt secured by the property was more than the house was worth.
- Corry, in partnership with foundations and corporations, should capitalize its own community “bank,” capable of issuing third position interest-only loans to qualified borrowers who would use the loan proceeds to catch up on deferred maintenance and capital investments.
- Loans would be conditioned not only on buyer credit, but a buyer agreement to stay in the home for ten years after which time the loan would be forgiven.

Timeline:

#### Phase 3

*(work to commence in 2022)*

### CREATIVELY APPROACHING THE APPRAISAL GAP

A public/private program that creates a fund for housing rehabilitation in the core area of the community will begin to level the playing field for Corry as the City continues to compete with the region for new housing starts or rehab projects. Such an endeavor requires a multi-pronged approach that may necessitate the give of land, Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA), an investigation of the Neighborhood Homes Investment Act, or a combination of incentives. All of which may be necessary to allow the City to compete with the region that has the luxury of lower taxes. Outside of the Core Area, there may be an opportunity for a new neighborhood development on City-owned or RDA-owned land. A demonstration project that provides new housing that is competitive within the region would provide proof of concept that there is demand for a new housing product in the City.



**Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods -  
Near Downtown Blocks in Corry's Core**

# Projected Costs and Sources

## Specific Near Downtown Blocks

\$9,755,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES	Total to Address	Unit Cost (est avg)	10 Year Cost	ANNUALLY		
				Annual Cost	Annual Output	Unit Average
Upgrade <b>Average</b> Quality Properties	261	\$15,000	\$3,915,000	\$391,500	26	
Upgrade <b>Troubled</b> Properties	137	\$25,000	\$3,425,000	\$342,500	14	
Upgrade <b>Distressed</b> Properties	69	\$35,000	\$2,415,000	\$241,500	7	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$9,755,000</b>	\$975,500	45	\$20,152
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania (Forgivable Loan Product)		<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>		
	Local Match		<b>\$4,755,000</b>	<b>\$475,500</b>		
			<b>\$9,755,000</b>	<b>\$975,500</b>		

## Renaissance Block Upgrades

\$885,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES	Total to Address	Unit Cost (est avg)	10 Year Cost	ANNUALLY		
				Annual Cost	Annual Output	Unit Average
Renaissance Block Upgrades	50	\$17,700	<b>\$885,000</b>	\$88,500	5	\$17,700
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania (Forgivable Loan Product)		<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>		
	Regional Philanthropy		<b>\$310,000</b>	<b>\$31,000</b>		
	Local Match		<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>		
		<b>\$885,000</b>	<b>\$88,500</b>			



## Specific Paint-the-Town Blocks

\$400,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES	Total to Address	Unit Cost (est avg)	10 Year Cost	ANNUALLY		
				Annual Cost	Annual Output	Unit Average
Upgrade Average Quality Properties	100	\$4,000	\$400,000	\$40,000	10	\$4,000
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania (Forgivable Loan Product)		\$55,000	\$5,500		
	Regional Philanthropy		\$150,000	\$15,000		
	Local Match		\$70,000	\$7,000		
	In-Kind		\$125,000	\$12,500		
			\$400,000	\$40,000		

## Stabilization of Near Downtown Blocks in Corry's Core: SUMMARY

ACTIVITIES	10 Year Cost	Annual Average	
Specific Near Downtown Blocks	\$9,755,000		
Renaissance Blocks	\$885,000		
Specific Paint-the-Town Blocks	\$400,000		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,040,000</b>		
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania	\$5,130,000	\$513,000
	Regional Philanthropy	\$460,000	\$46,000
	Local Match	\$5,325,000	\$532,500
	In-Kind	\$125,500	\$12,500
		\$11,040,000	\$1,104,000



Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods - Citywide Efforts

# Projected Costs and Sources

## Citywide Exterior Inspection Program

\$1,450,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES	Total to Address	% of Total Properties	Total to Inspect	10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	Annual @50%	Daily to Inspect
Owner-Occupied Properties Annual Inspection	1,508	52%	1,508			754	3
Absentee-Owner Properties Annual Inspection	1,392	48%	1,392			696	2
<b>TOTAL ALL UNITS</b>	<b>2,900</b>		<b>2,900</b>			<b>1,450</b>	<b>5</b>
Hire Two New City Code Inspectors	Base: \$50,000, OH: \$22,500 TOTAL per Inspector \$72,500				<b>\$145,000</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$1,450,000</b>			
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania			<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>		
	City of Corry			<b>\$1,450,000</b>	<b>\$145,000</b>		
				<b>\$1,450,000</b>	<b>\$145,000</b>		

## Citywide Forgivable Loan Product

\$4,630,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES	Total to Address	Unit Cost (est avg)	10 Year Cost	ANNUALLY		
				Annual \$	Annual Output	Unit Average
Upgrade <b>Average</b> Quality Properties	133	\$15,000	\$1,995,000	\$199,500	13	
Upgrade <b>Troubled</b> Quality Properties	76	\$25,000	<b>\$1,900,000</b>	\$190,000	8	
Upgrade <b>Distressed</b> Properties	21	\$35,000	<b>\$735,000</b>	\$73,500	2	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$4,630,000</b>	\$463,000	23	\$20,130
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania		<b>\$3,025,000</b>	<b>\$302,500</b>		
	Local Match		<b>\$1,605,000</b>	<b>\$160,500</b>		
			<b>\$4,630,000</b>	<b>\$463,000</b>		

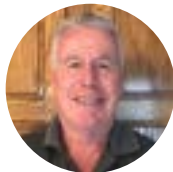


## SUMMARY Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods

\$28,160,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES		10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
TOTAL PROJECTED ACTIVITIES		\$28,160,000	\$2,816,000	
PROJECTED SOURCES	Federal Funding	\$0	\$0	0.00%
	State of Pennsylvania	\$13,285,000	\$1,328,500	47.18%
	Regional Philanthropy	\$920,000	\$92,000	3.27%
	Local Match	\$13,705,000	\$1,370,500	48.67%
	In-Kind	\$250,000	\$25,000	0.89%
		\$28,160,000	\$2,816,000	

### Champions



Brad Russell



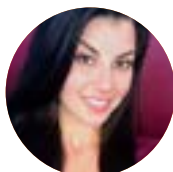
Kristy Elchynski



Brad Allen



Melissa Martin



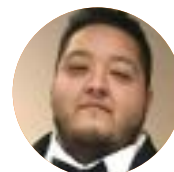
Erin Silvia



Joe Rumberger



Mandi Johnson



Jack Provencio

# Improve and Link Our Green Spaces



## WHY IT MATTERS

The importance of parks and trails in a community is not solely rooted in the opportunity to interact with nature and wildlife. Equally important is the opportunity for social interaction, whether planned or by chance. In 21st century America, residents have surprisingly few opportunities to meet neighbors by happenstance. It is often more convenient to drive alone to work, order a product online from Amazon thus reducing a trip to a local shop, or stay in for the evening and take advantage of the endless entertainment opportunities available via cable television or internet. On top of these hurdles, there are no trails on which to walk from **City Park to North Hills** or from the **Country Club to the Greenway Trail**. It is little surprise then, that most people abandon these efforts entirely.

If the connections from the neighborhoods to the trails and parks are seamless and properly designed, residents may begin to heed their doctors' advice and hit the pavement for a 30 minute walk or run. In so doing, it is almost inevitable this interaction with nature will result in increased social interactions as well. And a renewed appreciation for 'sense of community' will be realized.

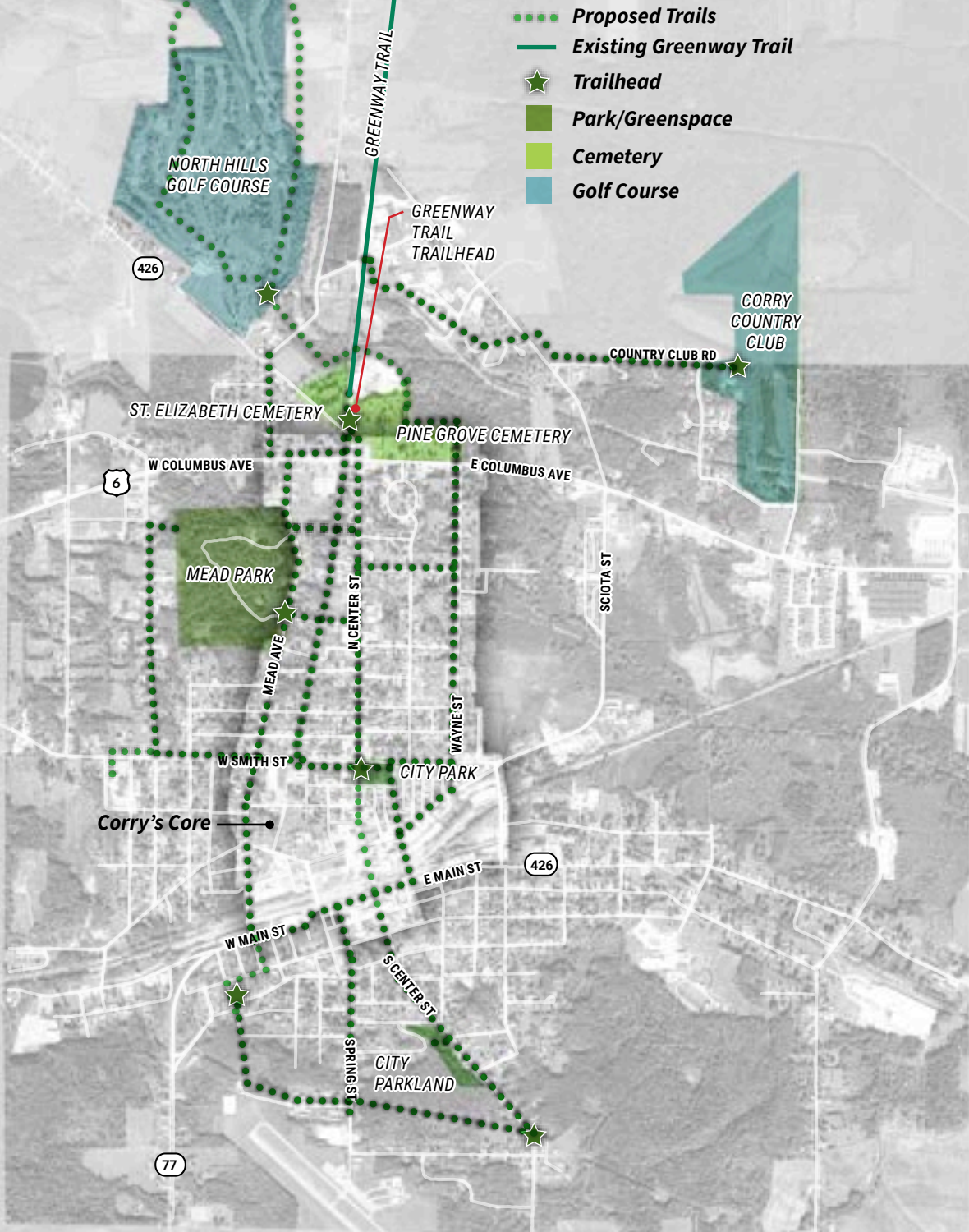


## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

The quality and accessibility of outdoor spaces dictate if and how often they are used. Imagine a well-defined 'emerald necklace' that connects the community's parks and open spaces, one that is marked by street trees, well-maintained sidewalks, benches, and wayfinding signage that indicates local amenities and distances. Much of this infrastructure is in place but there is nothing intentional in terms of connecting the pieces. In a city where the pastoral beauty of North Hills is just 1.5 miles northwest of City Park, it is regrettable that these two community assets feel miles away and only accessible by car.

For Corry to fully leverage its parks and recreational amenities to boost quality of life, it needs to develop connections between existing parks and trails to create a system of green spaces to be accessed and enjoyed by a variety of users. The importance of connecting Corry by bike and foot is further articulated in Corry's Active Transportation Plan that was created by Blue Zones Corry, the Erie County Greenways Plan; and the Commonwealth's Greenways Action Plan; and the Land & Water Trail Network Strategic Plan.

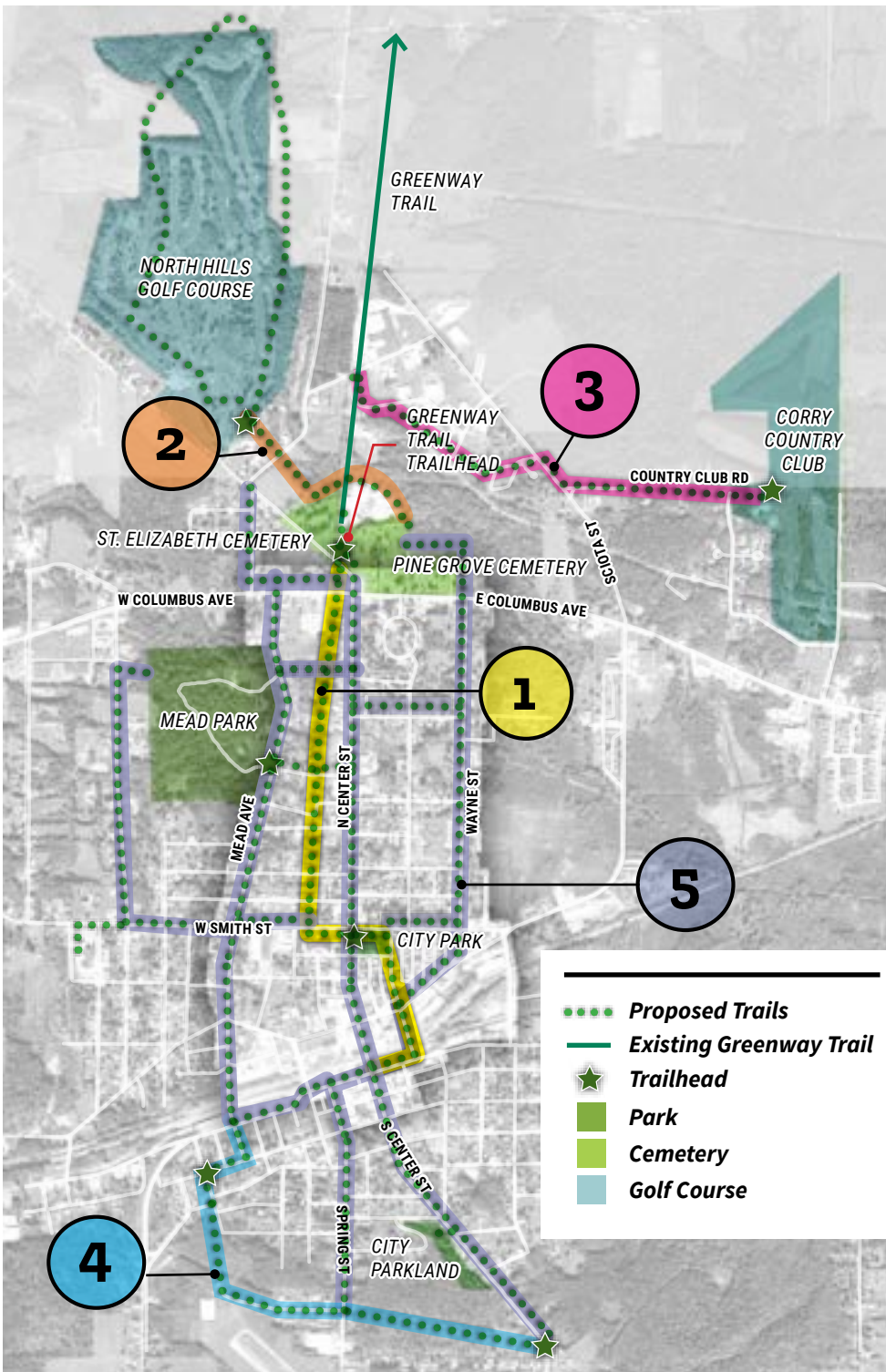
## A Fully Connected Parks and Greenway System That Capitalizes on Community Assets





Improve and Link Our Green Spaces

# A Phased Approach to Connect Parks and Trails



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Phase 1

Connect the **Corry Rails + Trails Park** to the **Greenway Junction Trailhead/Erie to Pittsburgh Trail** via **City Park**

The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail currently ends near the northern boundary of Corry at the Greenway Trail Junction making a trail gap. Existing rail and power line easements and streets are in place that could be utilized to create an extension of this trail that connects the City's parks into a fully connected trail and park system.

The initial phase originates at the existing trailhead and runs south along the rail and power line easement to Smith Street and east to City Park and then continues south along Maple Avenue to the Corry Rails + Trails Park. This stretch connects into the bike line project along North Center Street proposed within the Blue Zones' Active Transportation Plan. Associated with this phase of trail construction, additional funding for City Park improvements should be procured by the City and the business community and specifically dedicated to:

- Improved maintenance and landscaping operations
- Refurbishing and/or expanding the pavilion structure & utilities
- New benches and seating areas
- Water and power infrastructure
- Splashpad
- Interactive art installations

**Timeline:**

Complete by December 2023

## Phase 2

### Connect North Hills Golf Course to the Greenway Junction Trailhead

North Hills golf course provides many more opportunities than just golfing; it is a beautiful setting for walking, birdwatching, or simply enjoying a drink at the clubhouse. But it feels miles apart from the community's core if you are a pedestrian or cyclist.

The second phase is a continuation of the separated trail that runs from the trailhead just north of St. Elizabeth Cemetery and east through city-owned land to North Hills Golf Course.

**Timeline:**

Complete by December 2024

## Phase 3

### Connect the Corry Country Club to the Greenway Junction Trailhead

This phase of the trail system will utilize existing rights-of-way as well as the public utility easement in place. The initial connection point is at Enterprise Road for a short distance to the public utility easement, southeast and across Industrial Road before accessing Redevelopment Authority (RDA)-owned property and connecting to Village Green Drive and back into the road network at Sciota Street and down to Corry Country Club Road. At this point, the trail would use right-of-way land along Country Club Road going east to the golf course.

**Timeline:**

Complete by December 2025

## Phase 4

### Spring Street Connecting to Chord Street then North to Lemon Street

The power line easement through the wooded area between South Center (just north of Airport Road) and Spring Street (at the intersection of Chord Street near the Meyers Green apartments) would provide a nice off-street walking trail for residents in the southern section of the city. This could connect to Chord Street, extend west to city-owned land and then north to tie into Lemon Street.

This segment of trail construction extends the trail system to its southernmost point in the City and offers an opportunity to begin thinking about connections to the regional rail trail system, the East Branch Trail, that would link Corry to Spartansburg (possibly along South Center Street to Stewart Road and extend south along Lindsey Hollow Road) approximately eight miles to the south where a portion of the regional trail system is already completed.

**Timeline:**

Complete by December 2027

## Phase 5

### Complete the Emerald Necklace Surrounding the Core

The sidewalks in much of the city's core are in good condition. This area should be targeted for an annual assessment to ensure all necessary sidewalk repairs are made regularly and in a consistent manner.

Work in this phase also includes tree planting, art, benches, and wayfinding signage that will help to further identify and beautify this section of the trail system. This is where the separated trail system should seamlessly tie into the neighborhoods, allowing easy accessibility.

**Timeline:**

Complete by December 2030

## Mead Park Plan

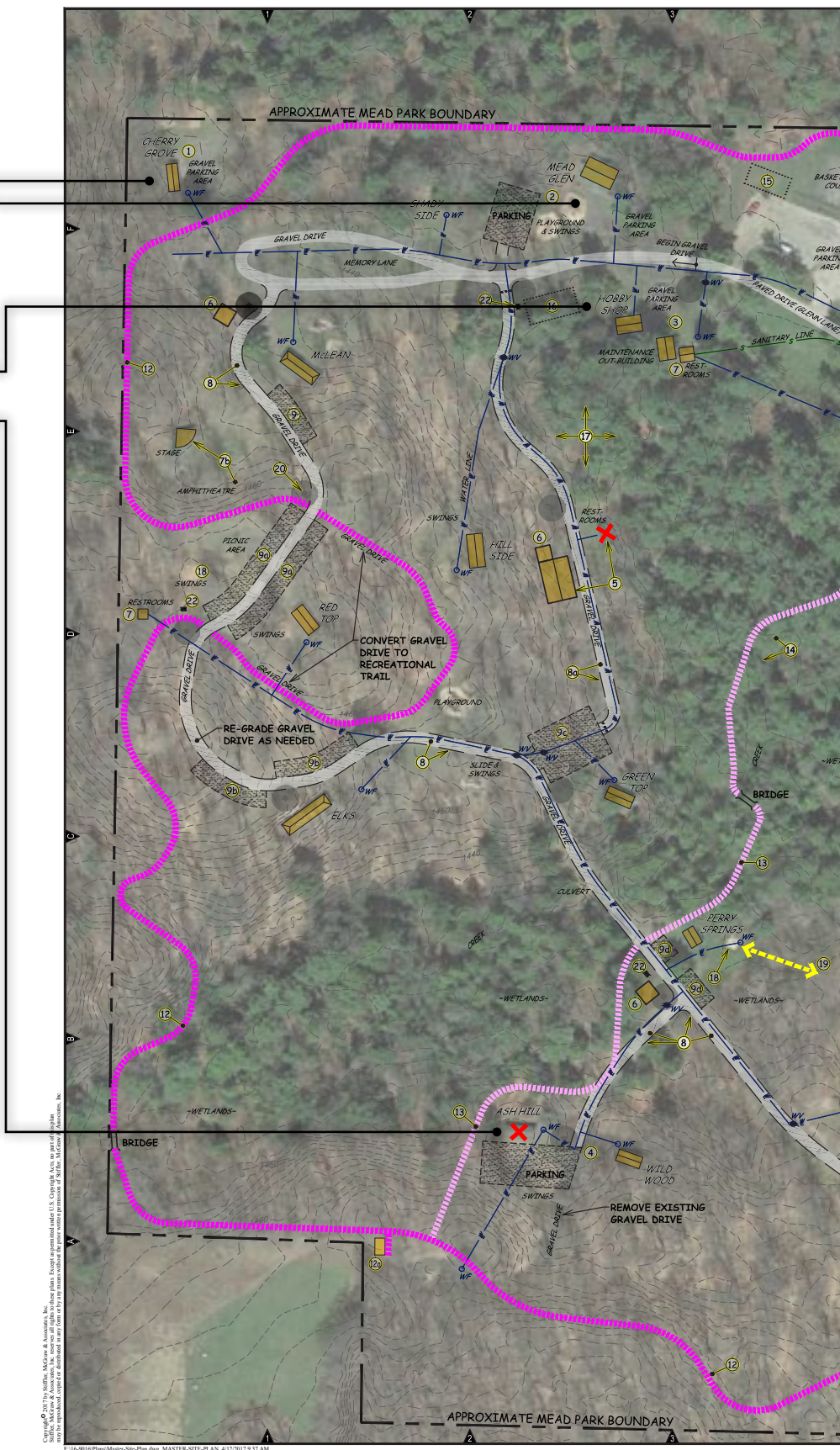
The Mead Park Plan was completed in 2017 by Stiffler McGraw under the direction of the Mead Park Association. The plan is well thought out and in addition to outlining deferred maintenance issues in detail, the plan recommends the following **new amenities**:

**Cherry Grove Improvements**

**Mead Glen Improvements**

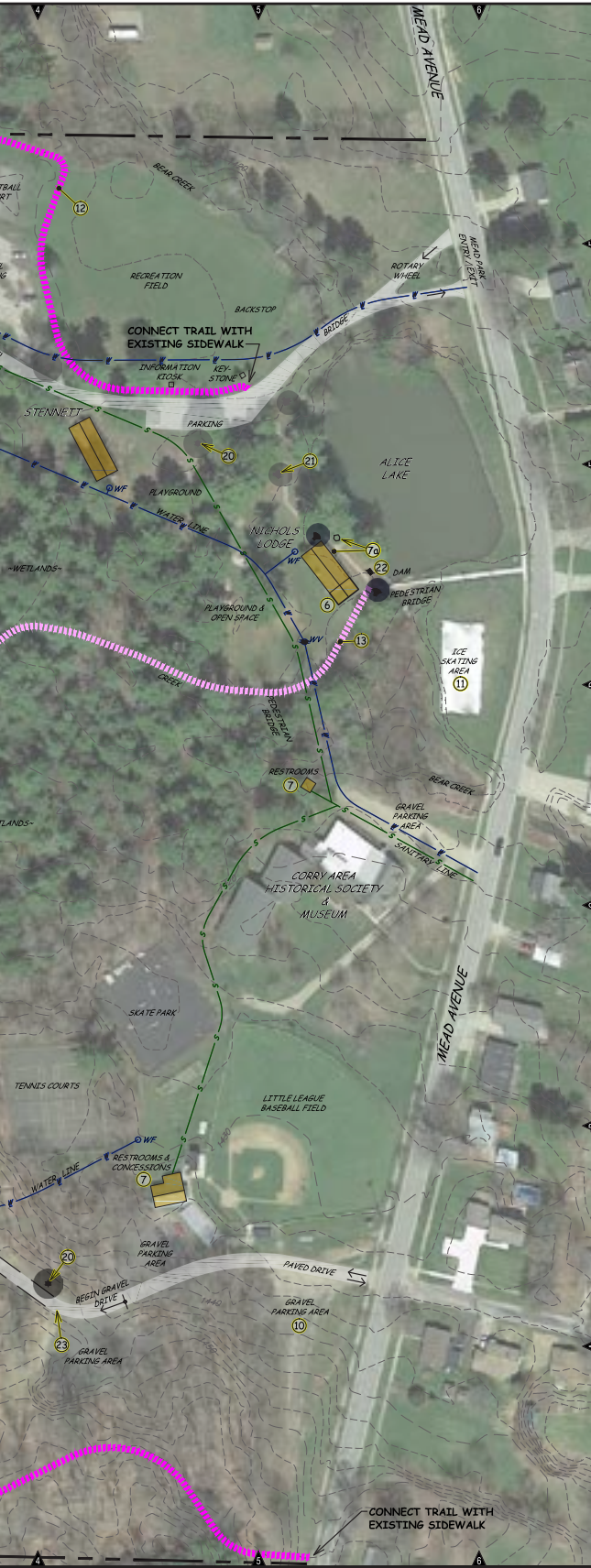
**Hobby Shop Improvements**

**Ash Hill & Wild Wood Improvements**



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**PLAN LEGEND & NOTES**

- EXISTING STREAM
  - EXISTING SANITARY SEWER LINE
  - EXISTING WATER LINE
  - EXISTING WETLANDS
  - EXISTING STRUCTURE
  - PROPOSED STRUCTURE
  - ✗ ITEM TO BE REMOVED
- SLANTED TEXT IDENTIFIES EXISTING PARK FEATURES.
  - VERTICAL TEXT IDENTIFIES PROPOSED PARK IMPROVEMENTS.
  - WATER AND SANITARY SEWER UTILITIES SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE. LOCATIONS SHOULD BE FIELD VERIFIED PRIOR TO ANY DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION. (WF = WATER FOUNTAIN, WV = WATER VALVE)
  - WETLAND BOUNDARY WAS FIELD LOCATED BY JOSHUA CHESTNEY, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST WITH STIFFLER, MCGRAW & ASSOCIATES ON 9/22/16. A WETLAND DELINEATION SHOULD BE PERFORMED PRIOR TO ANY DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION LOCATED NEAR THE WETLANDS.
  - PROPOSED PARKING AREAS SHALL COMPLY ALL APPLICABLE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., CITY OF CORRY ZONING ORDINANCE, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ADA STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBLE DESIGN, ETC.)
  - PROPOSED PARKING AREAS THAT PROVIDE ADA SPACES WILL ALSO NEED AN ACCESSIBLE ROUTE TO THE NEARBY PARK FEATURES.

- 1 CHERRY GROVE IMPROVEMENTS:
  - a. EXISTING PARKING - USE EXISTING BOLLARDS TO BETTER DEFINE PARKING AREA FOR (7±) PARKING SPACES.
  - b. REMOVE PORTION OF GRAVEL IN FRONT OF PAVILION. SEED AREA TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL GREEN SPACE.
  - c. SELECTIVE TREE REMOVAL TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL GREEN SPACE. SEED AREAS AS NECESSARY.
- 2 MEAD GLEN IMPROVEMENTS:
  - a. EXISTING PARKING - ADD BOLLARDS TO BETTER DEFINE PARKING AREA FOR (6± to 8±) PARKING SPACES.
  - b. ADDITIONAL PARKING - WHERE IDENTIFIED ON THE PLANS.
    - SELECTIVE TREE REMOVAL TO ALLOW FOR ADEQUATE PARKING AREA.
    - LOCATE SINGLE LANE PARKING ACCESS BETWEEN EXISTING TREES & MONUMENTS.
    - PROVIDE GRAVEL PARKING AREA FOR (1.4±) SPACES.
    - PROVIDE STABILIZED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS FROM PARKING AREA TO PLAYGROUND AND TO BUILDING.
- 3 HOBBY SHOP IMPROVEMENTS:
  - a. SELECTIVE TREE REMOVAL TO ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL GREEN SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS, AND BETWEEN MAIN BUILDING AND GLENN LANE.
  - b. EXISTING PARKING - EXPAND FROM EXISTING GRAVEL TO DEFINE PARKING AREA FOR (8±) PARKING SPACES.
  - c. SEED AREAS AROUND EXPANDED PARKING AND AROUND TREE REMOVALS AS NECESSARY.
- 4 ASH HILL & WILD WOOD IMPROVEMENTS:
  - a. ELIMINATE ASH HILL PAVILION TO ALLOW FOR EXPANSION OF WILD WOOD PAVILION.
  - b. EXISTING PARKING - EXPAND FROM EXISTING GRAVEL TO DEFINE PARKING AREA FOR (1.0± to 2.0±) PARKING SPACES.
  - c. SELECTIVE TREE REMOVAL TO ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL GREEN SPACE AROUND PAVILION AND PARKING AREA.
  - d. EXISTING PLAY AREA - ADD PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AND PLAY SURFACING.
- 5 NEW MAINTENANCE FACILITY. REMOVE EXISTING RESTROOM BUILDING.
- 6 NEW RESTROOM FACILITY. (MAY REQUIRE EXTENSION OF EXISTING SANITARY SEWER LINE)
- 7 UPGRADE EXISTING RESTROOM FACILITY.
- 7a UPGRADE NICHOLS LODGE BY PROVIDING ADA ACCESS. GLENN MEAD MEMORIAL STONE TO BE RELOCATED NEAR LODGE ENTRY.
- 7b UPGRADE AMPHITHEATER SEATING AREA AND STAGE.
- 8 GRAVEL DRIVE ENHANCEMENTS.
- 8a GRAVEL DRIVE ENHANCEMENTS. PORTION OF DRIVE FOR MAINTENANCE VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIAN USE ONLY. PROTECT DRIVE BY GATE OR REMOVABLE BOLLARDS AT BOTH ENTRANCES.
- 9 ADDITIONAL GRAVEL PARKING AREA FOR (8±) PARKING SPACES.
- 9a ADDITIONAL GRAVEL PARKING AREA FOR (32± to 36±) PARKING SPACES. PARKING WILL PROVIDE ADA ACCESS TO AMPHITHEATRE.
- 9b ADDITIONAL GRAVEL PARKING AREA FOR (20± to 22±) PARKING SPACES. PARKING WILL PROVIDE ADA ACCESS TO ELKS PAVILION.
- 9c ADDITIONAL GRAVEL PARKING AREA FOR (1.0±) PARKING SPACES.
- 9d ADDITIONAL GRAVEL PARKING AREA FOR (8±) PARKING SPACES. PARKING WILL PROVIDE ADA ACCESS TO PERRY SPRINGS PAVILION.
- 10 BETTER DEFINE EXISTING GRAVEL PARKING AREA. IDENTIFY PARKING STALLS TO MAXIMIZE PARKING.
- 11 RENOVATE EXISTING ICE SKATING AREA AND DEVELOP INTO PARKING AREA. (OPTION: ALLOW PARKING AREA TO FLOOD IN WINTER AND BE UTILIZED FOR ICE SKATING)
- 12 STABILIZED RECREATIONAL TRAIL WITH TRAIL MARKERS ~ 0.85 MILES, 1.25 MILES WITH SIDEWALK (OPTIONS: LIMESTONE DUST, ASPHALT, RECYCLED RUBBER)
- 12a ADD PLATFORM / OUTLOOK AREA ADJACENT TO STABILIZED RECREATIONAL TRAIL.
- 12b NATURAL HIKING TRAIL THROUGH WOODED AREAS AND ADJACENT TO CREEK, WITH TRAIL MARKERS ~ 0.30 MILES TRAIL THROUGH WETLANDS MAY REQUIRE ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING.
- 14 RESTORE EXISTING CREEK CHANNEL IN SPECIFIC LOCATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY OVERTOPPING AND EROSION. CONSTRUCTION LOCATED IN WETLANDS MAY REQUIRE ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING.
- 15 SAND VOLLEYBALL COURT.
- 16 DESIGNATED AREA FOR COURT GAMES. SELECTIVE TREE REMOVAL TO ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL GREEN SPACE AS NEEDED. (OPTIONS: BOCCIE, HORSE SHOES, PICKEL BALL, ETC.)
- 17 DESIGNATED AREA FOR DOG PARK. SELECTIVE TREE REMOVAL TO ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL GREEN SPACE AS NEEDED.
- 18 ADD PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AND PLAY SURFACING.
- 19 ENHANCE TRAIL BETWEEN PERRY SPRINGS AND TENNIS COURTS. CLEAR OVERGROWN VEGETATION AS NECESSARY.
- 20 LED LIGHT POLE - 1.3± LOCATIONS. (MAY REQUIRE EXTENSION OF EXISTING ELECTRIC SERVICE)
- 21 LED SIDEWALK AND POND ENHANCEMENT LIGHTING - 4± LOCATIONS.
- 22 INFORMATION KIOSK / PARK LOCATION MAP - 4± LOCATIONS.
- 23 ENHANCE SOUTHERN PARK ENTRY. (OPTIONS: SIGNAGE, GATEWAY, ETC.)

**PHOTO REFERENCES**



**STIFFLER MCGRAW**

1731 N. Junata Street  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648  
Phone: 814.696.6280 Fax: 814.696.6240

115 W. Spring Street  
Tinsville, PA 16354  
Phone: 814.775.0309 Fax: 814.775.0312

Stiffler, McGraw & Associates, Inc.

PLAN NORTH

GRAPHIC SCALE  
0 30 60  
1" = 60'

Owner:  
MEAD PARK ASSOCIATION  
C/O CITY OF CORRY  
100 SOUTH CENTER STREET  
CORRY, PENNSYLVANIA 16407

Project Name:  
MEAD PARK MASTER SITE PLAN

16-9016  
CITY OF CORRY  
ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

**FINAL**

Revisions:

No.	Date	Description

Sheet Title:  
**MASTER SITE PLAN**

PROJECT NO. 16-9016  
DRAWN BY: CSF  
DESIGNED BY: CSF  
CHECKED BY: JAR  
SCALE: AS SHOWN

Drawing:  
**PLAN**



Improve and Link Our Green Spaces

# Projected Costs and Sources

## Trail Development and Connections

\$4,407,500/10 YR

**PHASE 1**  
Corry Rails  
+ Trails  
Park to the  
Greenway  
Junction  
Trailhead/  
Erie to  
Pittsburgh  
Trail via  
City Park

ACTIVITIES	Length	\$/Mile	Total	Cost/Mile
Easements incl Legal Fees			\$25,000	
Signage/Wayfinding/Design Work/ Art Installations			\$25,000	
Grubbing + Grading, Base, Surface Treatment	1.5	\$250,000	\$375,000	
Planning/Design/Engineering			\$37,500	
Landscaping Additions			\$50,000	
<b>TOTAL PHASE 1</b>	<b>1.5</b>		<b>\$512,500</b>	<b>\$341,667</b>

**PHASE 2**  
North  
Hills Golf  
Course to  
Greenway  
Junction  
Trailhead

ACTIVITIES	Length	\$/Mile	Total	Cost/Mile
Easements incl Legal Fees			\$0	
Signage/Wayfinding/Design Work/ Art Installations			\$10,000	
Grubbing + Grading, Base, Surface Treatment	0.5	\$250,000	\$125,000	
Planning/Design/Engineering			\$12,500	
Landscaping Additions			\$15,000	
<b>TOTAL PHASE 2</b>	<b>0.5</b>		<b>\$162,500</b>	<b>\$325,000</b>

**PHASE 3**  
Corry  
Country  
Club to  
Greenway  
Junction  
Trailhead

ACTIVITIES	Length	\$/Mile	Total	Cost/Mile
Easements incl Legal Fees			\$75,000	
Signage/Wayfinding/Design Work/ Art Installations			\$20,000	
Grubbing + Grading, Base, Surface Treatment	1.0	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Planning/Design/Engineering			\$25,000	
Landscaping Additions/Bridge			\$75,000	
<b>TOTAL PHASE 3</b>	<b>1.0</b>		<b>\$445,000</b>	<b>\$445,000</b>

**PHASE 4**  
Spring  
Street  
Connecting  
to Chord  
Street Then  
North to  
Lemon  
Street

ACTIVITIES	Length	\$/Mile	Total	Cost/Mile
Easements incl Legal Fees			\$25,000	
Signage/Wayfinding/Design Work/ Art Installations			\$10,000	
Grubbing + Grading, Base, Surface Treatment	0.5	\$250,000	\$125,000	
Planning/Design/Engineering			\$12,500	
Landscaping Additions			\$0	
<b>TOTAL PHASE 4</b>	<b>0.5</b>		<b>\$172,500</b>	<b>\$345,000</b>

**PHASE 5  
Emerald  
Necklace  
(+/- 5 Mile  
Perimeter)**

ACTIVITIES	Length	\$/Mile	Total	Cost/Mile
Easements incl Legal Fees			\$0	
Signage/Wayfinding/Design Work/ Art Installations			\$100,000	
Concrete Sidewalk Repair/Replacement	2.0	\$275,000	\$550,000	
Planning/Design/Engineering			\$75,000	
Sidewalk/Street Trees/Benches		\$350,000	\$350,000	
<b>TOTAL PHASE 5</b>	<b>2.0</b>		<b>\$1,075,000</b>	<b>\$537,500</b>

**City Park  
Enhancement**

ACTIVITIES	Length	\$/Mile	Total	Cost/Mile
Infrastructure and Repair Work			\$250,000	
Signage/Wayfinding/Design Work/ Art Installations			\$25,000	
Trees/Seeding/Plantings			\$50,000	
Planning/Design/Engineering			\$5,000	
Splash Pad			\$100,000	
Landscaping Additions			\$10,000	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>			<b>\$440,000</b>	

**Ongoing -  
Mead Park  
Enhancement**

ACTIVITIES	Total
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b> Implement Current Park Master Plan	<b>\$350,000</b>

**Long-term  
- Connect to  
Spartansburg**

ACTIVITIES	Total
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b> Estimated Trail Cost South of Airport (+/- 8 miles regional trail work w/ partnerships at an estimated cost of \$2mn.)	<b>\$1,250,000</b>



**SUMMARY Improve and Link Our Green Spaces**

\$4,407,500/10 YR

ACTIVITIES	10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
TOTAL PROJECTED ACTIVITIES	\$4,407,500	\$440,750	
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>			
Federal Funding	\$750,000	\$75,000	17.0%
State of Pennsylvania	\$750,000	\$75,000	17.0%
Regional Philanthropy	\$1,000,000	\$100,000	22.7%
Local Match	\$1,657,500	\$165,750	37.6%
In-Kind	\$250,000	\$25,000	5.7%
	<b>\$4,407,500</b>	<b>\$440,750</b>	

**Champions**



# Ramp Up Our Connectivity



## WHY IT MATTERS

Business owners and residents in Corry have realized that current broadband standards of 25/3 Mbps are not sufficient to support a community working from home, receiving telemedicine, accessing online educational services, and enjoying a variety of entertainment options. Compare this with the fact that current FCC data indicate 59% of Americans have internet access with 100 Mbps speeds or greater. Before Corry can invest in attracting new neighbors, upgrading infrastructure, revitalizing housing and neighborhoods, improving public spaces, and supporting businesses in the city and surrounding area, Corry must first connect to the world through high-speed internet. COVID-19 has served to accentuate how far behind Corry has fallen in the race to keep and attract households and businesses. Without end-to-end high-speed internet access, Corry is not only not going to catch up, it will fall further behind. Corry will struggle to compete as long as the city and its school district are not connected to the broader world and the global economy through high-speed Internet.

## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

Efforts are currently underway to make Corry and the Corry Area School District an end-to-end high-speed internet zone—to build the remote world of work, education, business, medicine, and job training.

With more and more workers realizing they can live anywhere and do their work remotely, there is an opportunity to attract these workers to Corry, but only if the City is fully and reliably connected.

**Phase 1** – Creation of a free WiFi in downtown Corry supported by fiber connectivity with speeds of 20 Mbps. Phase One was fully funded (\$250,000) by COVID-19 Erie County Relief Block Grant mandated to be used for connectivity improvements. This project also established a high-speed public WiFi provider in Corry, and eventually the Corry Area School District.

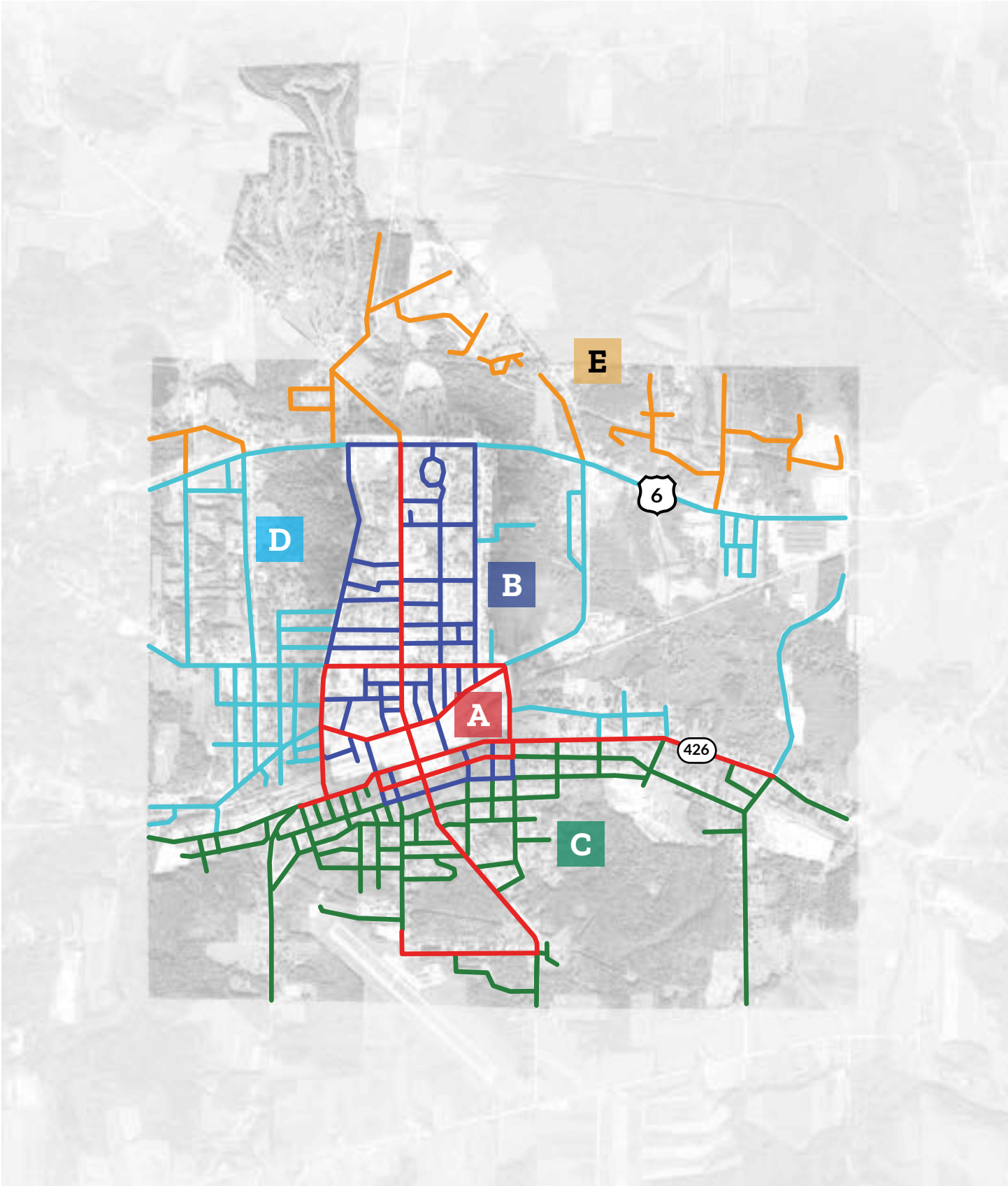
**Phase 2** Universal fiber optic connectivity access for homes and businesses within the City of Corry as well as fiber infrastructure outside city limits to support Phase 3 connectivity goals across Corry Area School District. Fiber will provide a guaranteed minimum 100Mbps symmetrical service to every service address in the City of Corry over the 60-miles of fiber to be installed. Purchase of fiber optic cable and installation hardware is complete (\$499,940) by COVID-19 Erie County Relief Block Grant funds mandated to be used for connectivity improvements. An additional \$215,680 has been secured through Neighborhood Assistance Program Tax Credit donations from local and regional businesses to support the installation of the first 10 miles of fiber. Five installation sub-phases are noted on the map to the right.

### Phase 2 Sequencing:

<b>A</b>	Spring St. to Airport Rd. to Center St./Route 426 to Route 6 Lemon St. to Shady Ave. along Main St./Route 426 South St. between 1st Ave. and East St. (w/ connectors) Washington St. between Mead Ave. and Pennsylvania Ave. (w/ connectors) Mead Ave. from W. Washington to W. Smith & W. Smith from Mead Ave. to Pennsylvania Ave. (w/connectors)	<b>Dec 2022</b>
<b>B</b>	All Streets between Mead Ave. & Pennsylvania Ave. between Main St. & Smith St. All Streets between S. 1st St. and East Street between Main St. & Pleasant Street All Streets between Mead Ave. and Wayne St. between Smith St. & Route 6	<b>July 2024</b>
<b>C</b>	All Streets remaining South of Main Street	<b>Dec 2026</b>
<b>D</b>	All Streets remaining West of Mead Ave. & East of Pennsylvania Ave. & Wayne Street	<b>Dec 2028</b>
<b>E</b>	All Streets North of Route 6	<b>Dec 2030</b>

**Phase 3** - Expansion of reliable, high-speed internet access across the Corry Area School District.

**Deadline December 2028**





**Ramp Up Our Connectivity**

# Projected Costs and Sources

## Corry WiFi and Fiber

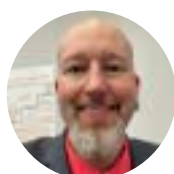
\$4,000,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES		10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
<b>Phase 1</b> Corry WiFi		\$250,000	\$25,000	
<b>Phase 2</b> 60 Miles of High Speed Fiber Starting With the Initial Sub-phases (<10 miles)		\$3,000,000	\$300,000	
<b>Phase 3</b> School District-Wide High Speed Broadband		\$750,000	\$75,000	
		\$4,000,000	\$400,000	
PROJECTED SOURCES	Federal Funding	\$1,000,000	\$100,000	25.0%
	State of Pennsylvania	\$1,000,000	\$100,000	25.0%
	Erie County	\$1,250,000	\$125,000	31.3%
	Regional Philanthropy	\$400,000	\$40,000	10.0%
	Local Match	\$350,000	\$35,000	8.75%
		\$4,000,000	\$400,000	

## Champions



Garrett Culver



Bill West



Les Utegg



Kathryn DiVittorio



Charles Gray



Brody Howard

“ I work from home for a company out of New York City and my job depends on Internet access.

“ I have four young boys in school. We have to use our hotspots on our phones for Internet. This doesn't get us far with school work, and definitely not for any measurable connections. I would love to continue my education, but it would be online work for which I can spare no connection time.

“ Some of us just want reliable wifi to stay connected to our friends and family who may not live close or could be sick.



# Activate Our City Center



## WHY IT MATTERS

The marketability, and thus viability, of a community is significantly impacted by the condition of its main entryway or downtown. If the buildings are empty or lacking quality tenants, or the facades are poorly maintained, the resulting sentiment is fairly or unfairly attributed to the entire community. Corry is just one of many cities that witnessed the gradual decline of its downtown as a result of changing consumer preferences accompanied by lackluster land-use planning that unintentionally incentivized commercial development on the outskirts of communities nationwide. Reversing these trends, which are well over 50 years in the making, demands intentional effort.

The neglect now apparent in the community core, and the downtown specifically, has been incremental and to such an extent that many residents likely do not remember the details associated with the area's decline. As longtime businesses began the exodus from downtown beginning in the 1970s, a few start-ups tried to make it over the subsequent decades. Each time most failed for lack of business know-how or lack of community patronage, or both. Yet, for every failure in downtown there was an offsetting 'success' on Route 6—Subway opened its doors in 1990, Walmart opened in 2002, and both Taco Bell and the Cobblestone Inn and Suites in 2014. At each step along the way, the community grew more and more complacent in terms of expectations and unknowingly witnessed the erosion of its authenticity. Luckily for Corry, very few of the buildings in the downtown that historically defined the community's character have been demolished. Revitalization of these structures is possible and initial efforts are already underway. These efforts must be supported not only by Impact Corry but also City Hall and the philanthropy of private companies scattered throughout the city and the region. A viable city core is critically important to Corry's quality of life and competitiveness.

## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

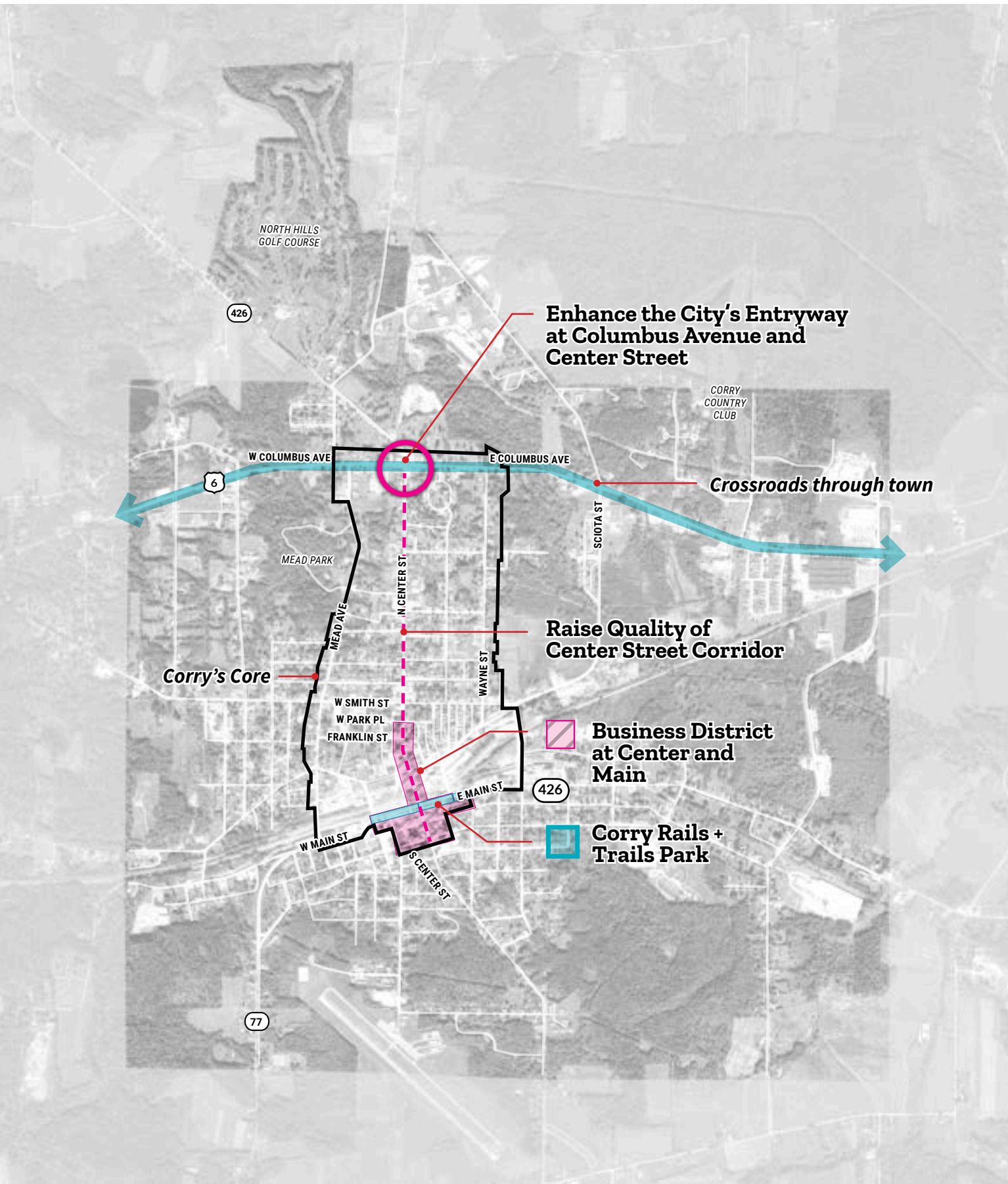
There are two areas in Corry's core that require intervention in order to stem, and then reverse, a decades-long decline. They are the center of the **Business District at Center and Main**, and the **Center Street Corridor** north of Park Place. Addressing these areas will visibly improve Corry along some of its most heavily trafficked routes, and show that the community has not accepted as a forgone conclusion the market weakness and distressed conditions at its geographic heart.

We will work within our city center to **grow existing and attract new small businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers** through education and training opportunities, regional marketing, and financial services.

Failure to strategically invest in this core area would have disastrous consequences for the rest of the community. If the community cannot come together to support the community's core, where Corry is its most authentic, most connected to its past and future, and most visible to locals and visitors, it is hard to imagine collectively addressing any other area within the city with the energy necessary to make change.







**Enhance the City's Entryway at Columbus Avenue and Center Street**

**Crossroads through town**

**Raise Quality of Center Street Corridor**

**Corry's Core**

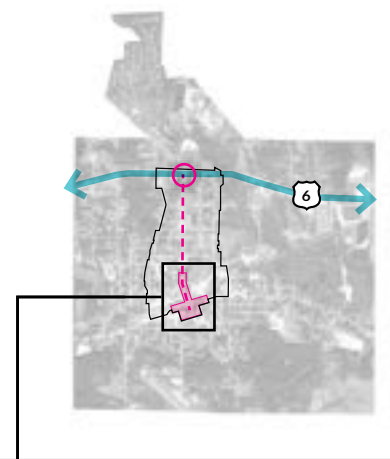
**Business District at Center and Main**

**Corry Rails + Trails Park**



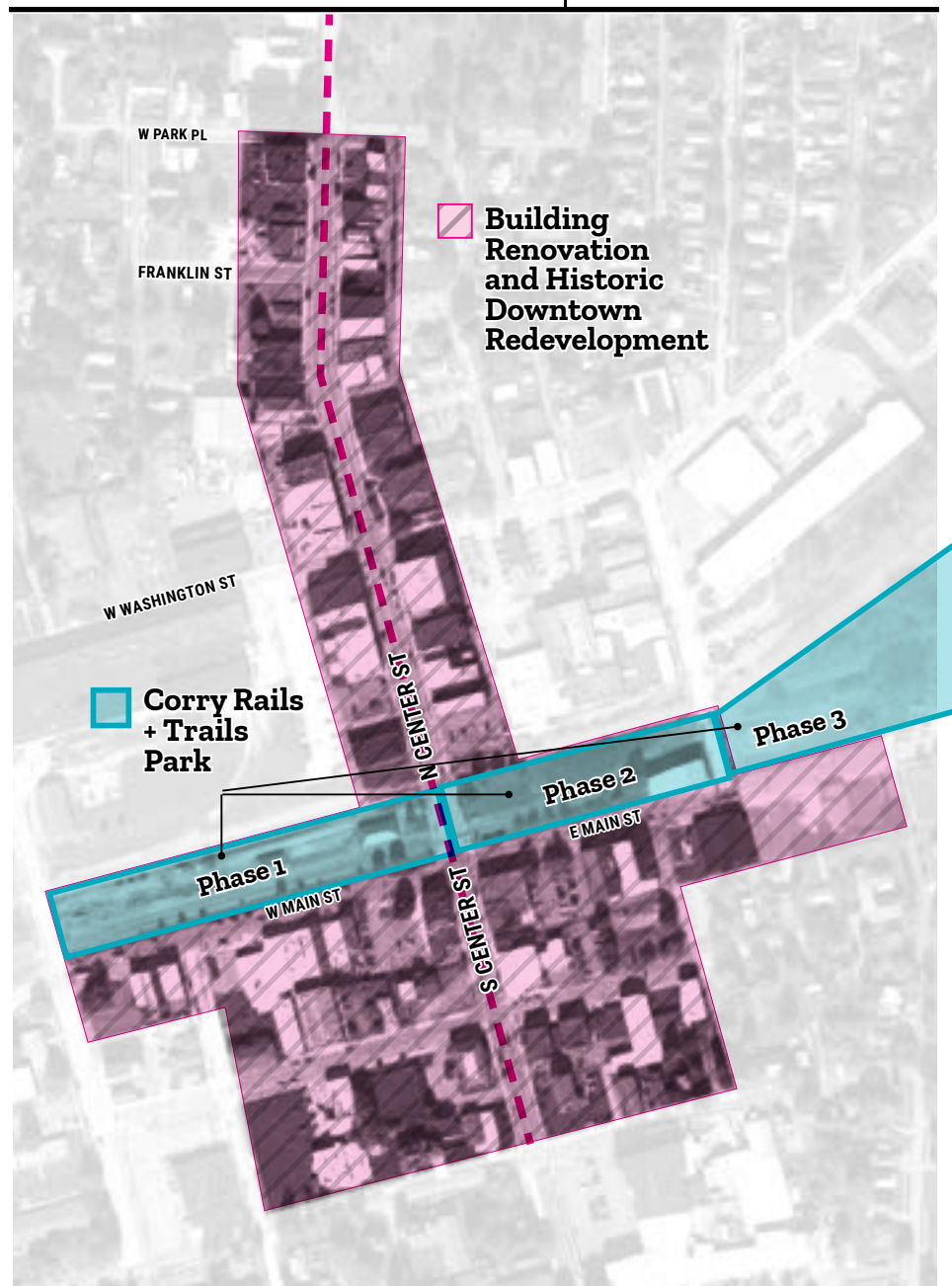
Activate Our City Center

# Business District Revitalization at Center and Main



Several decades of gradual decline in the downtown have resulted in too many abandoned buildings, too many vacant spaces, and a loss of vibrancy that have allowed locals the easy opportunity to walk away (or drive away) from this area and satisfy their daily needs along Route 6. But Route 6 does not fulfill the need for meaningful social interaction or an appreciation for local culture and history or even an opportunity to walk the streets of their community. That domain is reserved for the downtown.

A healthy downtown requires the economic support of the Corry Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and City Hall, the business savvy of the local Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Corry Business Association, and the moral support of the region's residents at large who must be convinced to change their shopping habits and become downtown's loyal patrons. Revitalizing Corry's downtown is not a choice that the community has to make—it is a requirement to ensure the future viability of the city.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Building Renovation and Historic Downtown Redevelopment

#### Phase 1 West Side (by December 2023)

- Expand the Façade and Building Renovation Program
- Create a City/Impact Corry Business Start Up Program
- Provide business and funding assistance for two new business owners to locate in the Downtown
- Complete Historic District designation process

#### Phase 2 East Side (by December 2027)

- Partner with local business owners to rehabilitate ten facades
- Municipal Building (possible renovation or relocation)
- Initial landscaping and street trees from Washington Street to the railroad line
- Rehabilitation Study for adaptive reuse of Downtown buildings

#### Phase 3 Between Maple Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue (by December 2031)

- Redevelop 80% of ground floor retail in Downtown as commercial uses
- Redevelop 50% of 2nd and 3rd floors as residential lofts and offices
- Carve out space for a pocket park
- Subsequent future phases could potentially include a rail-themed boutique hotel or similar.

#### Phase 4 (by December 2029)

- Continue redevelopment efforts that tackle the larger structures in the Downtown
- Incentivize affordable housing in the Downtown ensuring a complete housing ladder

#### Phase 5 (by December 2031)

- 100% of the ground floor retail is occupied within the Downtown
- 90% of the 2nd and 3rd floors are occupied by offices or housing (both market rate and affordable units)



### Corry Rails + Trails Park

#### Phase 1

The Corry Rails + Trails Park area is comprised of three distinct sections, a western section that extends from 1st Avenue to Center Street and includes two structures, one of which is the original rail offices. This section of the park, **Phase 1**, should be designed for use as a Downtown park that functions as the hub of the region's rail trail and bike/pedestrian networks while simultaneously serving the needs of local businesses and community gatherings.

#### Phase 2

The center section of the Corry Rails + Trails Park continues from Center Street to Maple Avenue and is currently an open green space. This area should be considered **Phase 2** of the overall Corry Rails + Trails Park project and offers an opportunity for landscape improvements that serve as a backdrop for the surrounding businesses. It also offers the potential for adaptive reuse of Main Street properties for economic development

#### Phase 3

Continue the work on the Corry Rails + Trails Park and expand into the public space between Maple Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue - this area could be a passive green space to accentuate the active components of Phase 1 & 2. Subsequent future phases could potentially include a rail-themed boutique hotel or similar.





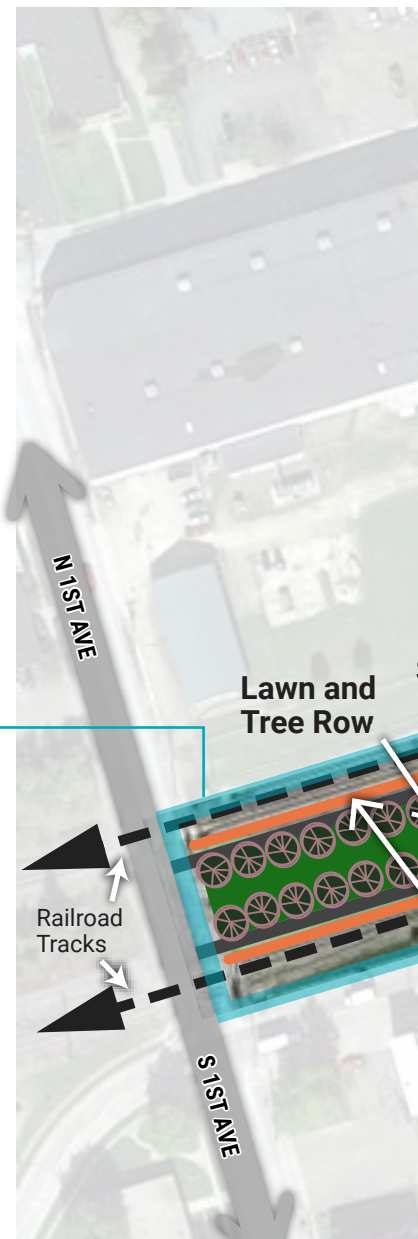
**Activate Our City Center**

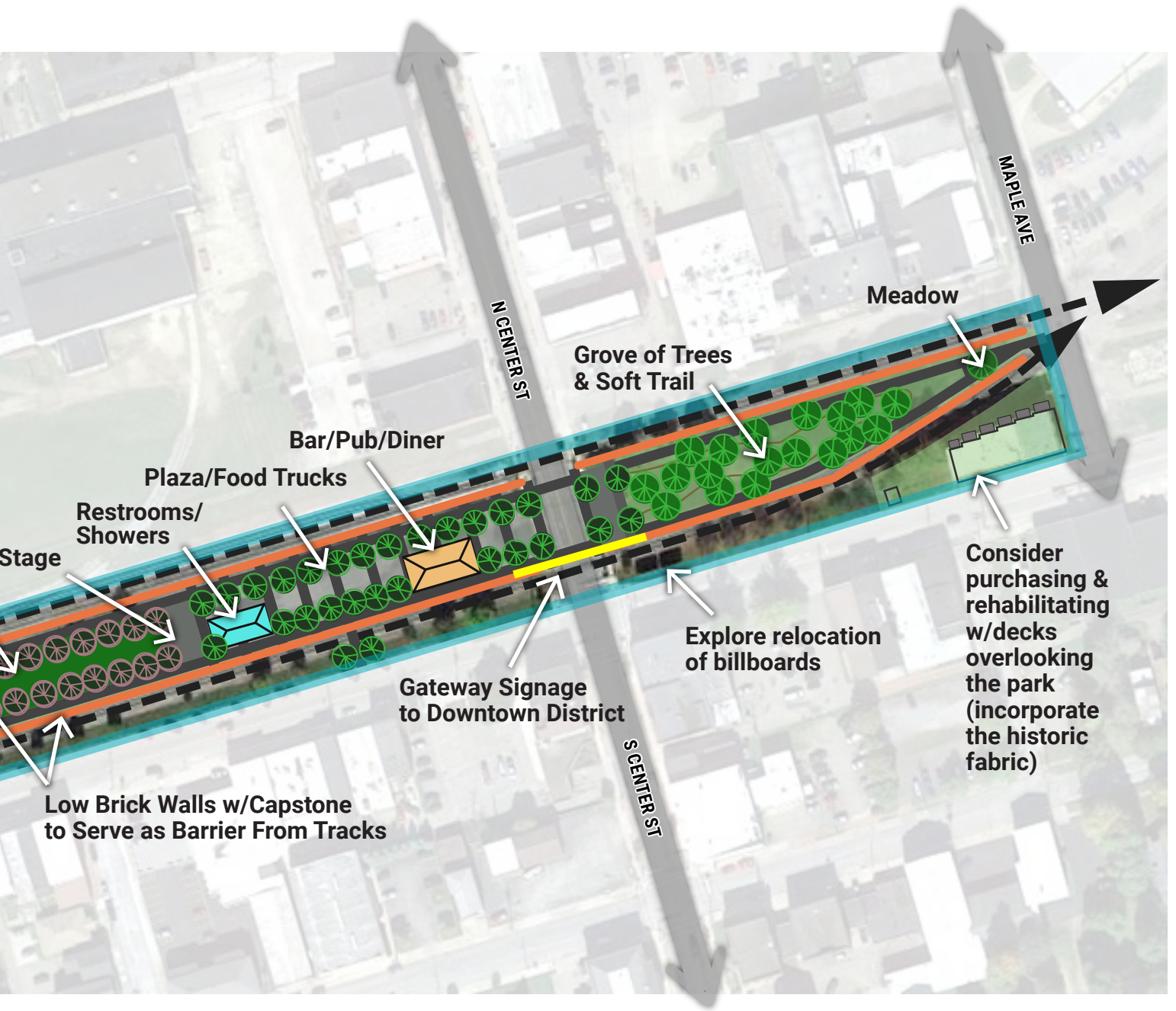
# Corry Rails + Trails Park

Corry has a unique opportunity to capitalize on the ‘land between the tracks’ that exists in the Downtown area. This open space covers approximately 1¾ acres and stretches almost 750’ east/west (with just over 100’ of space between the two sets of tracks before they converge east of North Center Street). Currently, the area is devoid of any public amenities and has a deleterious effect on the Downtown’s image. Further, in its current form, the space unfortunately divides the Downtown area – there are those buildings located north of this area and those located south of this area. It functions as a separation rather than providing the connective tissue needed in the Downtown.

The proposed site plan was based on significant input from the community via a November 2020 survey, and two large-scale community-based planning efforts, and input from the Steering Committee. Ultimately, the design is premised on the idea that this open space should not only serve as the origin/terminus for the citywide trail system but that it should also function as an aesthetically pleasing community gathering space. The allee’ of trees along the left side might be comprised of flowering cherry trees that frame an expansive lawn area used for outdoor concerts. Within this section of the proposed park, the existing ticket office might be a diner or pub that attracts locals and visitors alike to further activate the space. The central open area to the west of the ticket office could accommodate food carts serving a lunchtime crowd. And the eastern section of the park could be a less formally designed grove of trees with meandering paths that are designed to bring a more organic and natural characteristic to the park.

**Precedent Images**





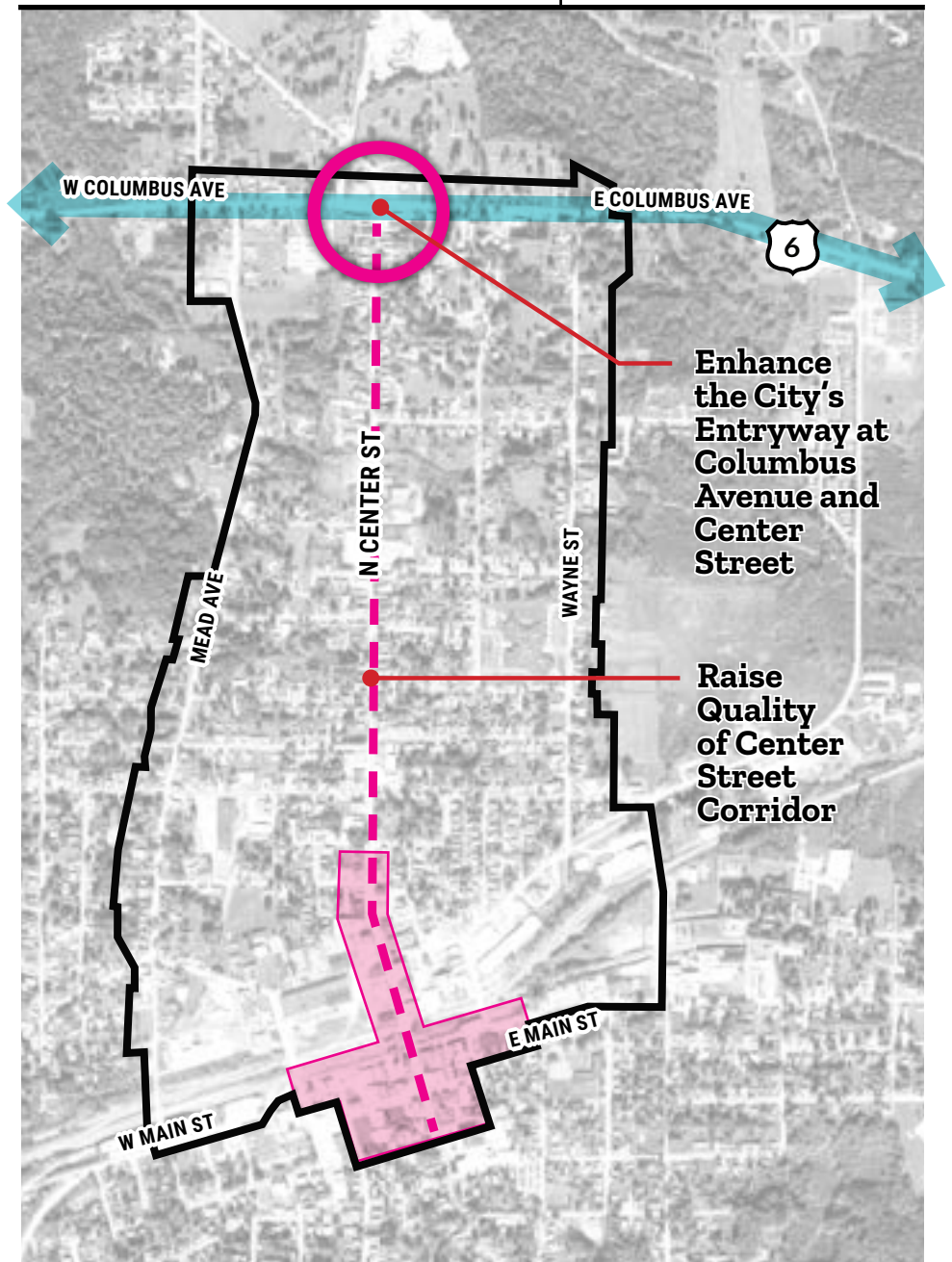
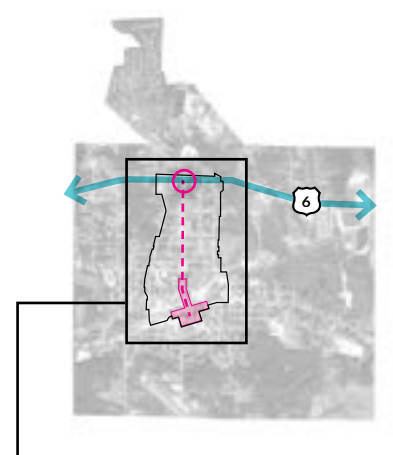


## Activate Our City Center

# Center Street Corridor

The Center Street Corridor is the entryway that provides first impressions for visitors as they turn south off of Route 6/Columbus Avenue. It's also a mixed-use neighborhood surrounding City Park that deserves attention after too many years of neglect. Center Street, from Columbus to Main, is the stretch of roadway that defines the community and its values for the most people.

Approximately 10,000 cars move east/west along Route 6/Columbus Avenue daily but surprisingly almost 6,000 cars move north/south along this important stretch of Center Street everyday. This corridor defines Corry to the outside world and without an increase in its visual appeal, the impression on both residents and visitors will continue to be either forgettable or negative.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ■ Raise Quality of Center Street Corridor

#### Phase 1 (by December 2023)

- Coordinate with the Blue Zones initiative to locate a bikeway from Columbus Avenue to Corry Rails + Trails Park

#### Phase 2 (by December 2024)

- Partner with local law enforcement to begin looking at walking this area nightly
- Initiate a partnership program to address properties in poor condition

#### Phase 3 (by December 2027)

- Center Street Beautification Project (approximately 1.25 miles)
  - Install period lighting and appropriate sidewalks.
  - Improve the tree canopy.
  - Complete street finish.
  - Incorporate public art.
  - Wayfinding signs
  - Infrastructure upgrades

#### Phases 4 & 5 (by December 2029)

- Work with property owners to upgrade facades and outdoor spaces
- Revolving loan fund
- Matching grants to incentivize building improvements



### ○ Enhance the City's Entryway at Columbus Avenue and Center Street

#### Phase 1 (December 2023)

Consider rebranding this area as Corry Crossing

#### Phase 2 (December 2027)

Incentivize business owners with matching funds to redesign their parking lots with screening, facade improvements, bike racks, updated signage and a streetscape that ties into Center Street's proposed redesign.

In addition to the proposed private property improvements to enhance this intersection, the City should coordinate efforts with PennDOT to create a new crosswalk paving pattern that conveys the importance of this entryway to Corry while also providing a visual reminder to motorists that this area also serves as an important crosswalk for local pedestrians. Public art should be incorporated into this work. The proposed Phase 1 Trail will cross at this intersection or just west of it and should also be incorporated into any proposed infrastructure improvements in this area. An alternative to the paved crosswalk could be an overpass bridge but would increase the project costs in the range of \$500,000 to \$3.5mn depending on right-of-way acquisition costs, bridge design, etc. according to the Safe Routes to Schools guide.





Activate Our City Center

# Projected Costs and Sources

## Building Renovation and Historic Downtown Redevelopment -w/Demonstration Projects

\$11,725,000/10 YR

	ACTIVITIES	10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
Phase 1	Facade and Building Renovation Program	\$1,250,000	\$125,000	
	Create a city/Impact Corry Business Start Up Program	\$150,000	\$15,000	
	Business Development Program	\$750,000	\$75,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 1</b>	<b>\$2,150,000</b>		
Phase 2	Partner with local business owners to rehabilitate ten facades	\$500,000	\$50,000	
	Municipal Building (Possible Renovation or Relocation)	\$3,250,000	\$325,000	
	Construct Tree Lined Streetscape Between Washington and RR	\$200,000	\$20,000	
	Rehabilitation Study for adaptive reuse of Downtown buildings	\$75,000	\$7,500	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 2</b>	<b>\$4,025,000</b>		
Phase 3	Redevelop 80% of Ground Floor Retail in Downtown as Commercial Uses	\$1,950,000	\$195,000	
	Redevelop 50% of 2nd and 3rd Floors as Residential Lofts and Offices	\$1,500,000	\$150,000	
	Pocket Park	\$100,000	\$10,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 3</b>	<b>\$3,550,000</b>		
Phase 4	Continue Redevelopment Efforts	\$250,000	\$25,000	
	Incentivize Affordable Housing	\$150,000	\$15,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 4</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>		
Phase 5	100% of the Ground Floor Retail is Occupied Within the Downtown	\$500,000	\$50,000	
	90% of the 2nd and 3rd floors are occupied by offices or housing	\$1,100,000	\$110,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 5</b>	<b>\$1,600,000</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$11,725,000</b>	<b>\$1,172,500</b>	
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	<b>Federal Funding</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	12.8%
	<b>State of Pennsylvania</b>	<b>\$2,975,000</b>	<b>\$297,500</b>	25.4%
	<b>Regional Philanthropy</b>	<b>\$1,750,000</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>	14.9%
	<b>Local Match</b>	<b>\$5,500,000</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	46.9%
		<b>\$11,725,000</b>	<b>\$1,172,500</b>	



## Corry Rails + Trails Park

\$3,750,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES		10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
Phase 1	West Side - Corry Rails + Trails Park	\$1,750,000	\$175,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 1</b>	<b>\$1,750,000</b>		
Phase 2	East Side - Corry Rails + Trails Park	\$1,500,000	\$150,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 2</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>		
Phase 3	East Side Green Space	\$500,000	\$50,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 3</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$3,750,000</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>	
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania	\$1,250,000	\$125,000	33.3%
	Regional Philanthropy	\$1,250,000	\$125,000	33.3%
	Local Match	\$1,250,000	\$125,000	33.3%
		<b>\$3,750,000</b>	<b>\$375,000</b>	

## Raise Quality of Center Street Corridor w/ Demonstration Projects

\$2,525,000/10 YR

	ACTIVITIES	10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
Phase 1	Coordinate w/ BZ to Create ‘Sharrow’ Bikeway from Columbus to the Corry Rails + Trails Park	\$225,000	\$22,500	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 1</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>		
Phase 2	Address Challenges at 7 West Columbus	\$200,000	\$20,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 2</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>		
Phase 3	Center Street Beautification (1.25 mi)	\$1,250,000	\$125,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 3</b>	<b>\$1,250,000</b>		
Phase 4	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping to 36, 34,20 West Columbus	\$50,000	\$5,000	
	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping to 1115 N Center	\$50,000	\$5,000	
	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping to 2 East Columbus	\$50,000	\$5,000	
	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping 906 N Center (YMCA)	\$250,000	\$25,000	
	Acquire, Demolish, and Landscape 98 E Columbus	\$150,000	\$15,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 4</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>		
Phase 5	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping 955 N Center (Napa Auto)	\$25,000	\$2,500	
	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping 826 N Center (Lakeshore/Grocery)	\$50,000	\$5,000	
	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping 420-426 N Center	\$25,000	\$2,500	
	Exterior Upgrades and Landscaping 139 N Center (1st National)	\$200,000	\$20,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 5</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,525,000</b>	<b>\$252,500</b>	
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	<b>State of Pennsylvania</b>	<b>\$1,250,000</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	49.5%
	<b>Local Match</b>	<b>\$725,000</b>	<b>\$72,500</b>	28.7%
	<b>In-Kind</b>	<b>\$550,000</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	21.8%
		<b>\$2,525,000</b>	<b>\$252,500</b>	

## Enhance the City's Entryway at Columbus Avenue and Center Street

\$800,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES		10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
Phase 1	Rebrand Entryway	\$50,000	\$5,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 1</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>		
Phase 2	Infrastructure Improvements at Columbus/Center - Entryway	\$500,000	\$50,000	
	Incentives for Business Owners at the Entryway Intersection	\$250,000	\$25,000	
	<b>TOTAL Phase 2</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	State of Pennsylvania	\$425,000	\$42,500	53.1%
	Local Match	\$300,000	\$30,000	37.5%
	In-Kind	\$75,000	\$7,500	9.4%
		<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	



## SUMMARY Activate Our City Center

\$18,800,000/10 YR

ACTIVITIES		10 Year Cost	Annual Cost	
TOTAL PROJECTED ACTIVITIES		\$18,800,000	\$1,880,000	
<b>PROJECTED SOURCES</b>	Federal Funding	\$1,500,000	\$150,000	8.0%
	State of Pennsylvania	\$5,900,000	\$590,000	31.4%
	Regional Philanthropy	\$3,000,000	\$300,000	16.0%
	Local Match	\$7,775,000	\$77,750	41.4%
	In-Kind	\$625,000	\$62,500	3.3%
		<b>\$18,800,000</b>	<b>\$1,800,000</b>	

### Champions



Wendy Neckers



Erin Passinger



Bev Weaver



Les Utegg



Brody Howard



Karen Croyle



Lisa Cox

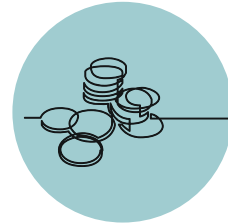


Charles Gray



Ashley Lawson

# Strengthen Our City's Balance Sheet



## WHY IT MATTERS

In past decades, small towns in rural areas—Corry among them—have experienced either a stagnation or a loss of employment, residents, households, total income, and real estate value. At the same time, the cost to provide public services has continued to grow, sending per capita local government spending soaring as the rising costs are spread across fewer residents. Unless new revenue sources are found, the result is higher tax rates—especially higher property taxes. Ultimately, tax increases reach their limit. First, the prospect of greater and greater taxes on property that is not gaining in value causes the market to question whether ownership in Corry makes any sense at all. Second, rational owner opposition to increased taxes on property that is not appreciating sets a political limit on how much revenue the City can raise. Finally, the revenue limits begin to negatively affect service delivery, which in turn guarantees even lower demand for Corry real estate in the future as potential buyers question whether the basic services they expect will be delivered, or delivered at a level of quality they expect.

Corry is constantly competing for residents and investors. When tax rates are higher than other jurisdictions and service provisions are lower, Corry cannot meet the expectations of the market and renders itself non-competitive. This will further exacerbate the loss of population and households experienced over the last 30 years. Future budgets must dedicate funds to projects that add value to the community's assets and demonstrably improve Corry's neighborhoods and downtown.

Further, commercial and industrial investors will seek out other opportunities, leaving fewer jobs and an even higher cost burden for local government services placed on residential property owners. This creates a vicious cycle—outmigration leads to increased per capita cost of services, which leads to outmigration, which leads to fewer dollars to invest in public facilities and programs, which leads to outmigration. This is not a sustainable pattern, so Corry must get its fiscal house in order.

## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

Corry must right-size its amenity-and-service offerings to more closely align with the current state of its financial situation. This requires hard choices about public facilities and services that residents have enjoyed for decades or longer. A critical look at each operational department is needed—is Corry appropriately staffed given its economic condition, are there alternative service delivery platforms that can provide equal or better value for lower investment, is this service mandated, and if not, is it driving value to the residents and investors? The same exercise should be exacted on public facilities—what is the cost and what value is being derived? As changes are made, and finances are stabilized, every investment should be targeted at increasing competitiveness for strong households in the region—strengthening neighborhoods, enhancing the business environment, and creating clear signals to the marketplace that Corry is a community of choice.

Making these adjustments will be difficult and will take time. The City's structural budget challenges did not appear overnight and will not be fixed overnight. But, in the short-term, **there are specific first steps** that reinforce the recommendations of the Strategic Management Program (STMP), that can be taken on the path to fiscal health.





**Strengthen Our City’s Balance Sheet**

# Rebalancing the Budget and Expectations

The operation of the City’s finances is the domain of the City Council, Mayor, and City Manager, and the topics addressed in this section are intended to support the work currently underway. Ultimately, the implementation of this plan hinges upon a strong partnership with the City as well as the business community. Implementation will require the community’s support for funding that could take the form of new loan products (from the banking sector and possibly the City), tax incentives, and/or a general obligation bond. It’s a big ask, but given the level of support to date, it seems that the Corry community and regional partners are ready to demonstrate what this community can achieve. The recommendations included in this plan are the result of many hours of work by the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee, and Impact Corry, with significant community outreach...much of the buy-in has already occurred and there are many residents committed to supporting the City’s next steps.

As the City continues to strengthen its balance sheet, the City is encouraged to invest time and resources in the four areas outlined to determine whether there are opportunities to realize savings for the community in the future and to have an honest discussion about the need to consider an increase in the mill rate on property taxes to address City operations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Sustainable Policing for the Corry Community

- The Corry community is rightly proud to have its own police force but, with the population in a slow but constant decline, the time has come to consider a different approach to public safety services—an approach the City can afford. The City spends greater than a quarter of its entire general fund to operate the police department.
- The City Council and the police department should engage with the Erie County Sheriff’s Office and the Pennsylvania State Police to explore what the future of policing for Corry might look like. It is sensible to expect such a transition would require a meaningful amount of time for planning and execution, but in no case should this transition extend beyond five years. This transition will require diligent education and outreach efforts with the community. This is not about a lack of appreciation, respect or commitment to the men and women in uniform; it is about the financial inability of the City to carry current costs any longer.



### Develop a Viable Long-term Business Plan for the North Hills Golf Course

- North Hills is a point of pride for the community but the golf course has suffered from deferred maintenance and non-optimized business practices. A financially sustainable operating model without revision will require a large increase in user fees to simply keep the doors open, and this appears unlikely. Creativity in terms of exploring the land as an all season asset should be put on the table.
- Residents should have an honest discussion regarding the reuse or public/private partnership options for this property. The following scenario outlines an opportunity to keep this beautiful local asset while saving the community dollars in the local general fund:
- City of Corry could lease North Hills to group of Corry Stakeholders, Inc.
  - Stakeholder group obtains a potential asset and assumes long-term maintenance obligations.
  - City receives cash infusion.
  - New controlling entity determines whether to operate the 186 acre parcel as a golf course or convert to alternative recreational resource or consider adding winter activities to ensure year-round viability with a greater demographic reach.



## Explore a New Future for the Corry – Lawrence Airport

The airport occupies 69 acres in the southern part of Corry and includes 4,100 feet of runway along with fuel sales and hangar space. LifeStar was the only tenant on the property until the corporation left in late 2019. The loss of the rental income, combined with reduced hangar rental income over the past two years, has appreciably constrained the airport authority's fiscal viability.



The recent Strategic Management Planning (STMP) Program Report (June 2020) notes the 'city's situation is not unusual as there are other small, municipal airports in Pennsylvania that are problematic given the decline in the private pilot population.' Currently, the Corry-Lawrence airport is underutilized.

The City and the community must begin to think about how this space is either preserved as an airport and more broadly marketed for the region's needs and hangar space for nearby private pilots or repurposed for something altogether different.

## Consider Creative Partnerships to Address Infrastructure Needs

The City should explore partnerships with third parties to bring in revenue streams from private organizations and/or grants to assist the community with public infrastructure needs; needs that have been neglected for far too long. The City has delayed much of this work for decades and no longer has the luxury to punt this into the future. The following areas require immediate attention:

- Roads
- Municipal buildings
- Storm water
- Waste water
- City services (trash, etc.)
- Parks



The City could consider creating a task force to assist the City Council and Manager as they consider new approaches to ensure this work is addressed over the next few years. The task force should seriously assess whether a property tax increase, specifically dedicated to infrastructure, is necessary to ensure this work is completed in a timely manner.



Along the line of partnering, the City should ensure that services provided to areas outside the City boundary cost the same as they do for those within the City. Such services might include fire and police for example. Currently, property owners within the City pay for these services at a higher rate than those outside the City. This regional subsidy is unsustainable for Corry.





# Strengthen Our City's Balance Sheet

## Projected Costs and Sources

### Rebalance City Budget Priorities to Align with Regional Partnerships

TBD - Business Plan Creation for Each Activity is Required

ACTIVITIES	10 Year Cost	ANNUALLY Annual Average
Sustainable Policing for the Corry Community	TBD	TBD
Develop a Viable Long-term Business Plan for the North Hills Golf Course	TBD	TBD
Explore a New Future for the Corry – Lawrence Airport	TBD	TBD
Consider Creative Partnerships to Address Infrastructure Needs	TBD	TBD
<i>Roll Cost Savings (est \$450,000/yr) from Re-Prioritizing Budget into Corry Implementation Bond (\$5M)</i>		
<i>Negotiate with State to TIF the City to Create Corry Implementation Trust Fund</i>		

### Champions



Bill Roche



Chelsea Oliver



Nick Heil



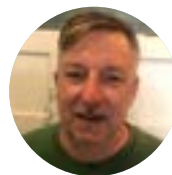
Tina Freeman



Jason Biondi



Scott Fogle



Buzz Hammond



Kathryn  
DiVittorio



Brandon Ferro





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# Calling All Champions

For over 40 years, the people of Corry have worked passionately to break the cycle of disinvestment throughout the Rust Belt that began in the late 1970s.

Efforts in Corry have held the dam, but the waters are still rising.

We must do something significant to succeed. We must all pull together in the same direction. And our efforts must be focused and disciplined.

Fixing what isn't working will require hard work. A lot of it.

Right now, Corry needs its champions.

Champions of every age willing to roll up their sleeves and work together.

People who see the beauty of what is...and what is to come.

Those ready to share their talents to realize the promise of Corry.

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A community with an authentic, resilient spirit. A place that celebrates its industrial heritage as well as its innovative, artistic future. A city of tree-lined streets, house-proud neighbors, and busy parks. A town of opportunity open to all. A paradise of nature and recreation. A refuge of remote living tethered to worldwide markets via the blazing speed of fiber optic connections. A thriving downtown of shops, restaurants, apartments, events, and people in the destination city of Corry, Pennsylvania.

# Community Strategic Plan - Project Phasing Schedule

	Total	Average/Yr	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	
<b>Revitalize Our Housing and Neighborhoods</b>														
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>														
<b>Specific Near Downtown Blocks</b>														
Upgrade Average Properties	261	26		5	11	20	25	30	30	35	35	35	35	261
Upgrade Troubled Properties	137	14				7	11	15	17	20	20	22	25	137
Upgrade Distressed Properties	69	7				3	5	5	7	10	11	13	15	69
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>														
<b>Renaissance Block Upgrades</b>														
Renaissance Properties	50	5		2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	8	50
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>														
<b>Specific Paint-the-Town Blocks</b>														
Upgrade Average Quality Properties	100	10		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	100
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>														
<b>Inspection Program</b>														
Owner Occupied	1,508	754			754	754	754	754	754	754	754	754	754	754
Absentee Owned	1,392	696			696	696	696	696	696	696	696	696	696	696
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>														
<b>Citywide Forgivable Loan Product</b>														
Upgrade Average Properties	133	13					8	10	10	20	20	30	35	133
Upgrade Troubled Properties	76	8					5	10	10	10	10	15	16	76
Upgrade Distressed Properties	21	2					0	0	0	5	5	5	6	21

	Total	Average/Yr	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
<b>Improve and Link Our Green Spaces</b>													
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>													
<b>PHASE 1 Corry Rails + Trails Park to Greenway Junction</b>													
Easements													
Signage													
Surface Treatment													
Planning + Design													
Landscaping													
<b>PHASE 2 North Hills to Greenway Junction</b>													
<b>PHASE 3 Country Club to Greenway Junction</b>													
<b>PHASE 4 South Center to Spring Street and North to Lemon Street</b>													
<b>PHASE 5 Emerald Necklace</b>													
<b>City Park Enhancement</b>													
<b>Ongoing Mead Park Enhancement</b>													
<b>Connect City Trail System to Spartanburg</b>													

	Total	Average/Yr	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
<b>Ramp Up Our Connectivity</b>													
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>													
<b>PHASE 1 Mobile Hotspots</b>													
<b>PHASE 2 60 Miles of High Speed Fiber Starting With the Initial Sub-phases (&lt;10 miles)</b>													
<b>PHASE 3 School District-Wide High Speed Broadband</b>													

**PART 3 THE BIG THINGS**

	Total	Average/Yr	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
<b>Activate Our City Center</b>													
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>													
<b>Building Renovation and Historic Downtown Redevelopment</b>													
Phase 1:Initial Program Start Up and Business Support													
Phase 2: Center Street, Municipal Building													
Phase 3: 1st Floor Retail & 2nd/3rd Floor Residential & Office													
Phase 4: Ongoing 1st/2nd/3rd Floor Rehab Work													
Phase 5: Completion of 1st/2nd/3rd Floor Rehab Work													
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>													
<b>Corry Rails + Trails Park</b>													
Phase 1:West Side													
Phase 2: East Side													
Phase 3: Between Maple Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue													
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>													
<b>Raise Quality of Center Street Corridor</b>													
Phase 1:Coordinate w/ BZ to Create Bikeway from Columbus to Corry Rails + Trails Park													
Phase 2: Initiate a partnership program to address properties in poor condition													
Phase 3: Center Street Beautification Project (approximately 1.25 miles)													
Phase 4: Focused Efforts on Specific Projects													
Phase 5: Focused Efforts on Specific Projects													
<i>Systems Design and Fundraising</i>													
<b>Enhance the City's Entryway</b>													
Phase 1:Rebrand Entryway													
Phase 2:Infrastructure and Incentives at Columbus/ Center Street													

	Total	Average/Yr	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	
<b>Strengthen Our City's Balance Sheet</b>														
Develop Plan for City Finances/Priorities														
Develop Plan for Municipal Golf Course														
Develop Plan for Municipal Airport														
Partnerships to Address Infrastructure Needs														



*#positively*  
**CORRY**

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**COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN  
2021-2031**



Prepared by czbLLC

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Erie Insurance



Corry Community Foundation  
Arlene H. Smith Charitable Trust  
Corry RDA - CAIDC - CIBA  
ECGRA