

Columbia County Placemaking Initiative



Final Report
October 2022 to September 2024



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About the Project

The Columbia County Placemaking Initiative (CCPI) was designed to coordinate resources and enhance the collective impact of projects led by municipal leaders, nonprofit organizations, businesses, artists, and residents to make Columbia County an even better place to live, work, play, and learn. This project is funded through a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agricultural – Rural Development (USDA), Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge.

Phase 1: Planning (October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023)

During the planning phase, the community:

- Participated in listening sessions and community cafés to identify assets, share ideas, and discuss needs and dreams
- Identified priority areas for the placemaking plan
- Reviewed and provided feedback on a draft placemaking plan

Phase 2: Implementation (October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024)

During the implementation phase, the community:

- Continued to provide information and insight for plans and projects
- Participated in roundtable discussions with funders and PennDOT
- Received technical assistance for various placemaking projects
- Participated in professional development workshops
- Developed plans for continued project implementation

Placemaking Plan

Local municipalities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and residents collaboratively created a placemaking plan facilitated and compiled by Hailstone Economic. The purpose of the plan was to capture the collective imagination and aspirations of local stakeholders and to structure those ideas into practical projects that will have a noticeable impact on the quality of life throughout the county.

The Planning Process

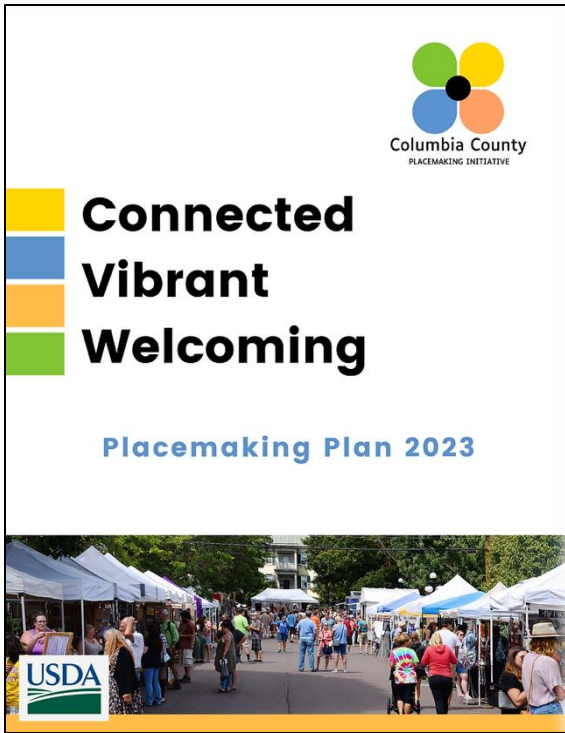
The planning process began with deep listening to understand Columbia County's unique assets, resources, needs, and desires. This included:

- Listening sessions that engaged stakeholders focused on northern municipalities, southern municipalities, downtown Berwick, downtown Bloomsburg, arts and culture, and housing
- Two community cafés open to the entire community
- A partner survey to assess local capacity and professional development needs and priorities
- A community survey to understand local residents' needs and dreams

Everything we learned through this process was organized into a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) that was shared with all participants who provided corrections and additions.

Hailstone Economic, in partnership with Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg, also collected, analyzed, and interpreted secondary data to further identify and understand community needs.

The information and ideas gleaned through this process were used to develop a draft placemaking plan.



The draft placemaking plan was shared with community residents and stakeholders through four community meetings and via email. The final plan was shared with the community at an event on October 19, 2024.

The final placemaking plan focuses on five areas:

Coblentz Corner



Broadband Expansion



Housing



Regional Arts Council



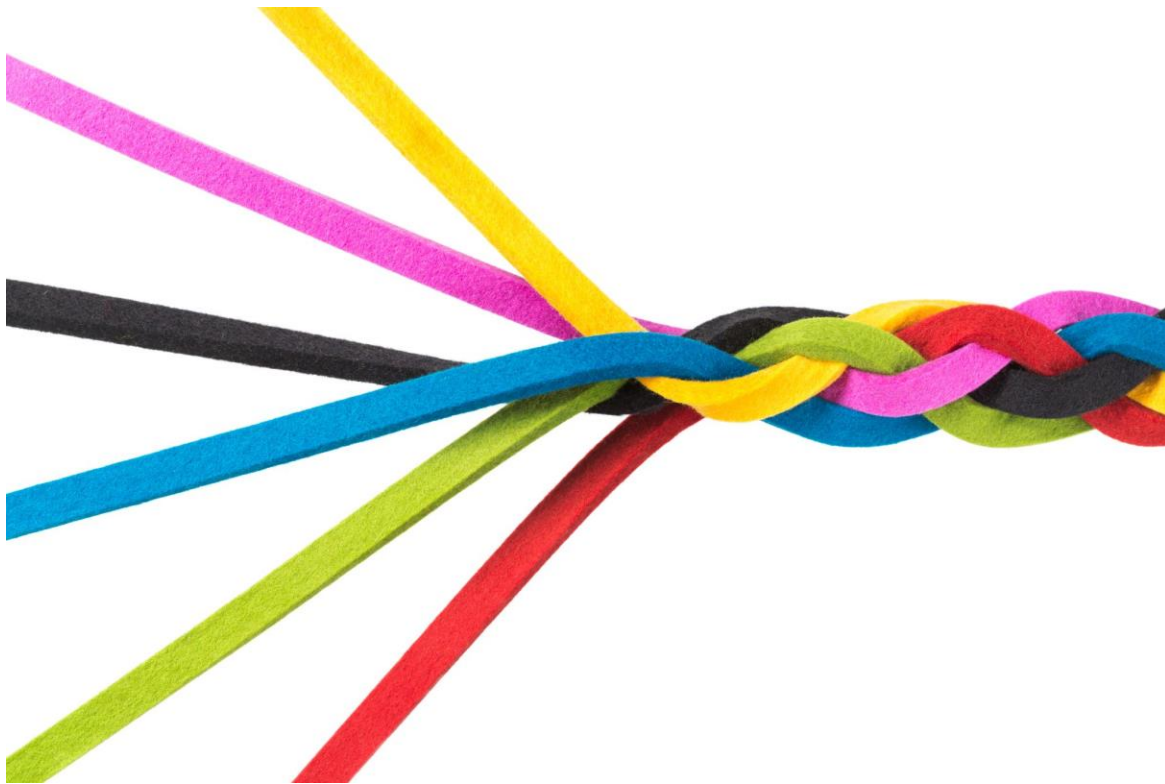
Berwick Park Improvements



Placemaking Projects

During the implementation phase, several placemaking projects were organized and facilitated including:

- Seed Grants
- Regional Housing Plan
- Employer-Sponsored First-Time Homebuyer Toolkit
- Berwick Master Parks Plan
- The Arts and Culture Alliance
- Arts and Economic Development Toolkit



Seed Grants



Two seed grants of \$7,500 were given to local placemaking projects organized by Berwick Arts Association and Berwick Theater and Center for Community Arts in response to a competitive application process. Thank you to Boyle Construction for contributing \$5,000 toward these grants.

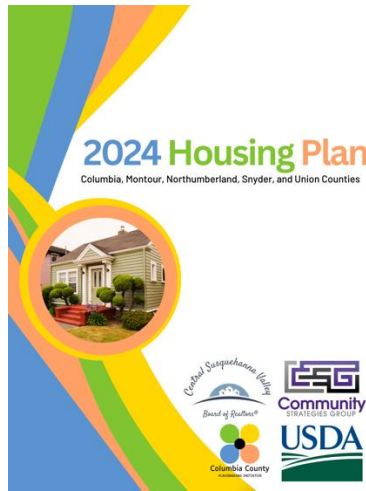
Berwick Arts Association worked with local artists to visually designate the new Arts District in downtown Berwick. Three artists were selected through an open competition: Anna Maffei, Rita Millard, and Dave Stabley.

Berwick Theater and Center for Community Arts is providing an ongoing opportunity for Columbia County residents to share their stories about life in Columbia County a new project called Chatspiration. These stories will be shared on a dedicated website to help people get to know each other, building connection and community.



A poster for the Chatspiration project. It features a light blue background with a white speech bubble containing the text "Chatspiration: Connecting through the hubbub of Columbia County". Below the speech bubble is a microphone icon. The text "Chatspiration collects and shares stories that celebrate the unique life and experiences of Columbia County residents. Visit our website to learn more!" is on the left, and "We want to hear your stories! Help us build up our community, one story at a time. What's yours?" is on the right. At the bottom, there is a QR code and logos for the Berwick Theater & Center for Community Arts, USDA, and Columbia County.

Regional Housing Plan



Central Susquehanna Board of Realtors® and Community Strategies Group took the lead on creating a housing plan for Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union Counties. The plan was developed through a series of workshops and focus groups that engaged real estate professionals, nonprofit organizations, and municipalities.

The plan has four goals:

Goal 1: Improve local knowledge about housing needs and solutions

Goal 2: Design and deliver innovative programs to address housing needs

Goal 3: Improve local housing infrastructure

Goal 4: Expand local capacity to address housing needs through funding and partnerships

In addition to Central Susquehanna Board of Realtors® and Community Strategies Group, several partners will take the lead on plan implementation including Susquehanna Valley United Way and Eastern PA Coalition for Housing.

Several organizations collaborated to create the housing plan:

- Central Susquehanna Board of Realtors® and members
- Community Strategies Group
- Agape: Love from Above
- Berwick Industrial Development Association (B.I.D.A.)
- Bloomsburg University Foundation
- Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc.
- Columbia-Montour Area Agency on Aging
- Commonwealth University – Bloomsburg
- Community Giving Foundation
- Degenstein Foundation
- First Keystone Community Bank
- MC Federal Credit Union
- Pennsylvania Association of Realtors®
- SEDA-COG
- Self-Determination Housing of Pennsylvania
- Snyder-Union-Northumberland Habitat for Humanity
- Susquehanna Valley United Way
- The Gate House
- Town of Bloomsburg
- Union County Planning Department
- United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development

Employer-Sponsored First-Time Homebuyer Toolkit

Employer-assisted housing programs were started by Fannie Mae in 1991. They include any type of employer-funded assistance to their employees to assist with rental costs and/or purchase a home – typically the employee’s first home.

Community Strategies Group and the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce will partner to educate local employers about offering an employer-sponsored first-time homebuyer program. An Employer Toolkit was created to educate employers about the benefits of employer-sponsored housing for employers, employees, and communities, options for structuring a program, examples of employer-sponsored housing programs in other areas of Pennsylvania, and information about supports available to help employers start and operate a program.



EMPLOYER-SPONSORED FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER

EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

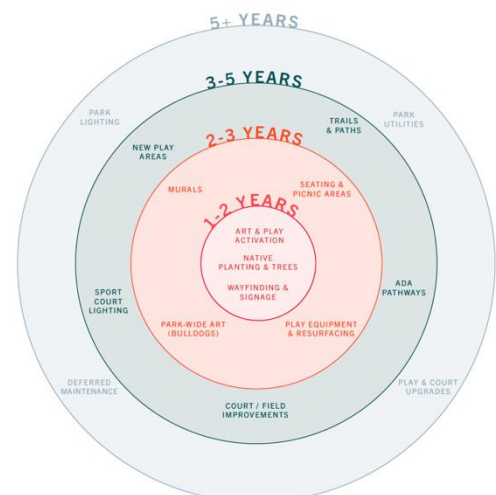
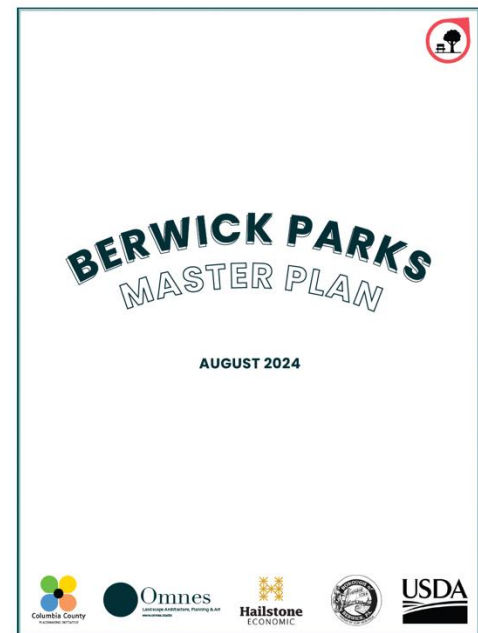


Berwick Master Parks Plan

Omnes, a woman-owned landscape architecture firm based in Easton, PA, was selected to create a plan for eight parks managed by Berwick Borough. The plan centers accessibility and the arts to ensure that Berwick's parks are vibrant and inclusive.

Thank you to the many partners who were involved in the planning process:

- Berwick Area Little League
- Berwick Aera School District
- Berwick Area YMCA
- Berwick Arts Association
- Berwick Historical Society
- Berwick Industrial Development Associatio
- Berwick Senior Center
- Ber-Vaughn Pool
- Columbia Montour Visitors Bureau
- Community Strategies Group
- Central Susquehanna Sight Services
- For the Cause and Berwick Teen Center Youth Action Board
- Hand in Hand Family Resource Center
- NEPA Center for Independent Living
- SEDA-COG
- Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
- The Arc Susquehanna Valley
- The Exchange



The Arts and Culture Alliance

In March 2023, a group of artists and arts and culture organizations gathered in Berwick for a community listening session about the arts. From that discussion, a decision was made to pursue forming an arts council for Columbia County and that project emerged into what is now known as The Arts and Culture Alliance.

The Arts and Culture Alliance generates excitement for the economic and cultural impact of the arts and create a vibrant, flourishing arts and culture community by:

- being a champion for the transformative power of the arts and culture;
- connecting, engaging, supporting, and facilitating collaboration among people and organizations who care about arts and culture;
- making art and culture accessible to new audiences; and
- acting as a catalyst for the integration of arts and culture throughout Columbia and Montour counties and beyond.

Thank you to everyone who participated in planning meetings:

- Andrea Bishop
- Dr. Janet Bodenman
- Connie Donlin
- Helena Griffith
- Brandon Hartman
- Oren Helbok
- Jacob Kelley
- Shelby Kellner
- Laura Knorr
- David “Otto” Kurecian
- Mark Golumb
- Abigail Manns
- Joy McGinnis
- David Morris
- Josh Nespoli
- Jon White-Spunner



Arts and Economic Development Toolkit

The Arts and Culture Alliance released an Arts and Economic Development Toolkit at an event on June 20, 2024. The toolkit is located at letsloveart.org and includes:

- Interviews with representatives from GoggleWorks Center for the Arts in Reading, Rivers of Steel in Homestead, Luzerne County Art Advisory Board, and Metris Art Consulting in Easton
- An economic impact analysis of arts and culture in Columbia and Montour counties, released in partnership with Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce and Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau
- Links to additional data and resources related to art and economic development

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Columbia and Montour Counties, PA
June 2024



LETSLOVEART.ORG



THE ARTS AND CULTURE ALLIANCE

Capacity Building Projects

During the implementation phase, several placemaking projects were organized and facilitated including:

- Funder roundtable event
- PennDOT roundtable event
- Professional development workshops
- Technical assistance
- Community connections



Funder Roundtable Event

On October 19, 2023, a funder roundtable event was held at The HUB in Bloomsburg. The purpose of the event was to connect local municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and businesses with funding opportunities, to build the capacity of local organizations to effectively engage with funders, to help funders better understand the needs of Columbia County, and to pair projects in the new placemaking plan with funding opportunities. Each funder explained the programs they offer. Several projects were pitched and everyone in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions and network.

Project Pitches:

- Oren Helbok, The Exchange, Regional Arts Council
- Josh Nespoli, Community Strategies Group, Coblenz Corner
- Damien Scoblink, Berwick Borough, Berwick Master Parks Plan Implementation
- Ammon Young, Columbia County Traveling Library

Participating Funders



Susquehanna Valley
United Way





PennDOT Roundtable Event

There are many state roads in Columbia County. Route 11 connects the eastern and western areas of the county, traveling through multiple municipalities and shaping the business districts in Berwick and Bloomsburg. Routes 93, 487, 118, 254, and 239 are also located in Columbia County. Through conversations with members of the community, we recognized that PennDOT's rules were not clear or easily understood by some members of the public.

On May 29, 2024, Briar Creek Borough hosted a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) roundtable. In addition to PennDOT staff, the event was attended by representatives from local municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce.

The purpose of the event was to understand and clarify state policy regarding right-of-way and signage along state roads in Columbia County. Participants had the opportunity to ask PennDOT questions and receive detailed explanations of PennDOT regulations.

At the event, participants learned about:

- Property owners' rights along state roads
- Signs that are allowed and not allowed along state roads
- Regulations related to public art such as banners on state roads
- Permits for off-premise signs
- How to balance safety and community appearance
- Using signage, design, and local ordinances to minimize truck traffic and damage to local walkways
- Regulations about sponsorships and advertising along state roads

There was also a discussion about the value of having the municipalities in the region get together to have in-person conversations to help them understand common needs, how to cooperate better, what is happening in each municipality, and how they can support each other. This might include workforce development and housing development for communities with increased job development. The Chamber took the lead on making this happen and hosted an event for municipalities on July 11.



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Professional Development Workshops

Hailstone Economic staff facilitated 23 professional development workshops and classes that were open to all local residents, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and businesses. The following topics were covered:

- Fundraising 101
- Marketing, Promotion, and Outreach for Nonprofits
- Marketing and Fundraising Planning
- Storytelling for Grant Proposals
- Leveraging Funds and Project Sustainability
- Getting Government Grants
- Pitch Your Project
- Grant Administration Strategies
- Finding Funding and Creative Financing Strategies
- Social Media: Simplified!
- The Business of Running a Small Nonprofit
- Recruiting and Engaging Volunteers
- Sustainable and Equitable Land Use Policies
- Economic Development 101
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Connect and Communicate: Building Bridges through Effective Communication
- Color Your World: A Workshop Based on True Colors Theory
- Effective Collaboration Strategies
- Facilitation Skills: Listening and Learning Together
- Finding and Using Community Data

After the workshops ended, the slide decks were placed in an online learning center so that the entire community could access these resources.

Technical Assistance

The organizations, municipalities, and businesses. The type of assistance provided included:

- Strategic planning
- Market study to identify uses for a new community facility
- Identifying funding opportunities
- Social media planning
- Marketing and outreach materials
- Teambuilding
- Research and data analysis
- Writing
- Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding
- Grants.gov registration

Hailstone Economic also provided insight and assistance, and/or facilitated connections and communication, for the following programs:

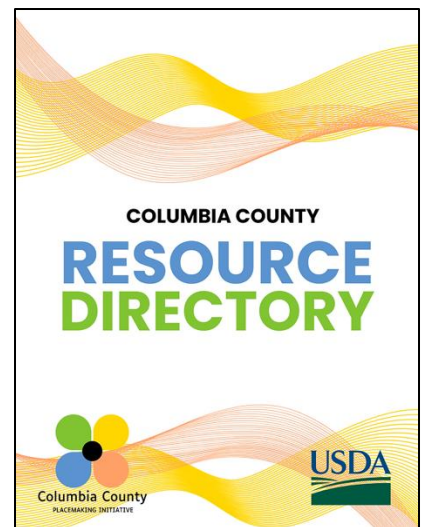
- U.S. Department of Agriculture – Strategic Economic and Community Development, Community Facilities, and Rural Business Development Grants
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Economic Development Initiatives
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Brownfields Program
- Appalachian Regional Commission - Area Development Grants
- National Endowment for the Arts - Challenge America
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund
- PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency - COVID-SFR Local Law Enforcement Support
- PA Office of the Budget - Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program
- PA Humanities Council – Wingspan
- PA Council on the Arts – Creative Communities Initiative
- PA Department of Community and Economic Development - Neighborhood Assistance Program, HOME-ARP, and COVID-19 ARPA PA Multi-Purpose Community Facilities
- FHLBank Pittsburgh – Blueprint Communities®

Community Connections

Through various meetings and events, local organizations connected with funders, new board members, and new partners. The Hailstone Economic team hosted Your Questions: Answered! at The HUB at Mulberry Mill on May 22, 2024. At this event, representatives from municipalities, nonprofits, and businesses had access to three members of the Hailstone Economic team with expertise in public policy, zoning and land use, community and economic development, community and regional planning, housing, program development, grant application and administration, fundraising, and marketing and outreach. Over lunch, the group discussed several topics including: how to write an effective grant application; supporting community-building initiatives; zoning for multi-use facilities operate; identifying sponsors; navigating government resources; bringing donors together; engaging local healthcare institutions.

Hailstone Economic created a Columbia County Resource Guide to share up-to-date information about local programs, services, and organizations with the community. The guide was published in August 2024.

Community members took a survey at the end of the process to share what they experienced from being part of the project. 67% met new people in their community and 60% developed or expanded their knowledge.



Partners

Many municipalities, nonprofit organizations, businesses, artists, and residents contributed their time, ideas, and resources to this placemaking project.

Placemaking Ambassadors



Placemaking Champions



Placemaking Ambassadors



Community Strategies Group provided guidance on the project design and assisted with the application to USDA, provided space for meetings, workshops, and events, and facilitated connections to local stakeholders. Thank you to Carolyn for helping us with scheduling and meeting logistics, to Josh for being our point of contact for all kinds of questions, and to Rich for being a gracious host and leader.



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg provided guidance on the project design and assisted with the application to USDA, provided space for meetings, workshops, and events, facilitated connections to local stakeholders, and connected students with volunteer and service learning projects. Thank you to Heather Feldhaus, Ph.D. for serving in a leadership role, to Christopher Podeschi, Ph.D. and Jeffrey Brunskill, Ph.D. for connecting us to students, and to Janet Bodenman, Ph.D. for coordinating a student project.

Volunteer Spotlight



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

We would like to thank the students that provided assistance with creating maps for our placemaking plan: **Kamryn Kropinski, Torsten L. Hartmann,** and **Grace Menko.**

Janet Bodenman, Ph.D. teaches a 400-level Leadership and Teambuilding class for communications students at Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg. In the fall of 2023, students in this class worked in teams to develop internal and external communication strategies for The Arts and Culture Alliance and presented their recommendations to several local arts organizations.

Devon Bird was one of the students in Dr. Bodenman's class. She was an intern with Hailstone Economic during the Spring 2024 semester, providing support to The Arts and Culture Alliance by developing a website, creating a contact database, mapping arts and culture assets throughout Columbia and Montour counties, and designing marketing collateral. She also conducted research and facilitated a social media class. Devon was then awarded an Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities (URSCA) project through the university. She worked with us over the summer of 2024 to effectively communicate the goals and progress of the Columbia County Placemaking Plan to stakeholders, engage with the community, and document the transformative processes through multiple media. Her project goals were to enhance understanding, foster community involvement, and highlight the significance of placemaking initiatives in improving the local quality of life. Through this project she worked toward developing a deepened understanding of how creative communication strategies can facilitate meaningful engagement and collaboration among diverse stakeholders as well as stronger connection to natural and built community spaces. **Devon shared more than 500 hours** of her time to this project during the spring and summer 2024 semesters.

Placemaking Champions



The Association for Inclusion, Respect, and Equity (AIRE) participated in many planning meetings and professional development workshops as uncompensated volunteers. They also created an arts- and inclusion-focused community placemaking action plan for the five-county area that they serve!



Berwick Arts Association provided guidance and support to ensure that the arts were included and well-represented in the Berwick Master Parks Plan. They also served in a leadership role in creating The Arts and Culture Alliance and implemented a seed grant.



In addition to serving in a leadership role in creating The Arts and Culture Alliance, Berwick Theater and Center for Community Arts provided space for community meetings and implemented a seed grant.



Central Susquehanna Board of Realtors® demonstrated the true meaning of partners as we worked together to create a housing plan for Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties. They also connected the project to the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors®.



The Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce is supporting local housing initiatives by connecting their members with information about employer-sponsored first-time homebuyer programs. They also co-sponsored an economic impact study of arts and culture in Columbia and Montour counties.



The Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau participated in just about every planning meeting for this project. They also provided photographs for the placemaking plan and co-sponsored an economic impact study of arts and culture in Columbia and Montour counties.

Additional Partners

We are grateful for the involvement and participation of the entire community. Thank you to these partners who contributed to the project, in addition to many local residents and artists.

Government

Benton Township

Berwick Borough

Town of Bloomsburg

Briar Creek Borough

Briar Creek Township

Catawissa Township

City of Shamokin

Columbia County

Columbia County Housing and
Redevelopment Authority

Columbia-Montour Aging Office and
Berwick Senior Center

Fishing Creek Township

Hemlock Township

Hemlock Township Police
Department

Jackson Township

Locust Township

Locust Township Police Department

North Centre Township

Orangeville Borough

Salem Township (Luzerne Co.)

PA Department of Community and
Economic Development

PA Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

PA Department of Environmental
Protection

PA Department of Transportation

PA Senator Linda Culver's office

SEDA-Council of Governments

Sugarloaf Township

U.S. Department of Agriculture

U.S. Representative Dan Meuser's
office

Union County Planning Department

Nonprofit Organizations

Advance Central PA

Agape: Love from Above

Association for Inclusion, Respect,
and Equity (AIRE)

Ber-Vaughn Pool

Berwick Area United Way

Berwick Area YMCA

Berwick Arts Association

Berwick Historical Society

Berwick Industrial Development
Association

Berwick Theater and Center for
Community Arts

Bloom Seed Library

Bloomsburg Children's Museum

Bloomsburg Fair

Bloomsburg Public Library

Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble

Bloomsburg University Foundation

Bloomsburg YMCA

Central Pennsylvania Chamber of
Commerce

Central Susquehanna Opportunities,
Inc.

Central Susquehanna Sight Services

CMSU Behavioral Health &
Developmental Services

Columbia Child Development Program

Columbia County Traveling Library

Columbia Montour Chamber of
Commerce

Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau

Community Giving Foundation

Community Strategies Group

Danville Area Community Center

Degenstein Foundation

Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc.

DRIVE

Fishing Creek Players

For the Cause

Geisinger Health System

Greater Susquehanna Valley Board of
Realtors®

Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber
of Commerce

Hand in Hand Family Resource Center

Hazleton Art League

Inglis/Self-Determination Housing of
Pennsylvania

(continued)

Nonprofit Organizations, continued

McBride Memorial Library	Susquehanna Greenway Partnership
NEPA Center for Independent Living	Susquehanna Valley United Way
North Mountain Art League	The Arc Susquehanna Valley
Northern Columbia Cultural and Community Center	The Exchange
Pennsylvania Association of Realtors®	The Gate House
Snyder-Union-Northumberland Habitat for Humanity	The Women's Center
Stuart Tank Memorial Association	Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11
	Young's Funny Farm

Businesses

ArchCentral Architects, Inc.	Key Partners Realty LLC
Berwick Hospital	Martz Technologies
Bowen Agency Realtors	MC Federal Credit Union
Brewskis Coffee and Bar	Mx. Kelley Queer Education
Century 21 Covered Bridges Realty	Nespoli Jewelers
DiscoverNEPA/Mericle	Paddle Faster Publishing
Elmdale Inn	Phillips Emporium
eXp Realty, LLC	Press Enterprise
First Keystone Community Bank	Priority Polished Properties LLC
Forks Farm & Market	Realty Zero
Freas Farm Winery	Under the Eaves Studio
Grey Medical Advocate LLC	Villager Realty
Inspired Designs by Liz	Wild Notion Glass
Iron Valley Real Estate	

Education

Arts in Bloom

Berwick Area School District

Commonwealth University - Bloomsburg

Luzerne County Community College

A Special Thanks to...

McBride Memorial Library, Northern Columbia Community & Cultural Center, For the Cause, and Briar Creek Borough for providing meeting space

The Exchange for providing meeting space and photos for the placemaking plan

Freas Farm Winery for donating sangria and **Kevin Badolato** for providing music for The Arts and Culture Alliance launch party

Connie Donlin for helping with food preparation and tablescaping for two community events

Community Investment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture - Rural Development (USDA) selected Hailstone Economic to receive a competitive cooperative agreement to facilitate a Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge project for Columbia County. USDA invested \$250,000 into this project.

These funds were leveraged to attract more than \$88,000 in additional funds, for a **total investment of \$338,000 into Columbia County municipalities and organizations**. This includes the value of contributed professional services, project volunteer and student time, and cash donations. It does **not** include the value of the many hours that local residents, business owners, nonprofit organizations, and municipalities spent in planning meetings, capacity building workshops, and working on projects.

Reflections

Members of the community shared the following reflections about the project:

- “[The project] brought people together, connected some dots in the community, and hopefully, created an understanding of new ways to work together.” - Nonprofit organization representative
- “You got a bunch of money that could have been used by the organizations already doing the work you set out to “study”” – Small business owner
- “Loved it. Great presentations. Great products. Great people.” – Nonprofit organization representative
- “It's the little things in life that excite us, or should I say the 35-page draft housing plan for the 5 counties! I know I will be using a lot of this information and citing this plan in future grant applications.” – Nonprofit organization representative
- "I feel more connected here with the university than I ever have." - Nonprofit organization representative
- “When asked (politely) to share an example from elsewhere of an organization like they proposed that had worked successfully, the consultants answered "Every place is different." I found that answer disappointing and, in truth, 100% insufficient. You would not accept an answer like that from a doctor if you asked about the success rate of an operation: You would want to know at least one example of a person who had at least survived, and hopefully thrived.” – Nonprofit organization representative
- This project enabled me to meet and work with other partners” – Nonprofit organization representative
- “Positive efforts to network existing independent arts organizations for common goals, sharing of missions, members, goals, and participation.” – Nonprofit organization representative
- “This project made me realize how many unique and fascinating people live around here” – Nonprofit organization representative
- “Every few years we go through this process and there continues to be good people who want change and growth.” – Small business owner
- “Jessica and Angela were wonderful to work with. They were great at providing all kinds of different training and were always ready to help anyway they could. Overall I enjoyed learning about placemaking and connecting with others who are doing community work. We don't have to do it alone, but we do need to do it together. Thanks for all your time and effort into the place I call home.” – Nonprofit organization representative
- “This was my first interaction with a placemaking initiative. I have learned a lot about placemaking and how the grant world works. I am also grateful for all the training connected to this placemaking team working in our area over the last 2 years.” – Nonprofit organization representative
- “I have become more driven to become engaged with the need for housing opportunities and will do whatever I can to assist those spearheading that plan I believe that it has also made more people aware of the groups that want to help grow and develop the Columbia County area; on the flip side, I see people becoming more afraid of change.” – Nonprofit organization representative
- “Working with Hailstone and being a part of the Placemaking Initiative revives the passion for what we do, especially the arts. There are many who believe in this area, what it is and can become. It truly takes a village and, fortunately, there are enough who are willing to invest in our county and help make it happen.” – Nonprofit organization representative

Next Steps

Over the past two years, the community came together to imagine, plan, and create opportunity to make Columbia County an even better place to live, work, play and learn. There are many opportunities to get involved in the projects that emerged through this process:

- Participate in a **housing plan implementation** committee:
 - Advocacy and Education (lead partner: Central Susquehanna Board of Realtors®)
 - Attainability (lead partner: Susquehanna Valley United Way)
 - Homelessness (lead partner: Eastern PA Coalition for Housing local coalition)
 - Housing Inventory and Quality (lead partner: Community Strategies Group)
- Volunteer on a committee for **The Arts and Culture Alliance**:
 - Advocacy and Education
 - Professional Development
 - Partnerships and Collaboration
- **Share your story** about life in Columbia County through Chatspiration with Berwick Theater and Center for Community Arts (chatspiration.org)
- Visit downtown Berwick to see the new **Berwick Arts District banners** created by local artists through Berwick Arts Association
- Volunteer or participate in the Association for Inclusion, Respect, and Equity (AIRE)'s **Placemaking Action Plan**
- Review materials from professional development workshops and classes at the **Online Learning Center** at ourplacecolumbia.com
- Distribute information about local resources by posting, linking to, printing, and/or sharing the **Columbia County Resource Directory**
- Tell your employer about starting an **Employer-Sponsored Housing** program
- Continue learning, networking, and collaboratively working with others!