

# BOROUGH OF BEAVER HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN



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## Executive Summary

The goals outlined in the Borough of Beaver Historic Preservation Plan (the Plan) are designed to protect, promote and preserve Beaver: its historic resources, “small-town” neighborhood setting, thriving business district and property values. Properly-developed and managed historic preservation programs have proven, in communities across the nation, to do just that. Over the last 25 years, Beaver has developed its own highly successful preservation program. It established a historic district, a preservation ordinance, and recognized the importance of historic preservation in its comprehensive planning. This Plan builds on these achievements – based on strong community input and an assessment of needs – by means of carefully articulated goals and an implementation process to meet these goals. The goals are:

- Goal #1:        Preserve & Protect the Historic Character of the Borough**
- Goal #2:        Increase Public Awareness of Beaver’s History and Historic Resources**
- Goal #3:        Maximize Economic Benefits from Beaver’s Historic Preservation Program**
- Goal #4:        Identify Funding Needs and Sources**

The Plan was developed in response to the construction of the Shell Appalachia ethane cracker plant located across the Ohio River from Beaver. Recognizing the historic significance of Beaver and the possible adverse effects of the plant, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) in conjunction with the Borough of Beaver initiated the project. Shell Appalachia provided funding.

Created in 2018, the plan has been prepared as a “best practices” document that augments Beaver’s existing preservation activities by strengthening its current comprehensive Plan. The plan offers options and outlines tools and methods to protect Beavers historic resources and setting by focusing on aspirational goals and practical strategies. In addition, a new design guideline component - *Design Guidelines* created specifically for Beaver (developed as part of this plan), has been written in a manner meant for a wide audience to understand, reference and implement. The plan is based on a series of public meetings, historic surveys, and polls taken in the community in 2017 and 2018.

RGA, Inc. (RGA), a cultural resources consulting firm with headquarters in Cranbury, New Jersey, and Frens and Frens Restoration Architects (Frens), located in West Chester, Pennsylvania, were chosen in 2017 to undertake the inventory, and prepare the preservation plan and design guidelines. PA SHPO provided valued and appreciated assistance throughout the planning process. Finally, all work was designed to be consistent with the guidance provided in the PA SHPO *Guidance for Historic Preservation Planning* and the Secretary

of the Interior's *Standards for Preservation Planning* and the *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The preservation of historic resources is nothing new to Beaver. Its residents, property owners, local government and non-governmental organizations such as the Beaver Area Heritage Foundation (BAHF) have successfully collaborated with the PA SHPO for a quarter century to educate the public and protect the community's historic character. The Plan is intended to augment, enhance and guide these ongoing efforts into the future. Finally, and as stated above, the plan and its accompanying *Design Guidelines* are meant to implement change for the betterment of the community by protecting, promoting and preserving Beaver's historic resources, its "small-town" neighborhood setting, thriving business district and property values.

## Acknowledgements

This Beaver Historic Preservation Plan was prepared by RGA in association with Frens & Frens for the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO), a bureau of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, for adoption by the Borough Council of Beaver, Pennsylvania.

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### Borough Council

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Beaver Preservation Plan Steering Committee

Michael Deelo

Brian Hankinson

Margaret McKean

Richard Sprecker

The HARB and the Steering Committee worked closely in refining this plan by contributing to the public participation process, responding to an opinion poll, and in some cases, discussing the plan directly with the RGA/Frens project team.

Public Participation

Thank you to the citizens of Beaver who participated in public meetings and/or voiced their opinions in the public opinion poll.

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Beaver Area Historical Foundation

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## Section 1: Introduction

For decades, the historic preservation mantra has been “All preservation is local.” This essentially means that there are no federal or state laws that protect a community’s historic resources unless part of a federal, or in some cases a state, undertaking involving federal funding or permitting. Even then, a positive preservation outcome is not guaranteed. Historic resources may be demolished or adversely impacted even by federal or state undertakings and certainly by private development. In Pennsylvania, as in all states, only individual municipalities acting with public support and collaboration can act to protect the community’s valuable historic resources.

Municipalities are enabled through the state’s Historic District Act and the Municipalities Planning Code to manage inevitable changes to historic resources through ordinance or zoning. In turn, these efforts can only be successful with sound planning efforts and public participation.



Figure 1 Beaver National Register and Local Historic District

### Preservation Today in Beaver

Beaver Borough leads the region in proactively managing changes to the community’s historic resources. Through the years, Beaver residents and property owners have largely unilaterally managed its historic character in a sensitive manner. But this has not happened in a vacuum or by accident.

For some time now, Beaver has had a cadre of dedicated and knowledgeable citizens and elected officials who initiated the creation of a large historic district, recently updated the



inventory of historic resources, created an historic district ordinance and (as part of the preparation of this plan) developed architectural design guidelines to assist property owners.

In addition, Beaver has a successful history of collaboration between private and non-governmental entities. This includes the Beaver Area Heritage Foundation (BAHF) which has a first-class museum, event space, historic sites and hosts heritage events. Beaver has enacted zoning and utilized federal grants that have helped protect the vitality of the Third Street commercial district, which has become one of the most vital and economically viable downtowns in the region. This collaborative effort promotes education and business improvement, while fostering fun, pride and convenience for its citizens.

In 1996 much of Beaver was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Beaver Historic District (see Figure 1). The National Register is our nation's list of significant historic properties, properties worthy of preservation. However, in its essence, the National Register is only honorific and provides no protection to historic properties. The Beaver Historic District is comprised of roughly 1450 properties including residential, commercial, public and religious properties, a series of public parks/open spaces and an individually-listed National Register archeological site. The District's period of significance is 1778-1946 and is listed under all four National Register criteria.

In 2011, Beaver designated a local historic district by ordinance as enabled by the Pennsylvania Historic District Act. The local historic district is coterminous with the Beaver National Register Historic District.

The Beaver Historic District ordinance (Chapter 11 in the Borough's Zoning Ordinance) established a Board of Historic and Architectural Review (HARB) to review certain changes to historic resources within the district and to otherwise guide Beaver's historic preservation efforts. HARB's review duties are mainly limited to proposed demolitions of historic resources.

The Plan has been prepared as a "best practices" document that provides guidance to help preserve, protect and enhance its historic resources for the benefit of the entire community. The Plan takes into account Beaver's attractive setting, its vibrant commercial and governmental core and the significant historic resources that have created Beaver's strong sense of place. The Plan outlines tools and methods to protect these important resources by focusing on aspirational goals and practical strategies which, if followed, will help maintain and enhance a place 4,500 people call home and where many others come to work and visit. The Plan, augmented by Design Guidelines created specifically for Beaver, has been written for use by a wide audience to understand, refer to and implement. This Plan is designed to move the community forward, based on a successful record thus far of preservation and community engagement.

The term "best practices" is not generic; it refers to PA SHPO guidance for implementing local historic preservation programs. PA SHPO's goal is to encourage communities throughout the Commonwealth to use the various tools and resources available to promote historic preservation for the purpose of resource protection and sound, community-wide economic development. This approach is applied herein, tailored to the unique qualities of Beaver. The Plan promotes historic preservation within and outside of the Beaver Historic District.



Ultimately, the Plan recognizes the critical role Beaver's historic resources play in establishing its valued community character. The Plan has been designed to help Beaver and its citizens protect these resources. The Plan's goals and strategies, as well as the Design Guidelines were developed because Beaver citizens related their values, concerns and hopes for their community on the subject of historic preservation by participating in various surveys, public meetings and by serving on various boards, commissions and committees that helped guide this Plan. The community consensus has been to preserve the Beaver's historic character in a manner that engages the public and respects the value of property ownership. Implementation of this Plan should help Beaver's commercial core (centered on Third Street) remain vibrant, should help stabilize and even increase property values and resident-ownership retention. This Plan has been built around this consensus, while employing best practice approaches to achieve them. The Plan is designed to assist the Borough and its citizens to more effectively protect historic resources within the Beaver Historic District, but also to promote and encourage preservation throughout Beaver. Finally, with significant economic and demographic changes on the horizon after the ethane cracker plant opens, this document will also help Beaver manage those inevitable changes in a manner guided by public aspiration.

### **Purpose, Background and Preparation**

Beaver boasts a fascinating and rich history dating back to the French and Indian War in the mid- eighteenth century. Strategically located on the banks of the Ohio and Beaver Rivers and a major Native American trail, what began as a small military outpost and village prospered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries due to its early nineteenth century selection as the county seat, its ideal setting as a residential community, and the surrounding industrial growth (See Section 2 for a more extensive history). Today this history is visible throughout the community in its extraordinary architecture and town plan. From the commercial buildings on Third Street to stately Queen Ann and Tudor Revival style residences throughout the Borough, to its large and architecturally significant religious buildings, Beaver exhibits a phenomenal array of architecture. This architecture, combined with Beaver's small-town setting and convenient location within metropolitan Pittsburgh, make the Borough a desirable place to live, work and visit.



According to the PA SHPO's Guidance for Historic Preservation Planning, "The historic preservation plan provides local units of government with a working document to identify historic and cultural resources in the region, county and/or municipality; to consider the issues, problems and opportunities associated with those resources; to explore the possibility to county-wide and regional approaches to management of important resources; and to develop goals, policies and strategies for their appropriate use, conservation, preservation and protection that are consistent with those established for other comprehensive plan elements." The planning process must recognize the particular needs and features of a community, described in the following Plan components:

- Evaluation of the municipality's developmental history
- Inventory of existing conditions
- Assessment of current and future needs
- Articulation of community goals, objectives and strategies
- Implementation program/action plan
- Identified funding sources, methods, tools to implement historic resources plan
- Establishing the legal basis for historic preservation.

Over the last two decades, Beaver has taken concrete steps to recognize and protect its historic setting. In 1996, the majority of Beaver's resources were listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Beaver Historic District. In 2011, as enabled under the Pennsylvania Historic District Act (Act of June 13, 1961, P.L. 282, No. 167 as amended, 53 P.S. § 8001, et. seq.), Beaver adopted an ordinance (see Appendix A) to protect the historic resources within the historic district. The ordinance established a Board of Historical and Architectural Review (HARB) to review and make recommendations to the Borough Council to help protect historic resources within the district from demolition. The local historic district boundaries are the same as those of the National Register listed Beaver Historic District. In 2016, Beaver updated the inventory within the historic district in order to enable the HARB to better administer the ordinance, and approved goals to inventory areas of Beaver not in the historic district.

Today, the massive Shell Appalachia ethylene cracking plant is under construction across the Ohio River from Beaver in Potter Township. A finding of adverse effect was documented regarding this plant upon the National Register-listed Beaver Historic District and Beaver. A Programmatic Agreement between Shell Appalachia, the PA SHPO and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was drafted to resolve these adverse effects. In addition to the 2016 updated inventory of the Beaver Historic District's historic resources, the major terms of the Programmatic Agreement provided funding for the following mitigation stipulations:

- Completion of a Historic Preservation Plan (this document, which can be adopted as an update to the historic preservation element to the Borough's Comprehensive Plan);
- Development of Design Guidelines (the plan's accompanying document, Design Guidelines, completed in 2018, see additional information below);

- Completion of an Inventory of Historic Resources (also a major part of the planning process – over 200 resources outside of the Beaver Historic District were documented);
- Completion of a Public Information Brochure (a quick guide to promote historic preservation in Beaver).

### **The Benefits of Historic Preservation Planning in Beaver**

Public and private investments in historic preservation yield cultural, social and economic benefits to a community. Implementation of sound preservation principles help develop public education and promote an understanding of and an appreciation for history and historic architecture in places like Beaver, which in turn will help promote community-wide historic preservation. In a largely built-out community such as Beaver, the continual preservation, promotion, marketing and investment of historic character is a critical component of any economic development strategy. It has thus far paid off handsomely in Beaver, and possibly has contributed to much higher than average median residential property values (\$192,000 vs. the county average of \$137,200) (Zillow, 2018) and its vibrant business district. The latter recently was enhanced by the restoration of a commercial property at Second Street and College Avenue, using the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program.

Continuation and enhancement of Beaver's existing preservation planning efforts will further benefit the community in many ways:

- Quality of life: Identifying, understanding and prioritizing the historic resources in a community provides critical community planning information, can promote tourism, quality of life, community-wide historic aesthetic character and connections with other community attributes and activities.
- Vibrant downtown: Historic commercial areas such as Beaver's Third Street are made more vital and successful by identifying and implementing appropriate preservation design and marketing principles.
- Pride of place: Property values tend to rise with increased historic preservation activities, as does home ownership and home retention.

This Plan offers options to help grow and strengthen Beaver's existing preservation program by establishing a design ethic based upon the community's traditional character. This should help protect and enhance property investment by encouraging sensitive and consistent design decisions the individual resource and those around it.

Continued improvements to a community's historic preservation program support the authentic, traditional character, such as that found in Beaver. A stable community setting yet growing in value should continue to attract new residents and businesses, a critical factor as the region's economy evolves. Protection and marketing of the community's historic character should help Beaver stay relevant in a twenty-first century economy and beyond.

### **Project Timeframe**

The plan was completed by RGA, Inc. of Cranbury, New Jersey and the accompanying *Design Guidelines and Preservation Manual* were prepared by Frens and Frens Restoration

Architects of West Chester, Pennsylvania, who also provided assistance in preparing this plan. Professional qualification of the preservation professionals assigned to manage the project exceed the minimum Historic Preservation Professional Qualifications Standards as defined by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service in 48 FR 44716 and 36 CFR 61.

This plan was created with assistance of the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) and in accordance with that office's *Guidance for Historic Preservation Planning*, the plan is consistent with Beaver-2001 Comprehensive Plan and its 2015 Comprehensive Plan Review, as well as existing Beaver zoning code provision. The intent of this plan is to be adopted by the Borough Council as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan or as a stand-alone planning document.

The project work commenced in the fall of 2017, and included the following public participation components that informed the Beaver Preservation Plan:

October, 2017	Project Begins
November, 13, 2017	1st Public Meeting (Project Introduction)
January, 2018	Public Survey
January/Feb. 2018	HARB/Steering Committee/Borough Official Survey
February 22, 2018	2nd Pubic Meeting (Preliminary Findings/Survey Results)
April 26, 2018	3rd Public Meeting (Preliminary Preservation Plan Goals)
September 18, 2018	4th Public Meeting (Design Guidelines)
October 25,2018	5th and Public Meeting (Preservation Plan)

## **Moving Forward**

The Borough of Beaver is a compact, walkable community with a central commercial district flanked by residential areas. Beaver's geography and historic character contribute to the astonishing sense of place that make the town a desirable place for families to live, work and play. Beaver's designed layout, with tree-lined streets featuring well-built houses on ample sized lots interspersed among public parks, all within walkable distance to its commercial corridor contribute to this sense of place. Beaver's citizens should feel fortunate to live in such a forward-thinking community: one that understands the importance of historic preservation. What follows is a step-by-step guide to help Beaver's elected officials, residents and property owners preserve and enhance the tremendous assets handed down to them by previous generations.

## Section 2: Developmental History of Beaver

### Overview

Perched on a plateau overlooking the bucolic Ohio River, it is sometimes difficult to believe the Borough of Beaver Pennsylvania is located in one of the great industrial regions of the United States. The Beaver county seat, it is a beautiful community with fine houses, lovely parks, and a forested escarpment across the river. Beaver's wide tree-lined streets and stately homes, its many parks and lovely but bustling downtown, seem separated, but certainly not cut-off, from the history that surrounds it. Indeed, one need only be in Beaver a short time to appreciate the industrial areas that surround it. Freight trains continually pass by on tracks along the Ohio River, as do barges on the river itself. The scenic Beaver Bridge (1910) carries additional freight over tracks adjacent to the former Pittsburgh and Erie Railroad freight and passenger stations. Just east of Beaver, in Bridgewater, is the former canal along the Beaver River, the Borough's namesake. Immediately west of Beaver, in Vanport, is the former Curtiss Wright plant, an aircraft propeller plant built during World War II. The history of industrial concerns in the Beaver area continues today, as a new industrial facility, Shell Appalachia's ethane cracker plant rises at the time of this writing across the Ohio River southeast of the Borough.



Figure 2. Regional map. Source: [share.phmc.pa.gov](http://share.phmc.pa.gov)

While no great mill altered its landscape, in its own way, Beaver is the product of industrial development. Apart from the great industrial plants of the Pittsburgh area, company executives and managers – the professionals of the day – found Beaver a refuge. As a result, the community is blessed with fine residential, government, religious and commercial buildings. When so many industrial plants closed in the late twentieth century, Beaver's by then well-established "sense of place" as well as its own "industry" as the county seat did not feel the sting of mass layoffs or the stigma of massive hulks of abandoned mills. Today,



Beaver continues to attract people looking for a clean, safe and convenient environment. This did not occur by happenstance; geography and location influenced decisions that ultimately determined history and what we now know as Beaver.

*The following is a brief history of the Borough of Beaver. It is mainly derived from the Beaver Historic District National Register of Historic Places nomination, completed in 1996 by David L. Taylor. Additional sources are noted, as applicable.*

### Fort McIntosh and the American Revolution

Permanent settlement of what is now Beaver occurred in the final quarter of the eighteenth century. The Tuscarawas Trail, a Native American trail that extended to central Ohio, began in what is now Beaver. In the mid-eighteenth century English and French traders established a small village in the area. France withdrew at the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, leaving Native Americans and English traders. During the American Revolution, the Continental Army constructed Fort McIntosh in 1778 to ward off Native attacks. Named after its

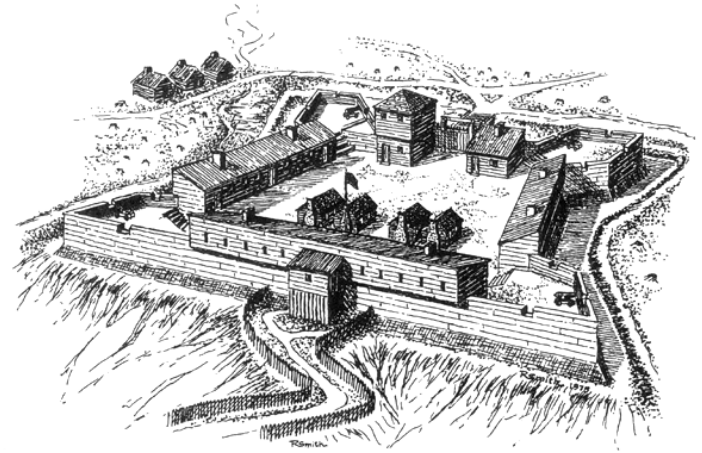


Figure 3. Fort MacIntosh. source: [beaverpa.us.history](http://beaverpa.us.history)

commanding officer, Lachlan McIntosh, the fort marked the first permanent settlement of European Americans in Beaver. Commanding a strategic location high above Ohio River near its confluence with the Beaver River (the present location of River Road and Insurance Street), the fort set the stage for Beaver's eventual development.

### A Planned Community

Changes occurred rapidly after the Revolution that would change the frontier forever. Between 1784 and 1785, Fort McIntosh was home to the First American Regiment, making it the first permanent peacetime home of the U.S. Army, except for small detachments at Fort Pitt and West Point. This unit continues today as the Presidential Honor Guard, also known as "The Old Guard", part of the 3rd Infantry Regiment. Fort McIntosh was abandoned in 1791. Remnants of logs used to build the fort can be seen along River Road, overlooking the Ohio River, while several of its logs and timber framing were reused in the construction of some of Beaver's early houses.

A series of events occurred that would ultimately attract people to Western Pennsylvania, and what is now Beaver. In 1783 with the war over, the Pennsylvania state legislature assigned lands to veterans as payment for their service. Two years later the state signed the Treaty of Fort McIntosh with the remaining Native Americans, which essentially pushed out the Native Americans and opened much of western Pennsylvania to settlement as the Native Americans moved further west.

The state legislature continued to look west. An act by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1791 authorized the establishment of the village of Beaver. The following year Deputy

Surveyor Daniel Leet completed a survey of the area, specifying a grid of streets at the confluence of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers. The plan included eight “public” spaces (including four in the heart of the community), major streets having 100 foot rights of way and minor streets having 25 foot rights of way, and development lots. The public squares were actually state-owned; not until 1834 did Beaver, then a Borough, complete the purchase of the last of these lands. In the ensuing years Beaver would expand only slightly.

### The County Seat

Beaver became the county seat in 1800 when the County of Beaver was formed; it became a Borough in 1802. Court was first held here that year, in the house/tavern of Abner Lacock, who was also judge and later a U.S. Senator. The first court house was built in 1804 presumably on what is now Agnew Square, one of the public lots laid out by Daniel Leet. A large Second Empire style courthouse opened in 1877, although it was destroyed by fire as the result of a painter’s torch igniting a bird nest in 1932. The courthouse was rebuilt in 1933 in an Art Deco Style. The current courthouse opened in 2003.



Figure 4. Beaver in 1876. source: [historicmapworks.com](http://historicmapworks.com)

At the local level of government, the Neo-Classical Revival style Beaver Borough Hall, located on Third Street, opened in 1912. By then Third Street had long emerged as the major thoroughfare and center of commerce in the community. It has been recently restored.

### The Community Grows

Beaver grew slowly but steadily through the nineteenth century. From a few hundred residents in 1820, the population reached 2,350 by 1900 and by 1950 the population reached its zenith at 6,360. The greatest growth occurred between 1880 and 1930; today the population is estimated to be just under 4,400. To be sure, a county seat often contains an abundance of jobs and professions most other towns don’t offer. But unlike so many river



towns in Southwestern Pennsylvania it was not job opportunities alone that drew and continue to draw people to Beaver. Beaver offered something different.

In 1870, the Pittsburgh and Erie Railroad opened a passenger station on the east side of town. The arrival of the railroad increased economic activity because Beaver's residents could now commute daily to jobs in Pittsburgh. Furthermore, the railroad brought building material to Beaver to be used in the construction of new houses. Moreover, Beaver's location west of much of the region's industrial activity allowed the prevailing winds to protect it from the severe smog associated with the region in the late 1800s and much of the 1900s. As the area's industrial base grew, requiring thousands of workers, Beaver offered an alternative location for its managers and executives to locate. It offered clean, efficient transportation, and safe streets. Beaver was also convenient to other towns via a trolley and later the automobile. While freight or passenger service is no longer available at the former Pittsburgh and Erie line in Beaver, the station buildings have been beautifully restored for use as a museum, event space, and local historic and genealogy research center.

Beaver's architecture reflects its transition from a small county seat to a bedroom community. Large and architecturally significant houses were built mainly in the eastern end of town, however fine residences and large, architecturally significant churches can be found throughout the Borough. The majority of the churches were constructed between 1890 and 1930, the period of rapid growth in the Borough. Meanwhile, Third Street experienced the development of several commercial buildings, often built in the Italianate style, between Beaver and Insurance Streets. This compact area became Beaver's "downtown." Though altered significantly over the years, Beaver's "main street" conveys its commercial significance and to some degree its historic appearance. Downtown Beaver thrives, offering a variety of goods and services.

## The Squares

Daniel Leet laid out Beaver in much the same fashion as Philadelphia and Savannah: a rectangular grid pattern having a central square with four additional squares near the corners of the rectangle. Beaver's public squares are named after some of Beaver's most important residents or other influential people. The squares, which have served (or still serve) as locations for the county seat, a cemetery, a jail, sites for a school and churches, remained unnamed until 1903. In the center of town, Agnew Square is named for Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Daniel Agnew, whose home once faced the square. Quay Square, also in the center of town, is named for U.S. Senator Matthew Stanley Quay. He was a Medal of Honor recipient for actions during the Battle of Fredericksburg in the Civil War and a major figure in Pennsylvania and U.S. politics. (Quay's last residence at the corner of College Avenue and Second Street was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1976). Two other interior squares are named for General William Irvine and General Lachlan McIntosh, both having been associated with Fort McIntosh. Clark Square is named for George Rogers Clark, who was a United States Commissioner at the time of the 1785 Treaty of Fort McIntosh. Bouquet Square honors Colonel Henry Bouquet, who led an



Figure 5 and 6. PA Supreme Court Chief Justice Daniel Agnew (top) and Senator Matthew Quay (bottom)

expedition to help quell Pontiac's Rebellion (1763-1766) and traversed the area which later became Beaver. Wayne Square is named for General Anthony Wayne, whose forces were located nearby in the winter of 1792-3. Finally, Linn Square is named for Robert P. Linn in 1980; Mr. Linn served as Beaver's mayor for than 50 years.

### **The Twenty-first Century – the Ideal Continues**

Beaver today is largely a “built-out” community, meaning virtually all of its developable land has been built upon. Over time, the “in-lots” Daniel Leet created between his grid street pattern were subdivided and developed as the larger lots envisioned (partly for agricultural needs) were no longer needed. With modern transportation systems expanding in the area in the early 1900s, and the use of automobiles grew, there was a lesser need for company executives and managers to locate here. Beaver, however, remained a place where people of all walks of life wanted to live. These factors in part led to the development of smaller houses and smaller lots. Popular architectural styles, such as Craftsman, were built and which enhance the overall small town feel of Beaver. Some design considerations may have been in place in part due to restrictions placed upon builders by the developers and, later, through Borough ordinances. While Beaver does have apartment complexes dating to the latter part of the twentieth century, most housing here is single-family. Beaver's grid street pattern, the uniform albeit smaller lots were developed as time went on, building restrictions including front-yard setbacks, and the mainly single-family residential make-up have helped preserve Beaver's “small town” feeling. Beaver's compact business district plus its many town squares or parks have greatly augmented and contributed to this character.

## Section 3: Inventory of Existing Conditions

### Overview

The majority of Beaver's historic resources are residential, followed by commercial, then religious, government and educational resources. Residential buildings in Beaver are mainly two-story, single-family units; in fact there are few multi-family buildings within the historic district or Borough at large. Most multi-family units are located in the north center part of the Borough, essentially between Buffalo Street to the west, Fifth Street to the north, Beaver Street to the east, and Third Street to the south. All eight of the Borough's churches are located within the historic district. Many exhibit size and architecture suggestive of well-funded construction projects. One example is the Romanesque Revival First Presbyterian Church on College Avenue, completed in 1890.

As Beaver County Seat, the Borough includes the county government complex. The courthouse, designed by the local firm of Wallover, Mitchell & Bontempo Architects, opened on Agnew Square in 2003. Within the complex is a former addition designed by Charles Baker & Associates in 1974, as well as a large parking facility.

Despite the industrial history of the region, few true industrial buildings are located in Beaver. However, the WH Silverman Distributing Company, a former industrial complex located on the northeast corner of Fifth Street and Galey Boulevard, is of note. Several transportation-related resources in Beaver are notable, including the passenger and freight stations of the former Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad and the four-span cement bridge that takes the railroad tracks over the former Pennsylvania Railroad lines.

The neighborhood setting in Beaver benefits from a near uniformity of plan and use. Residential neighborhoods remain largely uninterrupted by arterial roads, waterways, building complexes, topography or railroad tracks. Defining physical features such as railroad lines and the Ohio and Beaver Rivers are located on the periphery of the Borough. The Borough is bounded its north by a wooded hillside as the developed street grid gives way to Brighton Township. To the east, ascending from the large buildings and highways in neighboring Bridgewater, Beaver's primary eastern gateway is busy Third Street (Route 68), which quickly becomes downtown Beaver. As the communal central business district, Third Street acts to connect – rather than separate – the Borough's northern and southern neighborhoods. The result is a thoroughly walkable and cohesive community composed of a vital central business district and quiet residential neighborhoods with primarily single-family residences. The residential neighborhoods are further defined and enhanced by a well-designed streetscape delineated by sidewalks with front yards.

## National Historic Landmark

### Matthew S. Quay House, 205 College Avenue

National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are historic places that hold national significance. The Secretary of the Interior designates these places as exceptional because of their abilities to illustrate U.S. heritage. The almost 2,600 NHLs found in the U.S. today come in many forms: historic buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. Each NHL represents an outstanding aspect of American history and culture. NHLs must meet the National Register criteria described above, but are considered highly exceptional resources. There are approximately 180 NHLs in Pennsylvania, including two in Beaver County (the Matthew Quay House in Beaver, and the Beginning Point of the U.S. Public Land Survey – in Beaver County and Ohio). The Matthew S. Quay House was listed in the National Register and became a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1975. Quay was a Medal of Honor recipient (Civil War, Fredericksburg), U.S. Senator, and major political insider within the Republican Party in the late nineteenth century.

## National Register of Historic Places Listed Resources

### Beaver National Register Historic District

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. The more than 93,000 properties listed in the National Register represent 1.8 million contributing resources - buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects. There are over 3,400 historic listings in Pennsylvania, containing several more thousand individual resources.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a property must meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. These criteria require that a property be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and have integrity, or still look much the same way as it was in the past. In addition, the property must:

- A. be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

The Beaver National Register Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 24, 1996. It meets all four Criteria for Significance:

- Criterion A for Commerce, Politics/Government, and Community Planning and Development
- Criterion B for its association with U.S. Senator Matthew S. Quay
- Criterion C for Architecture; and
- Criterion D for Archaeology.

The district's period of significance is 1778 to 1946. The district boundaries cover the central portion of Beaver, including the entire area laid out in 1792. The Borough's commercial area along Third Street is the heart of the historic district and is surrounded by residential areas that comprise 93% of the historic resources in the Borough. The district includes 1,258 contributing resources and 198 noncontributing resources (1,456 total). The Borough was laid out in a grid pattern that rises from the Ohio River at the Borough's southern boundary to the hills in Brighton Township to the north. The east/west running streets are mostly numbered (Second Street, Third Street, etc.) and rise in elevation to the north. The district includes five historic public parks (counted as contributing resources); the Beaver County Court House partially occupies the larger, center park, and the four corner parks are community parkland. The historic district includes a variety of residential, commercial, religious and government buildings, exhibiting many different architectural styles. The resources are documented in the National Register nomination as well as the 2016 Clio survey report.

### **Fort McIntosh National Register Historic Site**

Archeology in the 1970s revealed the location and general size of the former eighteenth Century fort that once overlooked the Ohio River and was near three early trails on what was then America's frontier. Among other things, the fort was the location of the last federal military unit after all other others were disbanded at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. That unit, now called the "Old Guard" exists yet today as the Presidential Honor Guard. The Fort McIntosh site was listed in the Register in 1975 and has been the center of heritage education and community activities since that time.

### **Historic Resources Determined Eligible for the National Register**

The following resources have been determined eligible for listing in the National Register by the PA SHPO. A resource having a Determination of Eligibility or simply "DOE" refers to a historic resource (building, historic district, etc.) that has been determined eligible, based on National Register Criteria, for the Register by the PA SHPO. It is based on limited documentation, and an actual listing in the Register would first require discussion with the PA SHPO and the preparation of an NR nomination.

### **Pennsylvania Railroad Main Line (Pittsburgh to Ohio State Line) Historic District, Determination of Eligibility for the National Register**

The former Pennsylvania Railroad Main Line, which spans several communities and counties, received a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for the Register in 1993. The line traverses Beaver along its southern boundary and adjacent to the Ohio River, but just outside of the Beaver Historic District. The railroad district (the line itself is still active) includes several railroad-related buildings and structures though only a section of the tracks are located within the Borough.

## Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad, Determination of Eligibility for the National Register

The former Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Historic District falls slightly within the Borough at its southeastern boundary and spans several communities and counties. It received a DOE in 2001, and subsequently reviewed and affirmed. Associated with the district is its former passenger and freight stations (now museum, research and event space operated by the Beaver Area Heritage Museum). The buildings are contributing resources in the Beaver National Register Historic District.

## Archeological Resources

The PA SHPO's online cultural resources system – CRGIS – lists six archeological sites in the Borough. Two sites are associated with Fort McIntosh and four are associated with prehistoric resources. Aside from the Fort McIntosh National Register Site, none of the sites have been fully evaluated for the National Register eligibility. Most of the sites are near the Ohio River.

## Survey and Inventory of Borough Resources Outside of the Beaver Historic District

As part of this planning effort, an historic buildings reconnaissance-level field survey was undertaken in early 2018. The purpose of the survey was to in part broaden the knowledge of Beaver's historic architecture and help determine whether the Beaver Historic District boundaries should be amended by including previously excluded areas of the Borough. The survey areas were selected based on recommendations in the 2016 Clio report with input from the survey team and the Preservation Plan steering committee. Over 200 properties were surveyed, focusing on areas and notable buildings located outside of the historic district.



Figure 6 Beaver Historic District with proposed survey areas (in blue)



The field survey was undertaken using Survey123, an iPad-supported survey application compatible with ArcGIS. The PA SHPO provided a base survey form which included fields to document architectural elements such as exterior materials, number of bays (window columns), number of stories, architectural style, building type (the vast majority were residential) and notable features. Several custom fields were added including: additions, original architectural features, additional architectural description and a recommendation of whether or not the resource should be considered a contributing resource to a potential Beaver Historic District Boundary Increase.

Approximate construction dates were determined by comparing images found in historic aerials via PennPilot, the Nationwide Environmental Title Research (NETR). Penn Pilot is an online library of digital historical aerial photographs sponsored by the Pennsylvania Geological Survey. NETR is an online resource for historic aerials and maps. When applicable, Sanborn Insurance maps from the Penn State University Libraries Digital Collections (1886, 1896, 1906, and 1912) were also used. However, a majority of the resources surveyed were constructed after 1912. Each resource was photographed and integrated into the field survey form. Field maps of the survey areas used ArcGIS and parcel data acquired by the Borough for this and later projects from Beaver County. Upon completion of the field survey and quality control and assurance measures undertaken, the data was input to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will be linked to the PA SHPO's CRGIS database and made available to the public.

All surveyed areas had an array of identifiable architectural styles including American Foursquare, Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival. However most of the resources surveyed were modest mid-twentieth century Minimal Traditional and Ranch houses constructed after World War II. While some of these houses retain a moderate degree of architectural integrity, many have been subject to alterations including vinyl siding and replacement window fixtures, and all of the surveyed areas have been subject to modern infill construction consisting of large-scale homes built at the turn of the twenty-first century.

After review by this Preservation Plan's steering committee, consultant and in consultation with the PA SHPO, it was determined that the existing boundaries of the Beaver Historic District were appropriate and no increase to the district was necessary. The surveyed areas and findings are found below.

### **"Hoopes Plan" (Survey Area 1)**



*Figure 7. 160 Wilson Street*

The Hoopes Plan neighborhood is located outside the Beaver Historic District in the most southeastern section of the Borough. The area is bounded by East Second Street, River Road to the east and south and the east side of Wilson Avenue. The Hoopes Plan neighborhood overlooks the Ohio River to the south. Twenty-four properties were surveyed in this area, all residential. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this area was originally part of

the Hoopes estate. The development was laid out circa 1941, however houses were not constructed until after World War II; the majority of the houses were built between 1948



and 1952. Prevailing styles in this neighborhood include Ranch and Minimal Traditional. In general, the buildings retain a moderate degree of architectural integrity and are representative examples of Post-War construction.

### “Groveland Plan” (Survey Area 2)



Figure 10. 175 Orchard Street



Figure 9. 100 Chestnut St



Figure 8. 1295 Park Place

The area southwest of the Beaver Historic District roughly bounded by River Road, Second Street, Sassafra Lane and Sutherland Place was originally developed as the Groveland Plan. It is mainly comprised of modest single-family homes constructed after World War II, however several pre-1940 houses are also found. Some of the homes here were custom-designed for employees of Michael Baker Engineering, which was based in Beaver at that time. One hundred thirteen buildings were surveyed in the Groveland Plan neighborhood. The streets are laid out in a grid plan and have rear alleys with garages. Many of the houses in the neighborhood may be characterized as Minimal Traditional, while some higher styles of architecture, including Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival and Mid-century Modern are found here. Much as with the Hoopes Plan neighborhood, most of the houses in the Groveland Plan neighborhood have been altered by the application of vinyl siding and replacement windows. Mid-century Ranch houses can also be found in this area. Though the neighborhood boasts a number of houses over fifty years of age, this section of Beaver has a substantial amount of new construction from the turn-of-the-twenty-first century. 100 Chestnut Street is a fine and intact example of mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival architecture and is recommended to be evaluated for potential National Register significance.

### Sixth Street between Buffalo and Navigation Streets (Survey Area 3)

Located northwest of the Beaver Historic District near the Beaver Borough/Brighton Township municipal line, this area includes the 1100 block of Sixth Street between Navigation and Buffalo Streets as well as the Beaver Pool at 799 Buffalo Street and 1090 Seventh Street. A total of 25 properties were surveyed in this area. This area is among the older sections outside of the Beaver Historic District and has limited newer construction. Nearly a third of resources are American Foursquare-style residences dating from the first decades of the twentieth century. One such house, 1100 Sixth Street, is an exceptional example of the type. It is of buff brick construction and retains most of its original architectural detailing including copper flashing and gutters, stained glass windows and original wooden doors. It also has an early twentieth-century hipped-roof garage in the rear. This area of Beaver continued to be developed throughout the twentieth century and includes Minimal Traditional and Ranch style houses along Sixth Street.



Figure 11. 1100 Sixth Street

Along with 1100 Sixth Street, several resources in the survey area appeared to have some level of historical or architectural significance. 1090 Seventh Street is a circa 1835 brick Federal style house which has a high degree of architectural integrity. Its early age, architectural details and integrity makes this house a rather significant resource in the Borough. The Beaver Pool, a Works Progress Administration-built complex located at 799 Buffalo Street and stone pool house, constructed circa 1935, contains many of its original features including window features with leaded glass fixtures. These three properties: 1090 Seventh, the Beaver Pool and stone pool house, should be further documented to determine their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. On the south side of the 1000 block of Sixth Street, a row of fine American Foursquare houses also merit further study.



Figure 13. 1090 Seventh Street



Figure 12. Beaver Pool.



**Fifth and Sixth Streets between Dravo Avenue and Market Streets (Survey Area 4)**

This small four-block area is located on Fifth and Sixth Streets between Dravo Avenue and Market Street, directly north of the Beaver Historic District. Thirty six properties were inventoried in this area, which is primarily comprised of Minimal Traditional and Ranch style residences constructed in the mid-twentieth century. This area also boasts a collection of modest one-story stone-veneered houses, likely constructed by local contractor Frank Catenese. The area also includes two rather heavily-altered nineteenth century houses, 800 Fifth Street and 964 Sixth Street and the only commercial property surveyed as part of this endeavor: the WH Silverman Distributing Company, formerly the Metal Products Co. Ornamental Metal Works/TM Fitzgerald Greenhouses. The Frank Catenese-built houses deserve further study as examples of mid-twentieth century “minimal-traditional” stone houses.



Figure 14. Silverman Distributing Company.



Figure 15. 830 Fifth Street



Figure 17. 800 Fifth Street



Figure 16. 964 Sixth Street

### Sixth Street Extension (Survey Area 5)

Situated on a small, dead-end extension of Sixth Street northeast of the Beaver Historic District, this area is a cluster of twelve Minimal Traditional single-family homes constructed after World War II. The buildings are nearly identical two-story, three-bay houses with traditional/Colonial Revival architectural elements. The majority of the buildings are on Sixth Street, however three are located on adjacent Spring Lane and Beaver Street. Some of the houses on the south side of Sixth Street have rear garages which front Leopard Lane.



Figure 18. 381 Sixth Street.



Figure 19. 389 Sixth Street

### Survey and Inventory Recommendations

As noted, the existing Beaver Historic District boundaries appear to be adequate, and none of the areas above are recommended to be added to the current boundaries of the District.

The following properties merit further research and documentation to determine their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Place:

- 100 Chestnut Street (Survey Area 2)
- 1100 Block of Sixth Street (Survey Area 3)
- 799 Buffalo Street (Beaver Pool & pool house) (Survey Area 3)
- 1090 Seventh Street (A.T. Anderson House) (Survey Area 3)
- Frank Catenese Houses (Survey Area 4)

The Borough should continue and complete an historic properties survey for the portions of the Borough yet to be surveyed. The HARB should continue to inventory properties within the Borough that are outside the district boundary.



Figure 20. 1090 Seventh Street



Figure 21. 1100 Sixth Street.

## Section 4: Assessment of Current and Future Needs

### Assessment Methodology

This section is an assessment of current and future needs of the community. Beginning with a public meeting in November, 2017, several community sources and events informed the preparation and goals of the Beaver Historic Preservation Plan. Assessment of current and future needs occurred in the form of public meetings, meetings and discussions with various Borough Council members, Borough staff, members of the HARB and Steering Committee, other members of the community, and public surveys. The project also included a background research component. The primary assessment components are described below:

### Public Meetings

All meetings, including the November 13, 2017 project “kick-off” meeting, were open to the public. They were advertised as advance notice News/Events posting on Borough home page, Beaver e-Blast to subscriber list of about 900, and in the local newspaper. The majority of the meetings were held on HARB’s regular meeting times (fourth Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM, in the public meeting room in Borough Hall). HARB and the Preservation Plan Steering Committee members were well represented, and various members of the Borough Council (in particular Michael Deelo), and staff attended the meetings. Public participation was limited to fewer than 10 persons per meeting, however several members of the public attended all of the meetings, and participated with questions and comments. The meetings were opened by Robert Rice, HARB Chair; the Preservation Plan elements were presented by the consultants and members of the PA SHPO who managed the project.

November 13, 2017:	Project introduction and issues discussion
February 22, 2018:	Inventory Results/Recommendations; Public and HARB survey results; Design Guidelines presentation; Initial Preservation Plan discussions
April 26, 2018:	Preservation Plan Preliminary Goals and Strategies; presentation by members from the Pennsylvania Environmental Council River Town Program
September 18, 2018:	Design Guidelines Draft Presentation
October 25, 2018:	Preservation Plan Draft Presentation

The meetings were a major part of the planning process, giving all participants the opportunity to understand the project components and findings, and voice both ideas and concerns. Presentations by the consultant or the PA SHPO typically involved PowerPoint while work session components involved examining drafts of the Preservation Plan or Design Guidelines components. Much of the information discussed at the public meetings

revolved around the results of the public and HARB/Steering Committee/Borough surveys (see below). Attendees were generally positive regarding the preservation efforts in the community and expressed a desire to see Beaver's historic resources and streetscape preserved. Attendees were asked to share their opinions and ask questions throughout the meetings, many of which were about protecting or maintaining the Borough's neighborhood character and streetscapes.

### **Beaver Public Survey**

The public participation of the Preservation Plan included an online survey undertaken in early 2018. The survey augmented the 2015 Beaver Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Review survey, where the number one priority among 15 various Borough-wide issues was "Value historic district and preservation activities." The goal of the public survey for this plan was to gauge Beaver's residents on specific thoughts and concerns about historic preservation and protecting Beaver's community character.

The survey, via the Survey Monkey platform, attracted approximately 200 respondents, an excellent return and large sampling based on Beaver's population. The actual survey results are found in Appendix D, however key findings extrapolated from the survey include the following: more than three out of four survey responders (78%) live in the Beaver Historic District and appear concerned with issues affecting historic preservation. Over half (58%) of the responders believe major exterior alterations and new construction in the historic district should be reviewed. Conversely, nearly half (45%) think the ordinance should remain as is (although 28% thought the ordinance should be amended for additional review of new construction and major exterior changes while 27% were unsure). To that end, most respondents (62%) were unsure of what the historic district ordinance does.

Regarding threats to historic neighborhoods, the consensus of a majority of responders indicated that the lack of property maintenance, conversion of single-family homes to multi-family rental properties, demolition of historic buildings, loss of historic features, new construction visually incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood, loss of historic streetscape (shade trees, brick streets) were moderate to major threats to these neighborhoods. The responders also would welcome assistance, approving overwhelmingly that historic preservation in Beaver should be promoted by lectures on Beaver's historic architecture, etc., design guidelines, maintaining a referral listing of skilled contractors, and voluntary design consultation with HARB.

### **HARB/Steering Committee/Borough Council and Staff Survey (HARB Survey)**

A separate survey was developed for members of HARB, the preservation plan Steering Committee, and members of the Borough Council and selected staff. This survey addressed specific means of addressing historic preservation and resource protection in the community at large, the historic district, amending the historic district ordinance, capacity of the HARB to take an expanded role in design review, among other issues. The complete results are found in Appendix E. The results of both the HARB and the public surveys were presented in the February 22, 2018 public meeting.

The HARB survey revealed several issues that ranked of high or medium-to-high importance. These issues included the need for design guidelines, amending the historic district ordinance: to enable review of new construction and major exterior changes to



historic resources (note, Council members rated this as a medium level of importance), the need for public awareness and resident education, and the need for a skilled contractor referral list. These issues also ranked highly in the public survey. There were concerns, however that included whether the HARB could properly administer an amended ordinance (which would require more time) and whether HARB would obtain the proper support from Borough Council and staff. The latter issues were discussed in the public meetings and separately with Borough staff. Finally, Council members indicated landowners would be concerned with an amended ordinance where by major changes and new construction could be reviewed, while HARB members generally thought landowners would agree with such ordinance provisions. Overall there were concerns that should the ordinance be amended to expand the review and COA requirements, that such changes would not be onerous on property owners.

### **Major Takeaways from the Surveys**

#### **Regarding the current size of Beaver Historic District:**

- Keep district at current size.

#### **Regarding perceived threats to the historic district, the following were noted:**

- New construction
- Demolition of historic resources
- Lack of building maintenance
- Loss of historic features
- Loss of the historic streetscape appearance
- Effect of rental properties

#### **Regarding welcomed historic preservation tools and activities:**

- Design guidelines
- Education (property maintenance, architectural history, etc.)
- List of contractors specializing in historic restoration

#### **Regarding effectiveness of the current historic district ordinance:**

- Most found it moderately effective.

#### **Regarding potential changes to the historic district ordinance:**

- Provisions that are not considered onerous to property owner
- Provisions should be district-wide

### **Assessment of Community Needs**

The PA SHPO *Guidance for Historic Preservation Planning* requires an assessment of community needs based upon community input. These needs, as articulated in the Guidance are shown in italics, and are followed by a response developed through the preservation planning



process that has taken place in Beaver in 2017-2018. Ultimately, they form the basis of the preservation plan's community goals.

### **Threatened Resources and Protective Measures**

*Likelihood that historic properties are currently, or will be in the future, affected by inappropriate land uses or other human activities and, if so, whether measures already being carried out by the Borough of Beaver or other parties are adequate to manage or protect the resources:*

Under the current Borough ordinance, an application could be made to demolish or insensitively alter an historic resource or construct new buildings incompatible with the surrounding historic architecture or streetscape. The Borough's current Historic District Ordinance requires a COA only for demolition of historic property within the Beaver Historic District.

On a larger scale, the Shell plant, rising across the Ohio River from Beaver in Potter Township and the impetus of this Preservation Plan, could impact the Borough and its historic district. While the plant's location limits its direct, construction-related impact to much of the community and the historic district, significant indirect impacts can be anticipated. The economic opportunities related to new employment at the plant and ancillary development could logically result in speculative development, growth in rental residential property, the potential for tear-downs and increased construction and rehabilitation activity throughout the Borough. These activities could result in design decisions incompatible with the existing historic character of the Borough if they are not anticipated and managed in a thoughtful and consistent way.

Specific areas of concern and potential include:

- Tools to help promote historic preservation throughout Beaver, and particularly within the historic district included the need for Design Guidelines, preservation workshops and lectures, and a skilled contractor referral list.
- As expressed throughout the planning process, the historic district ordinance should be amended to require a COA for new construction and major alterations to buildings within the historic district. Such provisions should not be an unreasonable burden to property owners (as discussed, a large percentage of property owners would prefer to see the ordinance left as is, however a larger percentage would prefer that the ordinance is amended to cover new construction and major alternations.
- The Third Street commercial district, located solidly within the Beaver Historic District, should be considered a critical area. As development pressure and new businesses are drawn to Third Street, larger and perhaps less architecturally sensitive proposals may come forward which could negatively impact the commercial district's existing historic character and vitality. The Borough's current preservation ordinance only applies to demolitions and does not manage new construction or rehabilitation.
- The Borough should also be cognizant of county plans for its courthouse complex; though there are no plans at this time, possible future expansion or other changes could impact the streetscape and thus should continue to be sensitive to the Borough's historic setting.

- Traffic could be impacted with the opening of the Shell plant, and additional businesses that may open nearby as a result. Fortunately, the plan is mainly served by I-376 and Route 18. Increased traffic on 3rd Street (Route 68) could negatively impact businesses on Third Street with drivers not wanting to venture into town, particularly at rush hour. It could also impact the residential neighborhoods, as drivers look for alternate routes through town.
- Rental conversions are a major concern. Currently rentals account for 39% of residential units in Beaver, which is lower than towns like Beaver Falls, New Brighton or Aliquippa, but much higher than places like Mt. Lebanon Heidelberg. Landlords often do not provide the optimum upkeep to a property the way most homeowners do, thus impacting not only the resource itself but the streetscape as well.
- Future plans for and development of the Borough's parks were a consistent item of concern to the public. The parks contribute to the significance of the Beaver Historic District and to the quality of life for Borough residents. As such, any changes to the parks should take into account their historic character, and strive to minimize changes that may be insensitive to that character.
- Beaver's riverfront appears to be an underutilized asset. This beautiful location could significantly improve opportunities to attract visitors and events to Beaver. Partnering with organizations such as the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area (see below) and the River Towns program could help the Borough develop partnerships to enhance the historic character of the riverfront, encourage outdoor recreation activities and develop opportunities to connect with other experiences and locations related to Beaver's history and location.

### **Historic/Cultural Resources Requiring Attention**

*Any historic / cultural resources that are in need of attention by the local government due to encroachment of human activities, unintended land use conflicts or physical disturbance, or rapid physical deterioration:*

With most any community, historic resources can suffer from "deferred maintenance," which can lead to increased rehabilitation costs and even the loss of significant historic character and entire buildings. Beaver's historic district ordinance includes language to discourage the concept of "demolition by neglect within the historic district.

Although the historic district ordinance does not address deferred maintenance directly, properties throughout Beaver, including those outside the historic district, are subject to the *International Property Maintenance Code*, 2009 Edition, which the Borough has adopted.

### **Adverse Policies from other Comprehensive Plans**

*Whether policies or activities recommended in other parts of the county or municipal comprehensive plan will adversely impact the historic/cultural resources:*

There do not appear to be any conflicts, other than the lack of significant funding for historic preservation activities as called for in the Beaver County Comprehensive Plan.

### **Local Collaboration**

*Whether any conflicts, inconsistencies, competing priorities, or opportunities for coordination are evident in the resource management plans of the various local governments on the county.*

There do not appear to be any conflicts as found in the information studied for this report. There does appear to be room for additional collaborative efforts with other municipalities to promote historic preservation and heritage education in the Beaver area. All municipalities, including Beaver, potentially benefit from VisitBeaver.com, the county's visitor website that promotes, among other things, heritage tourism and downtown economic development.

## Section 5: Community Goals & Implementation

### Goals, Objectives & Action Steps

The following goals, objectives and action steps are consistent with PA SHPO best practice guidelines. More importantly – these goals are consistent with those articulated in public meetings, surveys and discussions with various members of the community during the process of developing this Preservation Plan. These goals are consistent with the Beaver Borough’s historic district ordinance which states in part:

*“To promote, protect, enhance, perpetuate, and preserve historic resources for the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation, protection and regulation of buildings, structures, and areas of historic interest or importance within the Borough; to safeguard the heritage of the Borough by preserving and regulating historic assets which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history; to preserve and enhance the environmental quality of neighborhoods; to strengthen the Borough’s economic base by the stimulation of the tourist industry; to establish and improve property values; to foster economic development; to foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the Borough’s past; and to preserve and protect the cultural, historical and architectural assets of the Borough for which the Borough has been determined to be of local, state or national, historical and/or architectural significance.” (Borough Code §11-102)*

According to a PA SHPO presentation entitled “The Six Habits of Highly Effective Historic Preservation Programs,” the six attributes of a “holistic” local preservation program in Pennsylvania are:

- Demonstrate a commitment to historic preservation as a vital and integral component of community and economic development;
- Implement and enforce laws, policies, and procedures that advance preservation goals and uphold the public interest in a proactive and lawful manner;
- Engage the public in historic preservation issues;
- Understand and maintain current, relevant information about historic resources in their community;
- Appropriately manage and maintain historic resources in their ownership; and
- Provide adequate human and financial resources to implement historic preservation programs effectively.

Clearly, implementation of the goals and action steps articulated in this plan will require close collaboration among the public, non-profit entities, property owners, businesses and the Borough. Whereas “Goals” are the general elements to achieve broad preservation

outcomes; “Objectives” are the work elements needed to effectively achieve the goal; and finally, action steps are listed for meeting those objectives.

- Goal #1:      Preserve & Protect the Historic Character of the Borough**
- Goal #2:      Increase Public Awareness of Beaver’s History and Historic Resources**
- Goal #3:      Maximize Economic Benefits from Beaver’s Historic Preservation Program**
- Goal #4:      Identify Funding Needs and Sources**

## **Goal 1: Preserve & Protect the Historic Character of the Borough**

*Priority: High*

*Monetary Cost: Medium*

*Human Cost: High*

### **Objective 1: Develop a community-wide preservation design ethic.**

A preservation design ethic is meant to establish policies and programs that protect, enhance and promote traditional design principles in Beaver for rehabilitation, new construction, development and investment. The new architectural Design Guidelines and Preservation Manual produced concurrently with this Preservation Plan—with significant public input--illustrate what a preservation-based design ethic would look like in Beaver. What follows are steps that can be taken to turn a preservation-based design ethic into reality.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Ensure the Design Guidelines are broadly distributed and fully promoted in multiple formats. Residents should receive a link to the Design Guidelines multiple times a year via email, and they should be available in printed form at the Borough Hall and at the local library.
- Develop a brief brochure related to the Design Guidelines that
- Illustrates in simple terms and illustrations what a preservation-based design ethic looks like.
- Is provided to property owners, residents, elected officials, non-profit entities and the development community throughout Beaver, with a focus on the Historic District.
- Is developed in both physical, electronic and web-based formats.
- Develop consistent outreach and education programming for residents, property owners, elected officials, non-profit entities and the development community.
- Programming should be considered in multiple formats
- Codify the need to protect and preserve Beaver's historic streetscapes by maintaining zoning setbacks, maintaining historic sidewalks and streets, and protecting trees, where possible.

### **Objective 2: Amend the Beaver Historic District Ordinance**

The following amends Beaver's Historic District Ordinance by giving responsibility to the HARB to review and recommend Certificates of Appropriateness for new construction and certain types of alterations to all existing buildings within the Beaver Historic District. The amendments, which strengthen the existing ordinance, are not onerous; for the most part they pertain to major alterations and overall design features that can impact not only the district's historic buildings, but the historic streetscape setting as well.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Add a provision to require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the construction of new buildings, structures or additions.
- HARB should consider planned design and location features that will adversely impact adjacent buildings within block or intersection, and overall streetscape setting.
- HARB will base review and recommendations regarding COA on guidance provided in the Design Guidelines.
- Expand the definition of Demolition to include “Alteration” which will require a COA for certain changes to both contributing and noncontributing buildings within the historic district.
- Define “Alteration” to include the removal or construction of a porch, or the replacement of its material.
- Define “Alteration” to mean the replacement or removal of significant style-defining architectural features, as may be described in the Architectural Styles in the Historic District section of the Design Guidelines.
- Define “Alteration” as not to mean the ordinary repair, in-kind replacement of materials, or the substitution of visually similar or sensitive materials, such as cladding, roofing material, windows (stained glass the exception) and doors.
- Amend ordinance to require use of the Design Guidelines in the review process; revise as necessary.
- For new construction involving demolition of a historic resource(s), require Borough to withhold granting of demolition permit until applicant obtains building permit for planned construction.
- Amend other provisions and definitions of the zoning ordinance to be consistent with the Historic District Ordinance, where necessary.
- Mitigate the impact of demolitions as a condition of the COA
- Amend ordinance (Chapter 11 – Historic District Ordinance, and other chapters, where appropriate) to include all buildings in the Historic District, not just “Historic Resources” or “Structures.” (This will help protect the historic streetscape setting from changes to buildings or structures considered non historic or noncontributing.)
- Require photographic documentation of any building to be demolished as part of the demolition permit.
- Define photographic documentation requirements including photographic parameters, curatorial parameters and repository
- Develop an architectural salvage program

### **Objective 3: Develop system for ongoing and proper administration of the ordinance.**

The Borough must maintain and ensure appropriate procedures and built into the enabling legislation and the ordinance provisions are properly carried out with each application for a Certificate of Appropriateness. This will require the commitment of the HARB and the Borough to continue outreach to the community to inform them of expectations and regulations.

#### **Action steps:**

- Develop a manual for all HARB members that, among other things, has a copy of the ordinance, any amendments, and the design guidelines.



- Attend PA SHPO meetings and digest PA SHPO information regarding proper administration of the historic district act, including attendance of ongoing regional or state-wide meetings dealing with the subject.
- Develop onboarding procedures and training for new HARB members.
- Invite PA SHPO and other area experts to provide on-going training at HARB meetings.
- Encourage HARB members to attend outside training opportunities.
- Designate HARB members to regularly attend Borough Council meetings and other board and commission meetings in order to share information and stay informed about potentially overlapping projects.
- Ensure annual reports and other written information are prepared in a professional manner and delivered on a timely basis.
- Consider hosting a regional workshop on the subject of historic district administration.
- Develop an ongoing training program for HARB members and borough staff to acquaint or reacquaint members and staff with ordinance procedures and provisions, historic architecture, and borough history.
- Invite Borough Council, staff, and other borough board and commission members to all HARB activities.

#### **Objective 4: Adopt and implement the International Existing Building Code (IEBC).**

The IEBC is within the family of the International Building Code, which has been adopted by the borough. The IEBC recognizes older buildings require some level of flexibility in code enforcement in order to maintain life, health and safety. Adopting the IEBC can help assist property owners and developers work through technical and cost issues associated with code compliance for older buildings while helping to maintain the architectural integrity of the building. According to PA SHPO guidance, use of the IEBC is considered a best practice.

##### **Action step:**

- Ensure the IEBC is adopted and utilized within the borough.

#### **Objective 5: Consider preservation options for historic resources outside of the Beaver Historic District.**

The Borough should consider implementing a traditional building design ethic for areas outside the historic district, such as through implementation of a conservation district. A conservation district could help preserve Beaver's streetscapes and general sense of place without necessarily requiring the level of detail some preservation ordinances and zoning requires. Broad and continuous promotion of the Design Guidelines as a resource throughout the Borough will also help this goal. The above notwithstanding, Beaver's current zoning, under Chapter 22, Subdivision and Land Development, §22-101, states that the intent, among others, is the, "...preservation of the natural, scenic and historic values of the environment."

##### **Action steps:**

- Consider adopting a conservation district ordinance that preserves the Borough's streetscapes and sense of place outside of the Beaver Historic District.
- Promote the use of the Design Guidelines on a voluntary basis in these areas
- Ensure the intent of Chapter 22, Subdivision and Land Development, §22-101, to guide new development.
- Utilize the Design Guidelines to guide new development.
- Amend ordinance to include "Historic Streetscape" in definitions
- Amend ordinance to require Historic Streetscape Impact Study for non-minor subdivision and land development projects, utilizing the Design Guidelines to guide new development.
- Amend Zoning Ordinance to include language for design consistency with Design Guidelines, Amendments to Comprehensive Plan, and the Preservation Plan).
- Amend Conditional Use provisions.
- Amend Special Exception provisions.
- Amend Chapter 27, §1602, Sign Requirements, to state that all new signage shall be consistent with the Design Guidelines.

## **Goal 2: Increase Public Awareness of Beaver's History and Historic Resources**

*Priority: Medium-High*

*Monetary Cost: Low*

*Human Cost: High*

### **Objective 1: Establish an ongoing lecture/workshop program.**

Lectures and/or workshops are an excellent means of promoting historic preservation and in a more practical sense, help property owners learn about preserving their property and maximizing their investment.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Develop a series of lectures and preservation workshops
- The Borough (HARB) and other organizations in the community and region may wish to help sponsor additional lectures/workshops pertinent to preservation issues in Beaver.

### **Objective 2: Organize a guided walking tour program.**

Walking tours are an excellent means of learning about the history and architecture of a community. Beaver is blessed with many buildings that tell its story. Walking tours can be guided or self-guided.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Develop a series of yearly walking tours, organized, and hosted by guides.
- Coordinate with other walking tours in the region to share marketing efforts.
- Coordinate with Beaver retail and restaurant establishments.
- Develop self-guided tours to be made available on Borough and BAHF websites, Borough Hall and Public Library.

### **Objective 3: Develop a consistent interpretive signage program.**

#### **Action Steps:**

- Develop a plan to place consistent interpretive signage at strategic locations in the Borough.

### **Objective 4: Establish a preservation awards program. Develop a program that recognizes property owners and individuals who excel in preserving their historic properties or other historic elements of the community.**

#### **Action Steps:**

- Develop a regular system and method of recognition.

**Objective 5: Create a resource guide for preservation projects.**

**Action Steps:**

- Establish and periodically refresh a guide to materials, suppliers, consultants, design professionals, contractors and technical preservation information
- Lists of professional services may be maintained without regard to recommendation for specific firms.
- Guides to find appropriate materials may similarly be provided without recommendation to specific suppliers.
- Continue HARB Matters section of the Borough website, consider inviting guest authors.
- Create and periodically refresh a list and of foundation, private and public funding resources that may help fund preservation projects.

**Objective 6: Consider establishment of a preservation “friends” group or committee.**

**Action Steps:**

- Local organizations should consider establishment of a stand-alone organization or standing committee specifically to promote preservation advocacy in the Borough. Such a committee could relieve HARB and even the Borough staff with much of the work necessary to bring these objectives to fruition. Projects could include semi-annual preservation workshops, develop a recognition program, or endangered property program.

**Objective 7: Conduct additional research on specific historic properties outside Historic District**

**Action Steps:**

- Prepare a Historic Resource Survey Form for Borough-owned Beaver Pool and submit to PA SHPO for review.
- Consult with PA SHPO about the preliminary eligibility of all the above privately-owned properties (100 Chestnut Street, 1100 Sixth Street, and 1090 Seventh Street), as well as the potential eligibility of the Frank Catenese Houses as a historic district.
- Should PA SHPO find there may be a potential for National Register eligibility, contact property owners and discuss the preparation of Historic Resource Survey Forms for those properties.

**Objective 8: Complete an historic buildings survey of the entire Borough.**

There are several areas of the Borough that have not been surveyed but may contain important architecture. A survey of these areas would provide Beaver with a thorough

inventory and understanding of its architecture, which could help preserve these areas under certain circumstances.

**Action Steps:**

- In consultation with the PA SHPO, conduct additional survey through retention of a qualified consultant or through use of trained volunteers.
- Seek funding opportunities to complete the surveys
- Ensure public engagement, outreach and education as part of the survey strategy.

**Objective 9: Establish an endangered property program**

Highlight properties that may be endangered by development, inappropriate design, deferred maintenance or other mechanisms.

**Action Steps:**

- Identify significant properties under threat and maintain a list that is periodically updated.
- Promote an annual “preservation opportunities” based upon endangered properties.
- Develop a strategy for contacting property owners and providing guidance to remediate threats.
- Enforce appropriate codes
- As appropriate, formulate a strategy for acquisition, repair and reuse.

**Objective 10: Ensure easy access to all historic preservation-related municipal resources**

**Action Steps:**

- Place Ordinance requirements and procedures in a clearly accessible form on the Borough and BAHF websites.
- To promote an appreciation for a COA applicant’s property, make the Beaver Historic District National Register nomination form and updated inventory accessible and searchable on the Borough website.
- Place Design Guidelines on the Borough and BAHF websites.
- Distribute an abbreviated version of the Design Guidelines for quick and easy reference.

### **Goal 3: Maximize Economic Benefits from Beaver's Historic Preservation Program**

*Priority: Medium*

*Monetary Cost: Low*

*Human Cost: Medium*

The positive economic impact of implementing a preservation-based design ethic has been studied and confirmed extensively over the past thirty or forty years. Communities across the nation have found that preservation principles, implemented by cooperative efforts at the municipal and public levels, stabilize and improve property values and increase vitality and economic opportunity in historic business districts. Such efforts also promote heritage tourism, a vital economic tool for Pennsylvania. Beaver, given its historic resources, heritage activities and venues, vibrant downtown, and convenient location, is positioned to capitalize on all of these preservation-based attributes.

#### **Objective 1: Pursue Certified Local Government certification.**

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is valued by communities across the country to maximize the benefits of their local historic resource protection efforts. Key features of the program include ongoing training for HARB members as well as the availability of grant funding for historic preservation and planning projects only available to CLGs.

##### **Action Steps:**

- Consult updated PA SHPO guidance for certified local governments to determine what areas the Borough needs to update.
- Form a committee to pursue CLG status.
- Create priority project list for potential funding under CLG grant program.

#### **Objective 2: Help stabilize and improve property values Borough-wide, increase vitality and economic opportunity in the Third Street commercial business district.**

##### **Action Steps:**

- Ensure broad and consistent promotion of Design Guidelines and education and outreach programming
- Explore potential for Borough-sponsored preservation incentives, including but not limited to:
  - Implementing a Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance program based in part upon use of the Design Guidelines
  - Creation of a revolving loan fund for rehabilitation programs
  - Creation of a preservation project grant fund
  - Creation of a façade rehabilitation grant program



- Re-establish the Business District Authority

**Objective 3: Develop and explore a coordinated heritage tourism strategy linking Beaver to regional efforts**

**Action Steps:**

- Coordinate with Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area programming
- Enroll in the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's River Towns program
- Expand creation of local recreational trails in cooperation with regional initiatives
- Develop and expand heritage tourism destination themes
- Maintain and assess Garrison Days and other events.

## Goal 4: Identify Funding Needs and Sources

*Priority: Medium-High*

*Monetary Cost: Low*

*Human Cost: High*

### Objective 1: Provide adequate financial and human resources to implement Beaver's historic preservation program.

For Beaver's historic preservation program to function properly and to implement some elements of this Plan, it will be necessary to identify additional funding or human capacity needs. Whether in the Borough itself or within non-profit organizations, these needs could be related to training staff, developing a volunteer corps, retaining experts, providing education or developing education materials. Additionally, the borough should be vigilant about attracting citizens to serve on HARB to fill any vacancies, while maintaining an active liaison between HARB and other borough boards and commissions, and Borough Council.

#### Action steps:

- Borough staff, elected officials and HARB should identify and prioritize capacity-building needs, whether human or funding in order to implement those elements of this plan the Borough pursues.
- The Borough, BAHF and other community organizations as appropriate should collaborate on implementation and capacity-building strategies.
- HARB should maintain a list of possible appointees to HARB, which could immediately be presented to Borough when there is an opening. This should create a smoother transition and prevent unfilled positions on HARB.
- Appoint liaisons among HARB, Borough Council, and the Planning Commission so that all major planning entities in the borough understand what the other is doing in terms of historic preservation.

## Section 6: Existing Historic Preservation Programs

The following presents a list and description of programs and entities that play (or can play a part) in historic preservation and resource protection in the Borough of Beaver. The information provided an excellent guidance for the Beaver Historic Preservation Plan.

### Beaver Borough Comprehensive Plan

Beaver Borough revised its comprehensive plan in 2001.

([http://elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/Beaver\\_County/213;%20Beaver%20Borough/4200704688mcp.pdf](http://elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/Beaver_County/213;%20Beaver%20Borough/4200704688mcp.pdf)) The Comprehensive Plan has several goals and objectives that overlap or are integral to goals articulated in the Beaver Historic Preservation Plan (see below). The Comprehensive Plan's goals are listed as "steps" for creating a vision statement, each containing several statements consistent with this Preservation Plan. The following language excerpted from the Comprehensive Plan show that consistency:

- Step 1: Beaver Borough is a quaint small town that has enhanced its historic assets and existing infrastructure making it one of the best known historic Boroughs within Pennsylvania. Several characteristics in the Borough's design add to its charm and character. These include:
  - the grid street layout,
  - mature tree lined streets,
  - consistent alignment of buildings along the central business district,
  - signage that is compatible with the character of the Borough .
- Step 2: "Key Community Goals"
  - **Topic: Municipal Government and Intergovernmental Cooperation**
    - *Goal Statement: To provide the best consolidated and cost efficient services to Beaver Borough residents through coordination with Beaver County as well as Beaver, Brighton, Bridgewater, Vanport, and other local municipalities.*
  - **Topic: Parks, Recreation and Special Events**
    - *Goal Statement: To enhance the existing community parks and riverfront while providing additional active and passive recreational opportunities and community events.*
  - **Topic: Historic and Cultural Resources**
    - *Goal Statement: To ensure all historic structures within the Borough will be preserved, and to promote the awareness of cultural opportunities. To support and utilize the exciting library and museum.*
  - **Topic: Community**
    - *Goal Statement: To provide community gathering places and events for residents to become actively engaged in civic activities.*
  - **Topic: Business**
    - *Goal Statement: To incorporate a historic streetscape theme into the Borough's main street, which will create a bustling business community.*
  - **Topic: Housing**

- *Goal Statement: To continue to maintain the character of homes and residential neighborhoods and provide a variety of housing opportunities.*
  - **Topic: Economic Health**
    - *Goal Statement: To improve financial viability of the community.*
- Step 3: Under Community Development Objectives, below are examples of stated objectives that tie directly into the goals of the Historic Preservation Plan:
  - Build and improve the existing architectural and streetscape character of the Borough by establishing guidelines and standards for future development, reuse, and expansion.
  - Require building facades to meet the visual quality and character of the surrounding streetscape.
  - Design new buildings and adaptively re-use older buildings so that front facades face the street.
  - Retain historical resources and character of the Borough.
  - Design new developments so they contribute to, and have a relationship to the community as a whole. Plan sites by considering the existing elements and the site's relationship to the surrounding parcels and street system.
  - Ensure setbacks match the surrounding character of the street in order to ... make the street environment comfortable to pedestrians...
  - Encourage the preservation, identification, and designation of eligible national, state, and local historic properties.
  - Continue to reuse and use historic structures for community activities.
  - Promote Beaver's unique historic and cultural assets to help increase tourism.
  - Support maintenance and routine upgrade of older homes.
  - Support re-use and redevelopment of vacant buildings or closed, commercial sites.
- Step 4: The Future Land Use Scenario, which states that the "...future land use scenario reflects the community's intent to preserve the character of the Borough and enhance its existing assets and land use." These include:
  - Enhance the existing streetscapes and incorporate a historic theme.
- The Comprehensive Plan also lists specific goals and action plans. The goal for Historic and Cultural Resources is, "To ensure all historic structures with[in] the Borough will be preserved, and to promote the awareness of cultural activities." The four strategies listed to achieve this goal:
  - Maintain and update the historic sites inventory within the Borough to identify structures that could be placed on the National Register of Historic Places
  - Encourage creative partnerships to upgrade the existing library with additional resources and computer technology.
  - Provide guidance for the design/rehabilitation of new and old structures for historic preservation.
  - Develop a historic street lighting program (Page III-5).

In 2013, Borough Council directed the Beaver Planning Commission to review and update portions of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. During the plan review process, a survey of residents, called the Community Attitude Questionnaire, was undertaken to weigh support for several policy recommendations. Approximately one quarter of households in the Borough participated in the survey, a very high return rate.

The survey questionnaire included a number of questions related to conditions in the Borough and visions for the future. Historic preservation scored number one of the fifteen topics put forth in the survey. The topic entitled **“Value Historic District and Preservation Activities”** scored 88%, which ranked the highest support level. Ranked number six in support, at 74%, was **“Preserve brick streets and sidewalks,”** which are major elements of Beaver’s historic streetscapes. Finally, **“Convert large historic homes to condo use”** registered a 60% approval rating, and ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of the 15 topics. In fact, support for preservation was so high that the first Action Item identified in the Review identified various historic preservation efforts.

The review of the 2001 comprehensive plan, initiated in 2013, was completed and adopted by Borough Council in 2015. (<https://beaverpa.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/20160226-Comp-Plan-Review-Update-Review-4.pdf>)

### **Borough Council and Planning & Zoning Commission**

The Borough Council is the elected governing body of the municipality. Among other duties, the Council adopts and amends ordinances, creates Borough policy and adopts an annual municipal budget. The Planning & Zoning Commission consists of members appointed by Borough Council and makes recommendations to the Council on matters of land use and planning.

This Plan is intended, in part, to provide Borough Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission a tool to make informed decisions and recommendations regarding architectural and community design, new construction, redevelopment, land use, zoning, ordinances and funding allocations as these issues pertain to the valuable historic character of Beaver.

### **Historic District Ordinance**

The Borough of Beaver’s historic district ordinance (Chapter 11 in the Borough code), which establishes the Borough’s Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB), is the product of decades of historic preservation efforts in the Borough. Borough Council approved the historic district ordinance in 2011 pursuant to the Pennsylvania’s Historic District Act. Among other duties, the ordinance requires the HARB to review proposed demolitions in the historic district and make recommendations regarding Certificates of Appropriateness (regarding demolition applications) to Borough council.

HARB membership formed the core of the Steering Committee that spearheaded development of this Beaver Historic Preservation Plan.

As of this writing, Beaver’s historic district ordinance is the only municipal ordinance enacted pursuant to the state Historic District Act that only allows review of demolitions. All other such ordinances in the Commonwealth review new construction, additions and

rehabilitation or some combination of these. One goal of this plan is to amend Beaver's preservation ordinance in a manner that provides better management of the community's shared historic character.

### **Borough of Beaver Code**

Pertinent sections of the Beaver Borough code were reviewed to ensure the recommendations in this Historic Preservation Plan would be consistent with Borough Code and to identify any areas of concern or possible recommendations for revision. The following paragraphs are organized by the chapter of the Borough code.

**Chapter 4 – Buildings** includes provisions important to the HARB administration if certain provisions in the Beaver Historic Preservation Plan are adopted:

**Section §4-203 *Rehabilitation Permits Required*** states “No work of rehabilitation shall be undertaken within or upon a residential structure until a permit has been issued by the Zoning Officer.” Although “rehabilitation” is not defined, this requirement can be very beneficial to the HARB. It enables the Zoning Officer the opportunity to review the permit and decide whether it would necessitate review by HARB before a permit may be issued. This is particularly important if Beaver amends the Historic District Ordinance to require a COA for certain alterations, in which case both “rehabilitation” and “alteration” should be defined.

**Section §4-302 *Permit Required* and Section §4-303 *Conditions for Razing Buildings*** Section 4-302 states that no building may be partially or fully demolished without a building permit, and Section 4-303 outlines provisions for obtaining a building permit. These provisions are (or can be) important for the proper administration of the Historic District Ordinance. Regarding Section 4-302, the definition of demolition is: “The act of moving or dismantling or tearing down or removing of all or part of the exterior load-bearing portion of any building and all operations incidental thereto, including neglecting routine maintenance and repairs that can lead to deterioration and decay. Not included is the removal of exterior, nonstructural architectural elements.” If the building is in the Historic District, it would necessitate a COA. The provision thus provides for the Zoning Officer to direct the application to HARB. Section 4-303 describes conditions that must be met before a permit may be issued. Currently there are no provisions for properties within the Beaver Historic District; such a provision is strongly recommended.

**Chapter 22 - Subdivision and Land Development §22-101**, states that the intent, among others, is the “...preservation of the natural, scenic and historic values of the environment.” This presents an opportunity to amend the ordinance to incorporate the *Design Guidelines* and preservation tools such as a Historic Resource Impact Study (see Section 6, Goal 4) to protect historic resources and streetscapes for non-minor projects both in and outside of the Beaver Historic District.

**Chapter 27 - Zoning** contains language regarding Conditional Use and Special Exceptions for the various zoning classifications. Neither include requirements for meeting historic preservation standards. The Conditional Use and Special Exception language could be



amended to include using the *Design Guidelines* under certain circumstances. (Also see Chapter 6, Goal 4.)

**§27-1602 Sign Requirements** has language drafted to “...control and promote the erection of signs which preserve the architectural character and environmental context of the Borough...” thus recognizing the importance of Beaver’s historic architecture and setting. The sign ordinance forbids many types of signs throughout the Borough that are inappropriate for historic settings. Although signage occurs within the historic district (mainly along Third Street) HARB is not involved in the sign review process. Amending the current sign ordinance to include consistency with the Design Guidelines is recommended.

## **Non-governmental Entities in the Borough of Beaver**

### **Beaver Area Heritage Foundation <https://beaverheritage.org/>**

Beaver is fortunate to be the home of the Beaver Area Heritage Foundation (BAHF), founded in 1967. The Foundation took a giant leap forward in 1996 when, in a collaborative effort with the Borough of Beaver, it began restoration of the former Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Freight Station and repurposed the building as a local history museum. The Beaver Area Heritage Museum opened in 1998 and has been a catalyst for the Foundation’s historic preservation programming. Beaver benefits from this local amenity for its own preservation and heritage education purposes, but also because the Museum draws people from throughout the region. It helps position Beaver as a destination for regional visitors. The foundation has a number of programs that promote historic preservation in Beaver, the largest being Garrison Day, which celebrates Fort McIntosh. Some 10,000 people attend this event annually. The foundation and the Borough work collaboratively on this and other events

The BAHF, in collaboration with other entities, also restored the Lake Erie Railroad Passenger Station, adjacent to the former freight station and now museum. The building is much larger and more architecturally significant than the freight station. The main floor the Beaver Cultural and Events Center, event space that the BAHF manages and rents out for special events. The lower level is used by the Beaver County Genealogy and History Center

Another collaborative effort between the BAHF and the Borough was the construction of the 1802 Log House. The building is just south of the former freight station on the BAHF property, and is constructed from logs that may have originally been used to construct part of the Fort McIntosh complex. The foundation operates the building as a house museum and event center.

The BAHF’s restoration and reuse of these buildings and the Fort McIntosh site, and the foundation’s ongoing heritage event promote historic preservation and heritage appreciation while greatly contributing to Beaver’s economy. Beaver is lucky in this regard: few communities have the attractions, the infrastructure, the dedicated individuals and entities, or the governmental support to make this happen.

### **Beaver County Genealogy and History Center <http://beavercountyhistory.org/>**

Founded in 1971, the Beaver County Genealogy and History Center (BCGHC) is a repository for genealogy and historic information about Beaver County. The center is located in the Beaver Historic District in the lower level of the former Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Passenger Station (the Beaver Cultural and Events Center). Open to the public, the nonprofit BCGHC is funded by individuals and corporations. Beaver benefits from having this entity reuse one of the most important historic resources in the Borough, but also because it brings in researchers from throughout the region some of whom visit not only the research center, but the Heritage Museum, the shops and restaurants on Third Street as well.

## **Beaver County**

Beaver County offers no programs or services specific to historic preservation efforts. Beaver County's 2010 Comprehensive Plan states, in its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis that the county's numerous historic and cultural sites are a Strength; deterioration and demolition of historic buildings, shrinking funds for preservation and a lack of coordination among many preservation groups are a Threat. The plan's Goals and Objectives section states "The County recognizes the importance and economic potential of its historic and cultural assets and supports efforts to identify, protect, and promote significant historic sites and cultural institutions." To that end, it offers the following objectives:

- Better market the County's historic and cultural assets within the County, throughout the Pittsburgh Region, and in neighboring States;
- Preserve historic buildings and sites;
- Promote better communication and coordination among and County's numerous historic and cultural sites and local historic societies;
- Ensure that development adjacent or in close proximity to historic and cultural sites is compatible and does not detract from the value of the site (page 301).

## **Beaver County /Regional Preservation Plans and Entities**

There is no comprehensive regional plan promoting historic preservation in Beaver County, but the county does support entities that promote historic preservation and heritage education. The county also promotes tourism to historic and cultural locations through the efforts of its visitors and tourism entity, VisitBeaver.com.

## **Non-governmental Regional Entities**

There are several county-wide or regional entities promoting historic preservation, history and tourism from which Beaver has and can continue to benefit:

### **Beaver County Historical Research and Landmarks Foundation <https://bchrlf.org/>**

The Beaver County Historical Research and Landmarks Foundation (BCHRLF), located in the William Viscary Mansion in Freedom Pa., is the county-wide historical society of Beaver County. A nonprofit entity, it is in part supported by Beaver County Commissioners, businesses and individuals. In addition to operating the Viscary Mansion, it manages several events to promote history and preservation throughout Beaver County. These include educational programs, community outreach, a speaker's bureau, and "Passport to Beaver County History" to encourage visitation of Beaver County's heritage museums, including the Beaver Area Heritage Museum, and a historical marker program.

**Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area <https://www.riversofsteel.com/>**

Beaver County is one of eight counties that comprise the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area. Established in 1984, National Heritage Areas promote heritage conservation, recreation and economic development on a regional basis. A National Park Service program, Rivers of Steel is one of 40 National Heritage Areas in the country.

**Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation <http://phlf.org/>**

Based in Pittsburgh, the Foundation is regional in scope, and promotes preservation in the region through professional services and advocacy.

**State-wide Resources**

Pennsylvania has two significant entities that provide historic preservation planning services and advocacy to local communities:

**Preservation Pennsylvania <http://www.preservationpa.org/>**

Preservation Pennsylvania is the Commonwealth's only statewide, private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of historically and architecturally significant resources.

**Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO)**

**<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Pages/default.aspx>**

The Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) is a Bureau within the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Every state has a SHPO, and the PA SHPO manages all state and federal programs in the Commonwealth related to historic preservation, including the National Register of Historic Places, historic buildings survey, environmental review, disaster planning technical assistance, Keystone Historic Preservation Grants, historical markers, federal and state rehabilitation investment tax credits and community preservation programming. This Plan was developed in part with assistance from the PASHPO Community Preservation program.

**National Resources****National Park Service <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1345/whatwedo.htm>**

The National Park Service (NPS) is an agency within the Department of the Interior. The NPS' Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science Directorate manages a variety of programs related to historic preservation. NPS provides some funding to SHPOs through the federal Historic Preservation Fund to assist in the management of federal historic preservation programs.

**National Trust for Historic Preservation <https://savingplaces.org/>**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) is a national, privately funded organization that works to save America's historic places.

**Partners for Sacred Places <http://www.sacredplaces.org/>**

Partners for Sacred Places (PSP) is the national non-sectarian, nonprofit organization devoted to the preservation of historic religious properties and finding ways to nurture historic congregations by creating local connections to shape vibrant, creative communities. Founded in 1989, PSP administers the National Fund for Sacred Places, which provides grants for capital campaigns and training opportunities. PSP also offers consulting services, provides maintenance information, and offers its own training services for congregations.

### **Adjacent Municipalities to the Borough of Beaver**

The PA SHPO's *Guidance* for developing preservation plans requires an assessment of what adjacent municipalities may be doing to promote historic preservation, in an effort to look for collaborative efforts between the communities. Pennsylvania municipalities are empowered to protect historic resources by means of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) (Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247). In general terms, the MPC empowers counties and municipalities, individually or jointly, to plan their development and to govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances and additional tools. The MPC mandates the protection of historic resources through the following language: "...*zoning ordinances shall provide for protection of natural and historic features and resources.*" (Sec. 603(g)(2)). Protection of historic resources, if any, however, varies by municipality. Generally, the municipalities adjacent to Beaver have not enacted ordinance language to protect historic resources, though historic preservation activity has occurred in various communities.

Beaver has six municipalities along its borders.

#### **Vanport Township**

Vanport is the municipality immediately west of Beaver Borough. Older houses in Vanport are mostly located along the Ohio River, south of Route 68. Vanport is the home to the former Curtiss-Wright plant, which manufactured propellers for military aircraft during World War Two. (The Beaver Area Heritage Museum has a model propeller produced at the Vanport plant for naval aviation.). Vanport is also home to the Van Buren Homes and Tamaqui Village, multi-family defense housing built during the Second World War for workers at the Curtiss-Wright plant. The municipal comprehensive plan (Baker, 1970) was approved in 1970 and does not appear to have been revised since that time. The comprehensive plan has no section on historic preservation. Vanport has no preservation ordinance, and its subdivision and land development ordinance makes no provision for preservation of historic resources.

#### **Bridgewater Borough**

Bridgewater is located immediately east of Beaver. Older houses in Bridgewater are mainly located along the Beaver River, east of Route 51. The majority of these older resources are located within the Bridgewater Historic District, which was listed in the National Register in 1996. Occupying a major portion of the Borough along the Beaver River, the district includes mainly residential resources constructed between 1818 and 1933 (the historic district's period of significance) and is significant for its role in transportation and architecture. Bridgewater's municipal comprehensive plan includes a preservation section that discusses the historic district (Mullin & Lonergan 1998: V-17ff). Most historic resources located inside the historic district date to the nineteenth century. The comprehensive plan

offered two preservation initiatives for Bridgewater to pursue: establishing an overlay zoning district for the historic district and creating design guidelines for the district (Mullin & Loneragan 1998: V-18). As of 2018, the Borough has not approved either measure. Bridgewater has no historic resource protection ordinance.

### **Brighton Township**

Brighton is located north of Beaver Borough. It is mainly rural, but more developed in the southern portion near the communities of Vanport, Beaver and Bridgewater. The municipal comprehensive plan includes a preservation section outlining three preservation strategies (Trant 2007: 23). The plan includes one “High Priority” strategy, which is to produce a brochure showing important historic resources along with natural and recreational facilities. Two “Medium Priority” strategies include producing a historic resource inventory and a historic preservation plan for the township. Brighton has no preservation ordinance, but its zoning ordinance includes a list of township goals that includes: “to preserve and enhance the natural, scenic, and historic areas of the community” (Brighton Township Zoning Ordinance §195-6-A5). The township’s subdivision and land development ordinance makes no provision for the protection of historic resources.

### **Potter Township**

Potter is the municipality south of Beaver Borough, on the south side of the Ohio River west of Center Township. Potter Township is the actual location of the Shell Appalachia ethane cracker plant, under construction as of this writing. The township does not have a comprehensive plan specific to the township, but is included in the multi-municipal plan adopted in 2005 with Greene, Raccoon, and Independence Townships. The plan identified four historic resources in Potter Township. Its Action Plan summed up its preservation strategies as strengthening and supporting existing preservation efforts, encouraging listings on the National Register, and linking historic sites to trail networks (Pashek 2005: 45-46, 161-162). Potter has no preservation ordinance, although its zoning ordinance prohibits the installation of tower-based wireless communication facilities, “...on a building or structure that is listed in either the National or Pennsylvania Register of Historic Places or is identified as an historic structure or has been designated as being of historic significance. (Ordinance §210.34). The Potter Township subdivision and land development ordinance makes no provision for the protection of historic resources.

### **Center Township**

Center Township is located on the south side of the Ohio River, mainly southwest of Beaver. The municipal comprehensive plan approved in 1993 has a brief section on historic preservation. It states that in 1975, in preparation for the Bicentennial, 11 historic buildings, sites, and roads were identified in the township. The comprehensive plan recommended that these sites be re-evaluated by a historic preservation task force, possibly in connection with the expansion of township parks (Sarraf 1993: 25). Center Township has no preservation ordinance, and its zoning ordinance includes just two provisions relating to historic resources: one stating that historic plaques identifying historic buildings are exempt from the sign ordinance, and one regulating the extraction of mineral rights on properties with historic resources (Center Township Zoning Ordinance 2012).

### **Monaca Borough**

Monaca Borough is located on the south side of the Ohio River and mainly southeast of Beaver. The Borough's 1992 Comprehensive Plan (Mullin & Longeran 1992: VII-1) discussed the benefits of historic preservation, among other things, but included just one recommendation, which is to promote the preservation of locally significant landmarks. Its main commercial thoroughfare, Pennsylvania Avenue, was found not eligible for the National Register by the PA SHPO. Monaca Borough has no preservation ordinance.



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# Appendix

**Appendix A. Beaver Historic District Ordinance**

**Appendix B. Potential Funding Sources**

**Appendix C. Legal Basis for Historic Preservation**

**Appendix D. Public Survey Results**

**Appendix E. HARB / Steering Committee Survey / Borough Staff Results**

## **Appendix A: Borough of Beaver Historic District Ordinance (Chapter 11. Historic Preservation)**

## Appendix B: Potential Funding Sources

The funding and incentive programs illustrated below specifically address preservation programming. Funding from other sources—such as Community Development Block Grant funding—may be available for use for preservation-related projects. Please note: website information is accurate as of this writing. This list should only be considered a snapshot of known, existing sources.

### A1 PA SHPO

#### **Certified Local Government Grant (CLG) Program**

The CLG program is a Federal program administered by the PA SHPO. The program provides technical assistance and funding exclusive to municipalities enrolled in the program. The program may fund a wide variety of preservation programming, but not brick and mortar (construction) projects. In Pennsylvania, the CLG program is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO). To receive certification, local governments agree to expand their preservation programming by enacting historic preservation ordinance and/or zoning (Beaver already has this in place), and by commenting on National Register of Historic Places nominations within their jurisdiction. CLGs also agree to provide a brief annual report on the municipalities' preservation activities, provide training for local preservation review boards, and/or commissions, and undertake or update historic resource surveys (Beaver's was recently completed and thus may not need updating.).

<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Community-Preservation/Pages/Certified-Local-Government.aspx>

#### **State and Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits (RITC)**

These tax credits are available to income producing properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places that are substantially rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The PASHPO manages both a federal and state RITC.

<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/default.aspx>

#### **Keystone Historic Preservation Grants**

PASHPO administers two preservation grant programs available to local units of government or qualified non-profit entities.



Keystone Historic Preservation Project Grants can fund a variety of preservation “planning” projects including historic buildings surveys, National Register nominations, planning documents, design guidelines, archeology and market and feasibility studies.

**Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grants can help fund construction projects on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Place.**

<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/Grants-Funding/Pages/default.aspx>

## **A2 Preservation Pennsylvania**

**Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania**--the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania has been used to acquire and resell threatened historic properties to buyers who are willing to restore and maintain them, and to make low interest loans directly to organizations and government agencies for the restoration or rehabilitation of specific historic properties.

<http://www.preservationpa.org/page.asp?id=7>

## **A3 Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area**

ROS maintains a mini-grant program designed to fund projects that sustain Rivers of Steel’s sense of place through heritage preservation, interpretation, cultural, and recreational assets of the region.

[www.riversofsteel.com](http://www.riversofsteel.com).

## **A4 National Trust for Historic Preservation —www.savingplaces.org**

**National Trust Preservation Fund**--This program, provides matching funds up to \$5,000 for preservation planning and educational projects.

**Preservation Revolving Fund**--This fund provides financial and technical resources to organizations that use historic preservation to support the revitalization of underserved and distressed communities.

## **A5 Private Funding Sources**

Private or foundation funding sources may be available depending on the specific project and grant making mission. Consult local or regional grant making organizations. Grant opportunities vary by organization, intent and availability.

## Appendix C: Legal Basis for Historic Preservation

### A1 Overview

Multiple pieces of legislation – federal, state and local – passed in the twentieth century created complementary ways of preserving the historic resources. The following are important pieces of legislation impacting Beaver:

#### A1A National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

Nationally, the central piece of legislation is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, which created standards for recognition of historic places and restrictions on the use of federal undertakings that might adversely impact historic places of historic significance.

#### A1B Pennsylvania Historic District Act, 1961

Pennsylvania preceded the National Historic Preservation Act by passing its own preservation act in 1961. Act 167 of 1961, the Pennsylvania Historic District Act (HDA) was written and championed by Western Pennsylvania legislators. The Act provides enabling legislation for municipalities to manage their historic areas. Beaver’s historic preservation ordinance was enabled by the HDA and dozens of communities across the Commonwealth have such local ordinances.

#### A1C The Pennsylvania Constitution

The Pennsylvania Constitution, ratified in 1971, states at Article 1, section 27: “The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.

#### A1D The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), as amended *requires* municipalities to protect historic resources. Section 603(g)(2) says: “...*zoning ordinances shall provide for protection of natural and historic features and resources...*”(emphasis added). The MPC also enables municipalities to establish conservation districts. Conservation districts provide an innovative means of managing change in historic areas.

