

Visioning Rural Pennsylvania Intergenerational Living: The Ridgway and Freeport Pilot Projects

Meet the Presenters







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We believe that all people should have access to science-based education.



Who We Are

The Penn State Extension team consists of a collection of educators, associates, and faculty that come together when their expertise is needed. Since team members live and work alongside you, they have a vested interest in ensuring our products and services better their communities.







Penn State Extension Program Units





Why go "intergenerational"?

The "Added Value" argument:

- Intergenerational strategies have distinct value for addressing certain persistent problems by --
- Promoting health & wellness (healthier lifestyles)
- Reducing social isolation and loneliness
- Supporting families in challenging circumstances
- Enriching education/lifelong learning
- Passing on cultural values and heritage
- Promoting climate awareness and action
- Community renewal and revitalization:
 - Generating new ideas and efforts to address rural depopulation trends and issues?

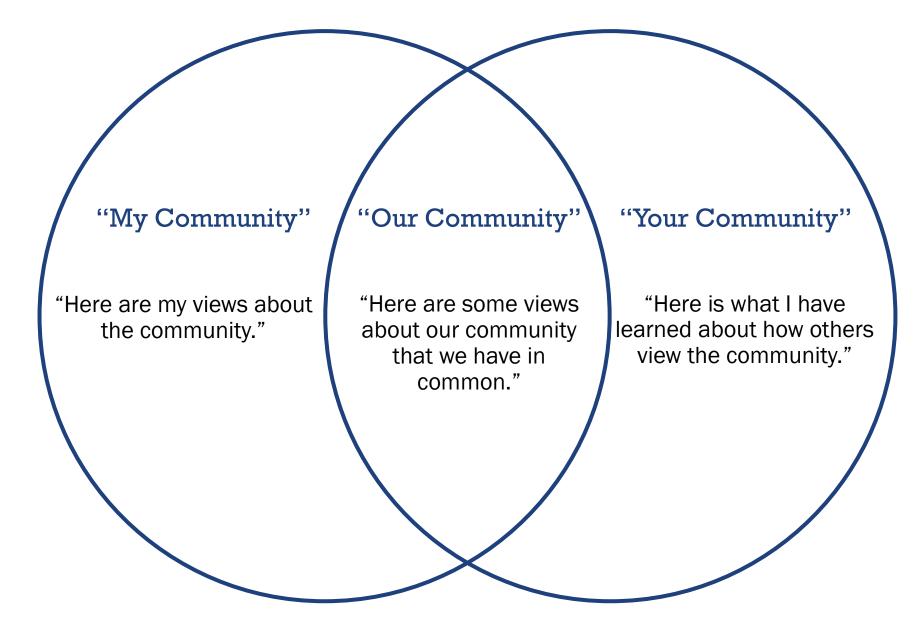
More on the Why Intergenerational ...

Age is a dimension of diversity

• Harness age diversity as a resource for solving problems, even tough problems like trying to address challenges related to rural depopulation trends.

Each generation has something of value to contribute to the planning process

- For example, older generations can contribute a historical perspective of the community borne from personal experience. They could remind other residents and professional planners about some of the community sites and facilities that have been cherished as valuable anchors for community pride and identity. Such a historical perspective can provide useful insights in planning for the future of the community.
- Youth provide aspirations and inspiration for the future and often have proficiency with current technologies
- Widen the pool of civically-engaged residents (across generations)
- An intergenerational framework for local planning and development helps ensure that community residents of all ages can share their views, experiences, and hopes for the community and be a part of the planning process -- and discover common values and interests.



"Here are my perceptions of the community." \rightarrow "Here are other residents' perceptions." \rightarrow "What are the similarities and differences between our perceptions?" \rightarrow "What could we work on together?" \rightarrow "Let's get started."

Mono-generational

VS

Multi-generational

VS

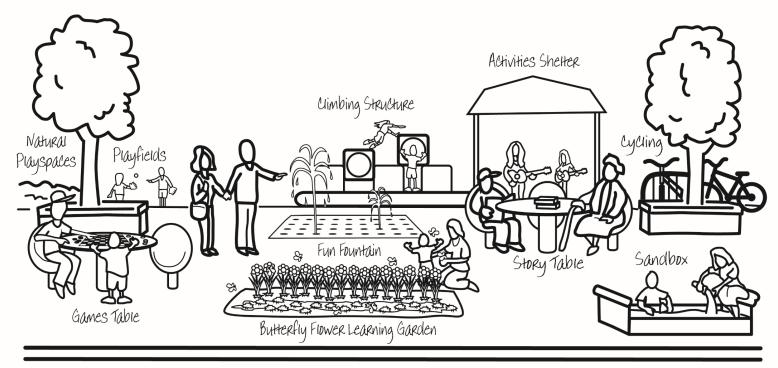
Intergenerational settings



"**Intergeneration** Illustration

Count the ICZs ("intergenerational activity hubs")

A park designed as an intergenerational setting



- Programs and Partners
- Policy
- Place
- Process
- Partnerships
- Values ... and how they might be aligned for each intergenerational activity hub.

Source: Thomas Laird



Promote local awareness and increased understanding of rural depopulation trends and how they impact local quality of life.

Engage residents (especially children, youth, and older adults) in IG community visioning activities focused on ways to address rural depopulation trends and related challenges.

Work with IG groups of residents, local planners, and stakeholders to generate ideas for promoting in-migration and reducing out-migration, prioritized based on level of local interest, access to resources, and availability of "champions" to coordinate working teams for organizing and executing community planning and intervention strategies.

Preliminary plans for this intergenerational community visioning project included engaging 2-3 PA rural communities in 2024

Community Selection Criteria (a pre-project step)

- Is the community experiencing a distinct rural de-population trend over the past few decades?
- Are there key administrator(s)/leaders/stakeholders that "buy into" the project goals & methods prssent?
- Does the community have resources/assets deemed as "leverageable"?
 - Natural (environmental) resources
 - Public spaces that can function as intergenerational gathering hubs
 - Educational/school infrastructure that prioritizes school-community connections
 - Cultural assets
 - Other assets



Phase One:

Strategic Partnering

Phase Two:

Data Collection

& Review

Phase Three:

Community Visioning

Phase Four:

Establish Project
Sustainability

Project Phase	Key action components	Intergenerational Freeport, PA	Intergenerational Ridgway, PA
Phase 1: Strategic Partnering; public education meetings	Build "invitation list" - Expand leadership team, collaborating orgs & agencies, recruit project participants	Outreach education (IG programs)/ networking in – early Jan. 2024	Outreach education (IG programs)/ networking – early Jan. 2024
	Plan community education events - for local organization/groups: IG programs/ practices; local program opportunities	Wed., Feb 7 at 6:00-7:30 p.m.	Jan. 29 at 1:00-2:30 p.m.
Phase 2: Collection of relevant data and materials	Gather Census data, community plans, reports, and IG activity toolkit	Jan - Feb. 2024	Jan - Feb. 2024
Phase 3: IG community visioning- oriented activities	IG activities include site visits, interviews, land use mapping, co-design projects, IG ideas competition, & local <u>Futures</u> <u>Festivals</u>	March – June 2024	March – June 2024
Phase 4: Working to establish project sustainability	Share project outcomes w/ local stakeholders. Continue to plan, prioritize, implement local improvement activities	June/July - Sept. 2024	June/July - Sept. 2024
	Presentations (at local, statewide and regional conferences/meetings - with planners, IG specialists, educators, etc.)	July 10-12, 2024 (<u>IG Conf. in</u> Lancaster, PA)	July 10-12, 2024 (IG Conf. in Lancaster, PA)

Phase One: Strategic Partnering Finalize Leadership Team, Key Stakeholders, and IG Participants

- 1. Establish core group of collaborating organizations and agencies
- 2. Establish core group of project participants across generations

Phase Two: Data Collection & Review Collection and review of relevant community data and materials

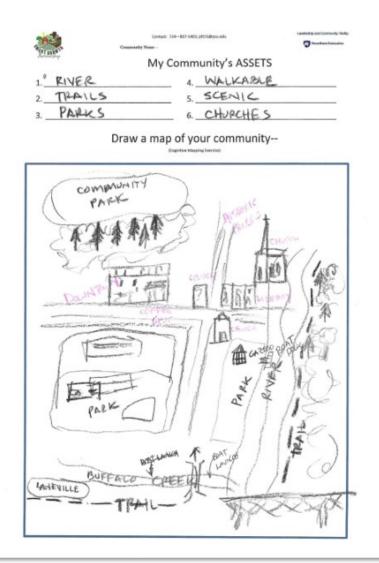
Data sources and materials include, but are not limited to:

- Census reports and data
- Official reports, such as community plans, procedures, etc.
- Presentations that highlight local and regional rural depopulation trends and related challenges
- Qualitative local data such as community asset mapping
- Community member surveys

Intergenerational Freeport

Community Asset Map Exercise Summary

February 7, 2024 (asset brainstorming session)



Waterways (Docking and Launching) – Allegheny River, Buffalo Creek, Kiski River Greenspaces – Riverside Park, Freeport Community Park, James E. Swartz

Memorial Field, 2nd Street Extension Park

Community Members

Community Leaders/Borough Council

Community Engagement

Local History - Canal, Railroad

Location

Walkability

Safety

Scenery

Accessibility to Highways/Pittsburgh

Central Business District - Retail Shops, Restaurants

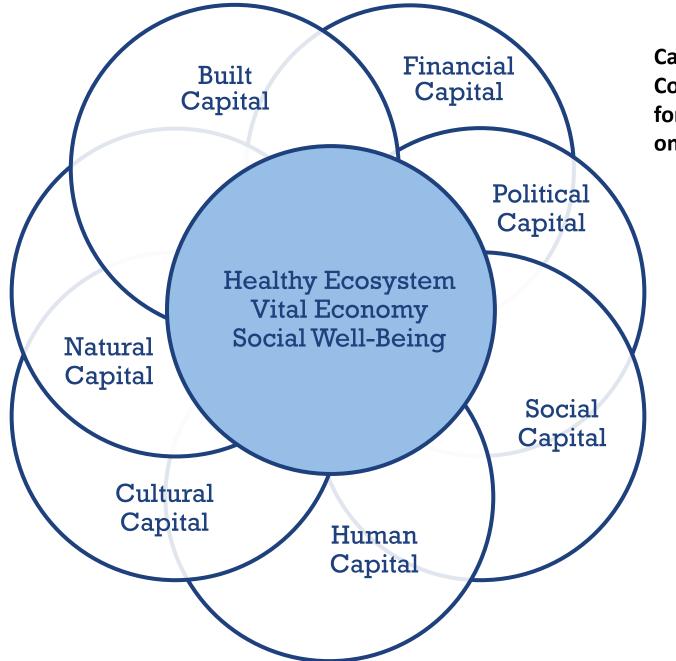
Rail Trail System

Churches

Non-Profit Organizations – Freeport Renaissance Association, Armstrong County Arts Council, Kiwanis, Masons, Freeport Theatre Festival, Freeport Area Library Association, etc.

Freeport Area School District/School Board





Categorizing the
Community Assets
for best return
on community investment

Natural Capital

This includes a community's environment, rivers, lakes, forests, wildlife, soil, weather, and natural beauty.

Cultural Capital

This includes ethnic festivals, multi-lingual population, traditions, heritage, or a strong work ethic. Cultural capital influences what voices are heard and listened to, which voices have influence in what areas, and how creativity, innovation, and influence emerge and are nurtured.

Human Capital

This includes the skills and abilities of residents as well as the capacity to access outside resources and knowledge in order to increase understanding and to identify promising practices (education, health, skills, and youth). Human capital also addresses leadership's ability to "lead across differences," to focus on assets, to be inclusive and participatory, and to be proactive in shaping the future of the community or group.

Social Capital

This reflects the connections among people and organizations or the social glue that makes things happen. Bonding social capital refers to those close ties that build community cohesion. Bridging social capital involves weak ties that create and maintain bridges among organizations and communities.

Political Capital

This is the ability to influence standards, rules, regulations and their enforcement. It reflects access to power and power brokers, including government officials and leverage with a regional company.

Financial Capital

This includes the financial resources available to invest in community capacity building, underwrite businesses' development, support civic and social entrepreneurship, and accumulate wealth for future community development.

Built Capital

This is the infrastructure that supports the community, including telecommunications, industrial parks, main streets, water and sewer systems, roads, etc. Built capital is often a focus of community development efforts.



Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Prompts used to facilitate **PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION** with age-diverse groups of local residents to draw attention to rural depopulation trends and issues:

- Are any of the following issues of concern in your community (communities):
 - Finding ways to recruit new residents?
 - Finding ways to **keep young families** in your community?
 - Finding ways to **boost entrepreneurial opportunities** for new graduates?
 - Finding ways to boost civic and economic vitality
 - Finding ways to revitalize public spaces and facilities
- What assets does your community have that might help address rural depopulation?
 - Unique or special places (natural or built environment), institutions (such as schools and social service agencies), organizations, programs, festivals, traditions - that might attract new residents?
 - Tourist attractions
- What ideas do you have to address rural depopulation trends and issues?



Methods to Stimulate Communication

- Share perspectives about community past, present, and future through:
 - Land-use mapping activities
 - Site visits, including "walk-about-talk-about" excursions
 - Cross-generational interviewing and activities
- Points of emphasis:
 - Look at places undergoing change and transition
 - Access the lived experience of all generations
 - Assess similarities and differences in generational perspectives of current community life and visions for the future



Method: Generate Ideas for Intervention

- Brainstorm ideas for promoting in-migration and reducing out-migration. Place emphasis on ways to:
 - preserve and promote local cultural heritage stimulate entrepreneurial activity through tourism promotion and by supporting new and existing local business
 - create and/or restore indoor and outdoor IG
 gathering hubs for recreation, co-learning, and
 community service
 - deepen school-community partnerships

- Prioritize ideas based on:
 - level of local interest
 - access to resources
 - availability of "champions" to coordinate working teams that organize and execute community planning and intervention strategies

Phase Four: Establish Project Sustainability

- Share intergenerational community visioning and placemaking ideas and outcomes with broader community.
- 2. Work with local planning professionals and other stakeholders to jointly develop a shared vision, plans and strategies for community revitalization and renewal, with special emphasis placed on ways to boost in-migration and delimit out-migration patterns.

We continued to ask:

What are your intergenerational project ideas for...

- Preserving and promoting local cultural heritage?
 - Values, traditions, art forms, events, etc.
- Stimulating entrepreneurial activity?
 - Through tourism: eco-, cultural-, and IG- tourism
 - Support for local businesses:
 - Using new technologies and methods to expand, improve or diversify product lines
- Creating new IG settings?
 - Cultural and arts amenities
 - recreational sites
 - IG gathering hubs
- Deepening school-community partnerships?

Intergenerational Living in Ridgway







Ridgway Community Partners:



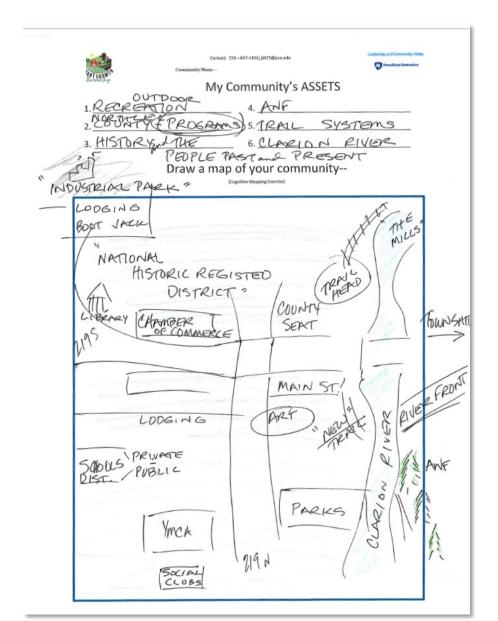
- Ridgway Borough
- Senior Junction
- Ridgway YMCA
- Penn State Extension-FFC Unit
- Ridgway Public Library
- Elk/Cameron 4H Teen Leadership Council
- PA Wilds
- Ridgway Parks Program
- Elk County Community Education Council
- Ridgway Area Middle/High School
- Chamber of Commerce
- Ridgway Library
- Elk County Council of the Arts



Intergenerational Ridgway

Community Asset Map Exercise Summary

January 29, 2024 (asset brainstorming session)



Outdoor Recreation Spaces

Allegheny National Forest

People- Past and Present

County Programs

Trail Systems

Industrial Park

YMCA

Chamber of Commerce

Art Council

Parks

School-Public and Private

Riverfront - Clarion River

Social Clubs- Give back to the community

County Seat

The Ridgway Mills Area

Library

Lodging





eron Counties visited the Senior Junction in Ridgway on Tuesday to mentor participants on the use of their mobile devices. Grace Bon started off the workshop with a presentation on "The Basics of Phone and Tablet Use" to introduce partici-pants to the variety of things that they can do with their devices. Following the presentation, a group of 8 lo-cal teens worked oneon-one with workshop participants on their individual devices. Along with Bon, this group included Marcus Aielle, Liam Macer, Brennan Rupprecht, Drew Thomas, Hailee McDermott, and Garrett Balon. The teens helped with understanding and changing settings, using cameras, searching for apps,

Members of the 4-H

Teen Leadership Council of Elk and Cam-



Photos submitted

cjb7092@psu.edu. project known as Intergenerational Ridg-Teaching way. This is one of two pilot projects established by Penn State University (Extension educators and faculty). It brings together Ridgway community leaders, planners, and other professionals and stakeholders to develop and pilot a set of intergenerational strategies that can help address in meaningful experichallenges related to

This series of Teens Technology Workshops is one program that the 4-H Teen Leadership Council is bringing to the community. The Teen Council creates oppor-tunities for local teenagers to become active members of their community, build skills in leadership and citizenship, and participate

4-H Teens **Empowering** Technology for Adults





Master Site Plan: 28 acres along Clarion River

THE HEART OF ELK COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

\$1.00

Master site plan meeting held for riverfront project

By Jake Mercer Staff Writer

RIDGWAY - On Wednesday, the Ridg-way Community funneled into the West End Fire Hall for the Herbert, Rowland & Grubic (HRG) master site plan meeting on Wednesday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30

The Ridgway River-front Master Site Plan aims to develop more public recreational spaces and improve bublic access to the Clarion River. HRG Master Site

Plan Consultants Nichle Mendinsky and Jen-Ryan-Gisewhite vere present to share ix different design oncepts that HRG has leveloped for the Ridg-vay Riverfront Master lite Plan.

Mendinsky wanted ttendees to know that hese concepts are only otential options at this tage for what is to be She then complenented the attendance



Attendees at the HRG master site plan meeting pick out concepts they like from the printed

maps placed on the tables.

stages of this process. Mendinsky then pre-sented six different concepts of the design, and all concepts had the same components, they were just arraigned differently.

All six concepts included camping, tage for what is to be one with the property t the Ridgway Mills. This property is a cen-space, as well as active ral focus of this project. program and parking areas.

t the meeting and was cluded all existing pose built buildings, sterested in base level buildings at the Ridg- green space to add rec-

way Mills property, reational features, and while some did not.

HRG Consultant Jennie-Ryan Geiswhite then presented more details within the six concepts, as features varied for each

These details included a pump track, walkways that have a viewing platform of the Clarion River, wetland areas, a playground area around the silo at the property, parking Some concepts in- for RV's, adding pur-

Mendinsky emphasized that these concepts are ideas of what the Ridgway Mills property could be.

"These are just sample reference images just to give you an idea of what it could be." Mendinsky said. "Do not get too caught up on it because we do not know what the style of anything is going to look like at this point."

See Site Plan on Page 3

- Camping
- Water Access
- Passive Recreation Areas
- Event Space
- Active Program Space
- Parking Areas













Saint Leo's Fishing Derby

Ridgway Chainsaw Rendezvous

Collaborated with HRG Consultants: Surveyed residents and visitors on Intergenerational Activities they would like in the community.

IG Survey Results Data Collection

Visitors to Ridgway (N=26)		
Type of Activity	Visitors	Percentage
Kayaking/Canoeing	21	80.77%
Fishing	20	76.92%
Hiking	16	61.54%
Attend a Community Event	12	46.15%
Outdoor Theater/Performing Arts	12	46.15%
Walking/Jogging	11	42.31%
Sports Events	8	30.77%
Use Playground for all ages/abilities	8	30.77%
Cycling for all ages/abilities	8	30.77%
Nature Camps/Environmental Activities	8	30.77%
Nature Photography	7	26.92%
Bird Watching	6	23.08%
Group/Family Games	5	19.23%
Story Time/Story Book Trail	5	19.23%
Landscape Painting	4	15.38%
Spaces for Reflection/Contemplation	4	15.38%
Geocaching	4	15.38%
Community Gardening for all ages/abilities	3	11.54%
Volunteering/Community Service Projects	3	11.54%

Residents of Ridgway (N=12)		
Type of Activity	Residents	Percentage
Fishing	9	75.00%
Attend a Community Event	9	75.00%
Hiking	8	66.67%
Sports Events	8	66.67%
Use Playground for all ages/abilities	8	66.67%
Cycling for all ages/abilities	7	58.33%
Group/Family Games	7	58.33%
Kayaking/Canoeing	6	50.00%
Outdoor Theater/Performing Arts	6	50.00%
Landscape Painting	5	41.67%
Story Time/Story Book Trail	5	41.67%
Nature Camps/Environmental Activities	5	41.67%
Walking/Jogging	5	41.67%
Bird Watching	4	33.33%
Nature Photography	4	33.33%
Outdoor Exercise	4	33.33%
Volunteering/Community Service Projects	4	33.33%
Geocaching	3	25.00%
Community Gardening for all ages/abilities	3	25.00%
Spaces for Reflection/Contemplation	3	25.00%



COMPARISON OF VISITORS' AND RESIDENTS' RESPONSES TO IG QUESTION

"If available, what types of the following activities would you take part in with members of your family, friends, and other community members of all ages? Please check all that you feel would be of interest to residents and visitors."

Type of Activity	Visitors (N=26)	Percentage	Residents (N=12)	Percentage
Kayaking/ Canoeing	21	<mark>81%</mark>	6	<mark>50%</mark>
Fishing	20	77%	9	75%
Hiking	16	62%	8	67%
Attend a Community Event	12	<mark>46%</mark>	9	<mark>75%</mark>
Outdoor Theater/ Performing Arts	12	46%	6	50%
Walking/ Jogging	11	42%	5	42%
Outdoor Exercise	10	38%	4	33%
Sports Events	8	<mark>31%</mark>	8	<mark>67%</mark>
Playground (all ages)	8	31%	8	<mark>67%</mark>
Cycling (all ages/abilities)	8	31%	7	<mark>58%</mark>
Nature Camps/ Envir. activities	8	23%	5	<mark>42%</mark>
Nature Photography	7	27%	4	33%
Bird watching	6	33%	4	33%
Group/ Family Games	5	<mark>19%</mark>	7	<mark>58%</mark>
Story Time/ Story Book Trail	5	<mark>19%</mark>	5	<mark>42%</mark>
Landscape Painting	4	<mark>15%</mark>	5	<mark>42%</mark>
Spaces for Reflection/ Contemplation	4	15%	3	25%
Geocaching	4	15%	3	25%
Community gardening	3	12%	3	25%
Volunteering/ Community Service projects	3	<mark>12%</mark>	4	<mark>33%</mark>

Ridgway's Bicentennial Parade Float "Intergenerational Living in Ridgway"









Parade Picture Collage





















Intergenerational Freeport















Intergenerational Community Visioning Activity – Focus is on 3 Priority Areas –

(selected by IG Freeport project participants)

May and June 2024

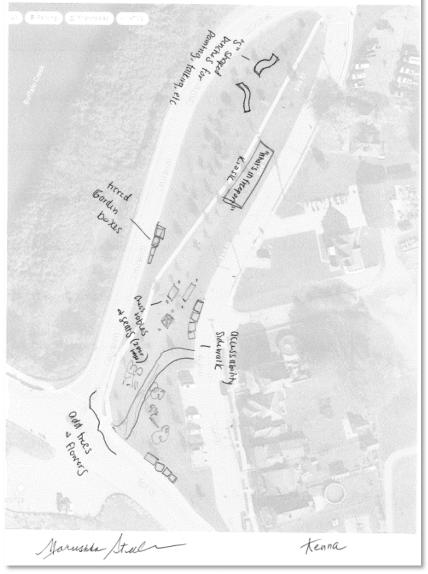
- John Turack & Matt Kaplan engaged agediverse groups of IG Freeport project participants with the support of local leaders in visioning sessions aimed at generating ideas to enhance and promote alternative uses in select community sites:
 - the 2nd St. Extension Park,
 - Swartz Memorial Field
 - the Trail/Public Art Collaboration
- This aerial shows three of the priority areas we have been discussing. The May 2024 meeting focused on the 2nd Street Park and its potential for a dog park.



Community Visioning Exercises

If available, what types of activities would you take part in with members of Intergenerational Freeport your family, friends, and with other community members or visitors? Circle all that apply. Landscape Painting 30 Nature Camps/Environmental Activities Nature Photography (**) Geocaching 4 Bird Watching 🥞 Outdoor Theater/Performing Arts Outdoor Exercise 6 **Community Gardening for All Ages** Kayaking/Canoeing (Sports Events (Volunteering/ Community Service Projects Spaces for Reflection/Contemplation Walking/Jogging 9 Hiking (Use a Plaground for all Ages and Abilities (^) Cycling for all ages/abilities (Attend a Community Event Other Story Time/Storybook Trail Group/Family Games **Fishing** I am a Community Visitor I am a Resident

Second Street Park Area





Intergenerational Freeport Video

https://youtu.be/BWhY2SoAi6E





In Summary, Penn State Extension's role thus far has been to -

- Convene partners, stakeholders, shareholders, and leaders
- Attempt to identify overall process and project leaders
- Provide Intergenerational Living concepts education
- Help everyone better understand their community by looking at objective data
- Help everyone identify the communities' key assets
- Help everyone think of the assets as community ingredients to be invested into improvement or enhancement of their <u>Community Capitals</u>
 - to align with the <u>5 P's of Intergenerational Living</u>
- Conduct group exercises to identify priorities and realistic community projects or programs to occur in various community locations
- We have been co-creating knowledge

Now comes the hard part – Identifying who will be doing what to make or help to make the projects or programs become reality.



Successes:

- Stakeholder engagement from across sectors
 - We collaborated with a diverse range of partners, including human service agencies, schools, borough managers, community and economic planners, and residents.
- Community members are eager to learn more about Intergenerational living and are looking for ways to actively engage.
- Future events are being planned: i.e. Intergenerational Olympics, more tech programs, involving youth in design concepts for community planning projects.



Some challenges

- We stumbled a bit in transitioning between project phases:
 - From "Brainstorming" possibilities for IG projects (programs & places) that have a bearing on local quality of life (esp., enhancing in-migration & reducing out-migration)
 - To full group review of the IG intervention possibilities generated
 - To prioritizing several IG projects, each of initiatives entails IG community visioning-type activities.
 - To identifying co-leaders ("champions") to help organize and drive progress with the selected projects.
 - To **finding resources** (financial, human, organizational and material) to build capacity to sustain and grow identified pilot projects.
- Finding Common Ground (upon which to base recommendations for community revitalization)
 - We took "baby steps", but still, made some progress...
 - We re-learned that *Every community is unique*.



Limitations to our project model:

- Every community is unique ...
- Process is more readily suited for making smaller, incremental changes to specific sites in participating communities.
- Process is not for addressing macro-level challenges, such as
 - o transportation infrastructure.
 - municipal structure



Lessons learned

- Each community seems to have its own "lock and key" with regard to best way(s) to stimulate interest, input, and active participation and co-leadership in local projects.
- Explicit, overarching emphasis (early on) on identifying and framing ways to address "rural depopulation" was not as compelling as an articulated focus on ways to "enrich" community "quality of life.
 - Accordingly, we modified our language, as reflected in the project titles: "IG Ridgway" and "IG Freeport".
 - Certainly, we will also work on tweaking the model to delimit bumps encountered in going from open discussion – to (project and team) planning – to action (IG activities and place design & improvement).
- Lessons learned about process
 - Can't do it alone Need help (maybe "true partners") for countering the naysayers for gaining traction for supporting good ideas, and for finding and taking advantage of potential synergies with others' entrepreneurial ideas and initiatives that might also serve to bring more businesses and tourists to town.
- Lessons learned about the project model and structure:
 - o The phases are not always sequential. Need to be flexible according to the realization that --
 - ...Every community is unique.





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Questions?



Thank you.



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