

LIGONIER VALLEY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Focus Group Summary – Business/Economic
January 17, 2017 – 6:00 PM

A total of twelve (12) persons attended the session facilitated by Rick Truscello (EADS). Suggested topics as per input received from field work, the prior workshop and the community survey included the following, but these were noted for guidance only:

- Quality of Life as economic incentive
- Building on positive image
- Training and associated issues
- Defining appropriate development
- Growth areas
- Entrepreneurial development
- Home-based/cottage business development
- Winter sports expansion
- Destination recreational opportunities
- Telecommunications infrastructure

After a brief introduction on the process and the purpose of this session, input on issues and recommendations were welcomed.

US Route 30 Corridor

- Target Area - Timberlink Golf Course Reuse:
 - 170 acres available
 - Idlewild ownership
 - Resort/Water Park
 - Summer Amusement Park/Winter Ski tie-in - Can lengthen tourism season
- Build on Route 30 Heritage Corridor concept.
- Verizon fiber is reportedly available along Route 30 as part of infrastructure for development requiring it.

Education focus – Environmental and Other issues

- Agricultural diversification – potential partnering with PSU
- Conservation
- Applied Technical training – potential partnering with CMU
- Artisans
- Filling technical training gaps not offered in Latrobe
 - Closer coordination between schools and businesses is needed to address talent retention and meeting real-world business needs

Tourism expansion

- Timberlink reuse (noted above)
- Laurel Highlands Trout Trail – economic impacts study to be carried out documenting spending and other economic impacts.
- Recognition of importance of Idlewild Park as part of the tourism/entertainment segment of the economy, and as complementary to nature-tourism resources.

- Enhancements are suggested on the Laurel Ridge Cross-Country Skiing Trail to complement recent reopening of Downhill Slopes.

Infrastructure Issues to be Resolved

- Sanitary sewer expansion in Oak Grove area to reinforce Rt. 711/271 Corridor as a developmental target area.
- Addressing telecommunication/Internet gaps affecting home business opportunities
 - Continued study of municipal broadband was noted as a need.

“Appropriate Development” should be addressed and defined in the Plan

- Recommendations on revised zoning and subdivision/land development regulations should flow from the Plan;
- Signage regulations in the Township zoning regulations should be revisited, compatible with character of the area, the Heritage Corridor and the Scenic Byway;
- The Conservation Subdivision approach should be considered in changes to the respective subdivision/land development regulations; and
- Gas drilling presents issues in relation to the retention and conservation of area assets.

Economic Development in General

- Youth retention focus is critical
 - Establish the infrastructure necessary to attract tech-savvy youth
 - Use the quality of life and nature experiences as an attraction;
- Maintain the quality of life to retain and attract the 55+ demographic as well;
- Consider the development of a “maker’s space” in coordination with educational and developmental entities;
- Maintain a locally-based developmentally-oriented dialogue focused on appropriate development as a follow-up to this Plan;
- Have a local presence with county economic development agencies; and
- Consider the “Country Market” as a business model focusing on local goods.