

Borough of Bell Acres Implementable Comprehensive Plan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Funding and Collaboration

Work on this Implementable Comprehensive Plan was funded by the Borough of Bell Acres.

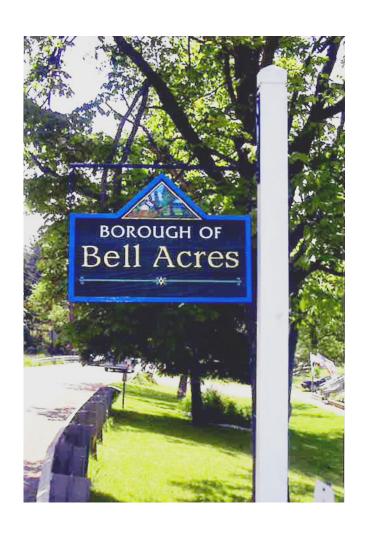
Pashek+MTR served as planning consultant for this Implementable Comprehensive Plan.



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The Council of Bell Acres Borough adopted this comprehensive plan on July 12, 2021, via Resolution 07122021A. The resolution appears on Pages 82-83.





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A LOVELY PLACE TO LIVE:

Bell Acres Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Forward momentum

It is clear from this planning process that residents appreciate their community for its convenience, character and charm, but that they also embrace the idea of planning for an even better future. The Borough chose to produce an Implementable Comprehensive Plan to provide the practical steps a small community can undertake to create the changes it desires while maximizing the use of resources.

The community chose three working areas as the primary focus of the comprehensive plan. They are, in order of resident priority:

- Protecting green space and enhancing trails
- Improving Borough communications
- Addressing infrastructure needs

Work to make positive changes in these categories is already under way.

The planning process

In July 2016, Bell Acres' Planning Commission invited Kay Pierce, manager of Allegheny County Economic Development's Planning Division, to talk about Implementable Comprehensive Plans. After further research on this new way of looking at planning, the Borough invited Jim Pashek from the local planning firm Pashek+MTR in December 2016 to discuss how an Implementable approach would work for Bell Acres.

The Implementable Comprehensive Planning process involves, at first, public engagement where community issues are identified. From that "listening" phase, the Planning Commission along with the consultant identifies what issues the plan should focus on and, for multiple issues, which should have priority. Then, in the second phase of work, a series of tasks is undertaken, including research on the issues and the development of very specific strategies to address these issues. The plan provides step-by step guides to implementing the strategies.

Bell Acres began to develop an comprehensive plan in 2017 by undertaking community outreach to learn what residents see as priorities. The goal of this outreach process was to identify problems that need to be addressed to make Bell Acres an even better place to live than it is today, and to be prepared for potential problems in the future. The Planning Commission lead this process.

To get started, a digital questionnaire was sent to all Borough residents that included open-ended questions as well as some to elicit deeper responses. Planning Commission members conducted interviews with Borough residents, staff, and other key community stakeholders. As the final step of the public engagement process, a well-attended community meeting was held to again seek resident input regarding key issues and priorities. The following pages detail the public input phase of this comprehensive plan.

Pre-planning work

The Implementable Comprehensive Planning process begins with public engagement opportunities at which community issues are identified. For Bell Acres, the Planning Commission sought input from residents through a variety of sources, including Planning Commission discussion, interviews of residents, a community-wide questionnaire, and a public meeting.

To begin, the Planning Commission members listed their opinions about needs in the community. This helps the Commission and consultant understand how to interpret input from the public that is sought later:

- Conservation easements
- Strong oil and gas ordinances
- Flooding on Turkey Foot and Sevin Road
- Connectivity of green space land
- Provide low impact park development (trails)

- Improve stormwater management ordinance
- Don't improve the Borough, keep it just the way it is
- Change ordinances to protect environmentally sensitive areas

Phase I: Listening to the community

Public meeting

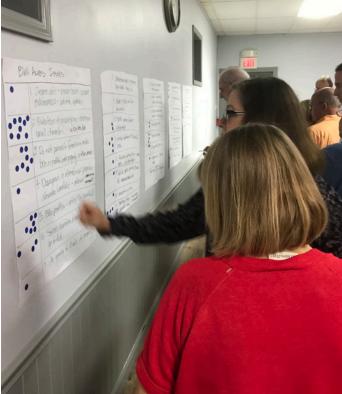
From the Public Meeting on September 12, 2018, the top six issues are listed here. (More detail is provided in the appendix.)

ISSUE	Votes
Protection of green space and rural character	24
Hawthorn Acres - raw sewage issues	21
No fracking	19
Dedicated funding for parks	11
Bike paths	10
Proper funding for police and fire	10



The 2018 Bell Acres community meeting where residents provided input on priorities for making changes in the community.





Community questionnaire

The questionnaire was available from Jan. 15 to April 9, 2018. Postcard announcements were mailed to all residents providing the survey link or offering to provide hard copies for those not comfortable with online questionnaires.

189 people responded, an excellent response rate in a community with 587 households (2010) and a population of 1,388 (2010). If there were one response per household, the rate of response was 32.2%. There may have been multiple responses from one residence, which would lower the percentage.

Average time to take the questionnaire was 13 minutes.

The respondents' age distribution was somewhat similar to age distribution in the Census figures from 2010.

Age Grouping	Census % (2010)	Questionnaire Respondent %
20-29	5.1%	1.6%
30-49	22.9%	30%
50-64	28%	36%
65+	18.2%	32%

Here are the main take-aways from responses. Additional detail is provided in the appendix.

Question 7 - Issues

#1-Protect historic/scenic resources and open space

#2 -Protect open space from developers

#3-Guide future development to areas of existing roads and sewers

Question 3 - Why respondents choose to live in Bell Acres

#1-Attractive rural character

#2-Safe and healthy place to raise kids

#3-School District quality

Questions related to green space as a community resource

Q9 -98% see green space as valuable

Q10 -90% support initiatives to preserve green space

Q11 -68% support funding greenways

Stakeholder interviews

Conducted by Ken Alvania

- Most were pleased with the Borough.
- Some wanted to limit future development; at least one person did not.

Conducted by Diane Abell

- Love rural, natural, peaceful feel
- Fearful of oil and gas exploration
- Appreciate Borough's efforts to protect green space
- Borough has always been there for them when they need them but otherwise leaves them alone

Conducted by Roy Kraynyk

- Need to address "eye-sore" properties
- Prohibit surface and subsurface gas exploration
- Concerned with air and water contamination as the result of fracking and pipe lines
- No new commercial development, maintain rural character
- Create land preservation policies

The Key Issues

The Planning Commission and consultant weighed all the input and identified the following themes, which are called "Key Issues." The comprehensive plan's strategies for change are devised to address these issues.

Protecting Green Space and Enhancing Trails

- Develop ways of preserving more green space and the funding mechanisms to do so
- Improve on-road bicycle trails
- Expand development and funding of parks and hiking/biking trails in parks and protected green space

Improving Borough Communications

- Raise awareness through education of what exists now
- Continue public engagement including strategies to expand the Borough website and
- Access to social media

Addressing Infrastructure Needs

- Sewage problems in Hawthorn Acres
- Flooding of Turkey Foot and Sevin Roads
- · Road resurfacing strategies

Identifying Key Issues is the concluding task of the first phase of the planning project. The second phase involves researching these issues, looking at best practices for communities similar to Bell Acres, and developing specific strategies to improve the Borough.

Phase II: Identifying solutions

During the second half of the planning project, the consultant and two community-based focus groups collaborated to fully understand the scope of the different issues, study context or data, and identify solutions.

The two focus groups were made up of volunteers recruited in 2019 through the borough website, the community questionnaire and personal contacts. The Communications Focus Group met twice in 2019, and the Green Space and Trails Focus Group had an initial in-person meeting in early 2020, followed by two smaller meetings (via remote platform) specifically about trail connections. The topic of Infrastructure did not have a focus group, but the consultant conducted field views and was assisted on several occasions by the borough's Public Works Director the borough Engineer, and the Bell Acres Municipal Authority's representatives.

Based on that background, and building on the ideas from the focus groups and borough staff and officials, the consultant identified next steps to include in the plan.

Bell Acres intended to have work on this comprehensive plan take place in 18 months, tackling one chapter or Key Issue at a time. This whole process certainly was slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic. The positive side of this is that some next steps of the "Communications" chapter, the first to be worked on, were implemented before the plan was even completed.

Matching strategies with community capacity and feasibility

Community comprehensive plans can sometimes be overwhelming in their ambition and to-do lists, particularly for small communities like Bell Acres. The Implementable Comprehensive Plan format takes community capacity into account in several ways.

First, the plan does not attempt to solve every conceivable problem or issue in the community. In Bell Acres' plan there are three Key Issues, as noted on the previous page, which the community members said were important to them and which the Planning Commission, Council and consultant agreed could realistically be addressed.

Second, the recommendations in the plan, though ambitious and rooted in best practices, take into account the small size of the Borough staff, the small population and the limited amount of funding likely to be available. The plan makes every effort to identify potential partners, funding sources and pathways for moving toward the kinds of change the community wants.

Third, the strategies are broken down into finite and specific step-by-step guides, detailing who needs to do what, in which order. The chapters on each Key Issue should serve as a workbook for how to proceed.

On Pages 13-18 are overviews of each of the Key Issues and lists of strategies for pursuing solutions. Subsequent chapters are devoted to each of the three Key Issues. These chapters provide more background and context, and detail specific action steps for each strategy.

Other important content in the comprehensive plan

The state's Municipalities Planning Code includes certain expectations for comprehensive plans, including that they will look ahead to future land use and that they include Community Development Objectives. These elements and other important topics are provided in Chapter 4 of this report, and are summarized later in this Introduction and Report Summary.

KEY ISSUE: Protecting Green Space & Enhancing Trails

The issue

Through public engagement in the comprehensive planning process, the Planning Commission identified Green Space and Trails as crucial aspects of the community's character and quality of life, specifically:

 Develop ways of preserving green space and the funding mechanism to do so

Improve on-road bicycle trails

 Expand development and funding of parks and hiking/biking trails in parks and protected green space

Background and context

Verdant forests, bubbling streams and green rolling hills are essential landscape types in Bell Acres, according to residents participating in the public process for this implementable comprehensive plan.

People consider green space to be crucial to the community's character. As a result, they would like to see existing natural areas protected as a means of retaining the rural, woodsy appearance that is prevalent in much of the Borough and for environmental conservation purposes that benefit the community in a host of ways, including improving air and water quality.

Beyond its ecological value and desirable appearance, green space contributes significantly to quality of life by serving community members' recreation

needs, with open areas frequently used by hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers. Also, protected green space enhances surrounding property values, stabilizes landslide-prone slopes and soils, and absorbs precipitation,, helping to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding.

VISION

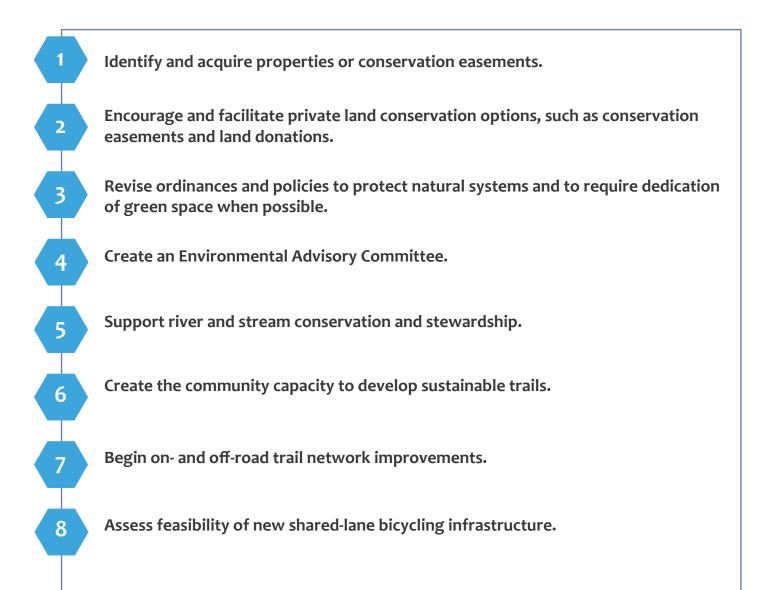
Bell Acres maintains and increases its publicly owned acreage devoted to green space as an ecological, scenic and recreation resource.

Talking points

- Questionnaire responses collected during the public input phase of this comprehensive plan listed the community's "attractive rural character" as a main reason residents like living in the Borough.
- 98 percent of respondents to the questionnaire said they believe that green spaces such as woodlands, streams and meadows are valuable and worthy of protection.
- Of those respondents, 89.6 percent said they would support initiatives regarding green space preservation. From that group in turn, 68% were willing to donate some amount of money annually for matching funds to support green space acquisition.
- In the same questionnaire, 78% of respondents said the Borough should work toward preserving additional land to connect parcels of existing green space throughout the borough and beyond.
- People attending a public meeting for the comprehensive plan listed protecting green space as their top issue.

KEY ISSUE: Protecting Green Space & Enhancing Trails

Strategies for change



VISION

Bell Acres fosters citizen

engagement through effective

residents and their local

government.

KEY ISSUE: Improving Borough Communications

The issue

Through public engagement in the comprehensive planning process, the Planning Commission identified Communications as a Key Issue, specifically:

- Raise awareness through education of what exists now
- Continue public engagement efforts, including strategies to expand the Borough website and access to information via social media.

Background and context

The convergence of some societal trends is leading many communities, including Bell Acres, to review all aspects of communication between the local government and residents.

One trend is the continuing transformation in communications as more people embrace digital and mobile platforms, leaving fewer to rely on paper or land-line forms.

Another trend is a growing expectation that information will be readily available and conveniently provided – when, where and how people want it.

Further, as the digital world becomes increasingly compelling and omnipresent, some people are reacting in the opposite direction, seeking personal engagement with people, activities and issues in their local communities.

Talking points

- Questionnaire responses collected during the public input phase of this comprehensive plan revealed that many residents were not satisfied with existing communications channels, frequency or ease of use.
- Residents, Borough staff members, elected officials and appointed officials participated in a focus group to assess existing communications and suggest changes. The group plans to continue meeting to strive for additional improvements two-way communication between over time.
 - The focus group reviewed Census data, questionnaire responses, and informal information gathered by the Borough officials through regular contact with residents to understand citizen preferences with existing or potential communications.
 - The focus group researched best practices for communities of similar size and chose ideas members considered most helpful or expeditious.
 - The group also sought to understand community capacity for additional communications efforts, both in terms of cost and staffing availability, and to make recommendations that were proportional.

KEY ISSUE: Improving Borough Communications

Strategies for change

Note that implementation for Improving Borough Communications commenced in 2020.

Create and maintain an overall plan for selecting and implementing ongoing improvements in Borough communications.

Revise the Bellacres.org website.

Employ technology to provide more information more efficiently.

Continue to provide information to those who do not use digital devices.

Encourage civic engagement and promote a sense of community through Borough communications.

VISION

Bell Acres Borough

maintains and upgrades public infrastructure through

efficient use of resources to protect

and enhance the health, wel-

fare and safety of people

and natural resources.

KEY ISSUE: Addressing Infrastructure Needs

The issue

In response to public engagement in the planning process, the Planning Commission identified Infrastructure needs concerning roads, sewers and stormwater as a Key Issue. Specifically, issues raised included:

 Flooding or landslides along Turkey Foot and Sevin roads

- Sewage problems in Hawthorne Acres
- Road resurfacing strategies.

Background and context

Wooded hills, terrain suited mainly to large-lot development, curving rural roads and pretty streams tumbling through valleys are among Bell Acres' most valued assets. They play a large role in defining the Borough's character and identity. However, these same elements also create infrastructure challenges for the Borough:

- Narrow valleys and steep hillsides contribute to flash flooding and washouts. Landslide-prone soils in the valleys create additional concerns.
- Development atop hills generates stormwater runoff. Some older housing developments were constructed without stormwater management.
- Steep, windy roads are prone to storm- and weather-related damage.
- Rolling, wooded hills make full public sewer connections in some areas prohibitively expensive.

Several realities compound the Borough's concerns about infrastructure. These include the increased frequency and severity of weather events and the small size of the Borough, which affects the amount of funding available to address problems.

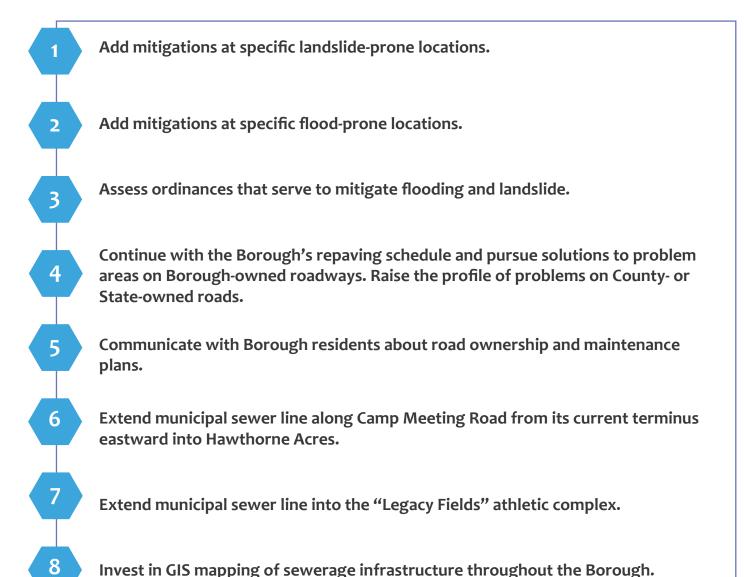
Bell Acres has demonstrated and already has begun acting upon its intention to maximize its resources and conserve and protect natural resources in the public interest.

Talking points

- The Borough is undertaking a 15-year plan for resurfacing and maintaining its roads, and this plan supports that initiative.
- Sevin Road and Turkey Foot Road are particularly prone to flooding, washouts and landslides. The Borough is seeking long-term upstream solutions at these and other locations to mitigate problems.
- Bell Acres has undertaken prudent management steps to maximize resources, including focus with neighboring communities on multimunicipal grant applications; making bulk purchases through the Council of Governments; and exploring new techniques for road surfacing.
- Some streams are suffering in terms of water quality and stream capacity due to siltation.
- Some stormwater detention facilities have not been maintained, and stormwater facilities associated with some county- or state-owned roads need attention, exacerbating runoff problems.

KEY ISSUE: Addressing Infrastructure Needs

Strategies for change



ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Future land use

Bell Acres is a residential rural-suburban community situated on heavily wooded hills and valleys in the northwestern quadrant of Allegheny County. The focus of this plan regarding future land uses has been on targeting areas for green space preservation and the development of recreational trails. Otherwise, the plan has focused on addressing infrastructure needs and enhancing quality of life through community information sharing and engagement.

The Future Land Use Plan presented herein combines and depicts the Borough's vision for retaining its residential, rural and woodland character.

Overall, the general land use patterns that currently exist would be maintained. Residential neighborhoods would remain intact and additional lands would be preserved as green space.

The Borough's intentions for future land use are reflected on a map provided in the Additional Topics chapter.

Community Development Objectives

- Preserve and protect the existing rural/woodland development pattern as an outer suburb.
- Increase the amount of land protected as green space, such as adding a Conservation Residential zoning district.
- Steward and conserve natural resources by incorporating policies and measures that enhance environmental sustainability. These will include steps such as best practices for maintaining tree canopy; reducing stormwater runoff; improving groundwater and stream quality; protecting steep slopes and green space; and minimizing land slide risk.
- Require that new uses are developed in ways that complement nearby uses, and minimize impacts on surrounding residential areas.
- Provide access to outdoor recreation activities via community parks and via trails located on public land or on on other protected green space available for public use.
- Enable efficient movement of people and goods by investing methodically in roadway improvements.
- Support viable, healthy and attractive neighborhoods by requiring concurrent addition of public infrastructure by developers.
- Facilitate administration and enforcement of the Borough's regulations.
- Invite citizen engagement in all aspects of civic life within the Borough, such as by adding an Environmental Advisory Committee and a trail stakeholder group.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Why this planning process is important

- Citizens expressed a desire for change in the three key areas and are expecting follow-through.
- Bell Acres has the best chance of safeguarding its future if it implements the changes that residents hope to see happen protecting and enhancing its most valued assets and engaging people in civic life.
- There are costs to making changes (time, money, effort), but also costs to doing nothing (community disaffection, flattening or low growth in property values).
- A comprehensive plan helps provide a clear rationale for ordinances enacted by Council, in that the plan documents what the Borough wants for itself and why.

Review and adoption process

Draft versions of this implementable comprehensive plan report were submitted for official review by Bell Acres Borough, Allegheny County Economic Development - Planning Division, contiguous municipalities and the Quaker Valley School District. The Borough's Planning Commission then reviewed the plan and recommended that the Bell Acres Borough Council adopt it. The plan was presented to the community at a public hearing, prior to a Council adoption vote. The adoption resolution appears in the appendix.

Now, who does what?

This report can serve as a guide in the following ways:

ELECTED OFFICIALS - This report documents the development of the comprehensive plan. It identifies the directions in which the Borough will change, and lays out the practical next steps that will produce the desired changes. Next steps, in most cases, rest in the hands of elected and appointed officials who have the role and responsibility of initiating new policies or procedures; providing funding via grants or Borough revenue streams; providing human and material resources; and lending oversight. Residents expect leadership from their elected officials, including anticipating future challenges before they become today's problems.

CITIZENS - Individuals may advocate for the plan and track progress by comparing the steps listed in this report to physical changes in the community and actions taken by the Borough. Citizens are encouraged to attend public meetings where decisions are made. Citizens should take an active role by pressing for the actions and policies listed in this plan, which are designed to create change in the community. Citizens also may support and propel change by volunteering for committees or for special initiatives.

BOROUGH STAFF MEMBERS - Though the staff is small, Bell Acres employees have an important role in implementation. They will be the people most likely to work on a day-to-day basis to develop policies and procedures; muster resources; and assist elected and appointed officials in pushing the outcomes of the plan. Staff members are in the best position to spot obstacles to progress and propose solutions.

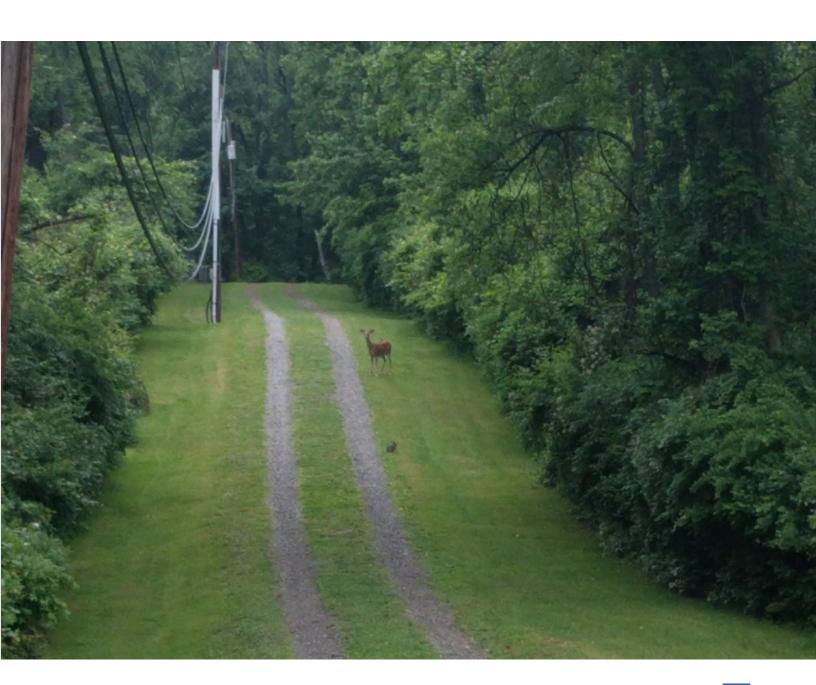
PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS - People serving on the Planning Commission should become deeply familiar with the contents of this report. These members hold the responsibility of keeping the Borough's "foot on the gas" for implementing the steps in this plan, anticipating what should happen next, and proposing action, and solving problems that will clear the way for progress.

Bell Acres' top tasks in next 12 months

Of the implementation steps outlined in this plan, this list suggests what to do right away.

- Go live with the revised Bell Acres website. (In progress.)
- Create mobile access to Borough news and information via Savvy Citizen. (In progress.)
- Establish a line item in the borough's budget for land protection.
- Establish a group to create fund-raising strategies for land protection, hold a fund-raiser, and begin accepting donations for future land acquisition.
- Identify a person or persons with the skill and knowledge base to plan and construct sustainable trails.
- Begin recruiting a trail corps.
- Approach one or more landowners about easement or potential future property acquisition.
- Repave the roads scheduled for maintenance this year.
- Determine a way to complete GIS mapping of existing sewer infrastructure, potentially seeking grant funding from the PA Department of Community & Economic Development or PA Department of Environmental Protection.
- Convene a meeting with Allegheny County and stakeholders to pursue on-road improvements on Camp Meeting Road, and with PennDOT and stakeholders to pursue on-road improvements on Big Sewickley Creek Road.

Key Issue PROTECTING GREEN SPACE AND ENHANCING TRAILS











Bell Acres open space and some species that live there (and sometimes visit driveways).

KEY ISSUE: Protecting Green Space & Enhancing Trails

VISION

Bell Acres maintains and

increases acreage devoted to

green space as an ecological,

scenic and recreation

The issue

Through public engagement in the comprehensive planning process, the Planning Commission identified Green Space and Trails as crucial aspects of the community's character and quality of life, specifically:

- Develop ways of preserving green space and the funding mechanism to do so
- Improve on-road bicycle trails
- Expand development and funding of parks and hiking trails in parks and protected green space

Background and context

Verdant forests, bubbling streams and green rolling hills are essential landscape types in Bell Acres, according to residents participating in the public process for this implementable comprehensive plan.

People consider green space to be crucial to the community's character. As a result, they would like to see existing natural areas protected as a means of retaining the rural, woodsy appearance that is prevalent in much of the Borough and for environmental conservation purposes.

Beyond its ecological value and desirable appearance, green space contributes significantly to quality of life by serving community members' recreation needs, with open areas frequently used by hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers.

Talking points

- Questionnaire responses collected during the public input phase of this comprehensive plan listed the community's "attractive rural character" as a main reason they like living in the Borough.
 - 98 percent of respondents to the questionnaire said they believe that green spaces such as woodlands, streams and meadows are valuable and worthy of protection.
 - Of those respondents, 89.6 percent said they would support initiatives regarding green space preservation. From that group in turn, 68% were willing to donate some amount of money annually for matching funds to support green space acquisition.
 - In the same questionnaire, 78% of respondents said the Borough should work toward preserving additional land to connect parcels of open space it already owns.
- People attending a public meeting for the comprehensive plan listed protecting green space as their top issue.

Residents' input points the way

The community questionnaire created to inform this comprehensive plan asked residents open-ended questions about what they like about the Borough and their priorities for change. The questionnaire also asked specific questions about support for maintaining or increasing green space. Some specific elements that residents appreciated were:

- "Country atmosphere."
- "Peaceful, clean and serene."
- "I am proud to live in a Borough that has the largest BDA (biologically diverse area) according to the Allegheny County Natural Heritage Inventory."
- "Amount of land and wildlife."
- "Love the peace and quiet here. Like living out in the country but still close to a city."
- "Quiet and clean environment."
- "Clean air and water."
- "Open land."
- "Flora, birds, fauna."

Community-based focus group

Responding to this input from citizens, a Green Space & Trails group that included Planning Commission representatives, some Bell Acres residents and some area residents with knowledge of trails within Bell Acres met to discuss the viability of public acquisition of land or easements and additional trail planning and construction.

The focus group discerned these components from public input:

Green Space

Residents highly value the considerable presence of green space in the Borough. This is a strength to build on.

- Quantity, quality and ecological value of green space
- Access to green space
- The potential for stormwater solutions to enhance green space
- User amenities to make green space more of an asset
- Communications with residents about the availability and value of green space

Trails

Current routes include bicycle and pedestrian use of local roads, and some use of trails within green spaces by mountain bikers, hikers, runners and equestrians. Trail- and route development represents an opportunity for the Borough.

- Existing routes and potential network expansion
- Improving the network via greater access, possible ADA-compliant options, wayfinding
- Potential additional amenities, including signage, benches, stairs
- Communications with residents about the availability and value of trails

Green Space and Trail improvement tools available to the Borough

- Ordinances
- Acquisitions, Easements
- Volunteer assistance (trail groups, bicycling groups, equestrian groups, scouts, resident mobilization, school groups, etc)
- Borough spending for specific priority projects
- Grants
- Additional opportunities for communications with residents

Green Space Focus Group

- Julie DiCenzo, citizen stakeholder
- Erica Kagle, citizen stakeholder
- Roy Kraynyk, Planning Commission
- Rob Peirce, citizen stakeholder
- John Walliser, Planning Commission

Trails Focus Group

- Frank DiCenzo, citizen stakeholder
- Andy Falk, trail advocate
- Scott Holquist, trail advocate
- Hank Ingram, trail advocate
- Patricia Norman, citizen stakeholder
- Chris Popovic, trail advocate

Framework for understanding green space and trails

The focus group set these priorities for future discussions and development of this plan and its recommendations:

- Green Space: Identify vulnerable areas and gaps between conserved parcels, and how to fund acquisition and easements.
- Trails: Establish priorities for connecting existing off-road trails to develop larger networks, and how to fund additional trail development. Improve safety of on-road bike routes.

"Green space" and "Trails" are often mentioned in the same breath – and are presented here in the same chapter – because the availability of trails is often predicated on the availability of green space, and conversely, the presence of green space generally suggests the possibility of more or better trails. Residents of Bell Acres participating in this comprehensive plan process clearly and emphatically wanted to see both green space conservation and trail development.

This comprehensive plan therefore recommends that Bell Acres should improve and expand its network of sustainable, non-motorized trails on existing public land, Allegheny Land Trust conservation areas, and on additional land the Borough chooses to acquire. This section lists the steps for doing so.

STRATEGIES: Protecting Green Space

As noted previously, Borough residents would like to see more land protected as green space. Recently, Bell Acres residents financially supported efforts by Allegheny Land Trust to acquire 100 acres of green space in the Borough. The residents' contributions were used by match larger state and foundation grants and used to purchase and care for the land.

While the goal of land protection is supported by a hefty majority of Borough residents who participated in this planning project, the difficulties arise in the matter of how to achieve it. The most effective ways to ensure land is protected are for the Borough to acquire the land or obtain conservation easements, or for private owners to choose to protect their property in perpetuity through various conservation options offered by land trusts.

Of these approaches, neither is fully in the control of the Borough. In the case of land trusts, the Borough can encourage property owners to choose this course of action, and assist them in acquiring information on how to proceed. This step can be crucial in a landowner's decision-making, but the owner makes the call. In the case of property acquisition, the Borough cannot control what parcels are available, when or at what cost. But the Borough can make decisions to purchase land or conservation easements.



Identify and acquire properties or obtain conservation easements.

These steps offer the Borough a process for pursuing this goal, which is so important to community members:

- A. The Borough staff and Planning Commission should maintain a list of properties the community finds to be desirable potential acquisitions. Based on the input from the focus group that assisted with development of this chapter, the Borough should prioritize properties that contribute to some or all of these:
 - Help the community expand its trail network so that the parcels contribute in several ways to community goals;
 - · Contribute to community resilience to flooding, landslide or other disasters; maintain tree canopy and protect fragile steep slopes, and slow stormwater runoff to mitigate bad outcomes;
 - Help the community maintain its current appearance of extensive woodlands and meadows, as this is an
 essential aspect of community character that residents say they consider important, at least partly because
 it enhances property values in the Borough;
 - · Are contiguous to existing public and private dedicated green space, as this helps limit habitat fragmentation and supports the health of forest communities and wildlife corridors.

Maintaining such a list best enables the Borough to be poised for action if a targeted property comes on the market. In fact, the community could initiate gentle inquiries with landowners who are known to be considering sale, or with absentee owners who might welcome an opportunity to plan for a sale or dedication of property they prefer not to hold.

- B. Propose a budget line item for future acquisition of property or of conservation easements. A line item keeps this issue in front of elected officials in their budget decision-making. The amount dedicated to this annually could be \$5,000 or \$10,000, or some other amount that elected officials feel is feasible, with the amount accruing over some years until a desired parcel becomes available at an appropriate price. Then, this can be applied as "matching funds" to leverage grants toward a purchase of fee interest or easements. Some potential mechanisms for this:
 - The Borough can "assign" funds within its fund balance to future projects via carry-over accounts in which a project is funded in one year and the money may be carried over to the next year. If tracking specific funds within the general fund is challenging, the Borough could opt for the option of setting up a reserve account.
 - The Borough could create a "reserve" account at its bank or with a company like the Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust (PGLIT). The Borough can add money to the account as needed with the understanding that money cannot be withdrawn from that account except for a specific purpose. The Borough should discuss this approach with its auditors to make sure that the paperwork and account comply with auditing requirements and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) reporting requirements.
- C. Identify or create an appropriate non-profit, foundation or trust to hold donated funds specifically for the purpose of green space protection or trail building. Appeals may also be made to residents to consider planned giving of funds for community green space as part of their estate planning. (See example of a new non-profit on Pages 30-31.)
- D. Add an annual donation mechanism to the website, to give residents a way to contribute voluntarily to future property acquisition. Many residents said during this planning process that they were willing to make annual donations for green space acquisition. A methodical donation request can be set up through most websites. The monies can be directed to the non-profit described above.
- E. Hold fund-raisers for green space acquisition and/or trail construction, inviting residents of Bell Acres and neighboring communities, as they may have interest in additional local trails. (See example on Pages 30-31.)
- F. The Borough staff and Planning Commission should become familiar with funding opportunities for acquisition, including grant requirements and deadlines. The most like sources to fund acquisition are listed here, with additional information in the appendix. Some of the grant programs also support trail development, stream enhancement, flood control and other green-space projects:
 - · Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP), through PA Department of Community and Economic Development: https://dced.pa.gov/download/greenways-trails-recreation-program-gtrp-guidelines/?wpdm-dl=81379
 - Land Conservation, Acquisition and Stewardship Grant through PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (this supports acquisition of property or conservation easements): https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/LandAcquisitionGrants/Pages/default.aspx

EXAMPLE FROM A NEARBY COMMUNITY

Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy

The Conservancy's mission is to support the existing 345-acre park system and expansions in future years. The conservancy was formed in 2020.

With donated legal services from the Borough's solicitor, the conservancy was created as a non-profit and became part of the Community Foundation of the Alleghenies for management of funds and legal reporting purposes.

The conservancy set up a Facebook page and used established email groups to spread the word. They had articles in the local and regional newspapers and magazines and mentioned the formation of the conservancy on the Borough's website. Postcards were sent to all addresses in the Borough encouraging participation in the first fundraising activity.

To celebrate the formation of the Parks Conservancy and the New Year, the first fundraising event took place on January 8, 2021. Volunteers set out hundreds of white paper bags with candles in McCahill Park and lit the candles at dusk to create a sparkling blanket of light along the Park Boundary with Squaw Run Road. Donors could purchase a light with a \$25 donation.

About \$20,000 was raised.

The lantern purchases were largely from donors of \$25, \$50 or \$100. It is hoped that this means of funding through smaller donations forms a positive connection between residents and their parks and trails.

More Candle Celebrations in other parts of the Borough are planned for 2021, including Trillium Trail illumination walk/drive-by on March 20 (the first day of spring), a lantern forest walk in Riding Meadow Park and a celebration of light in Hardie Valley Park in summer with a blue grass band.







- Lantern sponsorships -\$25.00 DONATION PER LANTERN

A Extra Special "THANK YOU" to our Event Sponsors





















Thank you for supporting the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy!

This year, more families have enjoyed our excellent park and trail system than even before. The Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy was built to provide our community with an easy way to invest in the continued care and protection of our beloved park spaces, and to help fund important future park expansion.

Brought to you by the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy Committee.

Please make checks payable to: Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy

Donate by Mail: P.O. Box 11224 Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Donate Online at: https://bit.ly/3aciqJu



Encourage and facilitate private land conservation options, such as conservation easements and land donations.

A. Make private owners of desired parcels aware of the possibility that they could participate in land trust programs.

Through land trusts, landowners may sell their land to a trust or choose to employ conservation easements to protect their land for its special qualities such as productive farm soils, scenic beauty or valuable wildlife habitat. Landowners who choose land trusts may also take advantage of tax incentives and any other funding available for conservation for the purposes of financial or estate planning.

To qualify for tax advantages, conservation easements must provide significant public benefit, such as wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation or other forms of preservation.

Landowners can work with a land trust to sell the property or to set easement terms that accommodate the owner's plans, as long as the easement protects important resources on the land. Many resources are available at <u>conservationtools.org</u>, including a list of conservation organizations in Allegheny County: https://conservationtools.org/organizations/county?county id=2

Here is an owner's guide to land conservation programs: https://conservationtools.org/guides/category/17-landowner-guides

B. Make private owners aware that they can dedicate (donate) some or all of their property to the Borough or land trust, or sell it for a nominal amount. Revise the Conservation of Land section of Borough ordinances to update the list of potential conservation groups; the ordinance currently includes Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association, which no longer strives to own land, and omits Allegheny Land Trust, which has protected and manages more than 200 acres of green space in the Borough.



Revise ordinances and policies to protect natural systems and to require dedication of green space when possible.

- A. As part of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, the Borough should require property developers to dedicate public open space within proposed subdivision and land developments. An applicant or developer may also agree to pay to the municipality a fee to be used instead of dedicating land (i.e., "fee-in-lieu"). The dedicated open space or the payment of the fee is to be used by the municipality to ensure that future residents of the subdivision or land development have adequate recreational opportunities.
- B. Ensure best practices for clustering development, minimizing impervious surfaces and providing utilities and infrastructure in order to minimize impacts to natural systems and species.
- C. Ensure tree-cutting ordinances provide adequate protection of the existing canopy and means for replenishing trees lost to development. Require native species selections for development activities.

- D. Ordinances for preserving tree cover should include a provision for off-site tree replacement at greater than 1 inch: 1 inch diameter at breast height (DBH) ratio to facilitate reforestation efforts on protected lands on which forests have been decimated by disease and pests.
- E. Ensure ordinances require sufficient stream buffers (greater than 50 feet).
- F. Adopt a conservation overlay district to protect natural heritage areas, steep slopes and hydric soils. See the 2021 Allegheny County Natural Heritage Inventory to identify locations that should be protected. The document is available at this URL: http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/CNAI_PDFs/Allegheny_NHI_2021.pdf

Natural Heritage Areas in Bell Acres			
Natural Heritage Area	Level of Significance	Species	
Backbone Road NHA	State Significance	Red mulberry (Morus rubra) Threatened in Pennsylvania	
Big Sewickley Creek Woods NHA	State Significance	Great blue heron (Ardea herodias) rookery of approximately 30 nests	
Devil's Hollow Conservation Area NHA	State Significance	Presence of a sensitive species of concern, not named at the request of the jurisdictional agency responsible for the species' protection.	
Little Sewickley Creek NHA	State Significance	The mocha emerald (Somatochlora linearis), a dragonfly species of concern	
Sevin Road NHA	State Significance	Red mulberry (Morus rubra) Threatened in Pennsylvania	

H. Adopt a public policy of reforestation, supported with a public information campaign to explain the communitywide benefits of reforestation where trees have been lost due to disease, pests, growth of invasive plant species, landslide or development. Provide resources for helping land owners improve their forests.



Create an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC).

Create an Environmental Advisory Committee under guidelines of the PA Municipalities Planning Code. This group could also oversee the volunteer trail building group suggested elsewhere in the plan.

A. The Borough Council has the authority to establish an Environmental Advisory Council, determine its size, select its members and define its charter. Creating an EAC must be done by ordinance.

- B. The Council should have three to seven members. Its charter should include the tasks and responsibilities desired by Borough officials, such as:
- · Researching issues and advising local government officials to help inform decisionmaking;
- Planning new conservation initiatives and environmental education efforts
- Overseeing comunity projects
- C. More ideas and information about creating an EAC including sample ordinances, recruitment, selection and duties are available at this website: https://conservationtools.org/guides/1-environmental-advisory-council
- D. Once established, the EAC should develop bylaws. Samples are provided at conservationtools.org.

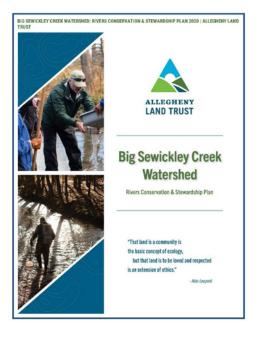


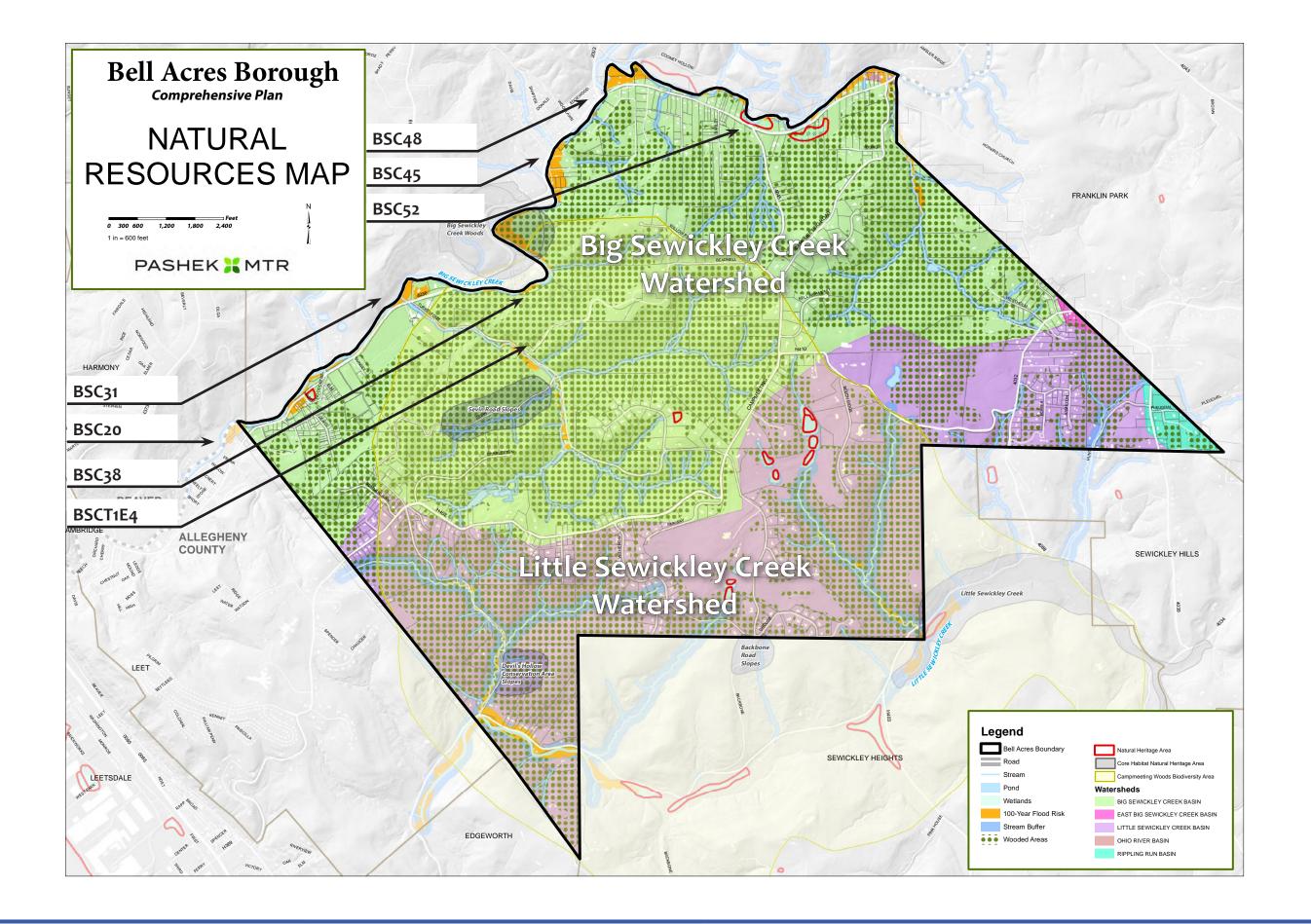
Support river and stream conservation and stewardship.

Bell Acres took a leading role in supporting development of the 2020 Big Sewickley Creek Watershed - Rivers Conservation and Stewardship Plan, which was completed while Bell Acres' implementable comprehensive plan was under development. Many of the recommendations in the Big Sewickley Creek Watershed (BSCW) plan align with the Green Space and Trails implementation strategies in the comprehensive plan.

The following recommendations are copied or adapted from the watershed plan because many apply not only in the Big Sewickley Creek Watershed, but also in other parts of the borough. Other recommendations similar to those in the Big Sewickley Creek Watershed - Rivers Conservation and Stewardship Plan are listed elsewhere in this comprehensive plan and therefore not repeated below.

- A. The Bell Acres Borough Council should formally adopt the Big Sewickley Creek Watershed Rivers Conservation and Stewardship Plan.
- B. The Borough should implement or participate in the following projects, which were recommended in a 2010 watershed report and are carried over to the 2020 BSCW plan. The project locations are identified on the Natural Resources Map on the next page (project numbers are from the 2020 BSCW plan).
 - · Create a conservation easement to protect a Blue Heron rookery (High-priority project BSC38).
 - Restore natural stream channel where installation of a sanitary sewer crossing of the stream has caused a debris jam, sediment build-up and backwater pools (High-priority project BSC48, with Economy Borough)

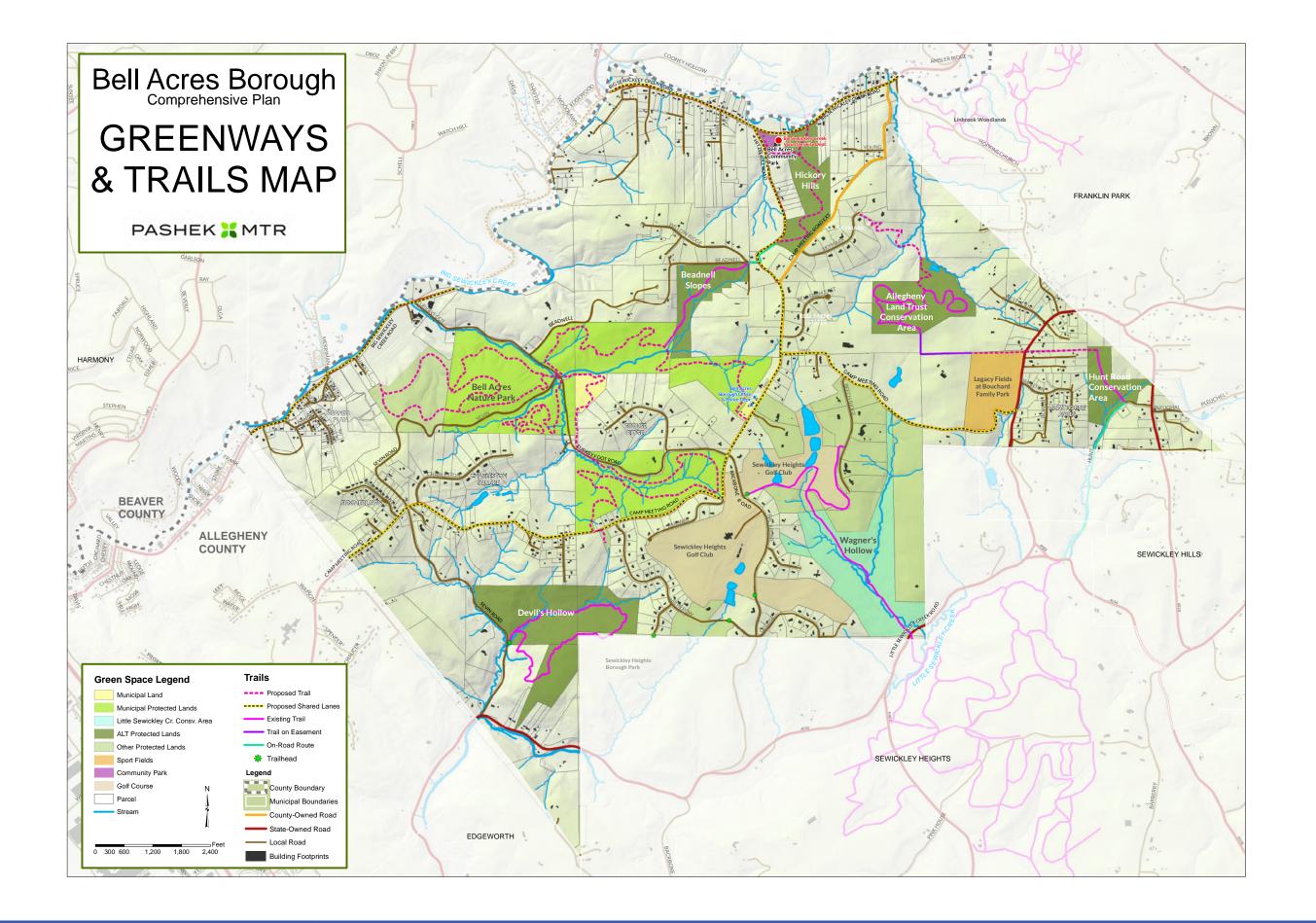




- Restore natural channel, which is too wide and straight in some places (Project BSC20, with Economy Borough).
- Enforce local ordinances and environmental regulations in order to remove debris (auto parts, plastics and flood debris) from stream and stream banks (Project BSC31).
- Restore national stream channel where sediment has built up in the middle of the stream and the channel is too wide (Project BSC45, with Economy Borough).
- Maintain a large riparian buffer around a wetland/floodplain area of approximately 1000 feet by 400 feet (Project BSC52).
- · Improve Beadnell Drive (dirt and gravel road) to reduce volume of runoff, thereby preventing erosion and sedimentation from Beadnell Drive (Project BSCT1E4).
- C. Improve water quality by reducing salt application in sensitive areas, managing creek debris and obstructions and addressing illegal dumping.
- D. Protect water quality by maintaining, expanding and restoring riparian zones and protecting and improving the quality of stream headwaters.
- E. Create community engagement opportunities to raise awareness and support for caring for natural places, attributes and systems.
- F. Provide ecological support for plants and wildlife by conserving habitat, preventing fragmentation of woodlands, and providing native plant species wherever possible.

Note that sensitive natural areas, watershed boundaries, stream headwaters and forest cover fragmentation areas can be identified on the map on the next page.

36



STRATEGIES: Enhancing Trails

Improvements or additions to on- and off-road routes will be valuable to residents of Bell Acres to improve mobility and add opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities in general.

Meanwhile, additions to the Borough's network of off-road trails would be welcomed by cyclist and pedestrians alike.

This section of the chapter provides strategies for both.

Off-road, sustainable trails

Sustainable, non-motorized trails are those intended for use by hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians and cross-country skiers. These trails do not cause generalized harm to vegetation, soils or streams and other natural resources because they are sited, designed and constructed according to specific principles and standards. Sustainable trail development can even enhance site ecology because it is so far less damaging than "rogue" trails that are often randomly created by people going where they want to.

Sustainable trail principles and design standards take into account:

- Users: Will users be beginner or skilled mountain bikers, experienced hikers, families with young children, equestrians? What routes can have universal accessibility?
- Trail Experience: Should there be beautiful views? Close looks at notable natural features? The chance to spy wildlife undisturbed? Arduous exercise? Thrills and technical challenges? A 20-minute walking loop for a dog and owner? How will the routes meet identified goals while also protecting natural resources?
- Route Planning, Phasing and Development: Where should the trails lead? What loops can be created, and what will they connect with? In what order should they be completed? Are there sufficient human and financial resources to complete something that is begun? Who will oversee the work on a master-planning level? On the site-work level? Will funds be needed to purchase tools, water, construction materials?
- Permitting and Other Requirements: What laws, ordinances, boundaries and permit requirements will apply? Who will ensure all requirements are met?
- Construction: Who can oversee the work to ensure quality control of design and execution of specific standards and techniques? Where will the tools and skills come from? Who brings the muscle-power?
- Maintenance: After trails are built, they get used. When trails get used, they need to be maintained as would any other public facility. Who will absorb this task?

6

Create the community capacity to develop sustainable trails.

Sustainable, non-motorized trails for walking or mountain biking are not usually too expensive to build and can be constructed by volunteers. The more difficult next steps are likely to be finding a person or persons knowledgeable about the principles of sustainable trail design to oversee the effort at no or low cost; fundraising to pay for those services if necessary; and recruiting volunteers willing to do the rigorous physical work.

Still, Bell Acres is likely to have an easier time with these projects than some communities might have. Individuals living in or near the Borough frequently use its existing trails, are committed to the recreational pleasures of walking or riding on trails, have participated in similar projects in the past, and are very likely to be able to muster teams for appropriate projects.

Here are the recommended steps for proceeding:

A. The Borough should designate a volunteer trail stakeholder group to lead the effort. This group should report to the Environmental Advisory Council or Planning Commission for decision-making, project oversight, fund-raising (if needed), permits and approvals, and progress updates.

The Planning Commission can begin recruiting by putting out a call via the Borough's newsletter, website and new communications channels, as well as personal social media networks. The group should include people with these forms of specific skills and knowledge:

- · Familiarity with existing trails on Borough lands
- · Representatives of different user groups (hikers, people with disabilities, cyclists, equestrians, casual walkers) who can advocate for their needs
- Familiarity with non-motorized, sustainable trail design principles, standards and techniques
- · Contacts with potential volunteers and ability to mobilize
- · Familiarity with Borough goals and ordinances
- · Knowledge about grant-writing
- · Scout leaders who can encourage Eagle Scout or Gold Scout projects that support trail improvements, such as stairway, bridge or kiosk construction, sign building and installation, or digital mapping/promotions
- · One or more people trained and certified to use chain saws and to apply herbicides when invasive woody plants are removed

Explain to potential volunteers there will be a few organizing meetings and then regular work days, such as the 3rd Saturday of each month. If some skill sets are not found among Borough residents, a motivated organizer could contact similar trail groups in neighboring communities to see if reciprocal volunteer assistance can be worked out. The Borough should invest in trail building tools such as wheelbarrows, adzes, shovels, and chainsaws, and identify a place for storing the items so they are available to volunteers. (A fundraiser could help with this.)

- B. The trail stakeholder group should become familiar with the existing trails and proposed trails as identified in this comprehensive plan (see map on Page 37) such as through group hikes/field views.
- C. For existing trails, identify trail stewards and meet so everyone understands the goals of the group. Establish a volunteer steward program with sections covered by at least two people per mile. The expectation is that they would hike the trail at least once or twice a month to observe any degradation of the trail by falling trees or erosion. Trail mile markers, blazes and/or directional signs should be acquired and installed along the trail route. For proposed trails, tap the trail stakeholder group's expertise to identify the most desired new route, basing decisions on the factors outlined on Page 38.

7

Begin on- and off-road trail network improvements.







Volunteer trail-building crews at work in Fox Chapel

The trail group should then methodically proceed with these steps:

- A. Organize trail improvement projects according to the trail group's priority list. For new trails, obtain aerial mapping with parcel information for areas where new trails are planned. Divide the project into phases if needed.
- B. Work with the Environmental Advisory Council or Planning Commission to seek access to private property, coordinate trail use on public land.
- C. Brainstorm and scout the best alignments, following design guidelines and avoiding roads, fragile areas and areas prone to erosion.
- D. Work through the Environmentla Advisory Council or Planning Commission to coordinate as needed with agencies to plan trail crossings of streams, drainageways or roads. Develop specific projects for volunteers to

construct, or for Scouts to organize for their Eagle/Gold awards. Write grants if needed. Construct new trails. Usually constructing new trails is a weekend activity, preferably with students or youth groups involved. The work should be conducted according to sustainable trail principles, especially the cross slope of trail, to minimize erosion). A guide for creating trails is available by searching for "Pennsylvania Trail Design and Development Principles" or using this URL: http://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1741679&DocName=Pennsylvania%20Trail%20Design%20and%20Development%20Principles.pdf

E. Consider teaming with Landforce for trail construction assistance. For more information: landforcepgh.org

On-road improvements

Bicycling is an important form of mobility and healthful exercise for Bell Acres residents, and provides a valuable form of social interaction and recreation. Moreover, use of non-motorized vehicles helps to lower carbon emissions, which contributes to community health through cleaner air. Cycling also reduces congestion on roads. This comprehensive plan supports the addition of bicycle infrastructure on roadways in Bell Acres.

Cycling on Bell Acres roads is most common on Big Sewickley Creek Road and Hitzel Hill Road, which are owned and maintained by PennDOT, and Camp Meeting Road, which is owned and maintained by Allegheny County. Another agency player is Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization that serves as a conduit for federal and state funding to local transportation projects, including "multi-modal" projects that create mobility infrastructure for walking and biking.

The current road surfaces of Camp Meeting, Hitzel Hill and Big Sewickley Creek Roads are not wide enough to include the addition of bike lanes, desirable as they would be for making cycling more safe, comfortable and convenient for all road users. (Cartway expansions to add bike lanes within the road right-of-way may be possible but would be the subject of a separate study.) Still, cycling conditions on existing roadways would be improved with the addition of shared-lane pavement markings ("sharrows") and signs noting that cyclists are likely to be present.

This section of the comprehensive plan suggests steps toward adding on-road improvements.

A. Open a conversation with transportation planners at the agencies responsible for roadway maintenance and improvements as well as Bell Acres' state legislators and U.S. representative. Explain the Borough's interest in adding bicycle infrastructure to the road.

Initial Contacts for Bicycle Infrastructure Project Implementation

SPC

Leann Chaney **Active Transportation Planner** Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Ichaney@spcregion.org

PennDOT District 11

Bill Lesterick Bike Ped Coordinator PennDOT District 11 wlesterick@pa.gov

Allegheny County

Ann Ogoreuc

Assistant Director, Mobility & Transportation Allegheny County Economic Development Ann.Orgoreuc@AlleghenyCounty.US

Improvements will best occur when the road owner is planning milling/repaving or larger projects. Starting a conversation can make the Borough's interest known to the owner. However, the Borough should be aware that it will incur costs of implementing the improvements even when road work is undertaken by the owner.

- B. Borough staff should join the road owner to review the route to confirm desirability, including potential obstacles. The owners are very likely to require a feasibility study of traffic conditions and safety, which the Borough is likely to have to fund.
- C. For any bicycle infrastructure improvement project, the next step is to develop an estimate of probable construction costs, show how these costs will be covered, and pursue funding. This plan assumes that improvements on County-owned Camp Meeting Road will be the most feasible and immediate possibility. For Camp Meeting Road, the work is straightforward but not without costs: Complete feasibility study, and assuming that shows no major obstacles, install pavement markings and signage. (See Opinion of Probable Construction Costs on the next page.) However, the Borough could also meet with PennDOT and SPC about the Bell Acres' interest in bicycling infrastructure on Big Sewickley Creek Road and Hitzel Hill Road in the event that PennDOT plans projects for those road in the next five to 10 years.
- D. Create a strategy for securing funding for the project, including Borough funding, other public funding and grants. In the case of the Camp Meeting Road project, the responsibility is primarily with the Borough. However, the Allegheny County Active Transportation Grant program could potentially be a source of funding, and that could be part of an initial discussion with that road owner.

Bell Acres would follow similar steps to those listed above for implementing bicycling facilities on Big Sewickley Creek Road and Hitzel Hill Road, which are owned by PennDOT. However, this project is likely to be more complex than a project for Camp Meeting Road due to issues of roadway width, driveways and intersections, sight-lines, traffic volumes and speed limits. The Borough would begin by making PennDOT District 11 and SPC aware of Bell Acres' desire for bicycle infrastructure, noting that it is consistent with the comprehensive plan. The most advantageous time to add bicycle infrastructure would be when PennDOT undertakes a milling and repaving project or other roadway improvements, when costs to the Borough could be somewhat mitigated.

Camp Meeting Road Bicycle Shared Lanes

01-12-2021

Opinion of Probable Construction Costs

Prepared by Pashek + MTR

Item Description	Quantity	Unit	Unit (Cost	Tota	l Item Cost
Site Improvements - West to East segments						
Borough boundary to Sevin Rd pavement markings	12	EA.	\$	300	\$	3,718
Borough boundary to Sevin Rd signage	12	EA	\$	200	\$	2,478
Sevin to Witherow pavement markings	19	EA	\$	300	\$	5,760
Sevin to Witherow signage	19	EA	\$	200	\$	3,840
Witherow to Fairway Drive pavement markings	39	EA	\$	300	\$	11,753
Witherow to Fairway Drive signage	39	EA	\$	200	\$	7,835
Fairway to Hitzel Hill pavement markings	26	EA.	\$	300	\$	7,848
Fairway to Hitzel Hill signage	26	EA.	\$	200	\$	5,232
Hitzel Hill to Fern Hollow pavement markings	47	' EA	\$	300	\$	13,992
Hitzel Hill to Fern Hollow signage	47	' EA	\$	200	\$	9,328
	5	Subtotal	Site Impr	rovements	\$	71,784
Road owner feasibility study						
Roadway study by Allegheny County	1	. LS	\$	20,000	\$	20,000
			Feasib	ility study	\$	20,000
			S	UBTOTAL	\$	91,784
			Conting	gency 20%	\$	18,357
				TOTAL	\$	110,141

Notes:

^{1.} Opinion of Probable Construction Costs is made based on the experience and qualifications of Pashek + MTR, Ltd. and represents reasonable judgment based on familiarity with the industry. Pashek + MTR, Ltd. has no control over the cost, or availability of labor, materials or equipment, or over market conditions or the provider's method of pricing. Pashek + MTR, Ltd. cannot and does not guarantee that the opinion of probable cost provided the Owner will not vary from the actual cost experienced by the Owner.

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Key Issue IMPROVING BOROUGH COMMUNICATIONS



CHAPTER TWO: IMPROVING BOROUGH COMMUNICATIONS

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VISION

Bell Acres fosters citizen

engagement through effective

two-way communication between

residents and their local

government.

KEY ISSUE: Improving Borough Communications

The issue

Through public engagement in the comprehensive planning process, the Planning Commission identified Communications as a Key Issue, specifically:

 Raise awareness through education of what exists now

 Continue public engagement efforts, including strategies to expand the Borough website and access to information via social media.

Background and context

The convergence of some societal trends is leading many communities, including Bell Acres, to review all aspects of communication between the local government and residents.

One trend is the continuing transformation in communications as more people embrace digital and mobile platforms, leaving fewer to rely on paper or land-line forms.

Another trend is a growing expectation that information will be readily available and conveniently provided – when, where and how people want it.

Further, as the digital world becomes increasingly omnipresent, some people are reacting in the opposite direction and actively seeking out personal engagement with people, activities and issues in their local communities. Casual observation by the consultant of numerous communities sees a consistent request for more ways to "know what's going on," or "get involved" in civic life.

Talking points

Questionnaire responses collected during the public input phase of this comprehensive plan revealed that many residents were unaware of existing communications channels or felt improvements were needed in terms of ease-of-use, frequency and available content.

- Residents, Borough staff members, elected officials and appointed officials participated in a volunteer focus group to assess existing communications and suggest changes. The group plans to continue striving for additional improvements over time.
- The focus group reviewed Census data, questionnaire responses, and informal feedback gathered by the Borough officials through regular contact with residents to understand citizen preferences regarding existing or potential communications.
- The focus group researched best practices for communities of similar size, and chose ideas that members considered most helpful or expeditious.
- The group also sought to understand the Borough's capacity for additional communications efforts, both in terms of cost and staffing availability, and to make recommendations that were proportional.
- Members of the focus group initiated a first round of changes in the September 2019-January 2020 time frame. They also had a list of additional ideas to investigate beginning in March 2020.

Residents' input points the way

The community questionnaire created to inform this comprehensive plan asked residents how they get information about things going on in Bell Acres. The question provided an opportunity for residents to add comments. Responses to this question indicated that most residents count on "word of mouth" and the local newspaper. The fact that comparatively few people (about 20 percent) relied on the Borough website suggested an area of potential improvements. People responding with their own comments said things like this:

- "That's the problem, the website is rarely updated."
- "Did not know you had a web site."
- "We don't get good information. The boro needs a better means of communicating."
- "It seems impossible for those of us who don't

- know many people. The website is not very informative when compared to Leet Township's."
- "Never hear anything, website never is updated."
- "I think the administration should put out a monthly newsletter, similar to Leet Township."
- "Could use better communications."
- "Never knew we had a website!"

Community-based focus group

Responding to this input from citizens, the Planning Commission, as driver of this comprehensive plan, sought volunteers for a focus group that would identify viable ways to improve communications. The group was charged with making recommendations to Council on how Bell Acres could better get the word out about *existing* communications channels and how the Borough could improve communications more generally.

Communications Focus Group

- Chris Abell, Council member
- Michelle Veeck, Council member
- Charles Kulbacki, Borough Manager
- Lisa Fleming, Borough Secretary
- Diane Abell, Planning Commission member
- Julie DiCenzo, citizen stakeholder

- Rich Garbee, citizen stakeholder
- Finn Johnson, citizen stakeholder
- Rich Kulbacki, VFD and citizen stakeholder
- · Lois Kulbacki, citizen stakeholder
- Marty Luzer, citizen stakeholder

CHAPTER TWO: IMPROVING BOROUGH COMMUNICATIONS

The focus group met initially in June 2019 to review citizen input, catalog existing Borough communications methods, and consider the implications of some pertinent Census data.

Bell Acres' official communications methods are:

- Borough website (bellacres.org)
- Police Department Facebook page (facebook.com/ BellAcresPolice)
- Swift911 notification system (sign up for emergency notifications via phone, text or email by clicking on the Swift911 button on the Borough website)
- Occasional postcards mailed to residents.

Independent and non-official communications methods include:

- The social media site NextDoor.com
- The Allegheny Times
- The Sewickley Herald

Census facts & figures

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that Bell Acres residents are older, more educated, and wealthier than Allegheny County or the state of Pennsylvania:

Age Demographics			Educational attainment	
Bell Acres median age:	47		Bell Acres high school graduate or higher:	97%
Allegheny County median age:	40.9		Allegheny County H.S. graduate or higher:	94.1%
Pennsylvania median age:	40.7		Pennsylvania H.S. graduate or higher:	89.9%
Income			Bell Acres bachelor's degree or higher:	59%
Bell Acres median household income:		\$101,250	Allegheny County bachelor's degree or higher	:40%
Allegheny County median household in	ncome:	\$56,333	Pennsylvania bachelor's degree or higher:	30.1%
Pennsylvania median household incom	ne:	\$56,951		

This data indicates the Borough's population is, generally speaking, well-educated and financially well-off – two characteristics that indicate likely ownership and use of computers and smart phones.

Computer and Internet connectivity

Bell Acres Households	Estimate
Total Households	538
Household with computer:	500
With dial-up internet subscription alone	0
With a broadband internet subscription	482
Without an internet subscription	18
No computer	38
Households with smartphone	416
Households with cellular data plan	305
Households with tablet or other portable wireless computer	352

(American Community Survey 2013-2017)

This data demonstrates the high likelihood that digital communication could be successful with nearly all residents. Traditional methods (telephone land-lines and paper copies) would be needed to reach the 56 households with no computer or internet subscription.

Based on a review of the Census information, the focus group concluded:

- Bell Acres residents have adopted current technology
- Most people use mobile devices and computers
- People expect to receive alerts that are pushed out* for important information

^{*} Note: "Push" communications are those that a sender sends to a receiver. The sender controls when communications are dispatched, and to whom. Often, however, receivers may choose whether to receive "push" communications, such as by signing up for news alerts. Push communications are often used to communicate important or time-sensitive bulletins.

Framework for understanding "communications"

What do citizens mean when they say they would like to see better communications? Do they want more bulletins? Better timeliness? More ways to get the information they want? Do they hope to receive what the Borough conveys, or do they also want to be able to ask for specific information and get an answer? Do they expect to be able to participate in a dialogue, or to provide their ideas? The chart on the next page lists some of the main aspects of communication, along with a definition of each and an assessment of what Bell Acres could consider or do next to improve.

As should be clear from the examples listed above and in the chart on Page 52, "communications" has many facets. Each aspect should be investigated, understood and planned for in its own right, but also within a larger community context. Changes or improvements should be realistic within the capacity (human and financial) of the Borough. Changes or improvements should help most of the people most of the time, but also not prohibit any citizen from staying abreast of Borough decision-making.

Decisions should recognize and accommodate the overall goals of both Borough officials and residents within the public good. Citizens who are fully informed and educated about facts and issues are typically more capable of participating effectively in civic life, such as through voting, volunteering, serving in appointed positions, or even seeking elected office. Citizens who are not informed may be more likely to feel surprised or even angered by official decisions they "didn't see coming."

The diagram found on Page 53 depicts a continuum of public involvement as that relates to various types of communication. Generally speaking, the farther to the right, the more informed and engaged in decision-making citizens are. Bell Acres Borough – both officials and residents – are free to settle on what place on the continuum the Borough currently is or "should" be; however, it is the consultant's observation that more citizens in more communities are speaking up for seeing the needle move toward the right. The diagram lists across the bottom the communication or engagement types that align with various points on the continuum.

ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION					
Aspect	Description	Status in Bell Acres / Suggestions			
The ways information is shared	What are the means or channels of communication, both official and neighborly?	The focus group addressed this aspect of communication first. The discussion should be ongoing because options change, and citizens' needs and expectations change.			
Citizen awareness of communications channels and efforts by the Borough	Do people know about the channels/means of communications available to them?	The community quality of life questionnaire illustrated gaps in awareness. Educating residents about communications channels available to them should be an ongoing effort, since people move in/out of the community or just decide to care about something when an issue pops up, or because new means of communication are added.			
Content and topics of communication	What information does the Borough provide?	The focus group should develop a lexicon to describe types of information, such as "events, emergency, general information, cool facts, official business," to help it work effectively as a group and externally with residents. It should continually review whether there is an effective alignment between content/topics, the channels/means of communicating, and the frequency of communications.			
The frequency of communication	How often does the Borough push out information for which kind of content? How and how often does it respond to incoming citizen communications?	Frequency will vary, depending on content and topics. The focus group should review whether there is an effective alignment between type, frequency and channels.			
Directionality	Can communications flow in two directions?	The focus group should explore ways to hear from and listen to citizens as well as to push information out to them. One way would be to use the attached "Public Engagement Continuum" diagram as a tool for engaging both council and citizens to explore where people want the Borough to "be" on the continuum.			
Communications resources	What people and what funding are available to help improve communications?	This question should be part of all the aspects listed above. Available human and funding resources are limited, so all recommendations should consider this context. Volunteers can help. Local sponsorship or donations could be available.			

kilendly arbitration. TOWN TO E TING TO TING "We want what **EMPOWER** Referendum you want" Judes beritise workshops Levels of public involvement HOW MUCH DECISION-MAKING RESTS WITH THE TOWN? Standolls COLLABORATE "We all have an equal voice" HOW MUCH WITH CITIZENS? Design charrettes Advisory committee's kocus groups be visible in the "Your input will ENGAGE outcome" Heaines Surveys Connents on posts welcome your Interviews CONSULT "We ideas" Social media posts Email blasts you up to date" "We will keep Newsletters INFORM

Note: Implementation of the Improving Borough Communications strategies commenced in 2019. The completed tasks are noted with a \checkmark .

STRATEGIES: Improving Borough Communications



Create and maintain an overall plan for selecting and implementing ongoing improvements in Borough communications.

A volunteer Communications Focus Group should continue to work collaboratively with Borough staff and local officials to pursue improvements, through meetings held roughly every quarter. An agenda for the first quarter meeting is provided on the next page; this follows up on 2019 action items.

In 2021, the group should:

- A. Establish goals for continuing to improve Borough communications over time. (The initial goal-setting process took place in 2019-2020.)
 - The group should discuss with council and residents, possibly via a survey, where Bell Acres "wants to be" on the Levels of Public Involvement continuum.
 - The group should identify potential changes in communications efforts that will move the needle.
- B. Identify ways to measure improvement, such as a biennial survey of resident satisfaction with communications.
- C. Identify feasible ways to achieve communications goals.
 - · Through the collaborative process, evaluate the anticipated value and costs of proposed improvements.
 - · Systematically pursue the feasible changes and improvements over time in the areas of: communications means or channels; citizen awareness of communications channels; the content or topics of communication; the frequency of communication; directionality; and resources.



Bell Acres Communications Workshop

Bell Acres Implementable Comprehensive Plan

[DATE] Bell Acres Borough Building

Agenda

Intro (5 mins)

- Group process: Finn Johnson, leader of the Communications working group, will facilitate the meeting, produce meeting notes for the record, plan the next meeting.
- Reintroductions if there are any new members.

Communications Initiatives (45 mins)

Evaluate work done so far on the following initiatives. What was accomplished? What still needs to be done? What's working well? What should be addressed? Specify next steps for each of these, if any.

- Website changes (Lisa/Diane/Michelle/Finn)
- Savvy Citizen (Finn)
- NextDoor (Marty)

Citizen Awareness (5 minutes)

- Do citizens know about the new communications channels, specifically the "push" capabilities of Savvy Citizen?
- Brainstorm and identify some ways to get the word out, such as NextDoor, facebook, flyers, postcards, yard signs.
- Specify next steps.

Next steps regarding other aspects of communication (10 minutes):

- Discuss the topics "content and topics of communication" and "frequency of communication" from the "Aspects of communication" chart on the next page.
 - o What are the types of content we currently provide? Define each.
 - o Are we hitting the right frequency for each content type?
- Specify next steps to improve either type or frequency, or both.
- Set up next working group meeting to review issue of directionality and identify improvements

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2

✓ Revise the Bellacres.org website.

A primary focus of the Communications Focus Group should be to assess the functionality of the Borough's website. This may prompt the Borough to consider migrating to a different platform that can "do more."

- A. Make changes regarding the Bell Acres website (bellacres.org) to make it easier for users to find the information they need and want, and to provide additional functionality as deemed important for meeting the Borough's communications goals. NOTE: This effort got underway in 2020. An early example is shown below.
- B. Add website content that provides answers to frequently asked questions; that alerts citizens to dangers, inconveniences or emergencies; that helps make citizens aware of upcoming official decisions; that alerts people to upcoming activities or events; that provides interesting information; and that clearly indicates how to learn more.
- C. Consider improvements that have been popular in similar communities.
- D. Strive to respond to other communications priorities the Borough has heard from citizens.
- E. Make it easy to sign up to receive information, to volunteer, or to participate in groups, activities, meetings or events.







Employ technology to provide more information more efficiently.

In its efforts to meet community goals for effective communications, the Communications Focus Group should investigate and incorporate ways the Borough can employ technology to deliver and receive information from residents. The Borough website by itself is not sufficient, as it primarily serves as a repository of information that users must themselves seek out. By contrast, apps, plug-ins and other technologies can enable the Borough to provide information on-demand or according to the preferences of individual residents.

- A. Investigate and incorporate services or applications that facilitate information-sharing via the means that people want online, mobile app, texts, emails.
- B. Investigate and incorporate ways the Borough can "push" communications to residents; that residents can seek out the communications and information they desire; and that communication can flow in two directions.



Continue to provide information to those who do not use digital devices.

Recognizing that a small minority of residents do not have computers or smart phones, the Borough will need to continue to meet their needs via paper communications, traditional newspapers or telephone.

- A. Develop a template for a news release to save time when providing information to local newspapers for publication.
- B. Continue to mail out postcards when 100 percent coverage is needed.
- C. Offer hard-copy versions of communications to residents upon request. Information on how to request printed material should be incorporated in news releases, phone conversations, post-card mailings, or public meetings.

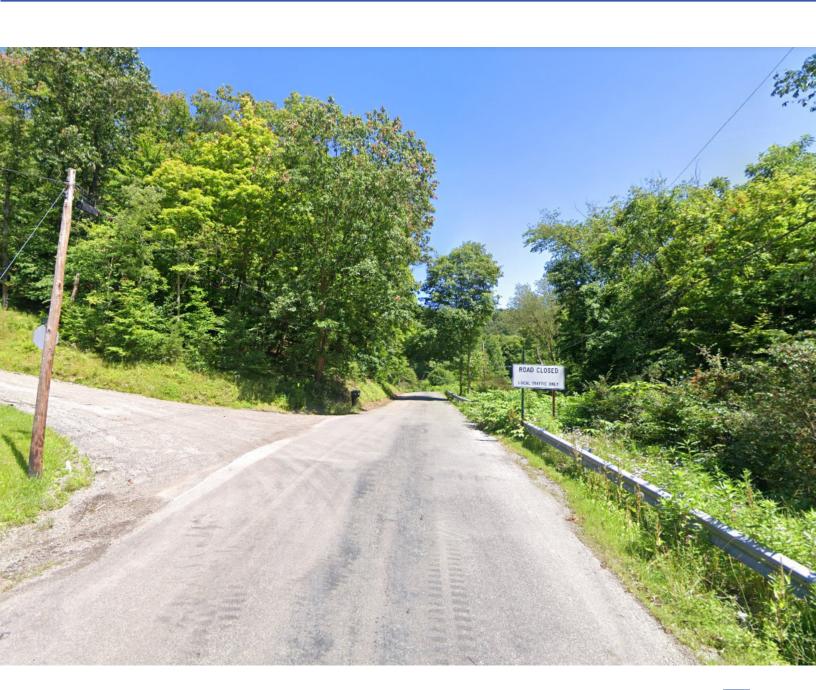
CHAPTER TWO: IMPROVING BOROUGH COMMUNICATIONS



Encourage civic engagement and a promote a sense of community through Borough communications.

- A. Provide timely information about community activities or events, volunteer opportunities and upcoming decisions, to foster involvement in civic life.
- B. Encourage residents to share fact-based community information via reliable print or social media forums.

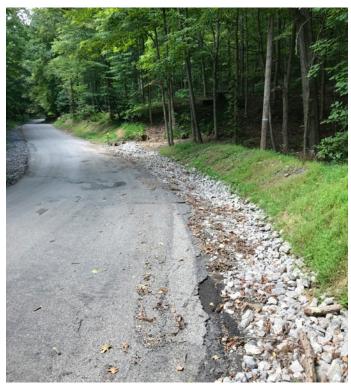
Key Issue ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS











At top, some landslide- and flood-prone areas. Bottom: Mitigaitons to alleviate road flooding.

KEY ISSUE: Addressing Infrastructure Needs

The issue

In response to public engagement in the planning process, the Planning Commission identified Infrastructure needs concerning roads, sewers and stormwater as a Key Issue. Specifically, issues raised included:

 Flooding or landslides along Turkey Foot and Sevin roads

- Road resurfacing strategies.
- Sewage problems in Hawthorne Acres

Background and context

Wooded hills, curving rural roads and pretty streams tumbling through valleys are among Bell Acres' most valued assets. They play a large role in defining the Borough's character and identity. However, these same elements also create infrastructure challenges for the Borough:

- Narrow valleys and steep hillsides contribute to flash flooding and washouts. Landslide-prone soils in the valleys create additional concerns.
- Development atop hills generates stormwater runoff. Some older housing developments were constructed without stormwater management.
- Steep, windy roads are prone to storm- and weather-related damage.
- Rolling, wooded hills make full public sewer connections in some areas prohibitively expensive.

Several realities compound the Borough's problems with infrastructure. These include the increased frequency and severity of weather events and the

small size of the Borough, which affects the amount of funding available to address problems.

Through land conservation and stream/steep slope protections, Bell Acres has demonstrated its intention to maximize its resources and conserve and protect natural resources in the public interest.

VISION

Bell Acres Borough
maintains and upgrades
public infrastructure through efficient use of resources to protect
and enhance the health, welfare and safety of people
and natural resources.

Talking points

- The Borough is undertaking a 15-year plan for resurfacing and maintaining its roads, including new paving.
- Some options are available for improving gravel or low volume roads (including tar-and-chip) through the state's Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Roads program.
- Sevin Road and Turkey Foot Road are particularly prone to flooding, washouts and landslides. The Borough now seeks long-term upstream solutions at these and other locations to mitigate problems.
- Bell Acres has undertaken prudent management steps to maximize resources, including working with neighboring communities on multimunicipal grant applications; making bulk purchases through the Council of Governments; and exploring new techniques for road surfacing.
- Some streams are suffering in terms of water quality and stream capacity due to siltation caused by runoff and disturbances.
- Some stormwater detention facilities have not been maintained, and stormwater facilities associated with some county- or state-owned roads need attention, exacerbating runoff and flooding.

Residents' input points the way

The community questionnaire created to inform this comprehensive plan asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with various services the Borough provides, including road maintenance and provision of sewers. People are generally satisfied with Borough services, but expressed lower satisfaction with road maintenance, with comments explaining frustration with closures and detours due to landslides, and a desire for repaving. Respondents' lower satisfaction with provision of sewers was mainly related to recently raised household rates and to a lack of public sewer service in the Hawthorne Acres neighborhood.

The high cost of improvements

Small municipalities throughout Pennsylvania wrestle with the significant challenge of funding infrastructure improvements. These are often costly projects, and paying for them is difficult. Grants are highly competitive, and state, county and local coffers are limited. Bell Acres, with only about 500 households, does not have a large tax base over which to spread out any additional costs.

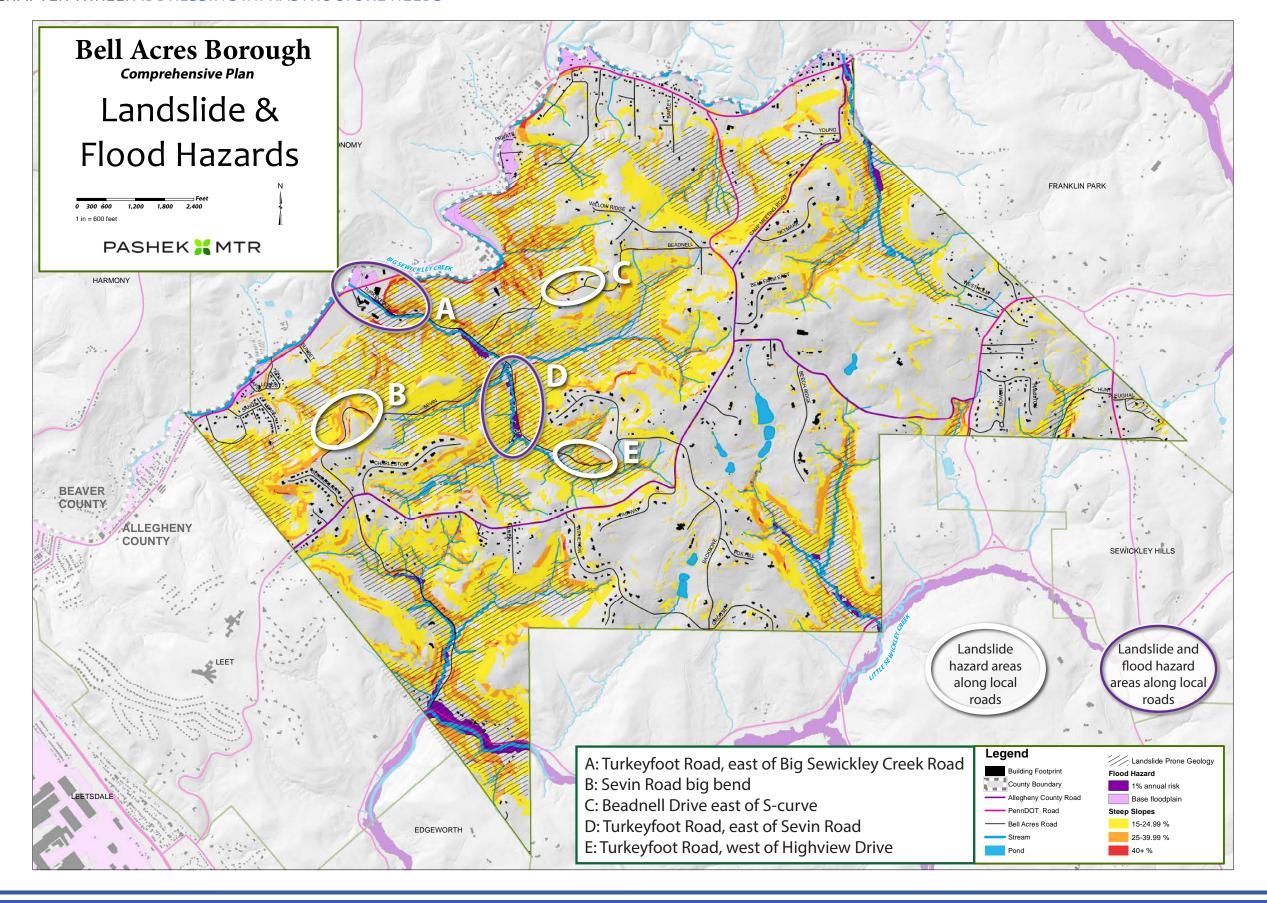
The strategies presented on the following pages do not attempt to mask the significant challenge of raising funds for additional infrastructure projects. But the recommendations also include suggested regulatory or policy ideas that could help the Borough to mitigate problems over time or spread out costs over longer periods.

STRATEGIES: Mitigate landslide and flooding risk

The tree-covered hills and stream valleys that Bell Acres residents highly prize as defining characteristics of the Borough's appearance are sometimes the source of inconvenience, danger or expensive damage when they pose a threat to infrastructure or property.

Landslides have closed roads for days or months. Flooding from major storms has regularly created havoc if not damage. The map on the facing page notes some of the locations where geography, geology and development have combined to exacerbate flooding or landslide risk or both.

- Glenshaw Formation bedrock: The diagonal-line hatching on the map shows areas in Bell Acres with the presence of Glenshaw Formation bedrock, a form of sedimentary rock that is prone to landslide. The sedimentary layers include shale, sandstone, limestone and other types that can slip against each other and flow downhill, particularly when saturated following a rain event.
- Steep slopes: Southwestern Pennsylvania's ridge-and-valley topography is defined by streams that carve into hillsides to form drainageways that, in turn, lead eventually to the three rivers. Hillside slopes over 15 percent are steep; many Bell Acres slopes exceed 25 percent, and some exceed 45 percent.
- Earth disturbance: Development of any type disturbs the natural contours of the earth, affecting how water
 infiltrates into the earth or flows across it. New buildings, roads or other impervious surfaces can affect how
 stormwater runoff flows through and away from developed areas into streams. Removal of vegetation can
 destabilize soil and eliminate the foliage and roots that absorb rainwater.



INTRODUCTION



Add mitigations at specific landslide-prone locations.

- A. These are some locations of landslide prone areas above or below locally owned roads, where the Borough could team with property owners to implement mitigation strategies. This plan suggests focusing on properties related to Borough-owned roads because the community likely bears responsibility for the cost of these road repairs.
 - · Turkeyfoot Road, east of Big Sewickley Creek Road
 - · Sevin Road at the big bend
 - · Beadnell Drive east of S-curves
 - · Turkeyfoot Road, east of Sevin Road
 - · Turkeyfoot Road, west of Highview Drive
- B. Prevention is important. Employ vigilance through partnerships with motorists, land owners and Borough staff. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provides these warning signs of landslides:
 - · Springs, seeps, or saturated ground in areas that have not typically been wet before.
 - · New cracks or unusual bulges in the ground, street pavements or sidewalks.
 - · Soil moving away from foundations.
 - Ancillary structures such as decks and patios tilting and/or moving relative to the main house.
 - Tilting or cracking of concrete floors and foundations.
 - · Broken water lines and other underground utilities.
 - Leaning telephone poles, trees, retaining walls or fences.
 - · Offset fence lines.
 - · Sunken or down-dropped road beds.
 - · Rapid increase in creek water levels, possibly accompanied by increased turbidity (soil content).
 - · Sudden decrease in creek water levels though rain is still falling or just recently stopped.
 - · Sticking doors and windows, and visible open spaces indicating jambs and frames out of plumb.
 - · A faint rumbling sound that increases in volume is noticeable as the landslide nears.
 - · Unusual sounds, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together, might indicate moving debris.

"Adequate drainage is necessary to prevent sliding or, in the case of an existing failure, to prevent a reactivation of the movement. Common corrective measures include leveling, proper grading and drainage, and retaining walls. More sophisticated remedies in rock include anchors, bolts, and dowels, which in all situations are best implemented by professionals. Translational slides on moderate to steep slopes are very difficult to stabilize permanently."

 The Landslide Handbook (U.S. Geological Survey)

https://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1325/pdf/Sections/ Section1.pdf

These areas are most prone to landslide hazards, according to USGS:

- · On existing old landslides.
- · On or at the base of slopes.
- · In or at the base of minor drainage hollows.
- · At the base or top of an old fill slope.
- · At the base or top of a steep cut slope.
- · Developed hillsides where leach field septic systems are used.
- C. Apply mitigations, again in partnership with land owners, where landslides have previously occurred (repeated slides in the same location are not uncommon) and at locations above or upstream from landslide-hazard slopes, such as those listed in A. Mitigation techniques can include:
 - · Adding native plantings above and on the at-risk slope. These grow deeper, denser root structures than non-native varieties, and can soak up water through leaves and roots, alleviating saturation
 - Implementing drainage improvements (drainage pipes, ditches, berms, and catchment basins). This can include diverting runoff away from the slope to prevent saturation, or even collecting water at the top of slope and conducting it to green infrastructure facilities at the base of the slope
 - · Removing loose rocks and other debris regularly
 - Installing engineered solutions, such as regrading to lessen the slope, anchoring the slope or adding retaining walls

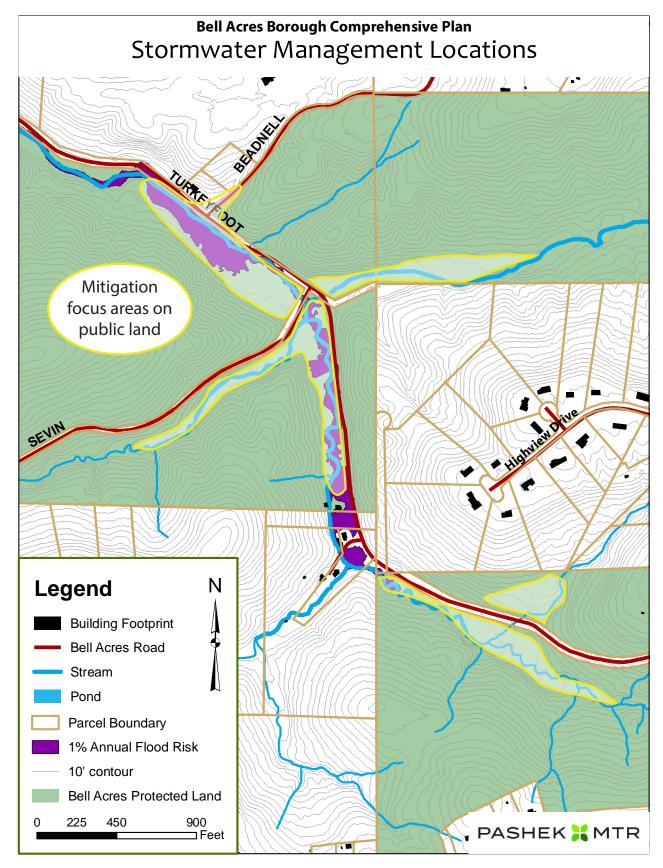
2

Add mitigations at specific flood-prone locations.

As with landslide risk, flooding that damages property, including Borough-owned roads, can result in hazardous conditions or costly repairs. Though simpler mitigations, such as upstream tree plantings, can help, larger stormwater management solutions will have more impact. These can be costly, though grant funding can be available to offset a significant portion of the price tag. The map on Page 63 shows in purple the locations with a 1% annual risk of flooding, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Some locations along local roads hold risk of both flooding and landslide. This plan recommends particular attention to these:

- Turkeyfoot Road east of Sevin Road
- Turkeyfoot Road east of Big Sewickley Creek Road
- D. Stormwater management best starts upstream. Addressing problems along these locations on Turkeyfoot Road can occur at the locations or uphill. Potential stormwater management locations are shown in a map on Page 67.

- E. Mitigation techniques include stormwater management best practices, including these ideas:
 - · Remediate stream channels to slow the flow. This includes techniques such as adding pools and riffles, creating meanders, repairing the banks, redirecting the flow within the channel.
 - Enhance riparian areas. This includes adding plantings, and creating or repairing the means for streams to flood in low-lying areas, to give water somewhere to go that is not straight downstream where additional volume cannot be accommodated.
 - · Planting trees. There's a saying that trees are the original green infrastructure. More trees everywhere upstream can only help.
 - Redirecting hardscape runoff. Some pressure on downstream flood-prone locations can be alleviated at the
 top of a hill, where development is most likely to have occurred. Some residential neighborhoods or individual properties may direct hardscape runoff from roofs and gutters, driveways and streets into streams.
 Runoff should be required to be infiltrated on-site into swales and raingardens.
- F. Bell Acres Borough can pursue these techniques in partnership with landowners, including by regulation upon real estate sales. Implementation strategies can be as follows:
 - · Acquire donated trees from TreePgh or Plant Five for Life, and plant them with volunteer labor.
 - Encourage use of residential rain barrels and links to sites showing homeowners how to construct rain gardens.
 - · Implement projects that remediate streambeds, channels or floodplains require engineering and permitting. These can be costly, and funding sources are provided in the appendix.
- G. The Borough should undertake the following Department of Public Works projects, which will mitigate flooding that damages roadways, and may also reduce saturation of some landslide-prone slopes:
 - Replace pipe crossing under Sevin Road near the intersection of Turkeyfoot Road. Remove old separated sections of concrete pipe and install new double-wall plastic pipe and a concrete headwall.
 - · Increase pipe diameter crossing under Turkeyfoot Road flowing from nature trail toward Sevin Road.
 - · Increase pipe diameter crossing under Turkeyfoot Road at the bottom of the hill before the road starts to level out, catching stormwater runoff from Highview Drive in the Grouse Ridge Plan.
 - · Increase pipe diameter crossing under the driveway of 123 Turkeyfoot Road, and joining pipe at catch basin crossing under Turkeyfoot. This location is gathering water from Beadnell Drive and road water along Turkeyfoot.
 - · Install additional pipe crossings under Turkeyfoot Road where the creek level has raised with sediment over the years. This will relieve some of the current crossings where pipe diameter cannot be increased.
 - Address pipe size and current conditions of pipes flowing along Turkeyfoot Road at Sewickley construction and 106 Turkeyfoot Road.
 - · Clean out the retention ponds at the Summerlawn development (this may be a Homeowner Association responsibility).



3

Assess ordinances that serve to mitigate flooding and landslide.

Bell Acres should continually strengthen ordinances related to flooding and landslide mitigations and prevention.

Trees

- "Tree Plantings and Preservation" is listed as non-structural Best Management Practice in the Stormwater Management Ordinance language covering Small Projects. This lays the foundation for encouraging additional plantings in partnership with property owners.
- The Borough's Logging ordinance restricts tree removal. The Borough should review any waivers or variances
 granted to logging operations since adoption, to understand whether ordinance language should be amended
 to clarify requirements, or if exceptions were too readily granted.
- Tree-replacement requirements could be added to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, such as inch-per-inch or some other formula. A provision could allow off-site plantings of replacement trees, such as in flood- or landslide-prevention target areas.
- As part of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, the Borough should require property developers
 to dedicate public open space within proposed subdivision and land developments. An applicant or developer
 may also agree to pay to the municipality a fee to be used instead of dedicating land (i.e., "fee-in-lieu"). The
 dedicated open space or the payment of the fee is to be used by the municipality to ensure that future residents of the subdivision or land development have adequate recreation opportunities.

Landslide

- Bell Acres' Landslide Overlay District includes provisions about reporting results of investigations of a site prior
 to land disturbance. The goals of this overlay district lay the foundation for pursuing partnerships with owners
 of existing developed property to seek cooperation in diverting water from landslide-prone slopes and enhancing vegetative cover.
- The Borough could consider adding requirements that would affect additional remediation on properties in the district for when ownership changes hands.
- The Borough should review its existing ordinances to identify and eliminate "loophole" language that enables development to skirt the Borough's intentions, which include strict prohibitions.

Stormwater

- Existing ordinances firmly lay the foundation for the recommendations in Strategy 2, items B and C, above.
- The Borough should review any waivers or variances granted since the stormwater ordinance was adopted, to understand whether ordinance language should be amended to clarify requirements, or if exceptions were too readily granted.

STRATEGIES: Support road maintenance projects



Turkeyfoot Road prior to repaying



Continue with the Borough's repaving schedule and pursue solutions to problem areas on roadways. Raise the profile of problems on County- or State-owned roads.

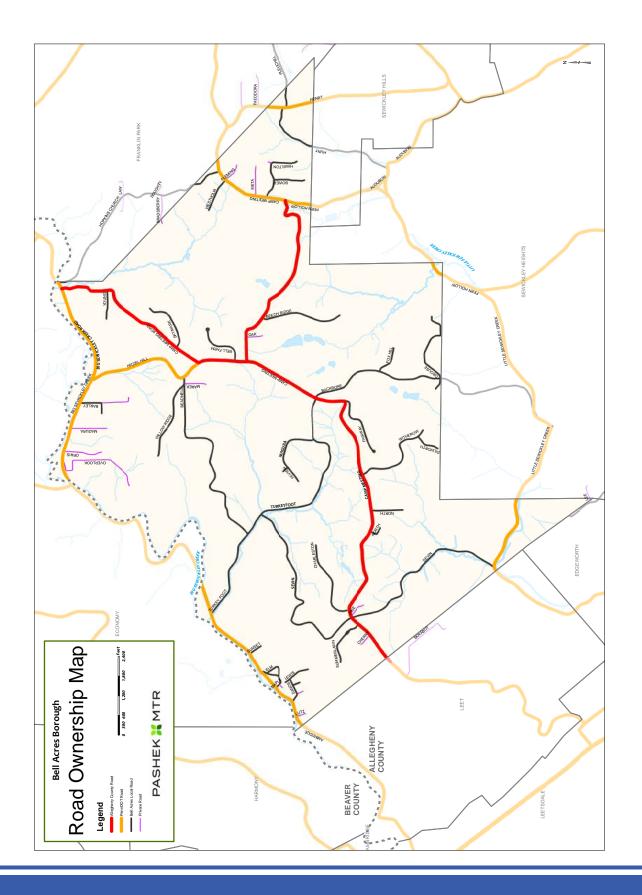
This comprehensive plan supports and encourages a regular repaving schedule for Borough-owned roads. A 15-year schedule is maintained by the Borough's Department of Public Works. (The 2021 schedule, which is subject to change upon annual review, is presented in the appendix.) The plan recommends the schedule be posted on the Borough's website so residents know what to expect, when. Improvements scheduled during 2021:

- Sands Avenue
- Kenelly Street
- Lewis Street
- Sunset Drive
- A. Pursue the projects listed in Landslide and Flooding mitigations, No. 2D, most of which also are roadway maintenance or improvement initiatives.
- B. The threat of flooding and landslide also has closed or threatened roads owned by Allegheny County and PennDOT. The Borough should continue to assertively press its case with the road owners and state elected officials to ensure prompt attention to road problems that pose a threat to residents' health, safety and welfare.

5

Communicate with Borough residents about road ownership and maintenance plans.

Provide on the Borough's website a map that clearly shows which entity owns which roads. A map is provided on the next page for this use. Introductory text can explain that road ownership dictates who maintains the road, and that the timing of maintenance – including repaving – is up to the owner.



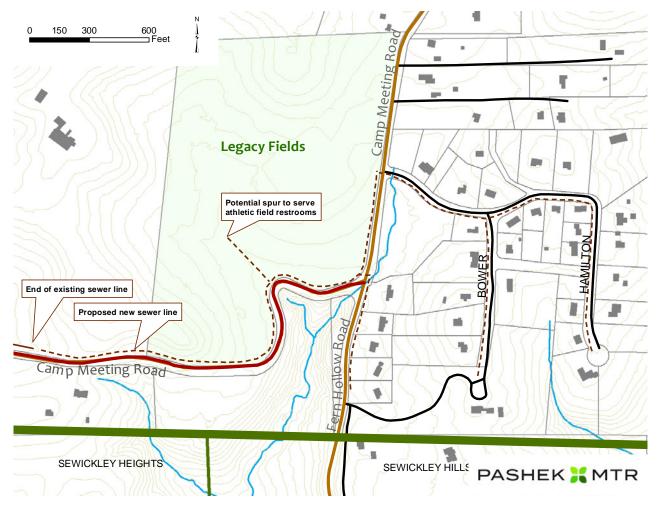
STRATEGIES: Address sewer infrastructure needs



Extend municipal sewer line along Camp Meeting Road from its current terminus eastward into Hawthorne Acres.

Homes in the Hawthorne Acres neighborhood and nearby Fern Hollow Road are not connected to the Bell Acres Municipal Authority (BAMA) sewer system, which serves much of the Borough. The 31 homes in this area employ private septic systems. This is not ideal because as septic systems age, they often fail to fully and safely process waste, resulting in groundwater contamination. This is a health and safety issue and is detrimental to water quality within the Little Sewickley Creek watershed. Moreover lack of public sewers can make home sales more difficult.

This plan proposes extending the public sewer system into this neighborhood, which will enable individual property owners to connect their homes. KLH Engineers, which serves BAMA, provided a rough cost estimate, presented on the next page. Grants may be available to help offset costs; grantors are listed in the appendix.



Hawthorne Acres sewer extension cost estimate

Item	Number	Cost/per	Total
8" collector sewer line	2,400 LF	\$120 / LF	\$ 288,000
2" force main collector sewer	500 LF	\$60/ LF	\$ 30,000
Grinder pumps	6	\$5,00 EA	\$ 30,000
Pump station (small canned station)	1	LS	\$ 350,000
3" force main sewer from pump station to existing force main	2,400 LF	\$75 / LF	\$ 188,000
3" force main from Camp Meeting Road intersection to existing 4" force main at Backbone Road	2,400 LF	\$75 / LF	\$ 188,000
SUBTOTAL base construction			\$1,074,000
Contingency (construction, engineer, legal and easements)	30%		\$ 322,220
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS			\$1,396,200

7

Extend municipal sewer line into the Legacy Fields athletic complex.

A sewer connection into the Legacy Fields sports complex would greatly improve conditions for families whose children play sports. Currently people using the fields must use port-a-johns. This improvement is contingent upon successful completion of the Hawthorne Acres-area sewer extension project described above. Note that a prefabricated restroom building can be purchased and delivered to the site. (The sewer extension and restroom project could potentially be supported financially by sports leagues and grant funding.)

CHAPTER THREE: ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

8

Invest in GIS mapping of to increase effectiveness of Borough operations

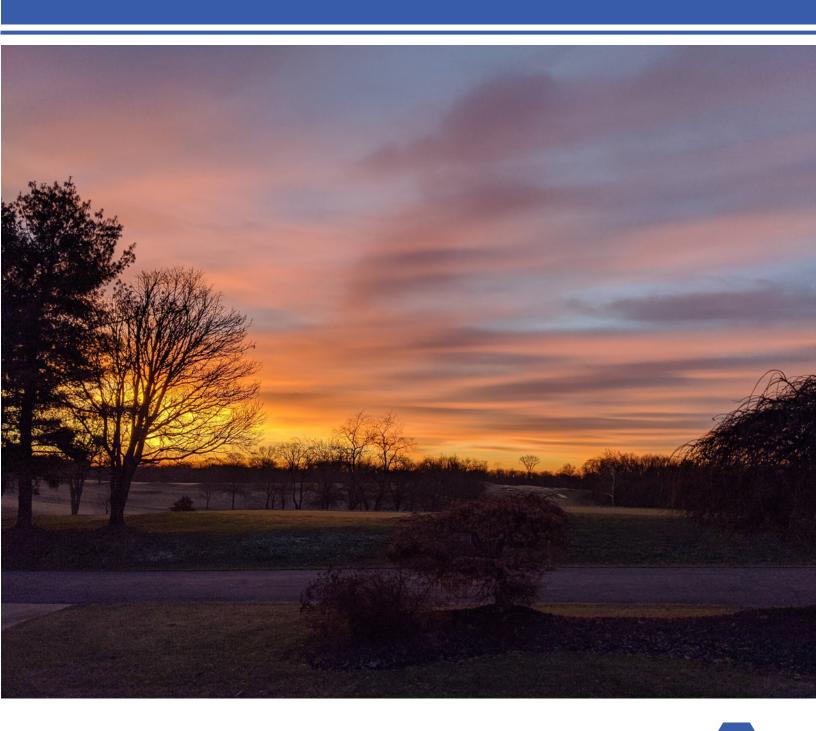
The Borough should acquire industry standard GIS (geographic information systems) mapping capabilities. Using industry standard software products, the Borough can employ data mapping to understand trends, assess needs and prioritize work.

For example, Bell Acres should have a reliable reference documenting the location of sewer lines, pump stations, grinder stations and other sewer infrastructure to ensure effective maintenance and future expansion.

Other potential uses in this comprehensive plan include:

- Map and track failing septic systems.
- Participate in pilot projects with Allegheny County Conservation District, Little Sewickley Creek Watershed Association and Big Sewickley Creek Watershed Association.
- Map the location and condition of township-owned facilities to enable effective inspection, maintenance, repair and replacement.
- Map the sources of complaints from residents about public issues.
- Collaborate with Allegheny County and contiguous municipalities on projects or issues.
- A. Select and purchase industry-standard mapping software suite and compatible hardware, including large-screen monitors.
- B. Select and purchase compatible software for mobile inspections and data collection.
- C. Provide access to on- or off-site training to enable staff members to participate in data-collection and / or map making. This might include anything from college courses to online tutorials.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS



CHAPTER FOUR: ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Statement of Community Development Objectives

- Preserve and protect the existing rural/woodland character and development pattern as an outer suburb.
- Increase the amount of land protected as green space, such as adding a Conservation Residential zoning district.
- Steward and conserve natural resources by incorporating policies and measures that enhance environmental sustainability. These will include enacting ordinances and policies for implementing best practices in maintaining tree canopy; reducing stormwater runoff; improving groundwater and stream quality; protecting steep slopes and green space; and minimizing landslide risk.
- Require that new uses are developed in ways that complement nearby uses, and minimize impacts on surrounding residential areas.
- Provide access to outdoor recreation activities via community parks and via trails located on public land or on on other protected green space available for public use.
- Enable efficient movement of people and goods by investing methodically in roadway improvements.
- Support viable, healthy and attractive neighborhoods by requiring concurrent addition of public infrastructure by developers.
- Facilitate administration and enforcement of the Borough's regulations.
- Invite citizen engagement in all aspects of civic life within the Borough, such as by adding an Environmental Advisory Committee and a trail stakeholder group.

Future Land Use

Bell Acres is a residential rural-suburban community situated on heavily wooded hills and valleys in the northwestern quadrant of Allegheny County. The focus of this plan regarding future land uses has been on targeting areas for green space preservation and the development of recreational trails. Otherwise, the plan has focused on addressing infrastructure needs and enhancing quality of life through community information sharing and engagement.

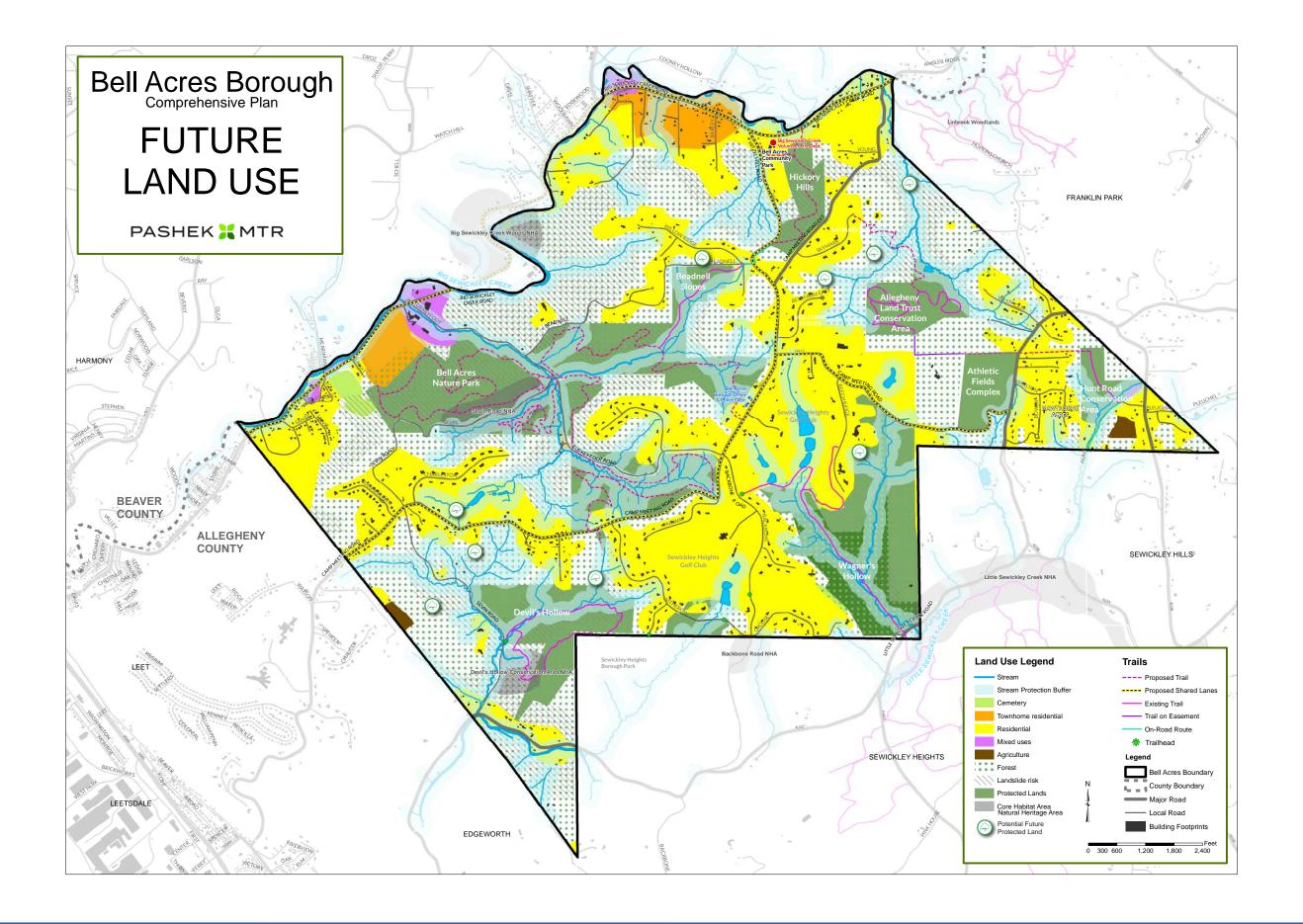
The Future Land Use Plan presented herein combines and depicts the Borough's vision for retaining its residential, rural and woodland character.

Overall, the general land use patterns that currently exist would be maintained. Residential neighborhoods would remain intact and additional lands would be preserved as open space.

Consistency with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code

In order for Bell Acres Borough Council to approve this comprehensive plan, the proposed plan must be reviewed by Allegheny County for consistency with the county's own comprehensive plan, and the plan must meet the requirements of the state Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Article III, Section 301. The following is a summary of those MPC requirements and a comparison of where that information is included in this comprehensive plan. Where the key issues did not include an element in the MPC, we address that following the chart.

MPC requirement	Where it can be found in the Comprehensive Plan	
Statement of community development objectives	Page 77	
Plan for land use	Pages 78-79	
Plan to meet housing needs	Statement in Community Development Objectives, Page 77.	
Plan for movement of people and goods	Discussion about roadways in the Addressing Infrastructure Needs chapter.	
Plan for community facilities	Additional recreational trails and routes are proposed in the Green Space & Trails chapter.	
	Continued	



ADDITIONAL TOPICS

MPC requirement (continued)	Where it can be found in the Comprehensive Plan	
Statement of interrelationship among various plan components.	The nature of Implementable Comprehensive Planning is to focus on major issues in the community. Each issue tends to address multiple planning elements in an integrated manner. For example, the Improving Borough Communications chapter addresses community engagement in all facets of community life.	
Short- and long term implementation strategies	Found in each chapter for the specific issue.	
Statement that existing and proposed development is compatible with existing and proposed development in adjacent communities and consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan.	We believe that the proposals in this plan are consistent with "Allegheny Places," the Allegheny County comprehensive plan.	
Plan for protection of natural and historic resources	The "Protecting Green Space and Enhancing Trails" and "Addressing Infrastructure Needs" chapters illustrate the goal of preserving the Borough's natural resources.	
Plan for reliable supply of water	The Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan indicates that the water supply for Bell Acres is adequately delivered via Edgeworth Borough Municipal Authority service.	

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ADOPTION RESOLUTION

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

- Community Questionnaire details
- Issues brought up at public meeting 9/12/18

CHAPTER 1: PROTECTING GREEN SPACE & ENHANCING TRAILS

• Potential Funders

CHAPTER 3: ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- Potential Funders
- 15-year road repaving schedule (as of 2021)

BOROUGH OF BELL ACRES ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA RESOLUTION NO. 07122021A

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF BELL ACRES, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING THE IMPLEMENTABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION.

WHEREAS, Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, 53 P.S. §§10301-10307, ("MPC") authorizes the Borough of Bell Acres ("Borough") to develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive plan for the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Borough last updated its comprehensive plan in 2004 and recognizes the importance of utilizing comprehensive plans a tool for assessing and implementing long range community development goals and a municipal plan for managing future grow, development, conservation, land use and community character; and

WHEREAS, Section 302 of the MPC, 53 P.S. §10302, sets forth the procedures for the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Bell Acres Borough Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") serves as the official planning agency for the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council for the Borough of Bell Acres ("Borough Council") charged the Planning Commission, along with consultants Pashek+MTR to engage the community and prepare an updated comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Planning Commission did, in conjunction with Pashek+MTR and input from the residents of the Borough, prepare an implementable comprehensive plan for the Borough ("Comprehensive Plan"); and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan was submitted for comment to the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development's Planning Department, the contiguous municipalities, and the Quaker Valley School District, and any comments received were reviewed and considered in the revision and development of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission and Pashek+MTR have completed the procedure set forth within Article III of the MPC as required prior to the adoption of a comprehensive plan in addition to many additional steps beyond those required such as preparing and reviewing community surveys, public workshops, planning meetings and other community engagement and input; and

WHEREAS, the as a result of the aforementioned process, the Borough has prepared a Implementable Comprehensive Plan for the Borough of Bell Acres, dated May 5, 2021, ("Comprehensive Plan"), consisting of 94 pages of text, graphics, images, and charts regarding the Township's demographic profile, goals, and plans and associated appendices, a true and correct copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit "A;" and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommends adoption of the Comprehensive Plan;

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has held a duly advertised public hearing on July 12, 2021 to consider the adoption of the Implementable Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has reviewed and considered the Comprehensive Plan and desires to adopt the same pursuant to the powers granted by the MPC.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council for the Borough of Bell Acres, incorporating the above recitals by reference:

- **Section 1.** The Implementable Comprehensive Plan of the Borough of Bell Acres, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania dated May 5, 2021, consisting of all maps, tables, figures, and textual matter including any and all appendices, is hereby adopted as the official Comprehensive Plan of the Borough of Bell Acres.
 - **Section 2.** The Bell Acres Borough Comprehensive Plan of 2004 is hereby rescinded.
- **Section 3.** This Resolution shall be appended to, or annotated on, the Comprehensive Plan.

Section 4. The Borough Manager and Solicitor shall distribute digital or paper copies, as applicable, of this Resolution and corresponding Comprehensive Plan to the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development Planning Department, relevant Borough staff, authorities, committees, and boards, for consideration in future planning and actions related to development.

RESOLVED and ADOPTED this 12th day of July 2021.

ATTEST:

BOROUGH OF BELL ACRES

By: Design What we have the second of the seco



Bell Acres Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Summary of Questionnaire results on 4-16-18

Survey available from January 15 to April 9, 2018

Postcard announcements were mailed to all residents providing the survey link or offering to provide hard copies for those not comfortable with online questionnaires.

We had 189 responses which was an excellent response rate. There are 587 households (2010) and a population of 1,388 (2010). Assuming one response per household we have a response rate of 32.2%. there may have been multiple responses from one residence that would lower the response rate.

Average time to take the questionnaire was 13 minutes.

The respondent's age distribution was somewhat similar to age distribution in the census.

AGE GROUPING	CENSUS %	RESPONDENT %
20-29	8.2%	1.6%
30-64	71.6%	66.5%
65+	20.2%	31.9%

- Q1. Most respondents have lived in Bell Acres for a long time. 57.7% lived more than 15 years in the Borough.
- Q2. Half of the respondents moved to Bell Acres from another Allegheny County municipality.
- Q3. Reasons respondents live in Bell Acres (top three):
 - #1 Attractive rural character with scenic landscapes and abundant green space (1.37)
 - #2 Safe and healthy place to raise children (1.74)
 - #3 School District Quality (1.88)
- Q4. See attachment
- Q5. The top 4 reasons why you are satisfied with life in Bell Acres:
 - #1. Police protection (1.25)
 - #2. Fire and emergency protection (1.44)
 - #3. Green space preservation (1.73)
 - #4. Housing types available (1.75)

- Q6. See attachment
- Q7. Top 3 important issues provided by respondents:
 - #1. Protect historic and scenic resources (1.60)
 - #2. Protect open space from development (1.55)
 - #3. Guide future development to areas with existing roads, sewers and other infrastructure (1.87)
- Q8. See attachment
- Q9. An overwhelming 98% of respondents believe that green space is valuable.
- Q10. 90% would support initiatives that would preserve green space.
- Q11. 68% would be willing to provide some financial support toward matching grants for greenway preservation.
- Q12. There was not a clear perspective on whether more dense housing should be allowed in Bell Acres (53% no and 47% yes).
- Q13. See attachment
- Q14. Respondents want info on fracking (78%).
- Q15. Strong support for linking existing open space (78% yes).
- Q16. 86% supported exploring the option of a "citizens bill of rights."
- Q17. 51 respondents had experienced flooding on their property during rain events.
- Q18. 33 respondents were interested in converting their well water to public water.
- Q19. 47 respondents were interested in converting their private sewer system to public sewers.
- Q20. Most people learn about what is going on in Bell Acres via word of mouth (82%). The newspaper received 53%.
- Q21. 51 respondents gave contact info so additional work on the plan can be sent.
- Q22. See attachment
- Q23. See age analysis at the beginning of this summary.

Bell Acres Issues from Public Meeting on September 12, 2018

Protection of greenspace - maintain rural character (no big box development)	24
Hawthorn Acres - raw sewage, need public sewer, clean water act - Big Sewickley Creek Road	21
Do no permit fracking under boro or public park property or other areas	19
Dedicated funding for open space and water quality	11
Bike paths - get off Big Sewickley Creek Road	10
Proper funding for police and fire	10
Control flooding on Big Sewickley Creek	6
Revenue from drilling	6
Address disrepair of abandoned property/absentee landlord	5
Add recreational space - possibly Brouchard Park - measured walking trail	5
Enforce speed limits on Camp Meeting Road	5
Newsletter for boro	4
Respect property rights	4
Support new high school - increase property value/quality	4
Problems with hunters in posted areas	4
Resources for veterans from boro	4
Debris collection a couple of times a year	4
Storm drainage improvements - update	3
Understand impact of proposed high school - traffic, etc.	3
Better police/resident relationships	3
Reflective lighting/signs on winding roads - a few streetlights?	3
Develop design guidelines to control appearance	3
Maintain independent recycling/waste management	3
Sidewalks, better road edge to get to bus stops - Big Sewickley Creek Road	3
Need fire department volunteers	3
Reverse 911	3
Clean air - maintain current ordinances - website updates	2
Concern with higher density variances to current ordinances	2
If going to frack, do it properly	1
Maintenance of Allegheny Land Trust deer control	1
More police during busing - speeding - not stopping for buses	1
Encourage attendance at community meetings	1
Provide natural gas	1
Concern with burning in boro - county ordinance	1
Concern with erosion, fallen trees in creeks - caused by development	0
Tar and chips doesn't last long enough - better options?	0
Excess drips - Bell Farms	0

GREEN SPACE AND ACQUISITION FUNDERS

DCED Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP)

Purpose: Projects which involve development, rehabilitation and improvements to public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails and river conservation.

Eligibility:

- For-Profit Businesses
- Municipalities
- Councils of Governments
- Authorized Organization
- Institution of Higher Education
- Watershed Organization

Local Match Requirement: Grants shall not exceed \$250,000 for any project. A 15% match of the total project cost is required.

Website: https://dced.pa.gov/programs/greenways-trails-and-recreation-program-gtrp/

DCED MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)

Purpose: Grants are available for three purposes: shared service activities, community planning and floodplain management.

- Shared service activities: consolidating or regionalizing services among multiple counties and municipalities, boundary change studies, and shared personnel. New or expanded intergovernmental initiatives that promote local government efficiencies and effectiveness.
- Community planning: comprehensive plans and parts thereof, land use ordinances, Transit Revitalization Investment District planning studies and entrepreneurial/innovative plans that support community and economic development improvements. Emphasis on multi-municipal plans.
- Floodplain management: reimbursement for costs of preparation, enactment, administration and enforcement of floodplain management regulations pursuant to the Flood Plain Management Act.

Eligibility: Counties and municipalities may apply. Shared service activities require two or more participating municipalities. Some projects are open to COGs and other intergovernmental organizations where duly authorized by participating municipalities.

Local Match Requirement: Grants of up to 50 percent of eligible costs.

Website: https://dced.pa.gov/programs/municipal-assistance-program-map/

DCED WATERSHED RESTORATION AND PROTECTION PROGRAM (WRPP)

Purpose: Act 13 of 2012 establishes the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds to the Commonwealth Financing Authority for watershed restoration and protection projects. The overall goal of the Watershed Restoration and Protection Program (WRPP) is to restore, and maintain restored stream reaches impaired by the uncontrolled discharge of nonpoint source polluted runoff, and ultimately to remove these streams from the Department of Environmental Protection's Impaired Waters list.

Projects which involve the construction, improvement, expansion, repair, maintenance or rehabilitation of new or existing watershed protection Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Eligibility:

- Municipalities
- Councils of Governments
- Authorized Organization
- Institution of Higher Education
- Watershed Organization
- For-Profit Businesses

Local Match Requirement: There is a maximum of \$300,000 for any project. A 15% match of the total project cost is required.

Website: https://dced.pa.gov/programs/watershed-restoration-protection-program-wrpp/

DCNR Land Conservation, Acquisition and Stewardship

Purpose: The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources helps communities and nonprofit organizations acquire land for public parks and open space to be enjoyed by all for generations to come.

DCNR supports land conservation and acquisition through several methods, including grant funding assistance for acquisition of trail corridors, recreation areas, greenways, critical habitat, and other open space by local government or nonprofit organizations and grant funding assistance for the purchase of conservation easements.

Land acquisition for parks and open space may include fee-simple purchases of a parcel of land, or to fund purchase of properties with rights that have been severed, such as mineral rights.

Conservation easement means an agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government for conservation purposes. The agreement limits certain uses on all or a portion of a property, while keeping the property in the landowner's ownership and control. Provisions that apply may be found in the grant materials.

(continued)

Eligibility:

- Municipalities
- Non-profit organizations

Local Match Requirement: A match is required for all projects and is usually equal to the grant funds awarded. The local match must be cash or donated land value (specific valuation processes apply).

Website: https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/LandAcquisitionGrants/Pages/default.aspx

RAAC GAMING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM FUND (GEDTF)

Purpose: The Allegheny County, Gaming Economic Development and Tourism Fund (GEDTF), administered by the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC), is intended to provide financial assistance to entities to facilitate economic development projects in Allegheny County.

Certain funds appropriated from gaming revenues are deposited with the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) for community and economic development projects in Allegheny County. Annually, RAAC solicits and reviews project proposals from eligible applicants for the CFA's consideration. Eligible uses include:

- Economic Development Projects that promote local economic activity and create and/or retain jobs.
- Infrastructure Development Projects that improve or create infrastructure.
- Job Training: Workforce development projects.
- Community Improvement Projects that improve or create civic, cultural, or recreational activities or facilities.
- Public Safety Projects that promote the safety of affected communities.

Eligibility:

- Municipalities
- Authorities (Redevelopment, Municipal or Industrial)
- Councils of Government
- Non-Profit Organizations and Trusts

Local Match Requirement: All projects must have at minimum of a \$200,000 project budget. Applicants seeking funds for smaller projects should consider other funding sources.

Website: https://www.alleghenycounty.us/economic-development/authorities/gedtf-fund.aspx

TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION FUNDERS

SPC & PENNDOT TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE PROGRAM

Purpose: The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Program provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities; infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility; environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; and, safe routes to school projects. Key criterion in the review of applications will be readiness for implementation and delivery, safety, consistency with local or regional plans; collaboration with stakeholders; and, statewide or regional significance.

Eligibility:

- Local governments
- · Regional transportation authorities
- Transit agencies
- Natural resource or public land agencies, including federal agencies
- · School districts, local education agencies, or

schools

- Tribal governments
- A nonprofit entity responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs
- Any other governmental entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails

Deadline: Next Application Period of PennDOT TA is yet to be determined. Next Application Period of SPC TA Program anticipated Fall 2021.

Local Match Requirement: There is no match requirement; however, local sponsors pay all costs for preconstruction activities (design, environmental clearance, right of way, utilities, etc.) and PennDOT provides 100% cost reimbursement for the construction phase (including construction inspection).

DCED MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION FUND (MTF)

Purpose: Provides grants to encourage economic development and ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to Pennsylvania residents. The program is intended to provide financial assistance to improve transportation assets that enhance communities, pedestrian safety, and transit revitalization. The program is under the direction of the Commonwealth Financing Authority.

Eligibility: Local Governments; Counties; Councils of Governments; Businesses & Non-Profits; Economic Development Organizations; Public Transportation Agencies (including but not limited to an airport authority, public airport, port authority, or similar public entity); and, Rail and Freight Ports

Deadline: Next application period is yet to be determined. Previously, applications were accepted between March 1 and Sept. 30.

Local Match Requirement: 30% match of requested amount (state/federal grants do not count as match); Grants must be between \$100,000 and \$3,000,000.

Website: http://community.newpa.com/programs/multimodal-transportation-fund/

DCNR COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (C2P2)

Purpose: DCNR's Bureau of Recreation and Conservation provides a single point of contact for communities and non-profit conservation agencies seeking state assistance through the C2P2 Program in support of local recreation and conservation initiatives and those that implement Pennsylvania's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This assistance can take the form of grants, technical assistance, information exchange, and training. All of DCNR's funding sources are combined into one annual application cycle and there is a single application format and process with one set of requirements and guidelines.

Eligibility: A wide range of grant and technical assistance programs are offered through C2P2 to help communities, land conservancies, and non-profit organizations plan, acquire, and develop:

- Recreation, park and conservation facilities
- Watersheds and rivers corridors
- Greenways and trails
- Heritage areas and facilities
- Critical habitat, natural areas & open space

Deadline: Next application period is yet to be determined.

Local Match Requirement: Generally, a 50% match by either cash or non-cash value is required

Website: https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Communities/Grants/Pages/default.aspx

PENNDOT MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION FUND

Purpose: Provides grants to ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to the residents of this commonwealth. The program is intended to provide financial assistance to municipalities, councils of governments, businesses, economic development organizations, public transportation agencies, rail freight, passenger rail, and ports in order to improve transportation assets that enhance communities, pedestrian safety, and transit revitalization.

Eligibility: Municipalities; Council of Governments; Business/Non-profit; Economic Development Organization; Public Transportation Agency; Ports or Rail / Freight Entity

Deadline: Next application period is yet to be determined. Applications were open from October 1, 2020 until November 6, 2020.

Local Match Requirement: 30% match of the amount awarded; grants normally do not exceed \$3,000,000

Website: https://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/MultimodalProgram/Pages/default.aspx

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS FUNDERS

DCED FLOOD MITIGATION PROGRAM (FMP)

Purpose: Projects authorized by a flood protection authority, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or identified by a local government for flood mitigation are eligible for the program.

Eligibility:

- Municipalities
- Councils of Governments
- Authorized Organization
- Institution of Higher Education
- Watershed Organization
- For-Profit Businesses

Local Match Requirement: Grants shall not exceed \$500,000 for any project. A 15% match of the total project cost is required.

Website: https://dced.pa.gov/programs/flood-mitigation-program-fmp/

DCED PA SMALL WATER AND SEWER

Purpose: Grants for small water, sewer, storm sewer, and flood control infrastructure projects. Pursuant to Article XVII-A, § 1774.1-A, of the Act of April 9, 1929, P.L. 343, as amended (The Fiscal Code) the sum of \$40,000,000 was made available to the Commonwealth Financing Authority (the "Authority") for eligible projects.

Activities to assist with the construction, improvement, expansion, or rehabilitation or repair of a water supply system, sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, or flood control projects.

Eligibility:

- Municipalities
- Municipal Authorities

Local Match Requirement: Eligible projects are those which have a total project cost of not less than \$30,000 and not more than \$500,000.

Website: https://dced.pa.gov/programs/pa-small-water-sewer/

DIRT, GRAVEL & LOW VOLUME ROAD (DGLVR) PROGRAM

Purpose: Allegheny County Conservation District (ACCD) administers the Dirt, Gravel, & Low Volume Roads (DGLVR) Program in Allegheny County. The program was established to fund projects that promote cost-effective, environmentally sound maintenance practices to correct erosion, runoff and pollution problems.

The DGLVR Program uses funds from the motor vehicle license and registration fund to provide monies to municipalities to stabilize dirt, gravel and low volume roads. The funds are provided to the State Conservation Commission, which then allocates the funds to ACCD based on the miles of dirt, gravel and low volume roads in the county. ACCD is required to use these funds to remedy erosion problems, reduce sedimentation of local waterways, reduce stormwater runoff from roadways and promote the concept of "Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) Practices."

Eligibility: Demonstration project funds are available to public road-owning entities such as municipalities, county parks, PA Game Commission, DCNR, etc. To be eligible to apply for funding, an official from the applying entity must have attended a free 2-day training on ESM practices for unpaved roads within the last 5 years, among other requirements. For the Low Volume Road Program, the municipality must document volume; a low volume road has an existing paved (including chip sealed) surface with a verified average daily traffic count of less than 500 vehicles a day.

Local Match Requrement: A minimum 20% match is required of each organization receiving a grant from the DGLVR Program. For example, if an organization requests and is awarded \$50,000, the entire project will have an investment of \$60,000 or more with the inclusion of matching funds. The matching funds can come from in-kind services, salaries, funding from other grants, etc.

Website: https://www.conservationsolutioncenter.org/images/dglvr/DGLVR-Program-Process-Ver.-1.4.pdf

BELL ACRES BOROUGH FIFTEEN YEAR ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Revised March 19, 2021

YEAR	SERVICES*	ROADS	PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE
2021	M, BR, HMA	Sands Avenue Kennelly Street Lewis Street Sunset Drive	\$134.000
2022	M, BR, HMA	Witherow Road Witherow Road Extension Grouse Lane Dilworth Road	\$148,000
2023	M, BR, HMA	Hamilton Drive Bower Drive Barley Road	\$166,000
2024	M, BR, HMA	Sunset Drive Bell Farm Estates	\$166,000
2025	M, BR, HMA, CMA, DSC	Fairway Road Sevin Road (South)	\$147,000
2026	M, B, HMA	Highview Drive Partridge Court	\$195,000
2027	M, BR, HMA	Beech Ridge Drive	\$205,000
2028	M, BR, HMA	Charleston Square	\$215,000
2029	M, BR, HMA	Skymark Lane Fox Hill Drive	\$210,000
2030	CMA, DSC	Turkeyfoot Road Hunt Road Beadnell Drive	\$190,000
2031	M, BR, HMA	Backbone Road (South)	\$265,000
2032	M, BR, HMA	Backbone Road (North)	\$268,000
2033	M, BR, HMA	Willow Ridge Road North Avenue North Lane	\$301,000
2034	M, BR, HMA	Westholm Drive Pleughal Road Young Road	\$230,000

^{*}M-Milling, BR - Aggregate Base Course Repair, HMA - Hot Mix Asphalt and Wearing Course, CMA - Cold Mix Asphalt Binder Course, DSC - Double Bituminous Seal Coat



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