

## ***Cambria County Comprehensive Plan: Toward a Sustainable Future – 2030***

### ***Introduction***

Cambria County is a diverse county with characteristics reflective of the society as a whole. Lush agricultural fields are found in many rural parts of the county, especially in the northern, central and southeastern sections. There is relatively dense urban and suburban development in southwestern Cambria County in and around the Johnstown area with a range of typical urban characteristics, problems and opportunities. There are verdant wooded hillsides and valleys and surface waters ranging from polluted to pristine. There are fairly self-sustaining small urban areas in and around the older boroughs of Portage, Cresson, Patton, Northern Cambria, Hastings and Nanty Glo. There are open space areas and major outdoor recreation areas such as Prince Gallitzin State Park, Duman Lake and Rock Run Recreation Park. There are areas that unfortunately have sustained economic declines related to the loss of the mining and steel industries, yet there are booming areas such as Ebensburg/Cambria Township and Richland Township, as well as communities like Adams Township feeling the spillover from these areas. Perhaps most importantly, the county has a diversity of people from every race, creed, ethnic group and way of life.

Planning for a County with this diversity is a challenge requiring planning skills that can accommodate rural, suburban and urban needs and perform a delicate “balancing act”. There are “mom-and-pop” business areas in the smaller boroughs and high-density commercial corridors such as Galleria Drive and Scalp Avenue in Richland Township and Route 22 and Mini Mall Road in Cambria Township, all part of “the economy”. The needs associated with preserving agriculture cannot be relegated to developmental needs and vice versa. The needs of the expanding suburban township cannot be a lower priority than the needs of land-starved and financially constrained urban areas. The transportation needs include everything from four-lane limited access highways to safe buggy-ways for a small Amish community, maintenance of adequate rail and air service and meeting the increasing popularity of trails, biking and walking.

In essence, planning in Cambria County is not *all urban, all suburban or all rural*. It is a little of each.

The plan will adhere to the concept of *Sustainable Future Development*, which essentially is a balanced approach that adapts human activities to the constraints and opportunities of the natural and social systems necessary to support development and everyday life. The approach is to accommodate sustainability as a critical and integrated theme within the planning process, analyses and recommendations rather than as an add-on element. Thus, the organization of the process and plan requires an understanding of environmental, social, financial and energy-related issues and making them critical in the planning process.