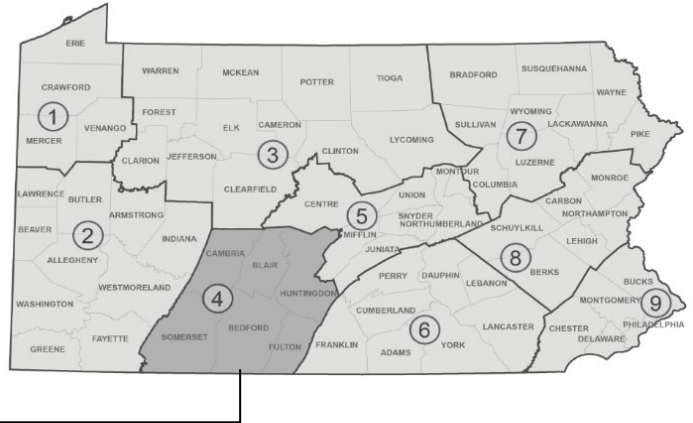
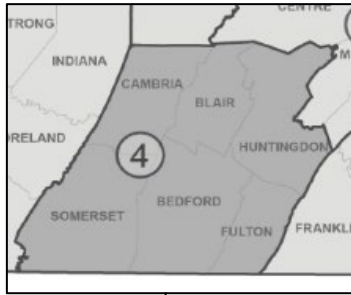




### Focus Area 4

Bedford  
Blair  
Cambria  
Fulton  
Huntingdon  
Somerset



## Demographic Profile

### Key Findings and Conclusions

- There are 236 municipalities in the focus area including two cities: Altoona and Johnstown.
- The focus area has experienced a steady decline in net population between 1960 and 2021, losing approximately 74,000 people, or about 15% of the 1960 population.
- 97% of municipalities in this focus area (219) have populations of less than 5,000. 90% of municipalities (199) have very small populations of less than 2,500.
- The region is aging rapidly. The 65+ population has increased from 19% in 2014 to 21% by 2021.
- The region’s population is overwhelmingly White/Caucasian, with White Alone, Non-Hispanic or Latino representing 93% of the region’s total. Residents marking Black Alone is 3% of the focus area’s population, or just 13,099 residents.
- Poverty within this focus area (12.5%) is higher than the statewide average (11.8%). However, this is not evenly distributed. Cambria and Blair counties’ poverty rate are the highest at 13.9% and 13.5%, likely due to the presence of Altoona and Johnstown.
- Homeownership in this focus area (76.1%) is higher than the statewide average (69.2%). This is likely due to the low rates of the population living in cities or other urban municipalities, as urban populations are more likely to rent.

### Potential Implications for Historic and Cultural Resources

- Decreasing population may lead to higher levels of vacancy and abandonment, particularly in boroughs and cities, which have been experiencing declines for several decades. This trend is likely to impact residential, commercial, and institutional resources.
- Increasing numbers of ethnic groups other than those that are historically associated with the region may suggest that the established narratives of historical significance of communities and buildings may not carry the same meaning with these groups. It may also suggest that there are places that these groups consider significant and worthy of preservation that may not have been documented or considered previously.
- An aging population could have several implications for historic resources. The first is the impact of fixed incomes on the ability to maintain historic properties. Second is the mobility and access needs of individuals who wish to age-in-place and the changes that might necessitate to historic buildings.
- Increasing poverty rates suggest a lack of funds for property maintenance, which could have aesthetic, financial, and health-related effects on the community.



- Homeownership rates suggest that residential landlords are increasingly significant stakeholders in how properties are maintained and rehabilitated. Coupled with increasing poverty rates, this trend may suggest a need for more low-income and affordable housing in the region.
- The relatively small (and decreasing) size of the municipalities in the region may present challenges with matching funds, leadership and administrative capacity for preservation programs and projects.

**Current Population**

- The 2021 population of the 6-county region was 436,648, or just 3% of the total population of Pennsylvania.
- There are 2 cities within the region: Altoona in Blair County and Johnstown in Cambria County.
- Cambria County is the single largest jurisdiction, closely followed by Blair County. Fulton County is the smallest county in the region, with just 11% the population of Cambria.

*Total Population:*

	Bedford	Blair	Cambria	Fulton	Huntingdon	Schuylkill
<b>City</b>	<i>n/a</i>	43,963	18,411	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Borough</b>	8,066	19,926	40,408	1,157	13,510	23,341
<b>Township</b>	39,511	58,825	74,761	13,399	30,582	50,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47,577</b>	<b>122,714</b>	<b>133,580</b>	<b>14,556</b>	<b>44,092</b>	<b>74,141</b>

- The vast majority of the region’s municipalities have small populations, with 219 (97.4%) having populations of 5,000 or less. 199 (89.5%) have populations of less than 2,500.
- There are 5 municipalities that have populations over 10,000. These include Altoona City, Johnstown City, Logan Township, Richland Township, and Somerset Township.

*Number of Municipalities by Population:*

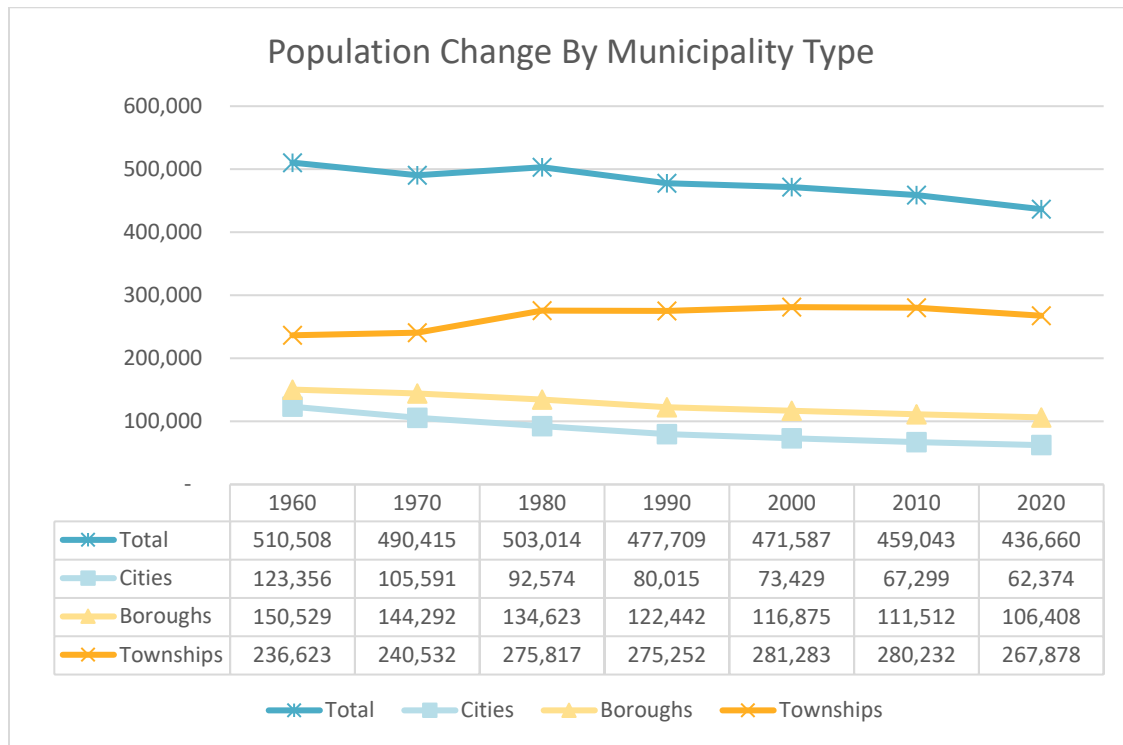
Population (2020)	Focus Area 4	Bedford	Blair	Cambria	Fulton	Huntingdon	Somerset
<2,500	199	34	13	49	13	46	44
2,500 to 4,999	20	3	4	9	0	1	3
5,000 to 9,999	12	1	5	3	0	1	2
>10,000	5	0	2	2	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>

**Population Trends 1960-2020**

- This region has experienced a steady decline in net population between 1960 and 2021, losing approximately 74,000 people, or about 15% of the 1960 population.
- Cambria County is experiencing the greatest rate of population decrease currently, losing 7% of the population between 2010 and 2020.
- Altoona and Johnstown, the two cities in the region, had the greatest decreases in population. Their combined population is about 50% of the 1960 population.



- Though townships in the region had been growing since 1960, since 2010 they began to decrease, meaning that all municipality types and counties in the region decreased.
- The overall trend seen over the longer 1960-2020 timeframe does not differ significantly from population changes experienced in the more recent 2010-2020 period, though there is a greater rate of decrease.



**Homeownership**

- Overall, the region’s homeownership rate (76.1%) is higher than the statewide average (69.2%). This follows the historical pattern.
- However, this varies by municipality. As expected, the homeownership rate is lower in the region’s cities at 59.8%. It is highest in the region’s townships at 83.5%, and 68.9% in the region’s boroughs.
- Somerset, Bedford, and Huntingdon counties have the highest homeownership, while Blair has the lowest, at 71.8%. This is still above the statewide average.

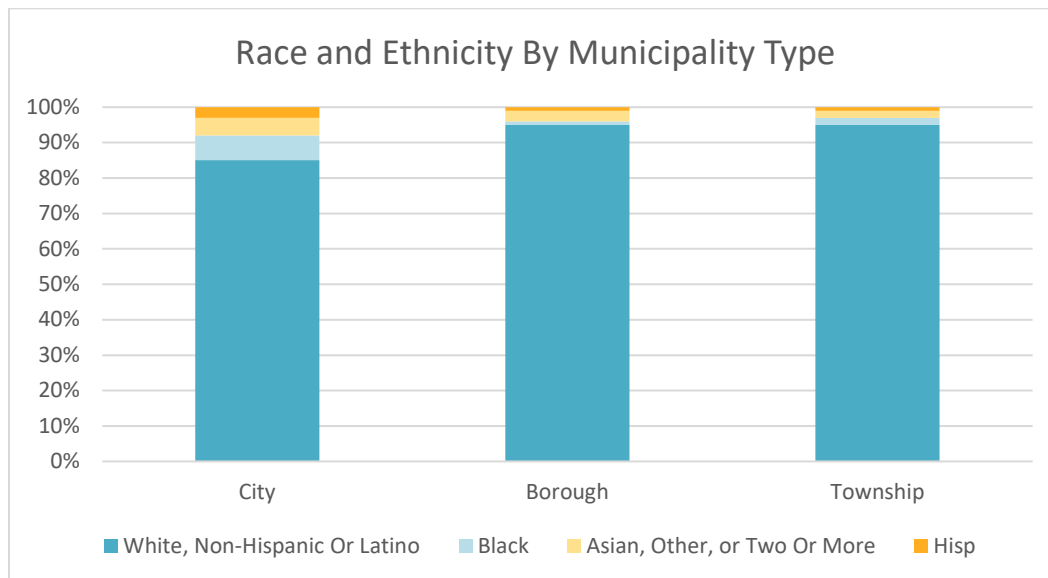
	Region 8	Bedford	Blair	Cambria	Fulton	Huntingdon	Somerset
<b>Homeownership Rate</b>	<b>76.1%</b>	79.4%	71.8%	75.8%	77.6%	78.0%	80.4%



**Race and Ethnicity**

- The region’s population is predominantly White/Caucasian, with White Alone (Non-Hispanic or Latino) representing 93% of the region’s total. This is a much higher proportion than that state average of 75% White Alone (Non-Hispanic or Latino). This is also decreasing. In 2014, White Alone (Non-Hispanic or Latino) made up 95% of the population.
- Huntingdon County is the most racially and ethnically diverse in the region, with Black Alone making up 5% of the population. Bedford County is the least racially and ethnically diverse, with White Alone (Non-Hispanic or Latino) making up 96% of the population.
- There is slightly more racial and ethnic diversity within the region’s cities, Altoona and Johnstown. While the region overall is 93% White Alone (Non-Hispanic or Latino), within the region’s cities this population only makes up 85% of the total.

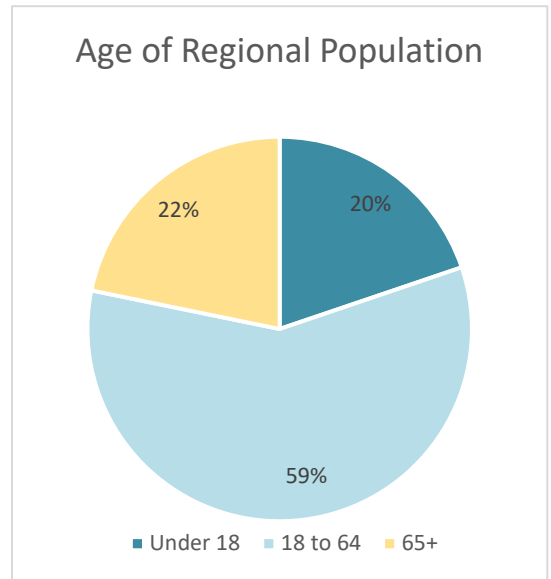
	Bedford	Blair	Cambria	Fulton	Huntingdon	Somerset	Focus Area 4
<b>White, Non-Hispanic Or Latino</b>	96%	94%	94%	95%	90%	94%	93%
<b>Black</b>	1%	2%	3%	1%	5%	2%	3%
<b>Hispanic Or Latino</b>	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Asian, Other Race, or Two or More</b>	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47,577</b>	<b>122,714</b>	<b>133,580</b>	<b>14,556</b>	<b>44,092</b>	<b>74,141</b>	<b>436,648</b>





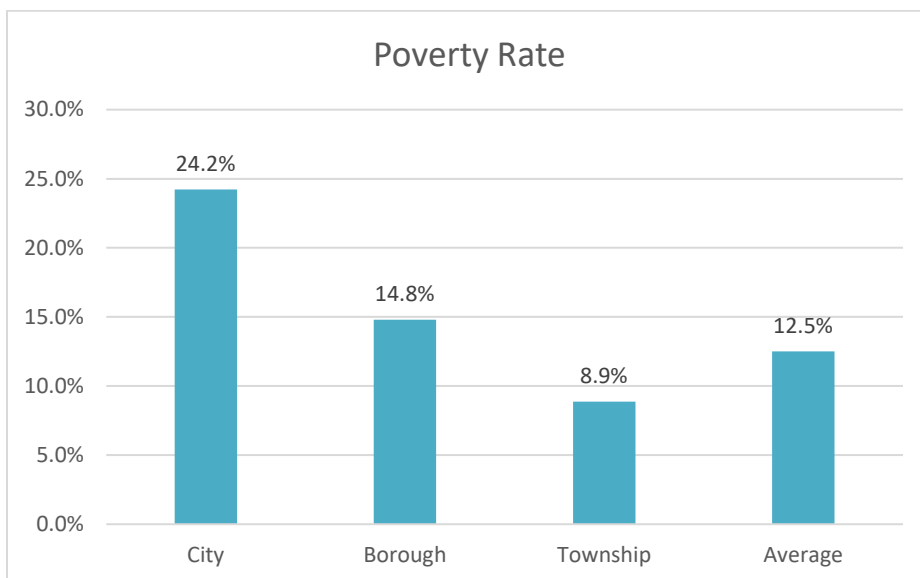
### Age

- As of 2021, 59% of the region’s population was between 18-65; 19% was under 18, and 22% was over 65. The statewide averages are Under 18 (20%), 18-64 (61%) and over 65 (18%), so this region skews older than Pennsylvania on average, with more seniors and fewer children.
- The distribution of age groups by municipality type was also roughly proportional to the regional breakdown, although cities had a slightly larger percentage of residents under 18, and a slightly lower percentage of residents over 65. Johnstown and Altoona have age breakdowns similar to statewide averages.
- This region’s 65+ population has grown from 19% in 2014 to 21% in 2021. The 65+ population has grown statewide as residents continue to age. Increasing age can be due to multiple factors including a low birth rate and out-migration of younger residents.
- The median age has been increasing since 1990 across all counties in the region. Bedford County is the highest at 47.2, while the statewide average is just 40.8.



### Poverty

- Just as median incomes are generally below statewide averages, poverty within this focus area (12.5%) is higher than the statewide average (11.8%). However, this is not evenly distributed. Cambria and Blair counties’ poverty rate are the highest at 13.9% and 13.5%, while Bedford and Somerset counties are the lowest at 10.5% and 10.6%, respectively.
- The high rate of poverty in Cambria and Blair counties is likely due to the presence of Johnstown and Altoona, which have high poverty rates. Averaged together, 24% of their residents are impoverished.





## Survey Results

The following findings and survey results are from PA SHPO’s unscientific online public survey developed to inform the 2024-2034 statewide plan. It was available to the public, partners, stakeholders, and others from September 2023 through May 2024.

### Key Findings

- When asked what contributions historic places make to their community or region, the top two most selected options were that historic places protect Pennsylvania’s unique stories and heritage for future generations and that they help to teach and remind us about the past. However focus area respondents uniquely were much more likely to select that historic places help sustain their community through heritage tourism, with 28% of respondents selecting this option as opposed to just 15% of statewide respondents.
- Statewide, respondents wanted to most prioritize historic archeological sites, cemeteries and burial places, and downtown commercial districts, in the order of top selection down. Within this focus area, respondents selected prioritizing downtown commercial districts, then cemeteries/burial spaces, then sacred and religious properties.
- When asked about threats to these historic places, the statewide and focus area responses diverge sharply. Focus area respondents selected most ‘Vacancy/disinvestment/deferred maintenance’, ‘Changes in community demographics (aging populations, loss of population, etc.)’, and ‘Little or no interest in historic preservation’. All of these selections were significantly more common than in the statewide responses.
- Both statewide and in this focus area, the most commonly selected response to what would most aid historic preservation is additional funding. However, one unique difference was that this focus area in particular more often selected was municipal employees having greater knowledge of preservation programs.
- When asked where funding should be directed, 55% of focus respondents selected more funding to history/preservation program and municipal construction projects, the highest selection rate for that question.
- When asked about the best types of educational and awareness tools, focus area and statewide responses focused on successful case studies as a helpful tool.

### Focus Area Highlights

For this section, comparisons were drawn between statewide responses to survey question in contrast to focus area responses. Cells below are highlighted to show which responses are over or underrepresented by the focus area’s respondents. In total, this region had 100 respondents out of the 2,238 statewide respondents.

#### Legend:

Response rate 10%+ higher than statewide
Response rate 3%-9% higher than statewide
Response rate within 2% of statewide
Response rate 3%-9% lower than statewide
Response rate 10%+ lower than statewide



Q5. Which of the following are the most important contributions you think historic places make to your community or region? Select up to 2.	Focus Area Responses	Statewide Responses
They help sustain my community through heritage tourism.	28%	15%
They provide unique economic development opportunities.	18%	12%
They help teach and remind us about the past.	38%	40%
They protect Pennsylvania’s unique stories and heritage for future generations.	63%	64%
They encourage sustainable, walkable, ‘green’ communities.	4%	10%
They improve the beauty and quality of life of my community.	24%	25%
They are a big part of our community/regional identity.	22%	28%
Not sure / I haven't really thought about it before.	0%	0%
None of these / I don’t think they make valuable contributions.	0%	0%
Other (please specify)	3%	3%

Q6. Which of the following types of older and historic places would you prioritize for preservation in your community? Select up to 3.	Focus Area Responses	Statewide Responses
Cemeteries/burial places	33%	35%
Pre-historic archaeological sites	17%	18%
Historic archaeological sites	24%	36%
Sacred spaces/religious properties	30%	18%
Transportation infrastructure	14%	7%
Residential neighborhoods	25%	30%
Downtown commercial districts	40%	31%
Public buildings	22%	21%
Institutional buildings	3%	6%
Educational buildings	7%	7%
Agricultural properties	13%	18%
Industrial areas	11%	5%
Landscapes	21%	27%
Recreational places	20%	13%
None of these should be preserved	0%	0%
Other (please specify)	4%	9%



<b>Q7. What types of places do you think are most threatened in your community? Select no more than 3.</b>	<b>Focus Area Responses</b>	<b>Statewide Responses</b>
Places that reflect local/regional history and culture	42%	43%
Buildings constructed from 1960 through the early 1980s	14%	10%
Archaeological sites	8%	14%
Places associated with underrepresented histories (for example, African American, LGBTQ+, specific ethnic/racial communities)	18%	24%
Recreational places (for example, amusement parks, swimming pools, etc.)	11%	11%
Older industrial areas	17%	15%
Traditional downtown shopping/commercial areas	42%	33%
Residential areas built before 1950	30%	24%
Planned suburban housing developments/neighborhoods built after 1950	0%	2%
Religious buildings/sacred spaces	22%	14%
Agricultural buildings/landscapes	17%	27%
Unusual and/or landmark buildings	28%	28%
Cemeteries/burial places	14%	14%
Other (please specify)	6%	6%

<b>Q8. Thinking about your response to the above question, what do you think is threatening those places? Select all that apply.</b>	<b>Focus Area Responses</b>	<b>Statewide Responses</b>
Development pressures (rural, suburban, urban, etc.)	44%	65%
Gentrification	11%	19%
Changes in community demographics (aging populations, loss of population, etc.)	66%	39%
Vacancy/disinvestment/deferred maintenance	61%	50%
Lack of local protection/regulation	42%	43%
Local zoning practices	14%	24%
Little or no interest in historic preservation	54%	46%
Few or no preservation advocate(s)	38%	27%
Misguided or misinformed development (parking lots, housing density, widescale demolition)	36%	39%
Interest in preservation but don't know where to start	21%	14%
Other (please specify)	7%	11%





Q10. Choose up to 5 things that you think would encourage and/or assist historic preservation efforts where you live.	Focus Area Responses	Statewide Responses
Increased public funding for historic preservation.	78%	72%
Municipal employees with greater knowledge of local, state, and/or federal preservation programs.	53%	41%
Access to knowledgeable technical experts.	22%	18%
Access to qualified contractors and tradespeople.	19%	21%
Access to reputable and easy-to-understand online resources.	24%	23%
Local ordinances/regulation to protect older and historic places.	39%	48%
Informed elected officials knowledgeable about historic preservation.	46%	46%
Increased public awareness of the older and historic places in the community.	58%	59%
Adding more properties to the National Register of Historic Places.	20%	15%
Gathering and maintaining up-to-date information about older and historic places, including archaeological sites.	27%	28%
Identification and preservation of places associated with underrepresented history.	24%	25%
Connecting preservation with sustainability, economic development, and planning.	53%	52%
Other (please specify)	7%	4%

Q11. When you think about needing more funding/money for historic preservation, what 3 specific things would you like to have?	Focus Area Responses	Statewide Responses
Financial support for private residential property owners.	33%	30%
More money to history/preservation organizations and municipalities for construction projects.	55%	45%
Expand access the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit for income-producing properties.	36%	28%
Funding for preservation plans to help manage change in communities.	22%	31%
Money for surveys to identify historic places in a community.	13%	18%
Funding to support or restart local preservation networks and advocates.	30%	26%
Financial support for municipalities interested in starting a historic preservation program.	19%	28%
Grant or other incentive to preserve specific threatened resources.	46%	52%
Funding for local training programs for municipal employees, tradespeople, contractors, etc.	26%	21%
Other (please specify)	4%	5%



Q12. If you think education about and greater awareness of historic preservation is important, what 3 tools do you think would be most useful?	Focus Area Responses	Statewide Responses
Specific and replicable examples of successful preservation construction projects.	45%	47%
Specific and replicable examples about community archaeology projects.	12%	12%
Case studies of successful preservation planning efforts or save a threatened resource.	29%	38%
User and resource guides for finding information, researching a historic property, using state or federal preservation programs, etc.	63%	58%
Toolkits for preserving specific types of historic places, like agricultural buildings or cemeteries.	43%	40%
Toolkit for talking about historic preservation and the importance of historic places.	38%	35%
101-type information about historic preservation, including vocabulary, state and federal laws, etc.	34%	34%
101-type information about archaeology, including vocabulary, types of sites, etc.	11%	9%
I don't think education/awareness is important.	1%	0%
Other (please specify)	3%	6%

Q14. Did you know that Pennsylvania has a state preservation agency, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO)?	Focus Area Responses	Statewide Responses
Yes	65%	70%
I think so, but I'm not sure	14%	12%
No	20%	18%
Other (please specify)	0%	1%

## Themes & Issues Summary

Analysis of the data compiled through the statewide planning process:

- The three top historic preservation themes for Region 4 are: community, education, and context.
- The three top historic preservation issues for Region 4 are: funding, access, and reuse.
- The residents of Focus Area 4 want to strengthen their community and preservation by combining resources of several preservation focused organizations to pool resources and volunteers to work towards common goals and be more collaborative with other disciplines, such as outdoor recreation. More funding that is easier to access and incentives can assist in achieving this.
- The area is rich in historic resources that can build community through adaptive reuses which can be encouraged by education local elected officials and residents about the economic benefits of preservation.