

## **SWOT Analysis**

*SWOT is an acronym that stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. We are using SWOT analysis for strategic planning purposes to identify aspects of the community that are doing well, where it can improve, and how it fits in the competitive landscape. Our SWOT Analysis splits into internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats).*

## **Arts, Recreation & Entertainment**

### **Strengths (Internal)**

- Greenville has a robust offering of art experiences: Greenville Symphony Orchestra, Greenville Area Community Theater, Sans MOCO Gallery, Weyers-Sampson Gallery, Thiel Players, High School Music and Theater, etc.
- The Shenango River provides outdoor recreation.
- Proximity to Pymatuning State Park
- The Greenville-Jamestown trail development continues.
- Greenville has faithful organizations dedicated to recreation development such as: Mercer County Trails Association, Shenango River Watchers, Riverside Revitalization, Recreation of Northern Mercer County (formally the pool committee).
- Greenville experiences all the seasons.
- Despite it being frequently said that there is nothing to do in Greenville, there certainly is.
- There are several sports associations.

### **Weaknesses (Internal)**

- There is no common calendar to centrally advertise and organize everything that is going on and being offered in the community.
- Attendance and participation continue to be a challenge for most organizations focused on Arts, Recreation and Entertainment.
- Sports associations seem fragmented.
- Maintenance of Riverside Park is difficult for the borough to keep up with and now relies on external support, such as Riverside Revitalization.

### **Opportunities (External)**

- Development of a common calendar to increase community awareness.
- Development of an overarching umbrella for sports associations (similar to the former GALSA) to make activities more accessible and possibly more economical.
- Developing a robust community indoor recreation facility (the objective of the Recreation of Northern Mercer County group)
- Cooperative advertising to reduce individual organizations costs.
- The Shenango River can be highlighted even more as a community asset in a variety of ways.

- Pymatuning tourism pipeline with the completion of the Greenville-Jamestown trail.

### **Threats (External)**

- Socio-economic hurdles for some families to afford participation.
- Culture is still technology-heavy for youth, making arts and recreation activities less appealing.
- Competition with recreation communities who may have more to offer.

### **Downtown & Commercial Blocks**

#### **Strengths (Internal)**

- Greenville has the desirable classic downtown look and streetscape.
- There is plenty of parking.
- Downtown has a variety of specialty shops.
- There is a balance of businesses represented: Service, Food, and Retail.
- Downtown is accessible from Thiel College.
- Downtown is very walkable.
- Greenville still has a number of business owners and community members who are dedicated to making the downtown even better.

#### **Weaknesses (Internal)**

- Thiel students are spending less and doing less than in the past.
- Retail represented does not appeal to younger generations.
- Shops do not have similar or consistent hours.
- There is a lack of cooperation between businesses.
- Truck traffic causes harm to the buildings, creates noise pollution and can be dangerous for pedestrians.
- There are over a dozen empty buildings in disrepair.
- There is no up-to-date inventory of commercial buildings.
- Building owners are often uncooperative, unresponsive, and will not sell even when empty.
- The downtown lacks a constant maintenance to keep streetscape in good condition.

#### **Opportunities (External)**

- A better relationship with PennDOT can be developed.
- There are buildings available and inexpensive.
- Buildings available are perfect for e-commerce based businesses that are still looking for a brick and mortar.
- Downtown Business Association (DBA), or some version/semblance of organization can be developed.

- Downtown housing, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartments can be improved in most buildings allowing for better mixed-use space.
- Various opportunities to partner with Thiel College.
- Redevelopment Authority (through Home Rule) could garner focus on economic development downtown.
- Opportunities to build community through our downtown (recognizing it as public space) and strengthen relationships are plentiful.

### **Threats (External)**

- Culture continues to shift toward e-commerce and mega-businesses like Amazon make it difficult for the small business to thrive.
- Our local economy continues to struggle.
- Greenville has a large and growing welfare population with different spending habits.
- Banks do not look favorable on downtown lending.

### **Economic Development**

#### **Strengths (Internal)**

- We have an Industrial Park that serves our area well.
- Greenville has affordable and available property/buildings/homes.
- Greenville maintains it's small town charm.
- We have a local college.
- Greenville boasts great schools.
- Greenville has tech infrastructure available.
- Greenville has a tax incentive program for businesses to benefit from (LERTA)
- Greenville offers important local services.
- Greenville has strong community members advocating for the area.

#### **Weaknesses (Internal)**

- The Borough is landlocked.
- The Borough (and the County as a whole) has seen a steady decline in population.
- Our population has a lack of experience and education in newer fields.
- There is a negative perception of the area (high taxes).
- There is less and less funding every year for development-oriented projects.
- GAEDC shows little interest in the Borough.
- Our inter-organizational cooperation is fractured and we often have duplication of services.
- We have a lack of site ready facilities.
- Proximity to interstates is still too far?

## **Opportunities (External)**

- We have the opportunity to capture Industrial Park workers as residents.
- Improvements made to Downtown's image would spur on new investments.
- Greenville still has more to benefit from and capitalize on its recreation and tourism-related attractions.
- Although Greenville does maintain a small town charm, there is still opportunity for improvements.
- The trinity site, once available, is a large parcel of undeveloped land for new growth.
- We have the opportunity to diversify industry.
- We can capitalize on the affordability to upstart here in marketing to the entrepreneur.
- We have rail access.

## **Threats (External)**

- The labor industry is heading more and more into Technology, Robotics, and AI.
- Generational and societal changes affect the job market and economic climate.

## **Organizations & Institutions**

### **Strengths (Internal)**

- Greenville has a strong history of charitable service organizations.
- Greenville High School was recently recognized as a Blue Ribbon school.
- Greenville Area School District has positioned themselves strategically with possible consolidation in the future.
- Thiel College is under new leadership to reverse the declining student population and improve student retention.
- Greenville Area Public Library was recently renovated and boasts robust programming.

### **Weaknesses (Internal)**

- Our organizations work independently to a fault.
- The communication between organizations and students at GHS and Thiel is complicated or restricted.

## **Opportunities (External)**

- A community calendar could be developed to help promote all of the activities that take place and help boost participation for organizations.
- Community volunteerism could be improved through a community volunteer day or volunteer fair.

- Big community projects could be broken down into smaller opportunities for organizations to take a piece in order to accomplish a greater whole together. (i.e. Riverside Park improvements)
- Sports organizations could benefit from an umbrella organizations.

### **Threats (External)**

- Participation is becoming much more difficult due to busy schedules.
- Younger generations are less interested in joining fraternal and service organizations.

### **Residential Neighborhoods**

#### **Strengths (Internal)**

- There is housing stock available.
- Our neighborhoods have become more diverse (age, race, career, etc.)
- Although our housing stock is made up almost entirely of older homes, they were built to last.
- Greenville has a much lower cost of living than most places.
- Greenville still maintains its “Small Town Community” vibe.
- Although we are a smaller community, we still have important amenities such as a college, library, hospital, etc.
- You can “know your neighbor” and have a sense of community.
- We are relatively safe.
- Our town is incredibly walkable.
- We maintain a sense of independence.
- Our neighborhoods have impressive shade trees that make for a comfortable green setting.
- We have an excellent school system.
- Lots of churches and different denominations.
- We have a robust arts and recreation scene for such a small community.
- “All the necessities of a big city with the comfort of a small town.”

#### **Weaknesses (Internal)**

- Our roads are terrible, with no cash flow for major improvements in the near future.
- We have our fair share of unmaintained properties.
- There is no public transit for people who need to go greater distances than what is walkable.
- We do not have any short-term housing available.
- We have not marketed ourselves well, or even at all.
- Social media self-deprecation would scare anyone away.
- Greenville’s property taxes are higher than most in the county (but Greenville provides more services than most in the county as well.)
- Property values have decreased overall.

- Although we have houses on the market for “cheap” many of them come with a lot of work for little return on the investment.
- We are a little too far from the Interstate.

### **Opportunities (External)**

- Our housing stock on the market could be a house flippers dream.
- Studies are showing that millennials are willing to commute to the city for small town living and we are placed in good proximity to Pittsburgh and Cleveland.
- Potential development of downtown 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartments.
- Home-based tech jobs have access to fast internet.
- We have areas that are available for commercial or mixed-use development (not just on the trinity site.)
- The LERTA Program could be better marketed to add incentives for redevelopment.

### **Threats (External)**

- Although we have beautiful shade trees throughout our neighborhoods, they are aging and we have no plan in place to replace them.
- We lose our most talented young residents to big cities because we have a small number of career building opportunities.
- UPMC is switching from a general hospital to a specialty hospital.
- Surrounding municipalities benefit from our services (parks, fire, library) without paying or paying enough – the Greenville taxpayer subsidizes when it is in no position to do so.