

alternative is driving into town. The corridor is open to pedestrians and bicyclists and traverses our central business district. The 2008 Downtown Master Plan proposes infill development along this corridor to further capitalize on its strength as a connector corridor within our community (see Figure 3).

While not a borough, the City of Meadville faces similar issues. They have launched a brilliant plan to connect open spaces throughout their community, focusing on the path of Mill Run. Unfortunately, in many locations the stream itself is underground, which led to creatively using open spaces along the corridor to maintain the link ages from the local high school property, through the core of the community to the confluence with French Creek (see Figure 2).

Alleys in a community can function as open space connectors. In Timbherstown, an enhanced alley served as a much needed connection linking to a large recreational open space and the Coney Creek corridor. The Timbherstown Master Plan proposes expanding these existing connections to a new neighborhood and eventually to the Amtrak station. When complete, visitors by train will be able to make their way from the platform to the downtown entirely separate from the vehicular routes (see Figure 3).

Parks, alleys, plazas, stream corridors, abandoned rail lines and even well appointed streetscapes are the building blocks of a successfully connected downtown. The means to this connected end is planning and using the value in these alternate routes. The time is right for this way of thinking in our communities. It is supported nationally and regionally. What is necessary now is the local support and desire. The movement that began so long ago in Boston is finally finding its way to the boroughs of Pennsylvania. (3)



FIGURE 3 The Master Plan proposes linking areas so that multiple modes of transportation can access the downtown.

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