

# Johnstown 2020

Report and Recommendations for  
2020 Regional Vision

April 2009



Next Generation Consulting

## AN OPEN LETTER TO JOHNSTOWN

April 27, 2009

Dear People-who-care-about-Johnstown's-future:

In 2020, Congressman John Murtha will be 88 years old. Mayor Thomas Trigona will be 73. The oldest "Gen Xers" (folks born between 1961 and 1981) will be marching towards their 50<sup>th</sup> birthdays, and the oldest "Millennials" (b. 1982-2001) - who are currently coming out of your colleges today - will be in their late 30's.

*How old will Johnstown be?*

If the Johnstown region sits idly by and allows the trends that are already at play run their course, Johnstown will be either much older, or much smaller in 2020.

What will it take to re-route these trends and give Johnstown the lift it needs to become a 21<sup>st</sup> Century city, a magnet for the next generation workforce?

Since last October, our team has been listening to and working with thousands of your citizens, neighbors, leaders, coworkers and former residents. The key question we asked was, "What will it take for Johnstown to be a talent magnet in 2020?"

Some of the answers, e.g. create some cool jobs to attract and keep younger workers, will not surprise you. But other things might. For example, almost four of every ten young people who've left Johnstown admit that they've thought about coming back.

This document is a start; it is *your* start at helping Johnstown become a talent magnet by 2020.

We believe you can do it,



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## GLOSSARY

The following terms are used frequently throughout this document.

**Young Professionals or “YPs”** are people aged 20-40, many of whom have post-secondary education. They are Johnstown’s future workforce and future community leaders. Throughout the report, the terms “YPs” and “young professionals” are used interchangeably.

**“Johnstown,” the “Johnstown area,” and the “Johnstown region”** are used interchangeably to refer to the entire MSA including (but not limited to) the city of Johnstown, Adams township, Cambria township, Richland township, and northern Somerset County. In areas where recommendations are specific to a geographic area, e.g. a neighborhood, we use specific street names, intersections, or well-recognized neighborhood names.

The term **“Homegrown”** refers to a person who has lived her or his whole life in the Johnstown region.

The term **“Boomeranger”** refers to a person who grew up in the Johnstown region, moved away (possibly for college or a job), and returned to the area.

The term **“Transplant”** refers to a person who did not grow up in the region, but moved to the Johnstown area from somewhere else. Transplants usually relocate for career reasons, quality of life, and/or to be close to a spouse and/or their family.

A **“Convincible”** is a term used to refer to someone who’s moved away from the area, and has thought about moving back.

Johnstown’s **“Handprint”** is a visual scoring system that measure the region in Seven Indexes the next generation values: Vitality, Earning, Learning, After Hours, Around Town, Cost of Lifestyle, and Social Capital. See page 10 for Johnstown’s handprint compared to Next Cities™. See page 27 for descriptions of the Seven Indexes included in the handprint.

A **Next City™** is one that has the amenities most likely to retain and attract a next generation workforce. Next Cities™ tend to have higher than average scores in most of the Seven Indexes (listed above.) For that reason, Next Cities™ are attractive to the next generation workforce, and also to the knowledge-based companies that rely on a skilled and educated population.

**2020 Regional Vision** is the stakeholder group that assembled to fund the project outlined in this document, and to serve as a catalyst to assist Johnstown in becoming a talent magnet for future generations. More information is at <http://2020RegionalVision.com>

**Young Professionals of the Alleghenies or “YPA”** is an organization consisting of YPs in the Johnstown Region dedicated to improving the quality of life in the community, assisting area business with recruiting and retaining YPs, and encouraging YPs to become engaged with the community. Learn more about the YPA at <http://www.youngpa.org/>

**Next Generation Consulting or “NGC”** is the organizations that conducted the research and analysis you’re reading right now. They refer to themselves in the third person throughout this document, as either NGC or as Next Generation Consulting. More information is available at <http://nextgenerationconsulting.com>

## RATIONALE

### Why this project? Why now?

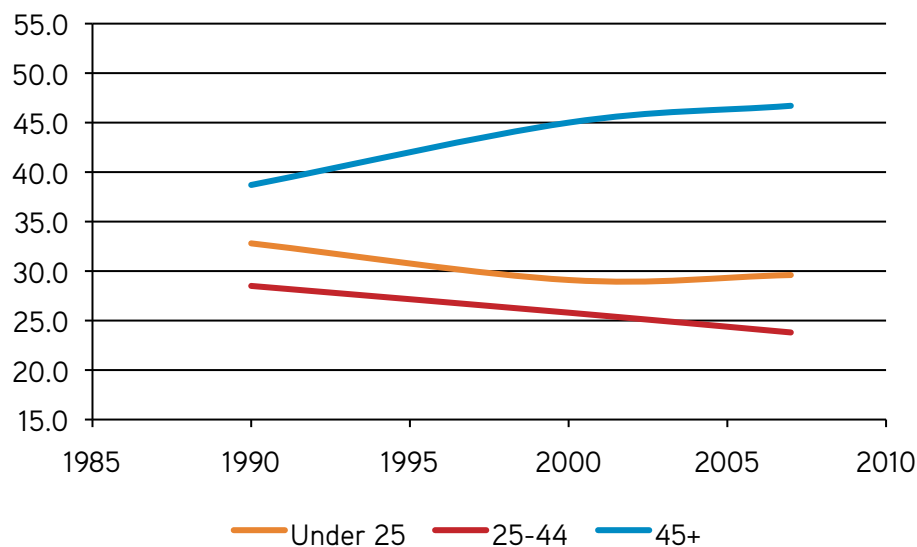
The Johnstown region is facing considerable demographic and economic challenges. The community is aging, employment opportunities are limited, and the community lacks a coherent vision of Johnstown's future. In order to survive and prosper, Johnstown must confront and overcome these challenges.



#### The Johnstown Region must retain and attract a younger workforce.

The 2020 Regional Vision stakeholders remark, "By 2020, Johnstown will either be much smaller or much older *if we do nothing*." The following table illustrates this situation; over the last 27 years – especially since 2000 – there has been a sharp increase in the number of people over 45 years old in the area, and a marked decrease in the number of younger people, aged 44 and younger.

**Table 1: Johnstown Population Changes, 1990-2007<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau



**Johnstown must diversity its economy to include a robust mix of knowledge- and professional service-based occupations, beyond government-funded positions.**

The top ten employers in Johnstown are:<sup>2</sup>

1. Conemaugh Health System
2. Pennsylvania State Government
3. Cambria County
4. United States Government
5. Wal-Mart
6. Concurrent Technologies Corporation
7. DRS Laurel Technologies
8. American Red Cross
9. Saint Francis University
10. University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown

Half of these top-ten employers are either governmental bodies (e.g. Cambria County) or recipients of government funding. While this lends economic stability to the area for now, a more diverse economic growth strategy should be pursued.

The growth of government-related employment in Johnstown, and defense-related employment in particular, is ostensibly due to the leadership of Congressman Murtha, Johnstown's representative in Congress and chairperson of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee. According to the *New York Times*, in 2006, alone, Congressman Murtha secured 80 million in defense spending for the Johnstown area.<sup>3</sup>

"[Congressman Murtha] has steered billions of dollars to his district over the years...Mr. Murtha's patronage has transformed Johnstown into a national hub of the defense business, attracting giants like Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman."<sup>4</sup>

Congressman Murtha's impact on the Johnstown economy is large and important. However, Mr. Murtha is expected to retire in the upcoming years. In order to survive, the Johnstown region must take a proactive position to attract a wider variety of employers in preparation for the post-Murtha era.

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<sup>2</sup> Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce website, <http://www.johnstownchamber.com/region/top50employers.asp>

<sup>3</sup> "Trading Votes for Pork Across the House Aisle," *New York Times*, 2 October 2006

<sup>4</sup> Ibid



### **Attracting educated young professionals requires jobs AND quality of life amenities.**

The traditional measure of a community's economic development is the number of jobs created and retained. From this point of view, a city is successful when the availability of good jobs is sufficient to lure and keep workers in the community.

*But having good jobs is not enough.* Talented workers cluster in places that not only have jobs, but also the quality-of-life assets and amenities they value.

For many communities, developing quality-of-life amenities that attract talented workers has a spin-off benefit. Site selection professionals who are tasked with selecting cities for business expansion and/or relocation are increasingly asking about BOTH labor availability and quality-of-life amenities. NGC has discovered that quality-of-life amenities are predictors of labor force availability. Therefore, cities with a breadth and depth of certain community amenities have a greater likelihood of attracting both talent AND companies that are expanding or relocating.



### **Defining Johnstown's Vision.**

Johnstown has multiple organizations and plans aimed at improving the community. Many community members sense this, and are asking for a coherent, inclusive vision, one that gives direction to the good intentions, energy, and skills of a diverse mix of leaders, change agents, and citizens.

This document does not provide a master plan for Johnstown. It provides guidance for only one component of Johnstown's future – albeit an important one – how to retain and attract a bright, creative, and engaged future workforce.

For all of these reasons, the Johnstown region must honestly assess the trends – demographics, economics, and community amenities – and take decisive actions that ensure the survival and success of the community.

## KEY FINDINGS

In November 2008, the **2020 Regional Vision initiative**<sup>5</sup> engaged Next Generation Consulting (NGC) to identify the strengths and liabilities of the region *as the next generation sees them*. The research included a survey of over 2,000 residents and nonresidents, plus listening sessions with more than 100 residents to define the region's assets, challenges, and opportunities.<sup>6</sup>

NGC found that:

- 1. The flight of young professionals (YPs) will cost the region \$77 Million over the next four years.**

NGC asked young professionals (YPs) how long they intend to live in the Johnstown region. Eighteen percent (18%) of the YPs said they plan to leave by 2013. What kind of economic impact could this have on the Johnstown region?

Using a standard economic impact calculator of 1.2, we can see that when an YP leaves the Johnstown region, it makes a \$51,000 impact per person.<sup>7</sup>

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Economic Impact} &= 1.2 \times \text{Median Individual Income}^8 \\ \text{Economic Impact} &= 1.2 \times \$42,500 = \$51,000 \text{ per person}\end{aligned}$$

In other words, Johnstown will lose an average of \$51,000 for each YP who leaves the community. With 18% of YPs planning to leave the Johnstown region within the next four years, and approximately 8,400 YPs in the Johnstown area, Johnstown stands to lose a total of \$77 million over the next four years.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://2020regionalvision.com>

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the methodologies used, see "Methodologies" beginning on page 34.

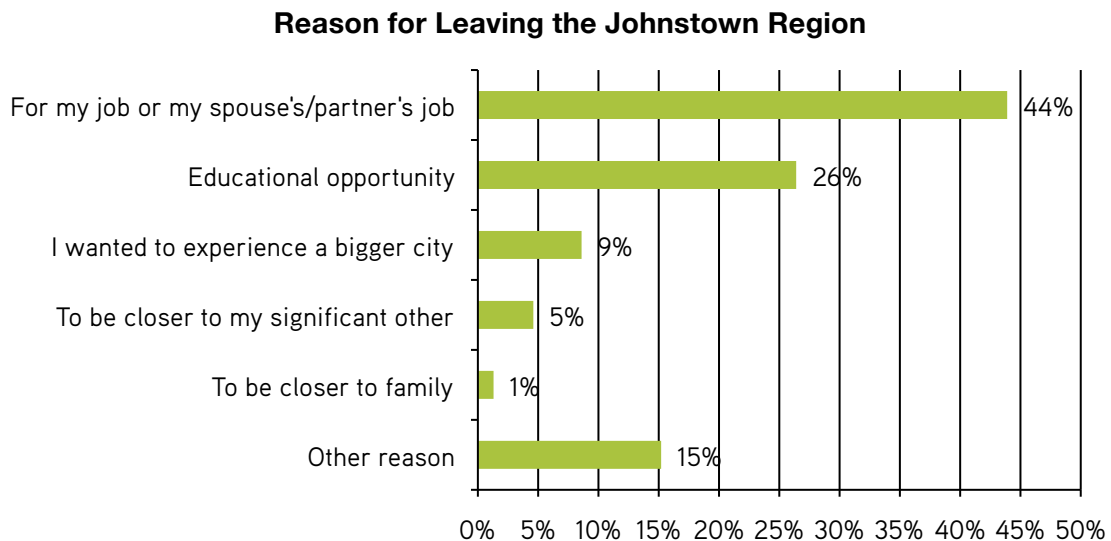
<sup>7</sup> It is generally accepted among economic development professionals that for every dollar an employee in your community earns, it cycles through the economy 1.2 times. This is a conservative figure. Some economists use a multiplier of 2–7 times the employee's income.

<sup>8</sup> The median income of YPs is calculated from responses to "Individual Income" on the survey.

<sup>9</sup> The approximate number of YPs in the Johnstown Region is calculated from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (2006) and includes persons between 18–44 years old who have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

**2. A lack of career opportunities is the main reason people leave the region and keeps people from moving back.**

Respondents who no longer live in the Johnstown region were asked why they moved away. As seen in the graph below, forty-four percent (44%) of the respondents said they left because of career opportunities elsewhere.



Furthermore, among people who no longer live in the Johnstown region, the largest difference between value and perception of the Seven Indexes is in the Earning index (-83.6%). In order to retain and attract residents, Johnstown must address the Earning potential in the region.

**3. Jobs alone are not enough to keep people in the region.**

Despite the importance of increasing job opportunities in the region, the survey results reveal that current residents are anchored to more than just their jobs. Residents were asked *what keeps them in the region*, and most (67%) responded that they have family in the area whom they want to be close to. Additionally, when asked *what three things they value most about living in the region*, the most popular responses were:

- Strong sense of family and friends (73%)
- Johnstown is community minded – people have opportunities and want to be engaged in the community (36%)
- Salaries are competitive and in balance with the cost of living (30%)

These survey results indicate that the Johnstown region should leverage the strong bonds between residents and family members in their efforts to retain current residents and attract Convincibles (see below).

#### **4. Attracting Convincibles back to Johnstown will reap economic gains.**

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the respondents who have moved away said they have considered moving back to the area. These are the **Convincibles**.

Johnstown's Convincibles are well-educated and experienced professionals:

- Nearly three quarters (73%) have a college degree (or more)
- Almost half (46%) have more than 7 years experience in their careers
- The Convincibles' average income is \$62,500

Convincibles are important to the region for several reasons. They do not need a heavy-handed sales job to lure them back to the region. They have already lived in the region, have affection for it, and are interested in returning.

Moreover, many of the Convincibles live within arms-reach of Johnstown and continue to have ties to the region:

- Thirty-eight percent (38%) live within the state of Pennsylvania
- Nearly all of them (99%) said they have family and friends in the Johnstown region

In their open-ended comments, Convincibles said they have considered moving back for the following reasons: (1) to be closer to family and friends, (2) the affordability of the community, and (3) the family-friendliness and community mindedness of the area.

Using the economic impact calculator, we estimate that when a Convincible relocates to the Johnstown region, it makes a \$75,000 impact per person.<sup>10</sup>

In other words, Johnstown could gain an average of \$75,000 for each Convincible who returns to the community. If all 180 Convincibles return to the region, Johnstown could add nearly \$14 million to the local economy.

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<sup>10</sup> It is generally accepted among economic development professionals that for every dollar an employee in your community earns, it cycles through the economy 1.2 times. This is a conservative figure. Some economists use a multiplier of 2–7 times the employee's income.

## 5. Johnstown's Handprint scores in Vitality, Around Town, and Cost of Lifestyle meet or exceed those of Next Cities™

Next Cities™ are communities that lead the pack with respect to attracting and retaining knowledge workers. Next Cities™ have innovation-based clusters, strong research and university systems, and invest in the assets and amenities that next generation knowledge workers value. NGC has found that communities with above-average scores in each of the Seven Indexes (i.e. scores greater than 5) are growing and offer a positive example of a way forward in the knowledge-based economy.

NGC compared Johnstown to 24 similarly sized Next Cities™<sup>11</sup> and found that Johnstown has equal or greater scores in three indexes: Vitality, Cost of Lifestyle, and Around Town, as you can see in the table below. These indexes (highlighted in green in the table) are areas that Johnstown should focus on as the region outlines a path to becoming a Next City™.

**Table 3: Johnstown vs. Next Cities in the Seven Indexes**

|                     | Vitality | Earning | Learning | Social Capital | Cost of Lifestyle | After Hours | Around Town |
|---------------------|----------|---------|----------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Johnstown's Score   | 6        | 1       | 0        | 0              | 5                 | 3           | 7           |
| Next Cities Average | 5        | 5       | 5        | 5              | 5                 | 5           | 5           |

Johnstown's higher than average handprint scores in the Cost of Lifestyle and Around Town indexes correspond to the survey respondents' positive perceptions of these assets in Johnstown (see the value versus perception table on pg 12). When asked about Cost of Lifestyle and Around Town, over 85% of respondents agree that Johnstown offers assets and amenities related to these indexes.

Johnstown also outscores Next Cities™ in the Vitality index, a nod to the region's rich natural



<sup>11</sup> NGC compared Johnstown to twenty-four similarly sized Next Cities™ including Cary, NC, Pueblo, CO, Springfield, IL, and Des Moines, IA. None of these smaller-sized Next Cities have oceanfront beaches. Only a couple of them have temperate climates. The handprint reveals that Johnstown – like these Next Cities – has natural strengths beyond climate and geography; strengths that, if built upon, position it positively in the next economy.

environment, accessibility to open spaces, and investments in park and recreation areas and trails. However, survey respondents have relatively poor perceptions of Johnstown's assets in this area; less than half of the respondents (45.7%) agree that Johnstown offers amenities related to Vitality (see the value versus perception table on pg 12).

People's perceptions of Vitality in Johnstown (e.g. recreational opportunities, health indicators, green space) are out of sync with reality. Reducing the gap between the perception and reality of Vitality in the region will allow Johnstown to leverage Vitality as a strength in its efforts to attract and retain next generation workers.

For Johnstown's city and regional handprint, as well as a description of the Seven Indexes, go to the Supplemental Findings section (pg 27).

**6. Residents and non-residents believe Johnstown is an affordable place to live, but job opportunities are limited.**

Next Generation Consulting (NGC) clusters the community assets and amenities that matter most to the next generation into the Seven Indexes. The indexes are named Vitality, Learning, Earning, Around Town, After Hours, Cost of Lifestyle, and Social Capital (a complete description of the Seven Indexes begins on pg 27).

In the online survey, respondents were asked two questions about the amenities in each of the Seven Indexes:

- How important are these amenities to you (the *value* of the amenities)?
- How well does the Johnstown region provide these amenities (the *perception* of the amenities in Johnstown)?

The table below (pg 12) ranks the Seven Indexes according to their *value* and compares it to the respondents' *perceptions*.

**Table 2: The Seven Indexes of a Next City, Ranked by Value to Survey Respondents**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Value <sup>a</sup> | Perception <sup>b</sup> | Difference <sup>c</sup> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>COST OF LIFESTYLE:</b> I want a community where I can afford to live, work, and play.                                                                                                                            | 96.7%              | 85.6%                   | -11.1%                  |
| <b>EARNING:</b> I want a broad choice of places to work and an environment that is friendly to entrepreneurs.                                                                                                       | 89.8%              | 29.5%                   | -60.3%                  |
| <b>VITALITY:</b> I value a vibrant community where people are ‘out and about’ using public parks, trails and recreation areas, attending farmer’s markets and living in a healthy community.                        | 87.3%              | 45.7%                   | -41.6%                  |
| <b>AROUND TOWN:</b> I want to live in a community that’s easy to get around in; I don’t want long commute times.                                                                                                    | 85.0%              | 87.2%                   | +2.2%                   |
| <b>LEARNING:</b> I want to plug into a community that offers life-long learning and values being ‘smart.’                                                                                                           | 83.5%              | 64.5%                   | -19.0%                  |
| <b>AFTER HOURS:</b> I want to be able to find authentic local places to have dinner, meet for coffee, hear live music, or just hang out. I want to be able to attend art openings, theatre, and cultural festivals. | 80.2%              | 40.9%                   | -39.3%                  |
| <b>SOCIAL CAPITAL:</b> I value living in a diverse community, where people are engaged and involved in community life.                                                                                              | 73.7%              | 45.2%                   | -28.5%                  |

**GREEN** = closest matches between value and perception

**YELLOW** = greatest discrepancies between value and perception

The closer the variance is to “0,” the better the match between value and perception.

The respondents indicated that they value Cost of Lifestyle more than any other index, and likewise have a very positive perception of the region’s affordability. Thus, there is only a minor difference (-11.1%) between value and perception of Cost of Lifestyle in Johnstown. This finding indicates that Cost of Lifestyle is an area of strength to be leveraged in the region.

<sup>a</sup> The “value” column represents the percent of respondents who chose “most important” or “somewhat important” for each index.

<sup>b</sup> The “perception” column represents the percent of respondents who chose “completely agree” or “agree” with regard to how well the region offers amenities in each index.

<sup>c</sup> The “difference” column represents the difference between value and perception.

Although less valued, the respondents also reported positive perceptions of the ability to walk, bike, bus, and/or drive around Johnstown (Around Town) as well as relatively positive perceptions of educational opportunities (Learning) in the region. These are also assets that the Johnstown region can promote in its efforts to attract and retain a next generation workforce.

On the other hand, Earning is the second most valued asset (89.8% of respondents said Earning is important), but fewer than 1/3 of respondents (29.5%) agreed that Johnstown provides quality job opportunities, resulting in a -60.3% disparity between the value and perception of Earning in the Johnstown region. The region's assets related to Earning are in dire need of improvement.

#### **7. Overall, residents are strongly committed to the area.**

When considering the region's ability to retain current residents, the survey results show that the Johnstown region is performing well. Nearly half of the residents (49%) said they plan stay in the community for 16 or more years. The majority of residents (55%) say that they plan to stay for 10 years or more.

## RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

NGC recommends a three-pronged approach to retaining and attracting young talent to the greater Johnstown region. These strategies revolve around the 3 P's: **People, Place, and Pride.**



### **#1: Engage people – especially young professionals and those who are young-thinking – in new ways.**

The rationale for this strategy is two-fold:

- (1) Retain and engage the next generation workforce that call Johnstown “home.” There’s a saying in business, “It’s easier to keep your current customers than it is to attract new ones.” The same is true in workforce development; it is more cost-effective to focus on retaining the young professionals (YPs) already living and working in the region than to convince new in-migrants to relocate here. In the Johnstown area, NGC has noticed that many well-intentioned, established leaders talk about young professionals, but YPs themselves are outside of the room during these discussions.
- (2) Mix people and ideas in new ways. Research conducted several years ago by Congressman Murtha’s office revealed that many residents of Johnstown never leave the city, and many live in the same house they grew up in! The region’s loyal Homegrowns can be a stabilizing force in the community; it can also be an albatross if Transplants and Boomerangers cannot find a way to penetrate the “good old boy” network, and give life to their ideas and hopes for the community. By offering new ways for people to interact with each other – and the community – Johnstown can unleash new energy and ideas that have the power to transform the community.

### **1.1 Fund an Executive Director position for Young Professionals of the Alleghenies**

Johnstown has a burgeoning and highly engaged group of young professionals. Even though the organization is only a year old, **Young Professionals of the Alleghenies**<sup>12</sup> (YPA) has nearly 100 dues paying members as well as an active board and several committees dedicated to various organizational functions (e.g. finance, marketing/public relations, social activities). With the emergence of YPA, there is for the first time a



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<sup>12</sup> More information about the YPA is available at their website, <http://www.youngpa.org/>

central hub where young professionals can meet their peers, and engage with community businesses and events in new and innovative ways.

In NGC's experience, without a paid staff to lead YPA, the volunteer base will be exhausted in 12-24 months. YPA needs an executive to secure resources, coordinate events and volunteers, and serve as the go-to person for the organization. Someone must wake up each working day, passionate about helping young professionals connect with each other, and connect to Johnstown. The YPA Executive Director's agenda may be set by YPA members with the input of the funder(s). Sample job descriptions, business plans, and other resources are available through NGC.

- ➔ **What:** Executive Director of Young Professionals of the Alleghenies
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** Social Capital
- ➔ **Lead:** Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce and Community Foundation for the Alleghenies
- ➔ **Support:** Mayor's office, Young Professionals of the Alleghenies
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** \$50,000 year plus in-kind contribution of office space and equipment

## **1.2 Train and place young professionals, Boomerangers, and Transplants on local and regional boards of directors.**

There is a sense among some community members and young professionals that the "old boys network" in Johnstown discourages – and in some cases completely excludes – new people and ideas. This recommendation takes a deliberate, proactive approach to developing and placing new leaders – especially those who can import ideas and experiences from other communities – on the region's non-profit and civic boards of directors. There are two components to this recommendation:

- 1.2.1 Create a fast-track course called "Board-Ready: How to Serve Effectively on a Board." This course would be open to all members of YPA and also target Boomerangers and Transplants who've recently relocated to Johnstown. The course would require four hours of training, and participants would receive a certification upon completion. The course would be offered once each quarter. The purpose of the course is to both outfit participants with the skills and tools to be effective as board members, and to expose them to the region's non-profit and civic boards of directors.

- ➔ **What:** Board-Ready: How to Serve Effectively on a Board (four-hour training)
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** Social Capital

- ➔ **Lead:** Local non-profit leader or civic professional interested in sharing their tips and tricks on how to be effective
- ➔ **Support:** Non-profit community, Young Professionals of the Alleghenies
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** \$5,000 year for instructor stipend and course materials plus in-kind contribution of meeting space and equipment

1.2.2 Launch a Board Match service to pair nonprofit and civic organizations needing new board members with graduates of “Board-Ready.”<sup>13</sup> The Board Match program would require all graduates of Board-Ready to complete an interest and experience inventory. Non-profit organizations may use Board Match for a small annual fee, and receive introductions to an unlimited number of certified “Board-Ready” graduates.

- ➔ **What:** Board Match, to connect “Board-Ready” graduates with non-profit and civic boards.
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** Social Capital
- ➔ **Lead:** Young Professionals of the Alleghenies
- ➔ **Support:** Non-profit community
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** \$12,000 in the first year to configure a web-based database of Board-Ready graduates with the interests and experiences. No ongoing cost; the Executive Director of YPA will be responsible for updating for instructor stipend and course materials plus in-kind contribution of meeting space and equipment

### 1.3 Create a dynamic website that aggregates all after hours events in the Johnstown area, and makes them easily findable and search’ able.

There are many things to do in Johnstown, but no well known website that aggregates them all. Because the next generation spends more time online than watching television or reading the news, they may get the false impression that “there’s nothing to do in Johnstown.” To reach them – and engage them – Johnstown’s after hour’s options must be online.

OnMilwaukee.com<sup>14</sup> started ten years ago by offering the most comprehensive online event



<sup>13</sup> The San Francisco volunteer center is one of a handful of communities that has a Board Match program. [http://www.thevolunteercenter.net/volunteers\\_boardmatch](http://www.thevolunteercenter.net/volunteers_boardmatch)

<sup>14</sup> <http://onmilwaukee.com/>

calendar in Milwaukee (right). Today, it has expanded to include reporting, blogs, videos and podcasts, but its hallmark is still its extensive calendar, putting Milwaukeeans in touch with the things they're interested in.

We recommend that Johnstown start its online portal with simple functionality, focusing on aggregating all the things to do in Johnstown, and putting the ability to list one's events in the hands of the promoters.

- ➔ **What:** Website that aggregates all the things there are to do in Johnstown
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** After Hours
- ➔ **Lead:** Creative web-team based in Johnstown
- ➔ **Support:** The participation of all organizations that want to promote their entertainment offerings, e.g. arts and cultural organizations, bars and clubs, YPA, etc.
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** TBD based on bid from local web team or agency.

#### 1.4 Design and execute a Boomerang Campaign to recruit Convincibles back to Johnstown.

Thirty-eight percent of all survey respondents who've left Johnstown have considered moving back. These are your **Convincibles**. They grew up in Johnstown, left to go to college and/or to pursue their first job(s). As they enter their late twenties or early 30's, they talk about 'settling down' and starting a family. At this point, they become nostalgic for Johnstown, and want to be closer to their families.

People who return to Johnstown are called "boomerangers" and they often say,

**"I never thought I'd come back to Johnstown. But I had my experience in the big city, and now I want something different. Johnstown has changed in a lot of ways, and there's just something that pulled me back."**  
– Boomeranger female, age 29.

Any campaign aimed at attracting Convincibles back to Johnstown should enlist the skills of a local creative agency to ensure that Johnstown's brand attributes are portrayed fairly, consistently, and creatively throughout the entire campaign. All the ideas offered in this Boomerang campaign are simply jumping-off points for a more dynamic, local campaign.

The campaign might include the following efforts:

- ➔ An "I'm a Boomeranger" video competition. The goal of the competition is to solicit real people's stories on why they chose to return to Johnstown. Selected videos

could be used in a website promoting the area (see example of Rockford below) and/or loaded onto YouTube, Facebook, and other social networking sites.

- ➔ A series of Thanksgiving weekend events - including a “Jobapalooza” job fair for YPs thinking about returning to Johnstown and a bus tour of the city’s coolest new developments – to reintroduce former Johnstown residents to the community
- ➔ A targeted, multi-pronged approach to re-attract the area’s college alumni who are now 27-30 years old and living outside of Johnstown. A targeted approach might include:
  - ➔ A letter from the Mayor and/or YPA president outlining the life/work opportunities in Johnstown
  - ➔ A series of large, full-color postcards to repeat the key Boomerang message(s)
  - ➔ An event co-sponsored by YPA and other organizations to make a peer-to-peer pitch about the dynamic changes happening in Johnstown



- ➔ **What:** Boomerang campaign
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** Social Capital
- ➔ **Lead:** Creative communication or marketing agency based in Johnstown
- ➔ **Support:** Mayor, YPA, Chamber, Colleges and Universities
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** TBD based on scope and bid from local agency

### 1.5 Fund a grant program for high schools, colleges, and universities to develop partnerships with employers to develop a robust co-op and internship program.

Almost 50 percent of internship students accept permanent positions with their internship employers. The retention of college graduates after 5 years of employment is 30% greater for internship graduates.

Students who have internship and co-op experiences while they're in college are more likely to stay in the area. In 2009, the State of Ohio – which has some of the highest levels of “brain drain” in the United States – took bold action to capitalize on this finding, and announced a five-year, \$250 Million commitment to expand internships and co-ops to 100,000 Ohio students.<sup>15</sup>

At a regional level, Johnstown can be inspired by the spirit and intent of Ohio's actions, and bring together employers and educators to craft a similarly bold initiative for their region. By linking earning and learning more closely together – with an economic incentive – the region sends a strong message that there is a partnership among business and education and local colleges and universities understand their role in developing the region's next generation workforce.

Best Practice: the Illinois Board of Higher Education's “Illinois Cooperative Work Study Program” provides grants to both public and independent colleges and universities. The program is designed to encourage permanent employment of Illinois graduates in Illinois. Learn more about the program at <http://www.ibhe.org/Grants/grantPrg/ICWS.htm>

- ➔ **What:** Co-op and Internship Program for area high school and college students
- ➔ **Indexes Impacted:** Learning and Earning
- ➔ **Lead:** Chamber of Commerce and lead administrators from education
- ➔ **Support:** Chamber members, professors and parents
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** \$100,000 in grant dollars from federal, state and local sources (In Ohio, the Governor is using federal stimulus money to provide grants to colleges and universities)

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<sup>15</sup> “Ohio to Build Largest Co-op and Internship Program,” <http://regents.ohio.gov/>



## **2: Re-invent Johnstown as an attractive, accessible place to live, work, play and grow.**

Johnstown's above-average scores in Vitality and Around Town are the assets on which we base the following recommendations. All of them are designed to increase Johnstown's "curb appeal" and/or enhance citizen's linkages to each other, and Johnstown's rich reserve of natural resources.

NGC believes that a strong city and downtown are the heart of a strong region. You can't, after all, be a suburb to nowhere. Johnstown area residents believe this, too. In the Café session, residents of all ages talked about the importance of a great downtown...*even those who don't live in the City of Johnstown or immediate surrounding area.*

### **2.1 Beautify – and clean up - what you have.**

Johnstown has an image problem. The highway entrances to the city are unsightly. Blight is pervasive, and many neighborhoods have come into disrepair. Yet, there are strong "bones" (architectural gems, historic spaces) on which to build.

#### **2.1.1 Launch an Adopt-a-Highway or Adopt-a-Street program, focusing primarily on the highways leading into Johnstown, and the main thoroughfares through the city.**

- ➔ **What:** Adopt-a-Highway and/or Adopt-a-Street
- ➔ **Indexes Impacted:** Vitality and Cost of Lifestyle
- ➔ **Lead:** Local businesses, especially those located on main thoroughfares
- ➔ **Support:** Department of Transportation and City Public Works
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** \$0.

#### **2.1.2 Support the demolition and/or removal of 138 blighted properties in Johnstown, as listed in the City of Johnstown's Master Plan, released April 17, 2009.**

The City of Johnstown has laws and regulations to deal with the renovation and/or removal of blighted properties, but these laws are not being enforced. Options to support this recommendation include:

- ➔ Launching an online petition that citizens can sign electronically and pass along to their elected representatives

- ➔ Testifying at City Council meetings in support of the enforcement of laws and regulations regarding blight
- ➔ Writing letters and emails directly to the property owners, and asking for their cooperation in the matter (with a link to the signed petition, listed above)
- ➔ Investigating the city officials who are not upholding their duty to enforce the law, and beginning (if necessary) proceedings to remove them from office for failure to perform their elected duties

*Due to the grassroots nature of this recommendation, there is no budget or lead agency identified.*

- ➔ **Indexes Impacted:** Vitality and Cost of Lifestyle

## **2.2 Support the City of Johnstown’s new Master Plan including Kernville, downtown Johnstown, Morrelville, Minersville, and Hornerstown neighborhoods along with Somerset and other communities in the region.**

In NGC’s experience, the City’s new Master Plan<sup>16</sup> calls for the redevelopment of many of the features that the next generation – and all generations – enjoy, e.g. an arts district, recreational features, green space, and stroll districts. In addition, NGC and Kairos Design Group, the consultants used by the City of Johnstown to develop the Master Plan, have been in close communication throughout each other’s processes, and see both projects as mutually reinforcing.

- ➔ **What:** Support the Master Plan
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** After Hours
- ➔ **Lead:** City of Johnstown
- ➔ **Support:** YPA, Chamber of Commerce
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** See the City of Johnstown’s website for more information

Of all the recommendations called for in the Master Plan, NGC believes the following elements provide the best support for Johnstown’s Vitality and Around Town strengths:

### **2.2.1 Support the development of distinct “stroll districts” throughout the region.**

A stroll district is a walkable multi-block area rich in authentic, locally owned retail, restaurants, entertainment options, galleries, and boutiques. Stroll districts appeal to both

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<sup>16</sup> See the slide presentation of the Master Plan from the April 17, 2009 presentation at <http://www.cityofjohnstownpa.net/news/documents/041709JohnstownPresentation.pdf>

tourists and locals. State Street in Madison, WI, Pearl Street in Boulder, CO, and Main Street in Galena, IL, are small to mid-sized city examples of stroll districts.

In many communities, stroll districts are a cornerstone of their After Hours assets and amenities.

- ➔ **What:** Support the Development of Stroll Districts
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** After Hours
- ➔ **Lead:** City of Johnstown, retailers and small business owners
- ➔ **Support:** All Johnstown area residents who choose to buy local
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** See the City of Johnstown's website for more information

## 2.2.2 Connect the Urban Trail Network

The Urban Trail network is currently being analyzed and recommendations are being made to enhance access usability and connectivity. Not only are trails good for the economics of an area (lifting the value of properties adjacent and near them), but these networks elevate the quality of life for the residents who have access to them. Trails can be used to connect people to their places of work, worship, play, commerce, nature, history, and to each other.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the urban trail network outlined in the Master Plan, NGC also recommends the following:

- ➔ **Designate safe, non-arterial streets as bike paths leading in and out of downtown Johnstown**
- ➔ **Connect these bike paths to the Great Allegheny Passage hiking and biking trail**
- ➔ **Consider adding a stacked loop system to the Great Allegheny Passage, to give users more trail options and variety<sup>18</sup>**

For young professionals (YPs) to enjoy downtown, it must be convenient to access with multiple forms of transportation options to and from the central business district. By increasing opportunities for alternative modes of transportation - bike and pedestrian traffic downtown - safety goes up and perceptions that "there's something going on in Johnstown" go up with it.

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<sup>17</sup> Building Community: Bringing Vision to Reality, Kernville Redevelopment Strategy (Draft), City of Johnstown and Kairos Design Group, Summer 2008, p. 3-44.

<sup>18</sup> The International Mountain Biking Association provides a wealth of resources on trail options, <http://www.imba.com>

Additionally, connecting the bike lanes to a path that ultimately links to the Great Allegheny Passage (and the Laurel Highlands) will increase opportunities for outdoor sports and recreational activities (e.g. mountain biking, cross county races). Adding 3-4 continuous “loops” of varying lengths to the path(s) would allow for variable biking and/or hiking tours within close proximity to the city.

- ➔ **What:** Create safe paths for bikers and pedestrians to connect to downtown Johnstown and the surrounding natural parks.
- ➔ **Index Impacted:** Vitality and Around Town
- ➔ **Lead:** City of Johnstown, Somerset County, Cambria County
- ➔ **Support:** Pennsylvania Environmental Council, local cycling clubs and bike shops
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** \$3-8 Million for all components

### **2.3 Create a PDF map of all the bike paths and bike-and-hike trails in the region, along with their trailheads, and put the map online.**

Johnstown has over 100 miles of existing and proposed trails within a 10-mile radius of Kernville, but there is not a single map that includes all of them, with markers for trailheads.

- ➔ **What:** Map of all hike and bike trails in the region, including trailheads.
- ➔ **Indexes Impacted:** Vitality and After Hours
- ➔ **Lead:** City of Johnstown Recreation and Cambria County Tourism Council
- ➔ **Support:** Pennsylvania Environmental Council, local cycling clubs, and bike shops
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** \$8,000-10,000 including graphic design and layout



### Recommendation 3: Take Pride in Johnstown.

In 1891, the Inclined Plane was built primarily as an emergency evacuation device to help residents escape a future flood. Today, Johnstown is facing a new wave of demographic and economic changes; what kind of “Inclined Plane” can lift us from these waters?

In NGC’s experience, there are four markers of sustainable change in a community: policy (enforcement or innovation), networks (like YPA), attitudes, and behaviors. NGC believes that Johnstown needs to believe in itself again; Johnstown needs a “lift.”

To attract and retain people to Johnstown, residents (and potential Boomerangers and Transplants) need to feel that living in Johnstown is something to be proud of. This is difficult to measure but easy to sense. Here are a few things every citizen of Johnstown can do today to increase their sense of pride in the region:

#### 3.1 Sign the Lift Johnstown pledge (<http://tiny.cc/LiftJohnstownPledge>) and ask people to commit to Lift Johnstown every day with new energy and a positive attitude.

It’s amazing how differently a person will view their city if they make a deliberate effort to wake up everyday and recognize the positive assets the city has to offer.

- ➔ **What:** Sign the Lift Johnstown pledge
- ➔ **Lead:** You
- ➔ **Support:** You
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** 2 minutes of your time

#### 3.2 Implement region-wide “40 under 40” awards (or similar) to celebrate outstanding young professionals (YPs) in the community.

By showcasing YPs who have excelled and made an outstanding contribution to the community, the region will begin to paint a more compelling picture of opportunities available to YPs in the area. In addition to attracting YPs to the region, a “40 under 40” celebration will also build a stronger commitment to the area among YPs and reinforce other YP retention efforts.

- ➔ **What:** Forty Under 40 Awards
- ➔ **Indexes Impacted:** Social Capital
- ➔ **Lead:** Johnstown Magazine

- ➔ **Support:** YPA
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** N/A

### 3.3 Buy local in 2009. Repeat in 2010, 2011, etc.

When you choose to spend your money in Johnstown, it has a multiplier effect and circulates through the community 2-3 times. When that money is spent at locally owned retailers, the multiplier is further heightened, up to seven times.

To attract and develop strong stroll districts, Johnstown residents must vote with their dollars, and show local retailers that they will spend their money here. This encourages retailers to expand and start new businesses, creating an upward spiral to support additional local retail districts.

- ➔ **What:** Buy local
- ➔ **Indexes Impacted:** After Hours
- ➔ **Lead:** Consumers (you)
- ➔ **Support:** YPA, Chamber of Commerce, Local retailers
- ➔ **Proposed Budget:** What do you have to invest?

## ONLINE APPENDIX

NGC has created a password protected online appendix and filled it with additional information and resources to assist Johnstown in executing these recommendations.

URL: <http://nextgenerationconsulting.com/clients/2020regionalvision>

Username: ngc005

Password: 40000

## SUPPLEMENTAL FINDINGS

### Johnstown's city and regional handprints

A “handprint” is a visual scoring system that evaluates a community against the Seven Indexes that matter to the next generation. Taken together, the Seven Indexes measure a community's relative attractiveness to the next generation. The handprint identifies assets and challenges as they relate to attracting and retaining a younger, skilled workforce. The handprint helps you to quickly identify your assets and areas in which you need to improve.

Following are brief definitions of each of the Seven Indexes:

**VITALITY** | How healthy is the region? This index accounts for air and water quality, parks, trails and recreation areas, and the overall health and wellbeing of the community.

**EARNING** | Young talent expect to have multiple jobs in their lifetimes and value a city with a breadth and depth of well-paying occupational options, plus support for entrepreneurial ventures.

**LEARNING** | How smart is the region? Young knowledge workers want to live in cities where education is valued and accessible – for themselves and their children.

**SOCIAL CAPITAL** | Young professionals value living in diverse communities. This index evaluates the region's diversity, its racial profile, inclusion and care of minorities, and its commitment to volunteerism and the engagement of young professionals.

**COST OF LIFESTYLE** | Can I afford to live in the region? Young talent are normally in the early years of their earning potential and are carrying enormous college debt. Affordability is key. This index includes all the variables in a national cost of living database, which includes a roof over the head, food on the table, and clothes on your back, plus a few others.

**AFTER HOURS** | There's more to life than work. This is the index that tallies all the things to do and places to go after five.

**AROUND TOWN** | This index counts indicators of accessibility. How long will I sit in traffic on the way to work? Can I catch a non-stop flight for work or leisure? Can I get around town on my bike? By foot? How easy is it to get where you want to go?

Next Generation Consulting (NGC) calculated Johnstown's handprint compared to three groups: *peer cities*, *peer regions*, and *Next Cities* (Johnstown's Next Cities handprint is on page 10).

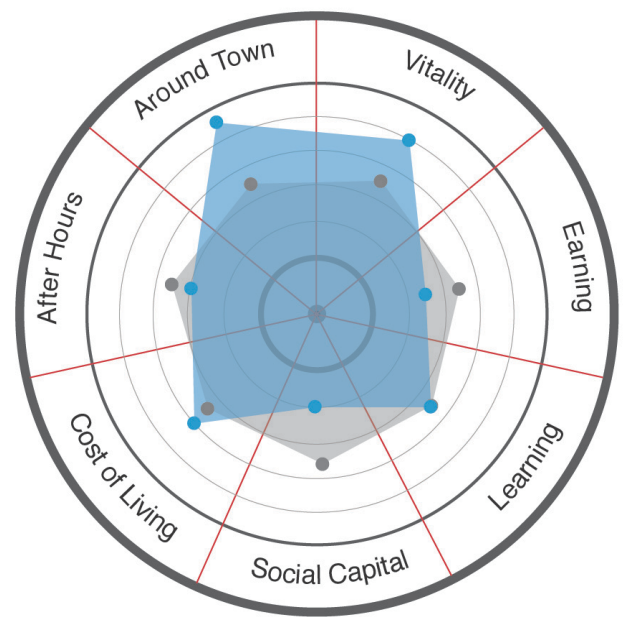
## Johnstown vs. Peer Cities

**“Peer cities”** are communities that are comparable to Johnstown with respect to geographical location, proximity to major metropolitan areas, population size/density, and/or socio-historical characteristics (e.g. industrial and/or steel industry heritage). Examples of Johnstown’s peer cities/regions include Elizabethtown, KY, Morristown, TN, Altoona, PA, Wheeling, WV, and Sheboygan, WI.

The diagram (right) is the City of Johnstown handprint – the city’s scores in the Seven Indexes compared to peer cities. The handprint uses a 0-10 scale, where zero is low, five is the average (compared to peer cities), and ten is highest.

Compared to peer cities, Johnstown meets or exceeds average scores for peer cities (set to 5) in four of the Seven Indexes (Cost of Lifestyle, Learning, Vitality, and Around Town).

Although Johnstown’s scores are below average with regard to Earning, After Hours, and Social Capital, the handprint indicates that the City of Johnstown is either keeping up or ahead of its peer cities in most of the indexes.



| City of Johnstown |   | Peer Cities Average |   |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| Around Town       | 9 | Around Town         | 5 |
| Vitality          | 8 | Vitality            | 5 |
| Cost of Living    | 6 | Cost of Living      | 5 |
| Earning           | 3 | Earning             | 5 |
| Social Capital    | 2 | Social Capital      | 5 |
| Learning          | 5 | Learning            | 5 |
| After Hours       | 4 | After Hours         | 5 |

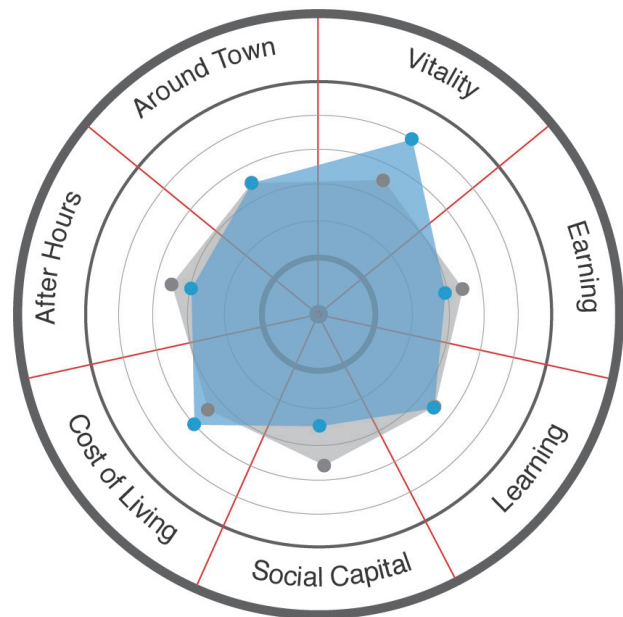
## Johnstown Region vs. Peer Cities

NGC also developed a handprint for the Johnstown region (right).<sup>19</sup> Again, the handprint uses a 0-10 scale, where zero is low, five is the average (compared to peer regions), and ten is highest.

Similar to the comparison to peer cities, the handprint scores for the Johnstown region meet or exceed average scores for peer regions (set to 5) in four of the Seven Indexes (Cost of Lifestyle, Learning, Vitality, and Around Town).

While Johnstown's city and regional handprints are very similar, there are some important differences. First, the city's score in Around Town (9) is substantially higher than the region's score (5). Second, although the city and region both score below average in the Earning and Social Capital indexes, the Johnstown region's scores are slightly higher than the city's scores in these indexes.

These findings indicate that the City of Johnstown and communities in the Johnstown region have complementary assets and amenities.



| Johnstown Region |   | Peer MSAs Average |   |
|------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Around Town      | 5 | Around Town       | 5 |
| Vitality         | 8 | Vitality          | 5 |
| Cost of Living   | 6 | Cost of Living    | 5 |
| Earning          | 4 | Earning           | 5 |
| Social Capital   | 3 | Social Capital    | 5 |
| Learning         | 5 | Learning          | 5 |
| After Hours      | 4 | After Hours       | 5 |

<sup>19</sup> The Johnstown region corresponds to the Johnstown Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and includes northern Somerset County.

## Online Survey Summary

From November 18, 2008, to January 16, 2009, Next Generation Consulting (NGC) administered a web-based survey that was emailed to young professionals, residents, and former residents of the Johnstown region (i.e., the City of Johnstown, Cambria County, and Somerset County). A total of 2,263 responses were collected. Of these, 1,789 (79%) were residents of the Johnstown region and 474 (21%) were non-residents. Of the 1,789 respondents who currently live in the region, 61% are Homegrown, 21% are Transplants, and 18% are Boomerangers.

To view all of the survey data, go to the online appendix at <http://nextgenerationconsulting.com/clients/2020regionalvision> (Username: ngc005, password: 40000)

Overall, the survey respondents are:

- Well-educated (67% have a 4-year degree or higher)
- Well-experienced professionals (56%)
- Working in management, professional, and related occupations (56%)
- Earning a median income of approximately \$42,500
- 40 years old (average)
- Female (57%)
- White (94%) – the largest minority group is African American (4%)
- Married/partnered (68%)
- Parents (61%) with 1 child (average)
- Homeowners (72%)

## The Seven Indexes: Residents vs. Nonresidents

In the online survey, current residents and non-residents were asked two questions about the amenities in each of the Seven Indexes:

1. How important are these amenities to you (the *value* of the amenities)?
2. How well does the Johnstown region provide these amenities (the *perception* of the amenities in Johnstown)?

The table below compares the residents' (top) and non-residents' (bottom) *values* and *perceptions* with respect to the Seven Indexes. The "value" column represents the percent of people who chose "most important" or "somewhat important" for each index. The "perception" column represents the percent of people who chose "completely agree" or "agree" with regard to how well the region offers amenities in each index. The "difference" column represents the difference between value and perception.

### THE SEVEN INDEXES: RESIDENTS (TOP-RIGHT) VS. NON-RESIDENTS (LOWER-LEFT)

|                   | Value          | Perception     | Difference       |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| COST OF LIFESTYLE | 97.3%<br>94.5% | 87.9%<br>76.8% | -9.4%<br>-17.7%  |
| EARNING           | 88.6%<br>94.3% | 34.4%<br>10.7% | -54.2%<br>-83.6% |
| VITALITY          | 87.1%<br>87.7% | 49.8%<br>30.6% | -37.3%<br>-57.1% |
| AROUND TOWN       | 87.4%<br>76.0% | 88.9%<br>80.6% | -1.5%<br>+4.6%   |
| LEARNING          | 82.9%<br>85.9% | 70.2%<br>42.8% | -12.7%<br>-43.1% |
| AFTER HOURS       | 79.5%<br>82.7% | 43.9%<br>29.5% | -35.6%<br>-53.2% |
| SOCIAL CAPITAL    | 73.4%<br>74.7% | 49.4%<br>29.4% | -24.0%<br>-45.3% |

**GREEN** = closest match between value and perception

**YELLOW** = greatest discrepancy between value and perception

The closer the variance is to "0," the better the match between value and perception.

There is considerable agreement among residents and non-residents with regard to values and perceptions of the Seven Indexes in Johnstown. For both residents and non-residents, Cost of Lifestyle and Earning are the most valued aspects of a community.

Residents and non-residents agree, furthermore, that biking, walking, and/or driving around Johnstown is easy (Around Town) and Johnstown is an affordable place to live (Cost of Lifestyle), but job opportunities are lacking in the region. Among residents and non-residents alike, the disparity between value and perception is greatest in the Earning index and least in the Cost of Lifestyle and Around Town indexes.

These findings indicate that Johnstown's strengths with respect to Cost of Lifestyle and Around Town, and Johnstown's liabilities in the Earning index, are points of agreement among residents and non-residents.

In the After Hours and Vitality indexes, the disparities between values and perceptions were substantially greater among non-residents compared to residents. This finding suggests that efforts to attract Convincibles should be aimed at improving the After Hours and Vitality indexes.

### **Johnstown's Net Promoter Score**

Respondents were asked on a scale of 0-10, "How likely are you to promote the region to a friend or family member looking for a great region to live?"

Among residents of the Johnstown region, 26.6% were promoters (scores of 9 or 10) and 40.1% were detractors (scores of 0 to 6), resulting in a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of -13.5%.

Among non-residents, 8.1% were promoters (scores of 9 or 10) and 74.2% were detractors (scores of 0 to 6), resulting in a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of -66.1%.

The NPS can range from -100% (all detractors) to 100% (all promoters). Many companies use the Net Promoter Score to evaluate customer loyalty and predict future revenue. Although companies and communities are selling different products, it's interesting to note that companies with intensely loyal and engaged clients (e.g. Apple, EBay) have Net Promoter Scores ranging from 50-80%, while the average organization "sputters along" at 5-10%. The Net Promoter Score is based on years of research on customer loyalty and profitability spanning several industries and decades. To learn more about the Net Promoter Score and how it's being used by a variety of industries, see <http://www.netpromoter.com/>.

## METHODOLOGIES

NGC used several quantitative and qualitative methodologies to reach the conclusions in the “Key Findings” of this document. Each methodology is outlined below:

### Community Survey

From November 18, 2008, to January 16, 2009, Next Generation Consulting (NGC) administered a web-based survey that was emailed to young professionals, residents, and former residents of the Johnstown region (i.e., the City of Johnstown, Cambria County, and Somerset County).

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their demographic profile (e.g. marital status, educational attainment, income level, current occupation, etc.) and a set of questions about their values and impressions of the Johnstown region. Respondents who no longer live in area were also asked whether they would move back and why they left.

The survey shines the light on what residents value in a region, where the region does – and does not – align with their values, and why respondents choose to stay in or leave the region.

To view all of the survey data, go to the online appendix at <http://nextgenerationconsulting.com/clients/2020regionalvision> (Username: ngc005, password: 40000)

### World Café

On February 11, 2009, Next Generation Consulting (NGC) conducted a “World Café” with area residents and young professionals. World Café is a process for leading collaborative dialogue and knowledge sharing, particularly for larger groups. The World Café process was used during this project, and is recommended in future strategies. A complete World Café guide is available at <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>

The purpose of NGC’s Café was not to reach a statistical conclusion. Rather, it was a way to get a sense for the things that young professionals think and feel about living and working in the greater Johnstown region. Capturing the perceptions around the areas assets, challenges, and opportunities as they pertain to attracting and retaining the next generation.

Several broad themes emerged from the Café:

- Johnstown and the region would benefit from improving transportation infrastructure (interstate, air, train, light rail) to better connect the region to major cities

- Marketing the region and city offerings would boost the city's ability to engage and retain young professionals while attracting potential boomerangers
- Downtown development should include green space and entertainment district and cultural venues – giving it a neighborhood feel
- City of Johnstown needs more business/development friendly policy allowing for more entertainment offerings to emerge throughout the city
- Johnstown YPs sense a need for broader occupational options allowing for career growth, and an entrepreneurial support system
- The region would benefit from graduate degree offerings and learning programs housed in downtown Johnstown

Although the Cafe did not help NGC reach statistical conclusions about how the greater Johnstown region can attract and retain young talent, the respondents accurately raised themes that were repeated in subsequent phases of the Discover process.

### **Handprint Scoring**

NGC uses over 40 unique metrics and a set of proprietary algorithms to compute handprint scores in each index.

To view the scores in each of the metrics compared to the Next Cities, peer cities, and peer regions averages, go to the online appendix at:

URL: <http://nextgenerationconsulting.com/clients/2020regionalvision>

Username: ngc005

Password: 40000

## CREDITS

Next Generation Consulting (NGC) would like to thank the following for their support and assistance with this project:

Cambria County Alliance for Business and Industry  
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Greater Johnstown Regional Partnership  
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James White  
Johnstown Area Regional Industries  
Michael Artim  
Michael Hruska  
Michael Kane  
Richland Township Supervisors  
Young Professionals of the Alleghenies

## SOURCES

In addition to the primary research we conducted for this project, we also consulted these resources:

U.S. Census Bureau  
National Center for Education Statistics  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Association of State Park Directors  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Sperling's Best Places  
Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce  
Johnstown's Master Plan (released April 17, 2009)  
UnivSource  
JiWire

## **ABOUT 2020 REGIONAL VISION**

2020 Regional Vision is an alliance supported by the Cambria County Alliance for Business and Industry, Greater Johnstown Regional Partnership, Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Chamber of Commerce, Johnstown Area Regional Industries, and the Richland Township Supervisors.

More information about the project is available at <http://2020RegionalVision.com>

## **ABOUT NEXT GENERATION CONSULTING**

Next Generation Consulting (NGC) is the only U.S. firm with a proprietary indexing system to assist communities in their talent attraction and retention efforts. NGC has talked to nearly 40,000 young professionals since 1998. From these interviews, NGC identified that young professionals—who have many options in where they live and work—migrate to cities that have distinct and measurable characteristics.

Learn more about NGC and our services at <http://nextgenerationconsulting.com/>