



# Community

STRATEGIES GROUP

Est. 1999

Building Stronger Communities Together

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501c3 charitable non-profit community developer

## Mission:

CSG collaborates with public and private partners to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve. We strive to create strategic pathways to local solutions.

## Vision:

We will empower individuals and organizations to achieve strong, healthy communities where all basic needs are met for every citizen. All people should have access to adequate housing, nutrition, recreation, the arts, and meaningful work.

## History:

- Founded: 1999 as 501c3 nonprofit subsidiary of Columbia County Redevelopment Authority
- Restructured: 2017 became independent entity, obtained Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) status, and expanded scope of work to include broader community and economic development activities
  - Re-Named: 2019 Community Strategies Group

## FAQ:

What do we do?: We build. We Serve. We Consult.

Where do we operate?: Columbia County, with capabilities to serve within 90 minutes of Bloomsburg

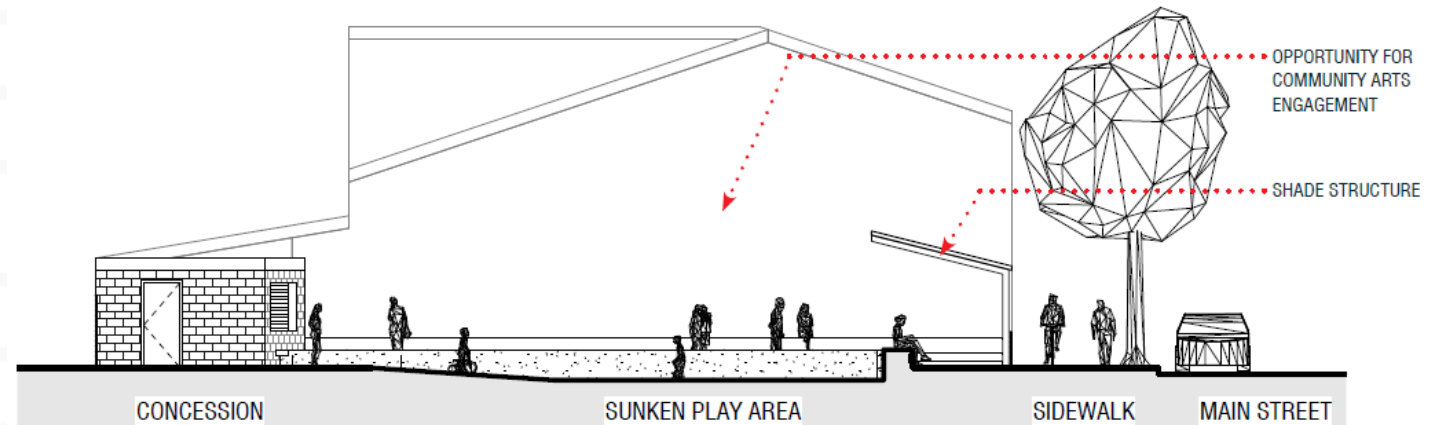




## Dr. Charles Gillespie Memorial Park:

### Pocket Park & Outdoor Arts Venue

- Outdoor Venue for Moose Arts Center
  - Farmer Market
- Operational Center for Downtown Festivals
- Community Organization Access for Events
  - Outdoor Movie Screenings
  - Safe Play Area
  - Art and Beautification





## Project Narrative:

The president of Downtown Bloomsburg Inc, who is a longtime community advocate and the owner of a local business, approached CSG in 2018 with an idea to convert a vacant lot near Town Square into a pocket park. The lot, nestled between two buildings with no rear access, had become overgrown with weeds after the previously existing building was destroyed by fire and razed.



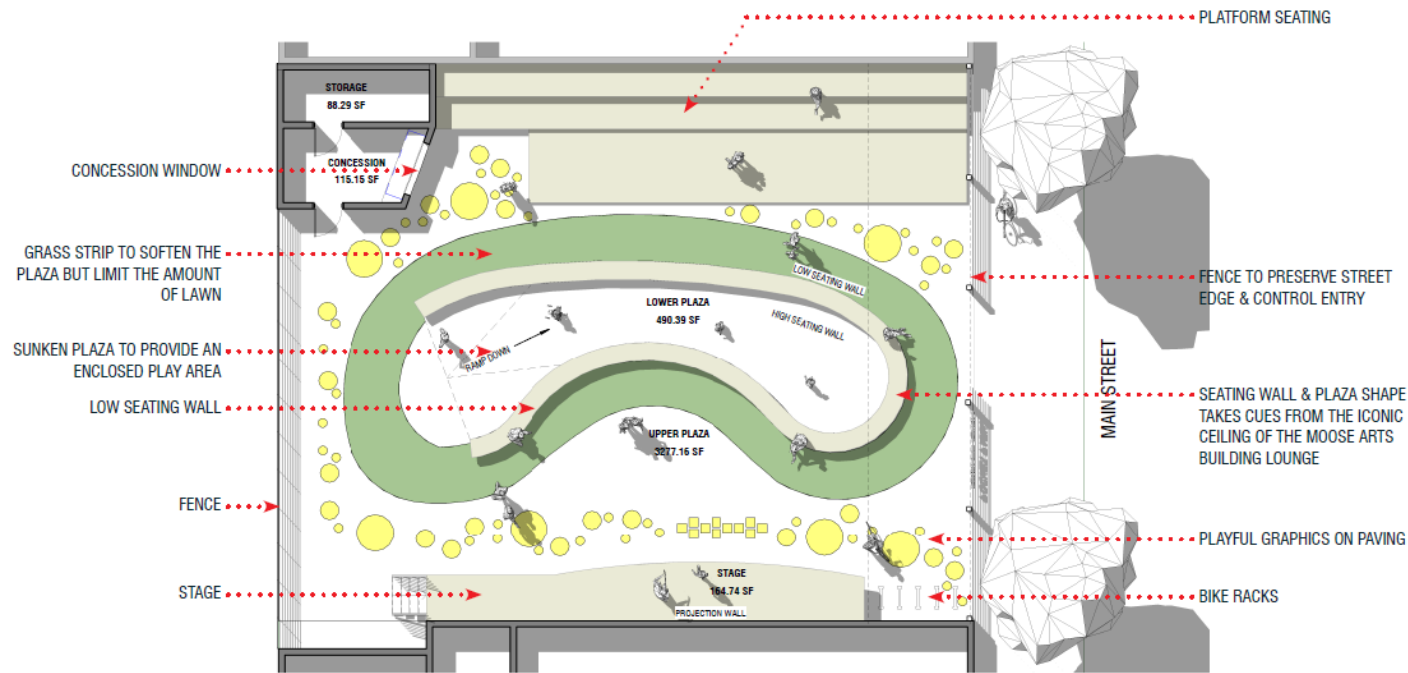
Through prior conversations for a closely related project idea further down the street, CSG already understood the community's desire for art-related facilities, and increased foot traffic and activity on the west end of downtown. After a few more round table discussions with some of the community's stakeholder groups to review conceptual designs, CSG and our architects landed on a multi-functional space with a "drive-in movie" inspiration with a flexible design to accommodate the widest range of possible uses while adding to the downtown's curb appeal. A small stage creates a unique atmosphere to host outdoor performances, such as The Exchange's monthly Blues Listening Room during summer months.

CSG has successfully completed \$80 million worth of community development projects since our founding in 1999. In recent years we have seen a nationwide increased emphasis on the importance and role of art and green spaces in "place-making," or the intentional design of communities where people want to live and spend their time and money. We are heavily invested in this trend and have begun putting art front and center in our work across the county. We believe projects like this are essential in opening the door to future private development as well.

This project was originally named "Moose Arts Park." The name has recently changed to "Dr. Charles Gillespie Memorial Park" to honor the project's first funder, but this has not yet been made known publicly. While the name of the park has been dedicated, there are additional branding opportunities for donors. In Phase 1, the stage is a particularly good option that we would consider.

Due to time of year, we do not anticipate breaking ground until Spring 2023 in order to avoid weather-related complications. However, securing full funding for Phase 1 now will exponentially improve our ability to fund Phase 2 elements to include with Phase 1 work.

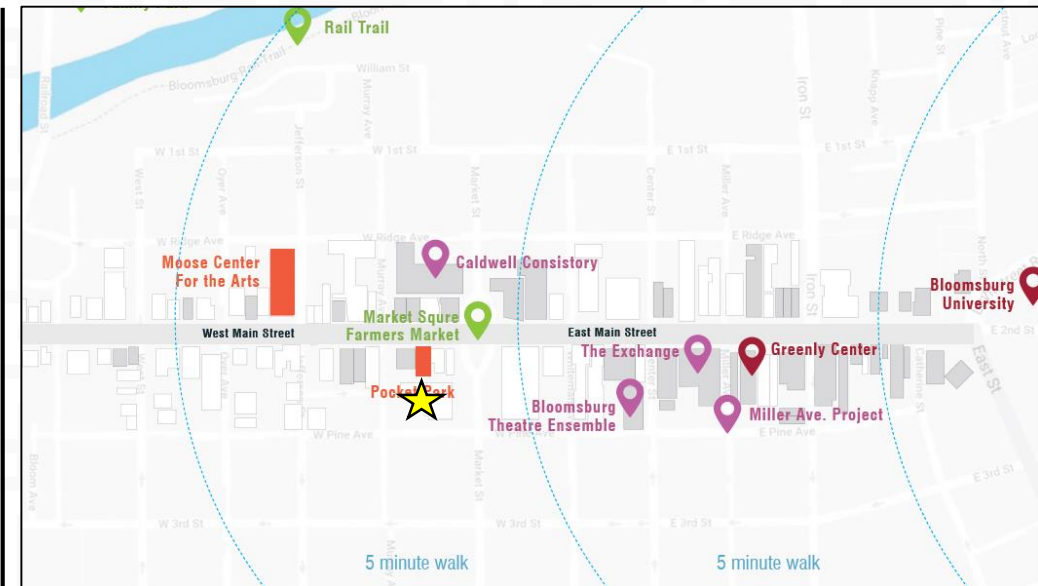
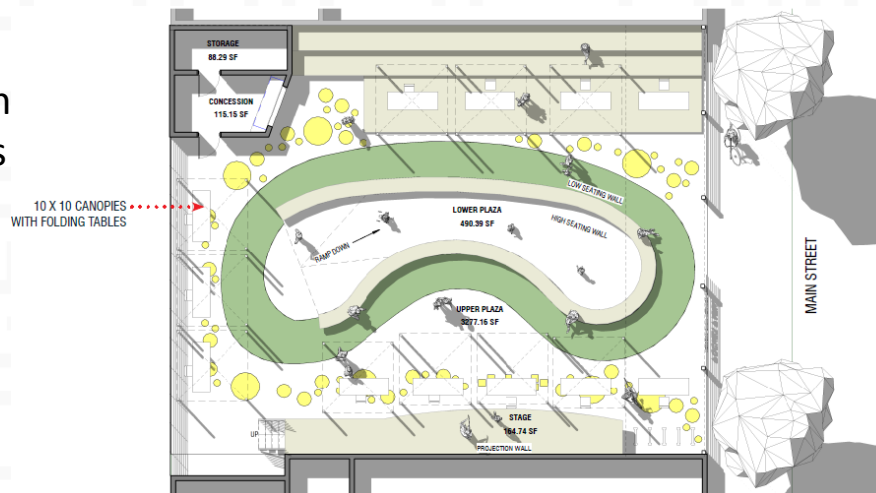




### USES:

Flex space to support downtown

- Seasonal Markets & Festivals
- Art & Music Performances
- Movie Nights
- Outdoor eating
- Safe play area for kids



**Location:** 110 W. Main Street, Bloomsburg PA

**Property Description:** Vacant fire lot 0.09 acres.

- Steps from Town Square
- Downtown Bookend to Bloom University

### **Community & Event Partners:**

- Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble
- Bloomsburg University
- Berwick Theater & Center for the Arts
- Downtown Bloomsburg Inc.
- Exchange Arts



## Dr. Charles Gillespie Memorial Park – TIMELINE\*

The goal of building this project in two phases is three-fold:

1. Convert the vacant lot into a functional part of the community as soon as possible
2. Use the momentum of Phase 1 fundraising success and breaking ground to fundraise for Phase 2 elements
3. Buy time in hopes that inflation settles down and prices come back to normal in time to secure cost savings

Item	Completion Date
Site Control	Complete
Conceptual Design	Complete
DCED Greenways Grant Round	Complete
T-Mobile App	October 1 2022
T-Mobile Announcement	November 2022
Zoning Review	December 2022
Bid Documents Completed	January 2023
Bidding Complete: Contract Award	February 2023
Zoning Review and Permitting Complete	March 2023
Ground Breaking Celebration	April 2023
Construction	April – September 2023
Ribbon Cutting	October 2023

\*Project Timeline is subject to change. Phase 2 elements will be added to Phase 1 as additional funding is secured, and construction time will be adjusted accordingly.



# Shovel Ready Plan

Item	Strategy	Contracts and Partners
Expected Outcomes		
Pocket Park Built	See project timeline	All contracts in place except for General Contractor
Central Hub for Established Seasonal Programming	Coordinate with established events to incorporate and utilize park for future plans	Partners: DBi, Farmers' Market, The Exchange
Expanded Community Programming and Activities	Develop scheduling system and present opportunity to community partners at monthly meetings	Partners: Town Council, Bloomsburg University, The Exchange, BTE, United Way, Berwick Theater
Permits Needed		
Land Development	Engineering firm manages this	McTish & Kunkel, under retainer
Zoning Review	Rich Kisner, Executive Director, will submit review application in October. The review will determine whether or not we need a variance or conditional use. We believe it is a permitted use and there will be no additional steps.	Town of Bloomsburg, Zoning Office
Building Permit	General Contractor manages this	TBD – Bidding Begins in November
Contracts		
Architect	Under contract	Alloy 5
General Contractor	Architect will manage bid process	TBD
Engineer	Under Contract	McTish & Kunkel, under retainer



## About Us

Community Investment:  
Est. \$80,000,000

Future Pending Investment:  
Est. \$62,000,000

Rental Units: 220  
Planned New Units: 120

Single Family Homes Built and Sold: 30  
Rehabbed Owner-Occupied Homes: 200

Blight Removal: 42 Properties

Annual Operating Budget: \$1,224,354



## **Board of Directors:**

Alex Dubil - President  
Community Representative

Heather Feldhaus – Vice President  
Bloomsburg University Administrator & Researcher

Elizabeth Masich – Secretary  
Realtor

Darrell Frederick – Treasurer  
Retired Finance

Kathleen Lynn,  
Columbia County Aging Office

Sandra Schwab,  
Tenant, Community Representative

## **Staff:**

Rich Kisner – Executive Director  
Josh Nespoli – Deputy Director  
Ken Mueller – Accountant  
Sheryl Davidson – Financial Assistant  
Nyky Crabb – Financial Assistant  
Matt Karchner – Property Manager  
Missy Stout –Property Manager  
Beth Burke – Service Coordinator  
Mike Sweitzer – Construction Manager  
Shawna Renninger – Office  
Administrator

### **Construction and Maintenance Team:**

Tom Funson  
Mick Strausser  
Harry Webb

## State Leadership

- **Commonwealth of PA Governor's Office:** PA Housing Advisory Committee
  - **Housing Alliance of PA:** Board of Directors, Executive Committee Chair
- **Joint State Government Commission on PA Homelessness:** Advisory Committee
- **PA Dept of Public Welfare:** Bureau of Autism Services, Housing Options Committee

## Community Leadership

- **Berwick Arts Association:** Board of Directors
- **Berwick Area School District:** Act 339 Advisory Council
  - **Berwick: The Next Step:** Advisory Council
  - **Beyond Violence:** Board of Directors
- **Central Susquehanna Opportunities:** Board of Directors, Executive Committee Chair
  - **Columbia Montour Vo-Tech High School:** Perkins Advisory Committee
  - **Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce:** Board of Directors
    - **Columbia County Homeless Taskforce:** Coalition Chair
    - **Downtown Bloomsburg Inc:** Board of Directors
  - **Exchange Arts:** Board of Directors, Executive Committee Chair
    - **For The Cause:** Board of Directors
- **Geisinger Health System, Bloomsburg Campus:** Community Advisory Board
  - **Luzerne County Community College:** Employer Advisory Board
    - **NEPA Alliance:** Advisory Committee

## Accolades

- Housing Alliance of PA  
Innovation Award: 2009
  - FHLB-Pittsburgh  
Blueprint Communities 2010
  - PA Housing Finance Agency  
Excellence in Housing Management: 2009, 2010
- PA Dept of Community & Economic Development  
C. Riley Stoy Award for Community Development Achievement: 2009
  - NEPA Center for Independent Living  
Edye Ranson Award: 2010
  - Wells Fargo Regional Foundation  
Neighborhood Implementation Graduate: 2014
- Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce  
Community Progress Award 2019