Marcellus by Design

- Historic Route 6
- Sense of Place
- Habitats and Corridors
- Recreation
- Historic Sites and Landscapes
- Water
- Food and Energy Futures
Blossburg is located in the southeast corner of Tioga County where Route 15 cuts through its west boundary parallel to the Tioga River. It is a small town with 1500 population. In 1792, the Patterson brothers first discovered Blossburg which was first named as Peter’s Camp. First settler Aaron Bloss changed the name to Blossburg in 1802. 10 year later, the first coal mine opened by David Clemens near Bear Creek. In 1817, coal mines were shipped out of Blossburg through Tioga River. Later in 1840, Fallbrook railway (connecting Williamsport, PA to Corning, NY) was accessed to Blossburg. According to the old schedule from 1890, train arrives at the Seymour Hotel (where today’s school building is) at 2:40 pm every schedule date. After the built of railway, Blossburg coal started to shipped on the market in Buffalo, Philadelphia and New York. The town was then thrived. Store, restaurants, hotels and opera hall on the old map of Blossburg indicates that the community was once dynamic and vivid. As the coal mining era ended up in early 1900s, new industry company Ward manufacturing was founded in 1924. It is a descendant of the Blossburg Coal mining industry and the major economy sector of local community. 1969-ariel image shows that the shops on the west side of Main Street were gone and new mall was than built. It was a gas explosion that burns down all the old stores. The west street was posted with stores. Since 1969, residence of Blossburg have started to celebrate Coal Festival ever Memorial Day weekend. It usually takes 3-5 days to honor the coal mining history while holding events like car show, carnival and parade.

Reflection of the old street
Right on where the old Tobacco store was, the new mall is selling the same product in a different landscape. The photo was taken in November 2014 during my field trip to Blossburg. The Tobacco sale banner is like a ghosty reflection of the old street which was once a thrived town center of coal mining Blossburg.
We started with trying to perceive sense of place for the entire Tioga County. We searched for images from different sources including social network sites to identify what is popular or famous or what people talk about. While Wellsboro is politically important and historically significant, Mansfield is known for its university. We came up with interesting findings which suggested Wellsboro’s political importance and its popularity as the gateway to Pennsylvania Grand Canyon. People are so fond of the town’s historic significance that the historic gas-lit street lamps are still in use if you visit Wellsboro. We also came to understand that the town has been captured to see the menu something that has not changed as much.

Next, we tried to look at the history of Blossburg using historic maps and photographs. The old maps were obtained from the historic Sanborn maps and the new ones using Google Maps and ArcGIS satellite images. Using ArcGIS we mapped the building footprints and tried to find a relation between the built and open space.

The images on the right show maps from the historic and current times. The coal festival in Blossburg is a popular event that contributes to the sense of place of the town.

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The historic images and maps show different factors that contributed to the sense of place then and now. While some of the elements like the landform, mountains, the Tioga River and the Tioga Coal were present in the past, the main form of transportation has shifted from the Tioga River and the canals to the route 15. The coal industry is now replaced with the shale-gas industry and downtown Blossburg is now bustling with convenience stores instead of small local business centers. The building materials have changed from wood and bricks to concrete.

To study the downtown further in terms of an assessment of the relationship of built and open spaces, we created figure-ground relationship diagrams of the historic downtown in 1904 and the current one in 2014.

Downtown Blossburg during the coal-mining industry was more compact: the local shops flanking the main street not only created a cozy atmosphere at a human scale but also provided a sense of direction in the street.

The current developments show a haphazard distribution of built and open spaces without a distinct emphasis on the main street. This has been partially due to the huge parking lot that acts as an inactive space in the middle of the town. The sections clearly show the difference between the two developments, and the difference in quality of space.

The design interventions to restore the historic sense of place and improve the existing one are directed towards improving the riverfront and the downtown. Engaging the riverfront in terms of community engagement and connecting it to the rest of the downtown we propose an integration of the river into the existing urban fabric of Blossburg.
Bring the hey-day history back to the main street:

Design proposals Perspective

parking lot into an outdoor interactive zone.

downtown a more happenning place turning the dull back the memories of teh oild days but will make the terms of elevated landscaped plazas will not only bring

Recreating the edge of the doiwntown main street in restoring its position among the town's pride.

A riverfront development program will enhance the value of Tioga river among the people of Blossburg

The design interventions to restore the historic sense of place can be presented by tangible landscape design. It is the source of the sense of pride, memory and familiarity. And I believe that intangible sense of place has very essential impact on restoring sense

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