

ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT R&D AGENDA WORKSHOP

A MetroLab Network Report Out
November 21, 2025



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Introduction

Cities are often at the forefront of tackling complex social, economic, and environmental challenges, balancing the need for innovation with the realities of limited budgets and political constraints. Allentown, PA is navigating a period of significant change, marked by shifting housing pressures, evolving public health and safety needs, and rapid demographic transitions. City leaders, community organizations, and higher education partners collectively recognize the importance of bringing research, data, and practical evidence to bear on these challenges.

To strengthen these partnerships and better align academic expertise with municipal and community needs, MetroLab convened a Local R&D Agenda Workshop with the City of Allentown at Muhlenberg College with representation spanning local and regional government, six higher education institutions, and community organizations. The session surfaced priority research needs across areas including housing and infrastructure, public health, community safety, economic development and mobility, service delivery, resident engagement, and more.

Participants emphasized the importance of actionable and locally grounded research, more efficient data sharing, and sustained collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and community groups.

This report summarizes those needs and opportunities from Allentown stakeholders at the workshop held on November 21, 2025.

Allentown's Research Needs

MetroLab convened this workshop with Allentown leaders and stakeholders to surface shared research priorities, explore collaboration models, and strengthen the relationships between institutions as drivers of evidence-based governance.

Participants identified six recurring domains where applied research could directly support policy and operational decision-making:

- Housing and infrastructure
- Public and behavioral health
- Community safety
- Economic development and mobility
- Service delivery
- Resident engagement

Topic 1: Housing and Infrastructure

- How often do residents move to, away from, and within Allentown? Why do they move, and, within Allentown, which neighborhood conditions influence that mobility?
- What housing and income characteristics define Allentown's current population, and how do these relate to stability or displacement?
- How can the city evaluate whether place-based development strategies, including the Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ), are achieving intended outcomes?
- What impacts do zoning reforms and upzoning have on small-city housing production, especially given the city's persistent unit shortage?
- How can Allentown measure the effect of older housing stock on resident health and household wellbeing?
- How can green infrastructure, tree canopy, and park systems improve environmental quality, heat reduction, flood resilience, and neighborhood livability?
- Which infrastructure design strategies (complete streets, traffic patterns, ADA standards and accessibility design, trees, litter controls) most influence resident behavior and safety?

Topic 2: Public and Behavior Health

- What community-level barriers prevent residents from accessing mental health, substance use, and primary care services?
- How do insurance limitations, transportation, language access, and stigma shape public health outcomes?
- Which environmental exposures (air quality, asthma drivers, chronic disease factors) are most affecting Allentown residents, and where are high-risk clusters?
- How do food insecurity, childcare gaps, and safety-net funding cuts influence household health and stability?
- How can city and regional health partners develop shared data systems to understand needs across hospitals, schools, and service providers?

- How can Allentown improve public trust in health and science, especially around vaccines, prevention, and emerging health threats?
- What are the non-academic, outside-of-school barriers that prevent students from getting the most out of school?

Topic 3: Community Safety

- What alternatives to enforcement and arrest can reduce violence and improve safety?
- What factors drive youth violence, and how do school indicators, social stressors, or online influences contribute?
- How can data systems across police, health, schools, and nonprofits be connected to understand root causes of violence?
- What do residents perceive as making them feel unsafe, and how can those perceptions inform prevention strategies?
- How can recreation programs, park access, and youth engagement interventions reduce crime and improve wellbeing?
- How can the city systematically evaluate whether policing strategies, data practices, and community engagement approaches are effective?

Topic 4: Economic Development and Mobility

- What do small businesses and entrepreneurs need in order to start, grow, and remain in Allentown?
- What factors contribute to unemployment, participation in the informal economy, or barriers to entering the workforce?
- How can place-based incentives be assessed for their economic and equity impacts?
- What transportation needs and mobility preferences define different populations in the city?
- How can Allentown better recruit and retain workers in city government and local nonprofits?
- What do residents experiencing poverty see as the real levers for improving opportunity?
- What barriers affect access to jobs, higher education, or skill-building programs?
- How is Allentown's economic mobility shaped by childcare access, safety-net reductions, disability service cuts, and changes in federal and state funding?
- How can the city project and prepare for the workforce many years down the road?

Topic 5: Service Delivery

- How can the city measure whether key services (public works, code enforcement, permitting, health, data operations) are effective and equitable?
- What strategies help modernize city systems, speed up government processes, and improve resident experience?
- How can shared data systems allow departments to collaborate more efficiently and avoid duplication?
- What organizational culture, staffing, or recruitment barriers limit the city's ability to deliver services effectively?

- How can Allentown evaluate government performance, track return on investment, and adopt continuous improvement practices?
- Where can higher education institutions support data collection, program evaluation, and grant management to fill capacity gaps?
- How can the region better understand the ecosystem and flow of resources and collaborations (government, not-for-profits, for-profits, etc.) and make services more efficient through that understanding?

Topic 6: Resident Engagement

- How do residents currently receive city information, and which communication methods best reach multilingual and digitally disconnected communities?
- What drives civic apathy, disengagement, or distrust, and how can the city rebuild civic identity and pride?
- How can the city better understand resident expectations for services and their perceptions of safety, quality of life, and neighborhood belonging?
- What does effective community engagement look like in under-resourced neighborhoods, and how can engagement be sustained over time?
- What makes someone identify with a city beyond “This is where I live”?
- How can Allentown build common ground across differences to achieve shared goals?
- How does social media shape civic behavior (particular among children), conflict, or misinformation?

How to Strengthen the Ecosystem for Research Collaboration

Workshop participants from local government, higher education institutions, and community organizations were asked how Allentown and its regional partners could work together more effectively to address shared challenges through research. The responses across all three groups reflected a deep desire for more consistent collaboration, clearer communication channels, and research that moves beyond theory toward implementation. Stakeholders described opportunities not only to connect academic expertise with immediate City and community needs, but also to rebuild regional research infrastructure where institutional gaps exist. Specific suggestions for how to strengthen the ecosystem for research collaboration include:

- **Connect research to real city work:** Participants indicated research is most helpful when it’s tied to ongoing projects, department priorities, and issues already on the ground rather than abstract questions. We urge the research community to consider which local department would own the recommendations made by the research itself (also, have a recommendation, not just an observation).
- **Make it easier to find the right people:** Collaboration improves when there are clear contacts, navigators, or liaisons who can match city needs with academic expertise. We urge each institution present at the workshop to assign an individual as a “front door” – who should be the main point of contact who can help coordinate research to practitioner, and practitioner to researcher?

- **Keep communication going throughout the year:** Partnerships work best when they are not one-off. Regular check-ins, early conversations, and steady contact help projects stay aligned. We recommend these occur on a monthly or bi-monthly cadence.
- **Improve how data is shared:** Stakeholders from all attendee groups pointed to fragmented systems. Shared formats and clearer expectations can help avoid duplication and make it easier to use data across organizations. Data sharing agreements can help immediately (with specific task orders coming in as necessary for specific projects).
- **Create more structured on-ramps for students:** Faculty and administrators emphasized the value of applied projects, internships, and experiential learning that plug students directly into city needs and can help grow the local talent pipeline.
- **Reduce administrative friction:** Several partners stressed the need for clearer IRB pathways, simpler processes, and help with grants management and research administration so collaboration doesn't stall in paperwork. We recommend exploring the establishment of a shared IRB pathway across participating partner institutions to reduce time spent and lower administrative burden for city and nonprofit partners.
- **Deliver findings in formats that City staff can use quickly:** Research needs to be timely, concise, and focused on implementation rather than long academic reports. We recommend:
 - Including a one-page summary
 - The summary should have common language, with no research jargon
 - Make the research accessible, ensuring it doesn't live behind a paywall
- **Build shared ownership of projects:** The best collaborations involve the city, higher education institutions, and nonprofits all helping define research questions and sharing responsibility for the outcome. The regular meetings will help identify work at "stage zero." Think of shovel ready projects that don't involve actual shovels, but good research questions.
- **Be transparent about priorities and timelines:** Understanding each other's calendars, constraints, and expectations reduces frustration and helps align projects from the start. Research projects should have the right altitude of question. We recommend a question that would take around 9-18 months to fully address.
- **Include city and community groups in grant proposals:** Participants recommended bringing local partners into funding opportunities to align research agendas with regional needs and help sustain long-term work.
- **Support nonprofit capacity with data and evaluation:** Community partners highlighted gaps in evaluation, mapping, and data collection, areas where higher education institutions can provide much-needed support. Philanthropic partners posed excellent research questions that would be ripe for a partnership.

Observational Takeaways from Workshop

- City staff, academic, and community partners showed a clear willingness to work together more systematically and build a shared research agenda and strong relationships between some partners already exist that can be built upon.

- Participants emphasized a need for practical, on-the-ground research questions where findings can immediately inform policy, program design, or service delivery.
- Data and information are often fragmented across government departments, hospitals, nonprofits, schools, and state systems, limiting the ability to understand issues holistically.
- Housing instability, mental health, and community safety are deeply linked and a key challenge that the community is committed to solving. However, because these challenges are cross-cutting no single department or entity has a complete picture of resident needs.
- Barriers to trust and communication with the community include language access, reliance on social media, limited outreach channels, and uneven understanding of how city services work.
- Capacity constraints are significant and widespread. City departments and nonprofits in particular described limited time, staffing, and tools for data collection, program evaluation, and grant management where partners could help.
- Existing systems often miss the lived experiences of residents. Youth, multilingual households, residents facing poverty, and unhoused individuals are not well captured by current data and reporting processes.
- With previous collaborative research structures no longer active, there is interest in creating a more coordinated and sustainable approach.
- Student capacity is an underused asset. Institutions across the region have students ready for applied work who could strengthen data collection, analysis, and program support.
- Participants want collaboration that is continuous rather than episodic, with research priorities shaped jointly by local government, higher education institutions, and community organizations.

About FAS and the Local Government R&D Agenda

Cities are often on the front lines of solving difficult and complex social issues such as affordable housing, mental health, and digital equity. Universities can serve as a key partner, producing cutting-edge research, ideas, and technology that could help cities solve some of these complex issues.

And yet, there is a disconnect between research and local government programs and policies. Why? We believe for two primary reasons: 1) research is often pushed, not pulled from local government and 2) research output doesn't necessarily align with how cities and counties work – and so it's difficult to adopt.

MetroLab aims to equip cities with science and research. And with philanthropic support, MetroLab is producing a national body of work called the Local Government R&D Agenda: a list of identified priority research areas that can address local governments' complex issues and needs. MetroLab aims to do this by working with a select number of cities and hosting

workshops with nearby universities and colleges to ask the question “if you could get research on [blank], what would you want?”.

By intentionally bringing these key stakeholders together, we can produce actionable research addressing complex challenges. For example:

- What if R&D efforts reduced the cost of affordable housing in half?
- What if city councils received draft policy language to make starting a business as easy as getting a driver's license?
- What if we discovered ways to expedite recovery funds delivery to low- to moderate-income neighborhoods, reducing wait times after a disaster event?

At the conclusion of the city-hosted workshops, MetroLab will work with federal agencies and congressional stakeholders to fund projects that would directly support and address the Local Government R&D Agenda. We hope to bring those projects back to cities, with MetroLab serving as a matchmaker of research and programmatic outcomes back to the local communities we partner with.

Appendix: Notes Captured During the Workshop

Workshop Question Responses

During the workshop, several interactive questions were asked of the participants. Those answers informed the summary above and are listed in full below.

For local government, what is one word you think of when you hear “research”?

- Data (x4)
- Academic (x2)
- Complicated
- Out of reach/needs to be applied
- Long process
- Past experience - why not the future?
- Intelligent
- People
- Needed
- Specialty
- Understanding
- Time
- Focused
- Collaborative
- Grad students
- Statistics (and ability to slant data)
- Indicator of community well-being

For academic partners, what is one word you think of when you hear public policy?

- Conflicting/conflict
- Government (x3)
- Guidrails
- Politics (x2)
- Leadership
- Systemic
- Guardrails
- Rules (x2)
- Slow (x2)
- Complicated
- Advocate
- Far-reaching (broad)
- Direction
- Priorities
- Contentious
- Roadblocks
- Change
- Laws, codes, regulation
- Work
- Politician
- Common good
- Safety
- Critical
- Processes
- Implementation
- Hopeful
- Broad
- Unreachable
- Law

In five words or less, how do you know who to work with from the other institution?

For local government:

- I ask the mayor
- Stay connected to professors
- We’ve put in years of work creating relationships
- Other staff recommendations and connections
- Flood their inbox
- Use my knowledge of higher education to find the right people
- Existing relationships
- Start with those I know
- I will ask LVCF, the city, or LPPI first

- I reach out to my colleagues
- No idea!
- Ask my people who their people are?
- Call a mutual colleague
- Prior connections in meetings/experiences
- Interested in a safer community
- From established formal agreements to study

For academic partners:

- Network through shared connections
- Relationship with Mayor
- Personal relationships (been around a long time)
- Word of mouth
- Google search or personal connections
- Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges
- Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley
- Through current relationships
- Already working on action-oriented projects
- Reach out to my president
- Public engagement opportunities (like this)
- Through peer connections
- Through partnerships and collaborative meetings
- Look them up on city web page
- They often reach out to me
- Some folks we work with because of an existing relationship. Others, no idea.
- Probably looking on website, but to be honest I do not have any idea
- Websites, social connections, colleagues, asking
- Find someone who knows (not me)
- My colleagues
- Leveraging networks of colleagues
- Google search
- I reach out to others who know them to make an introduction
- Website search
- I ask the mayor and he directs me
- Friend of a friend
- Google
- Use my LVEDC connections

What myth do you want to bust to the other side?

For local government:

- City government wants to prevent change or makes it hard
- That municipal leaders aren't invested in long term outcomes
- We like/are complacent being slow and ineffective
- Willingness to collaborate
- Unwilling to collaborate

- Community organizations are not strategic or savvy
- There are resources
- We don't want to collaborate
- Unwilling to share data/info
- Frame studies/research not for personal academic interest but for a tool to impact lives
- We are hopelessly bureaucratic
- Government institutions are incapable of change
- Research is a gap they need to fill
- Cities aren't interested in change

For academic partners:

- We are not an ivory tower
- We care about our community beyond campus
- We are not in an ivory tower. We live and work in our community!
- There are no "sides"
- That we are only working for a semester - I may do a semester-long project, but I want to keep going in between and beyond.
- Perceptions of elitism
- Our work is client-driven not academic
- That professors' interest is beyond the local
- Research is out of touch
- Researchers/academics have their own agendas and will prioritize those
- Faculty are all in their head, not practical
- Academics love democracy and are active partners with community and city leaders
- Academics can understand both sides of issues
- Research does not always need to be long. We can use our skills to improve quality and operations.
- We can bring the skills down to a more engaging manner and break it up for the audience
- Research is supposed to serve the client
- College employees are all rich
- Out of touch with community
- College employees and/or students can solve all of your problems
- That we don't care and/or not committed to the communities we live and work in
- That non-profits understand or value research
- That research is focused on very narrow questions
- Elitist
- That research is not community-oriented
- That academics are out of touch
- All college students have money
- We are not so slow
- We focus in the past to address future issues
- Having an intern is too much work
- Recent grads are not reliable
- University research is not practical

- Today's college students don't have a work ethic
- Close minded
- That colleges are ivory towers full of elitists who can't do practical things

For local government, if you could get research on [blank], what would you want?

- Residential transiency
- Where people come from
- Housing and income specifics
- Research on the needs of local industry for childcare
- Economic downfall due to weakened safety net support
- How do we know if the Neighborhood Improvement Zone (NIZ) is having its intended effect?
- Evaluating place-based economic development strategies
- How often do people move around in Allentown and why?
- Unemployment:
 - Informal economy
 - Good to have a data set like the longitudinal employer-household dynamics on the unemployed side of things
- Tracking the impact of reduced support for rapid responses in early childcare
- How do we best support small businesses and entrepreneurs?
- The actual daily experience of residents who benefit from at least one safety net program - where do they see solutions?
- Removing barriers to economic mobility and exploring root causes of poverty and how policy can help or harm
- Tracking the impact of decreased funding for disability services
- Proven methods for inter-city collaboration
- How to convince people to work in city government
- Government efficiency: make government work faster!
- How do you successfully change culture within an organization
- Ways that local philanthropy has made a difference
- Tracking the impact of the shift of HUD funding
- How do you build civic engagement when public schools are underfunded?
- What do residents expect of their city government?
- Contributors to civic apathy/lack of trust
- How to bring back community engagement to prevent/stop negative behavior
- What single thing should a city address that would make you prouder to live here
- How do we build common ground across differences to achieve common goals? What levers need to be pulled locally?
- What would need to happen to spur diverse political representation and engagement outside of a two-party system? Community-driven candidates/priorities?
- Why do people litter? How do we get them to stop?
- What makes someone identify with a city beyond "This is where I live"?
- Why do people use the city to engage in conflict on their behalf?
- Rec programs and violence reduction connection

- How the transition of UCR to NIBRS is providing information that informs data-driven decisions to reduce crime
- Evidence-based violence prevention strategies
- Rec program impacts on health impacts and crime reduction
- Quality of life and correlation to safety
- School time and connection to youth violence
- What makes people feel unsafe in Allentown?
- What influences crime when resources are met? How can we stop it?
- How do you gain compliance with quality-of-life laws?
- Community led violence prevention strategies
- Ways similar communities to ours have had positive changes in housing insecurity, mental health care access, health literacy, etc. Are these feasible for our own policy building?
- School indicators and correlation to youth offenses
- Funding/help housing for those struggling with mental health for long term success
- Understanding transportation choice preference
- Trees inventory analysis - value of tree canopy on economy and environment
- How can we use our infrastructure to control behavior? Examples: speeding, litter baskets, allowing trash bags at the curb or requiring containers
- Green infrastructure - value of parks along riparian corridors, how can we improve water quality?
- Heat response/climate - value of green spaces to reduce temperatures, pools, aquatics, cooling
- Social isolation - I would love to see if there are connections with community engagement and neighborhood outcomes. Does this lead to better housing?
- Park user data - who is using parks?
- Trail impacts - trail user counts and is it for recreation or transportation
- In what ways does racism (structural/systemic) continue to perpetuate the very disparities we claim/seek to address?
- Upzoning effect on housing production in smaller cities
- Different neighborhoods and their effects on behavioral health and old housing stock to health
- Personal health conditions of residents
- Health literacy for both our English and Spanish speaking residents
- How social media influences negative behavior in adolescents
- Tracking the impact of SNAP benefit changes on people, pantries, and food system and grocery stores

For academic partners, what research do you think local governments need?

- Projections on workforce needs to be extended out for years
- Everybody needs better collaboration from the Allentown School District
- Urban and public policy planning
- Data on air quality
- Impact of AI on workforce locally and in government jobs
- How to best connect community members with resources

- Grants management support, funding and financials management support, capacity building with professionals that do the behind-scenes administration
- New ways to educate public school students in the age of AI
- Public health impact of lack of affordable housing
- Public health impact of warehouse types of jobs (and impact on roads, traffic, quality of life)
- How to support ESL population
- How community members get their local news
- Education resources and benefits in Lehigh Valley
- What barriers do citizens perceive are preventing them from fully expressing their capabilities?
- Research on collaborative care models or other integrated behavioral health models
- Research on a real understanding on mental health access - not just are their providers but can people access them (insurance, location, etc.)
- Research on how many health care referrals are denied because substance use is on board
- Mental health SUDS treatment parity
- How to reach all members of an area with important info?
- How to build community trust?
- Transportation needs of low-income individuals
- Data on access to healthy food
- What are community-level barriers to mental health access/care
- Economic development for 21st century - how to bring new industry here
- Data on multiple interdisciplinary impacts of policies. Example: Does increasing number of bus routes improve 1) employment (get to work more easily), 2) air quality (lower emissions), 3) health (fewer crashes) and more
- Interconnected data reported - when APD does not receive the report, but a non-profit does, how do we share that? And how do we avoid duplication without sacrificing trust and anonymity
- What are the non-academic, outside of school barriers that prevent students from getting the most out of school? Attendance or tardy - safety, caregiving, homelessness, sleep, need to work, transportation, health, food, domestic violence
- Affordable housing
- Reducing poverty
- Traffic disorganization in Allentown, double parallel parking
- Patterns of behavior for [insert issue here]
- Solutions to specific problems such as traffic patterns, housing, facility/resource use, etc.
- Public understanding of mental health
- Allentown residents attending local colleges and the economic impact they're making to their own community (when they stay local)
- How do we effectively address mental health?
- Integrated data bridging demographic and attitudinal measures
- Policy implementation ROI
- Granular public opinion and needs data

- How do governments measure the effectiveness of what they do?
- Longitudinal cradle to career research
- I need to know who is coming into the jail, what specific programs they need while incarcerated and where they are going upon release. Who is most likely to return to jail and why? Where are they most likely to seek services and where do they live and work in re-entry?
- Data on transportation accessibility
- Research on public transportation needs
- Research on needs of senior citizens
- How policy at state and federal levels impacts real experiences - to identify what changes might be needed
- Understanding predictors of socially meaningful phenomena (health education, broadly) at a local level to inform local action
- Implementation science research is needed to understand how to support the uptake of practices to support a particular outcome

For local government, how can academic partners support policy development and programmatic needs?

- Help research what works and offer data connection ideas
- Aligning research projects to ongoing or planned initiatives
- Planning for training with local stakeholders
- Incentivizing students to stay local
- Collaborate on addressing/identifying key issues and finding a solution
- Connect college students and city staff early and often
- Develop a clearer IRB pathway when community collaboration is involved
- Align college courses with city projects
- Making research results useable and available
- Organize (and fund!) convenings
- Meet us where the work is happening
- Build helping relationships outside of proposals
- See Lehigh community fellows program!!!
- Develop partnership to share support on upcoming city initiatives
- Maintain consistent relationship with city staff
- Show up in the city, be neighborly
- Serve as a hub for collaboration
- Help us in changing the narrative around those in academia
- Leveraging classrooms for those in the community who may not have had the chance to sit there
- Having a liaison or person who can serve as the connector between higher education and government and community organizations (so it is not so difficult to find people and partner)
- By establishing formal relationships to work on issues that enhance learning opportunities for both entities
- Develop career pathways to directly support city talent recruitment
- Maintain open communication

- Build local policy liaison(s) to support growth of capacity to update/create policies (feedback loops)
- Collaboratively and consistently identify strategic research projects to drive innovation - working with city and NGOs in development and implementation
- Share feedback derived from social research to change policy for the better
- Be a programmatic partner for sports and rec (wrestling as a current example)
- Affordable research
- Trash and litter assessment in areas of need and counter measures
- Advocate at city council meetings for programmatic and research priorities
- Water quality programs
- Help with collecting data! We get a lot of data collection at the state level that does not always reflect our local residents and their needs. Then share with local government programs so we can use it to back policy implementation.
- Climate interns/research
- Universities reach out to us vs. needing to seek them out
- Collaborate with city employees to help fill the gaps around data and information on any of our areas/services
- Keep us up to date with research developments regionally, statewide, and nationally
- Provide dedicated, consistent, and not time-burdened partnership in formulating and delivering clear research questions
- Include municipalities and other stakeholders in grant opportunities that are aligned with regional priorities
- Support collaboratives that are addressing major issues with data
- Embedded in local community to inform a fuller understanding of issues

For academic partners, how can local government support university innovation and economic growth?

- Focus on infrastructure and safety
- Bring problems of pressing local importance to universities
- Make students feel like a meaningful part of the community
- Stay connected, email or call the staff administrators in the colleges
- By addressing the research needs of cities/governments
- Building coalitions and projects to open up new focus of funds not available to the other party directly
- Host students and engage them in the inner workings of local government so they can generate ideas
- Regularly communicate the opportunities and benefits to the community that having a university provides
- Share data
- Establish long-term partnerships that allow data sharing and thought collaboration
- Collaborate and share with us ideas, challenges, data (as it is), needs, questions, and we can help.
- Data transparency
- Build capacity, for more frequent discussions like this
- Offer internship opportunities, with potential to hire full time (keep our talent local)

- Economic growth - offer a “college promise” scholarship to graduates of city public high schools
- Through collaborative approaches
- Engage in partnerships that align with community needs and university resources and expertise
- By providing guidance on where we should be focusing our talents and resources for the public good
- Sharing what you do with organizations
- Free opportunities to students - even if it is “just” a tour!
- Work collaboratively by providing projects and data for research
- Inclusion in planning and pre-implementation
- Finding more ways to meet
- Embrace and welcome our students; create community-based spaces where they feel welcome; expand their home beyond campus
- Create many more opportunities for networking convenings and sustained relationships
- By connecting us to the communities’ needs and resources
- Establish long-term projects specific to targeted policy issues that non-profits are already working on
- Open communication
- Identify pain points and seek to solve problems then leverage solution for more economic growth
- Collaboration
- Help promote the region to attract the best faculty talent and students
- Understanding that each university is unique and that we all should be uplifted to guarantee diversity of thought
- Create a repository for goals or needs (to be viewed by researchers)
- Provide internships for our students
- Communicate local government priorities
- Share available government data with researchers
- Offer internships/opportunities for students to gain hands on experience
- Economic growth and innovation:
 - Partner to develop job programs that develop local talent pipelines
 - Create incentives for college graduates to stay and develop companies in the city
 - Help market the rich education culture and the benefits it brings for culture, community, businesses, etc.
- Being on community driven research teams and driving ideas
- Integrate collaboration into organizational structure
- If you have funding in an area that we bring expertise, can we be nudged about that possibility
- Through partnering on research and grants
- If you have an R&D question that aligns with what we have abilities in let’s do it together
- Tabling events!
- Continued partnerships such as relaxed Allentown Parking Authority presence on move-in days!

- Create center for innovation that meet needed economic growth for the next century - think the research triangle
- Align innovation with academic planning to help the city's economic engine of growth

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