FALL 2016

TRANSFORM
UNIFY
THRIVE

EASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2035

PREPARED BY
Urban Matrix Architecture and Planning PC
Metropolitan Urban Design Workshop

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AKRF Inc
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KEY CONSULTING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

LOCAL AGENCIES

- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Easton Recreation Bureau
- Easton Police Department
- Easton Housing Authority
- Easton Public Works Department
- Easton Parking Authority
- Easton Environmental Advisory Council
- Easton Historic District Commission

REGIONAL AGENCIES

- Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
- LANTA (regional public transit agency)
- Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- Easton Main Street Initiative
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- College Hill Neighborhood Association
- South Side Neighborhood Association
- Easton Business Association
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- Safe Harbor
- ProJect Easton

INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

- Crayola Experience
- Lafayette College
- Grand Eastonian Hotel
- State Theatre

ELECTED OFFICIALS AND BODIES

- Mayor's Office
- Easton Planning Commission
- Easton City Council

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

- Tina Roseberry, Director
- Carl Manges, Chief Planner
- Michael Handzo, Planner

CONSULTANT TEAM

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View of Easton's Historic Centre Square

FOREWORD

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the City of Easton's Comprehensive Plan. Although we are experiencing a tremendous renaissance in our City, now is not the time to rest on our accomplishments; it's a time to plan for our future. The proposed Plan, a revision of Easton's 1997 Comprehensive Plan, offers a framework for guiding future growth and development in our City over the next 10 to 20 years. It was developed using input from residents and stakeholders gathered from a survey and numerous public meetings held over the last several years. The Plan maintains our commitment to a Clean and Safe City with livable neighborhoods while also ensuring the quality and economic vitality of our business district and neighborhood businesses.

We are an administration and community that has high development and zoning standards, believes in good planning, and supports actions to ensure the community's long term viability, sustainability and quality. This is a community of people that supports those high standards... because we want Easton to be a special place, not just another place.

The plan was developed with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated and harmonious development of our City and its environs that will best promote health, safety and the general welfare of our residents, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

Thank you for taking the time to read this plan, our road map for the future, and I ask that you become engaged in the development of your City so that Easton can realize its full potential as a place where people want to live, work and raise a family.

Sincerely

Office of the Mayor
Salvatore J. Panto, Jr.
Mayor

Aerial image of Easton at fork of Delaware and Lehigh Rivers

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE EASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2035

From being a key destination in the coal and iron works region of the 20th century, Easton has taken concrete steps toward redefining its place in the Lehigh Valley (LV) Region. Over the last couple of decades, attractions such as the Crayola Experience, Sigal Museum, The State Theatre, Farmers' Market, the many festivals at Centre Square, and close collaborations between the City and Lafayette College have attracted people from the immediate region and beyond. This new influx of energy and investments predicts a revived urban focus that will help to bring the City's population back to its peak of 35,000 people by the year 2040.

These statistics and planning efforts represent a key juncture in Easton's history. Looking forward 20 years and beyond, this comprehensive plan provides the opportunity to define Easton's identity and its path toward a sustainable and prosperous future. With this overarching goal in mind, the plan making process and the plan itself serve a number of purposes for Easton's residents.

1. A Shared Vision for Easton's Future

During the process of developing the comprehensive plan, the people of Easton engaged with the City Planning department and consultants to express their aspirations and ideas about the kind of place they would like to see Easton become. This community engagement process, which is detailed further in the report, included techniques such as public meetings, focus groups, online surveys, one-on-one interviews with key community leaders, public presentations and design workshops. Extending over a period of two and a half years, this engagement process helped define a cohesive vision for Easton's future, and strategies and actions that will help achieve this vision by 2035.

2. Overall Framework to Guide all Plans, Initiatives and Investments

In recent years, the City of Easton has initiated and completed a number of projects and programs, several of which are currently underway. Some of these include the Simon Silk Mill, Neston Heights, new residential buildings on E. Saint Joseph Street, 13th Street corridor planning, Lafayette College's Film and Media Center in partnership with Lafayette College, and a number of initiatives for a cleaner and safer city. City Council and City Leaders have had to make decisions about budget allocations and prioritizing one project over another without the advantage of having a framework through which to evaluate citywide implications. The Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 provides a consistent evaluation framework to ensure the coordination of efforts and investments toward a common future for Easton.

3. Actionable Plan that Establishes Synergies Between Distinct Function Elements

The Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 sets forth a number of actions and strategies that highlight the interrelatedness among typical comprehensive plan function elements: transportation, land use, zoning etc. This approach is rooted in, and articulates community input to determine synergies between these 'function' elements versus describing them independently, as has been the case in the traditional approach.

4. Platform for Ongoing Dialogue and Monitoring

To realize a long-term vision for the City of Easton, it is important to make sure all stakeholders work in coordinated ways to monitor and influence how their City changes over time. The comprehensive plan provides a platform to bring together community, political and technical stakeholders, and lays out a framework for building consensus. This framework provides a structure to establish priorities, monitor progress and identify partners that can support the implementation of the comprehensive plan under the leadership of the City Government.

5. Next Steps and Blueprint for Success

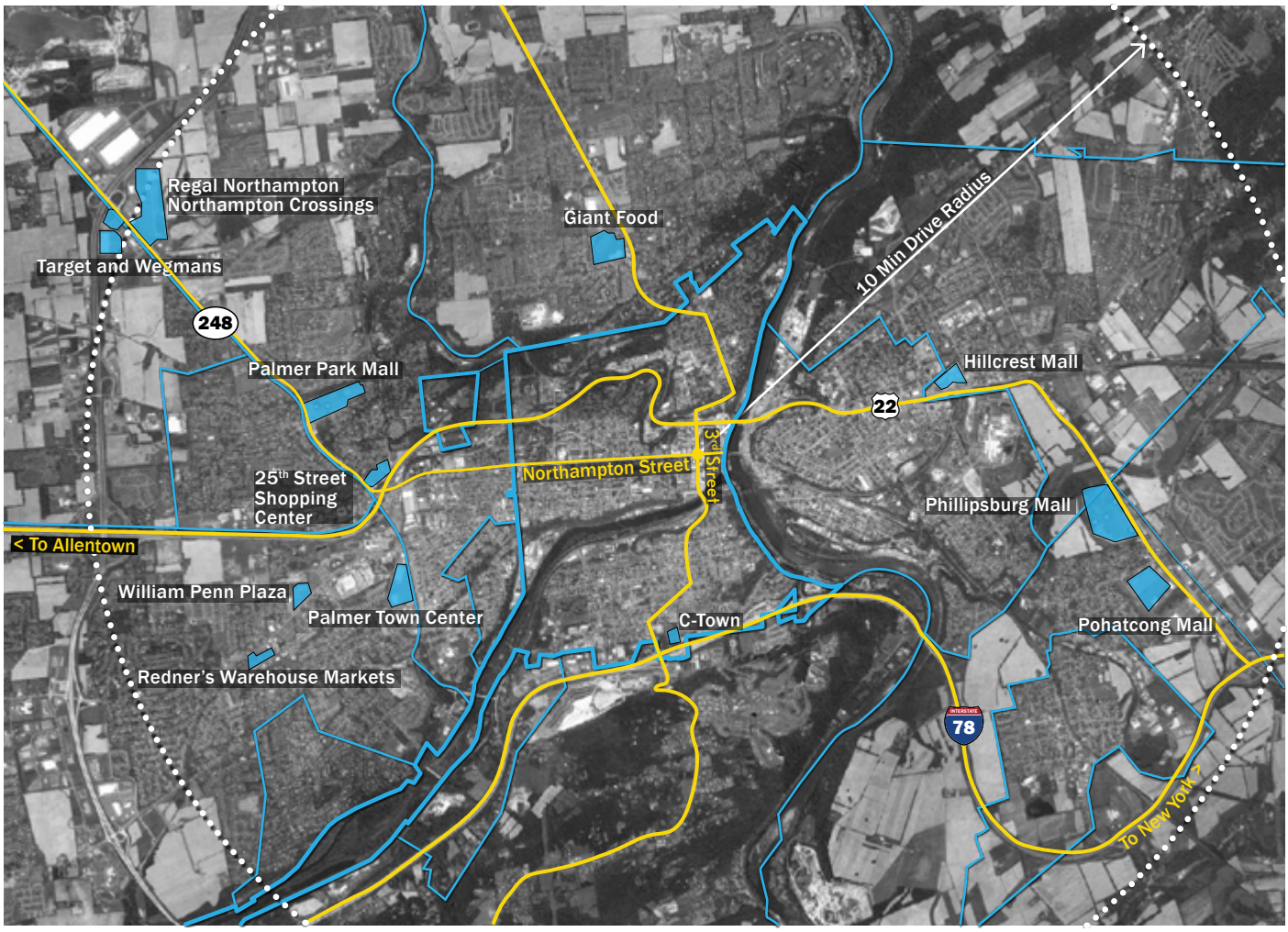
The comprehensive plan has ranks and prioritizes a series of short-, medium- and long- term actions that can be taken to ensure steady progress toward the community's shared vision for Easton's future. These priorities, determined in May 2015 through active participation from the Planning Commission, City Council, City Planning Department and the people of Easton, provide a blueprint for steady progress over the next year. The process of plan monitoring will then allow for these priorities to adapt to Easton's changing circumstances.

EXISTING PLANNING CONTEXT AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANNING INITIATIVES

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Act of 1968, the comprehensive plan recognizes Easton as a city and a distinct political entity / jurisdiction. However, Easton is a part of the larger LV region that is interconnected to its neighboring jurisdiction by natural and economic influences.

Located at the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, the City of Easton has enjoyed the status of a regional transportation hub during the industrial era. Today as the lands along the former Delaware and Lehigh canal and rail corridors have transformed into national heritage sites, Easton enjoys its position as a major tourist destination. Its attractions such as the Crayola Experience, Sigal Museum, Farmers' Market, rich architectural history, State Theatre shows, National Canal Museum, diverse restaurants and Centre Square programs are all regional in their reach and bring over 500,000 visitors to the City each year. This economic interdependency is especially important given that tourism is a significant source of income and revenue for the residents, and the government.

In addition to tourism, over 80% of residents are employed in the larger LV region, tying the City even more closely to its region. Easton is also the county seat of Northampton County and home to one of the top ranked liberal arts schools in the country: Lafayette College.



Easton's regional setting showing major roadway network and destinations in neighboring municipalities

Major Roads Administrative Boundaries Destinations / Shopping Centers

Over the last few decades, Easton has fast emerged as a creative and arts center, and attracted new resident population from the New York-New Jersey region. Even though it is the smallest of all cities in the LV Region, its scenic setting, rich architectural stock and recent renaissance with projects such as the Simon Silk Mill have positioned it as one of the most desirable places to live in the LV Region.

The opportunity for Easton will be to coordinate its plans and investments with neighboring municipalities and the larger region, so it can continue to attract visitors and residents by leveraging its current position and firmly establishing itself as an attractive urban place to live, work and play. The following section investigates existing plans and projects within the LV region to ensure consistency with ongoing planning efforts.

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) Comprehensive Plan

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) comprehensive plan forecasts population growth in suburban townships on the perimeters of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton. The plan identifies sprawl as a growing problem, and the key development concepts advocated in the plan protect natural areas and promote higher density urban areas. The Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 aligns with LVPC's comprehensive plan by promoting infill development, strategies to reduce blight and vacancies, protecting natural resources and integrating them with the community, and by identifying existing underdeveloped areas that can accommodate higher densities. Below is a comparison of all the development concepts (DC) laid out in the LVPC comprehensive plan with key concepts of the Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035.

DC 1: Conservation of important natural areas

Easton's location along the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and the Bushkill Creek renders it a very scenic setting that sets it apart from other cities in the LV region. These natural areas are an important asset and amenity for residents of Easton. The comprehensive plan provides strategies to enhance the recreational potential of Easton's waterways and integrate it more closely with upland communities. The plan also recommends integrating parks and waterways into a network of open space systems that can be accessed easily on foot and by bicycle. Further, since the land along these waterways is currently underutilized, low impact and environmentally responsible water dependent activities and development that will increase the attractiveness of the rivers as a destination have also been proposed in the comprehensive plan, through an analysis of best practices from around the United States and the world.

DC 2: New growth contiguous with major existing urban areas

During the ongoing comprehensive plan outreach with the community, the City's Planning agency and the Comprehensive Plan Consultant Group were able to clearly identify the inter-relationship among Easton and the surrounding communities of Forks Township, Palmer Township, Wilson Borough, West Easton Borough, Glendon Borough, Williams Township and Phillipsburg, NJ. A number of Eastonians commute for work, convenience and destination shopping, as well as for recreational needs to these neighboring areas. The comprehensive plan provides recommendations for strengthening the core transportation networks between these areas and identifies new development areas along these routes. In addition, it promotes Downtown Easton as the main commercial district for Easton and neighboring areas.

DC 3: New growth in designated urban areas where community utilities already exist or can be expanded

Easton, which is a part of the LV region's designated urban area, expects to accommodate an additional 7,000 people within its City limits by the year 2040, bringing its population to 35,000, matching its peak in the 1950s.

DC 4: Increased residential densities in designated urban areas

The housing analysis in the comprehensive plan has identified the need for multifamily housing typologies to support higher densities and the needs of the emerging demographic profile. The Downtown and West Ward neighborhoods are targeted for higher residential densities, and the Black

Zoning map showing the major road network and permitted uses across the Lehigh Valley Region
Source: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Diamond Coal Factory in the South Side has been identified as a potential medium density residential development.

DC 5: No urban growth areas in designated natural resources (or farmland where applicable)

The City's River Corridors are designated as natural resources in the LVPC general land use plan and are to be protected. The comprehensive plan encourages environmentally sensitive development in these areas to enhance the recreational potential of the River Corridors for the community and the region. This type of development will continue to protect these natural resources and integrate them more closely with upland communities.

DC 6: Extensive infill, redevelopment and reuse of properties in cities and borough

There are a number of underutilized, blighted and vacant sites in Easton that have been documented by the individual neighborhood associations and the Easton Planning Bureau. The comprehensive plan has created multiple strategies addressing infill, redevelopment and adaptive reuse. These strategies identify incentives, potential for public-private partnerships and best practices from around the country that can transform derelict areas and integrate them with adjacent urban fabric. In addition, the comprehensive plan also identifies key vacant sites to be transformed into community amenities that will promote strong and well-balanced neighborhoods.

DC 7: Combined economic and community development efforts to provide well paying jobs and improve the tax base of municipalities in distress

The economic analysis conducted for the comprehensive plan provides a data driven baseline to encourage further economic development. It identifies tourism as an important economic sector. In addition, the comprehensive plan puts forth multiple strategies to connect residents with employment and workforce training centers in the LV region, and to take comprehensive steps towards creating a business ready environment to attract new businesses to Easton.

DC 8: Continued development of transportation facilities, community utilities and public parks to meet the needs of the region as it grows in the future

Easton has taken a number of steps over the last two decades to further this development concept. Some of the initiatives include development of the multimodal transit center on South Third Street, 13th Street corridor study, community gardens in the West Ward neighborhood, and many more initiatives. The comprehensive plan builds on these initiatives and highlights additional areas of improvement, new facilities and utilities that match Easton's projected population growth and market needs.

Williams Township Comprehensive Plan

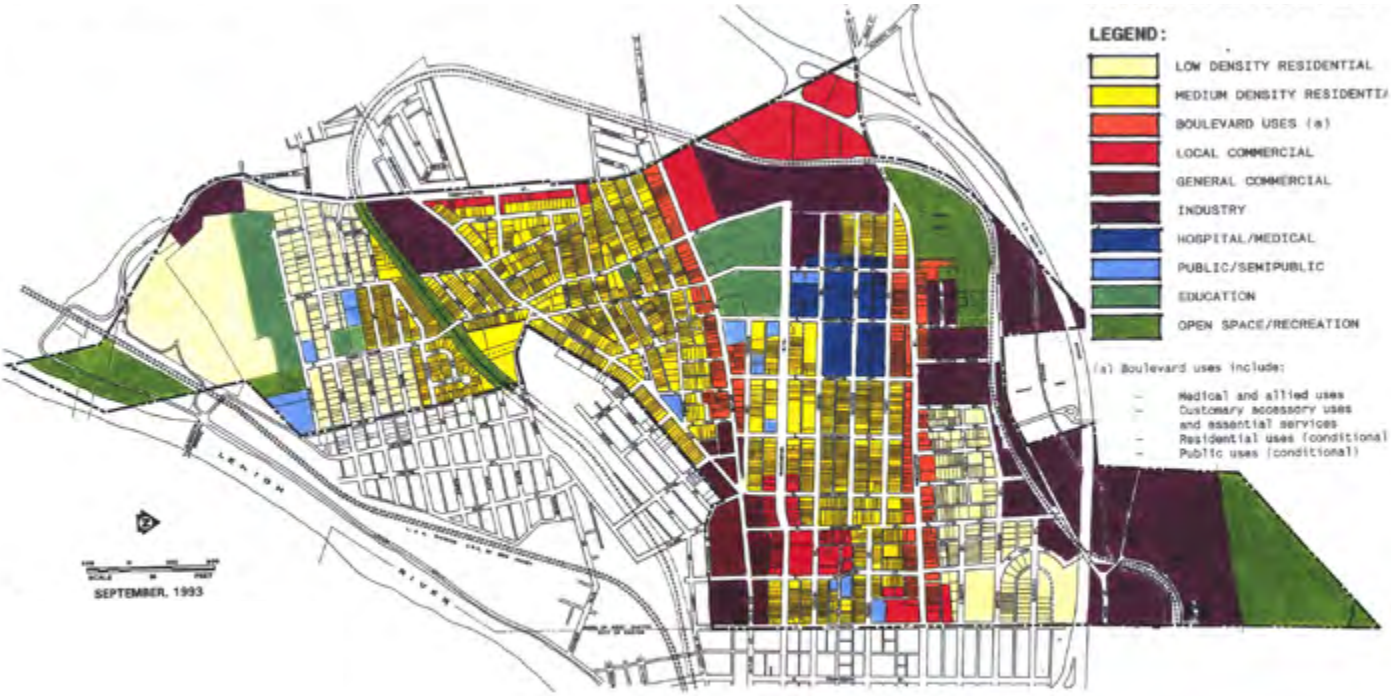
Easton shares most of its southern boundary with Williams Township, majority of which is made up of open farmland, villages, woodlands and rolling topography. The township adopted its comprehensive plan in 1989, which highlighted the desire for a balanced, well planned and controlled growth, as well as a high quality of life for the town residents.

At the northern edge of the township and along I-78 and Cedarville Road, residential and industrial development has taken place. In fact most of the township's commercial and industrial development is concentrated in this area. To the west and immediate east of Morgan Hill Road, and along Easton's boundary, there are a number of industrial and commercial uses including Glendon Green Energy Business Park, Sarco Inc., Heritage Guild of Easton, fireworks companies and auto related establishments. The residential and light industrial areas in Easton that lie directly to the north of these uses are not impacted negatively by adjacency to such types of establishments. Most of these areas have access from I-78 and collector roads such as Hilton Street or Industrial Drive, which minimizes traffic intrusion on Easton's roads. To the far east of Morgan Hill Road, residential developments along Cedarville Road share access with residential areas in southeast Easton. Morgan Hill/Philadelphia Road and Cedarville Road/South Delaware Drive are two traffic routes that connect Easton with Williams Township, and the Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 proposes model streetscape solutions that will minimize traffic impacts, noise and pollution.

Wilson Borough Comprehensive Plan

Wilson Borough lies along the western edge of the City of Easton at 15th Street from Butler Street to Bushkill Street. The boundary between Wilson and Easton is barely perceptible except perhaps for the change in street signage. The 2010 census recorded a population of about 7,900 persons, and it is one of the most densely populated areas the Northampton County.

The borough's comprehensive plan, published in 1998, address issues similar to those of Easton's West Ward



Future land use plan for Wilson Borough
Source: Council of Borough of Wilson

neighborhood: traffic congestion, lack of parking, aging housing and infrastructure, a growing population and the need for additional parks, new bikeways and a community center. The Easton Hospital is located in Wilson, and one of the primary recommendations of the comprehensive plan is to encourage health care related businesses and services. The plan also recommends substantial commercial development. However, since land is limited, it does so on light industrial properties. Along Butler and Northampton Streets, Wilson Borough's plan calls for infill development and further densification of residential land use if possible. This is consistent with Easton's planning efforts that maintain medium- to high-density development along these streets, and proposes infill development and a mixed land use character for these corridors. Like Easton, Wilson Borough also emphasizes a system of interconnected parks and open spaces throughout the borough that can eventually connect with the Delaware and Lehigh Canal Heritage Corridor.

Forks Township Comprehensive Plan

Forks Township lies along Easton's northern boundary and adopted its comprehensive plan in 2010. Between 2000 and 2007, the population of Forks Township grew by 67%, and it is no surprise that the comprehensive plan emphasizes preservation of farmland, environmental management, traffic mitigation and improved park facilities.

The boundary between Easton and Forks Township marks a transition from the urban and pedestrian characteristics of College Hill to the auto-centric development patterns in Forks Township. However, both communities are predominantly low-density residential development along their shared boundary, which does not pose conflicts.

Forks Township follows state mandated flood control regulations along the Bushkill Creek, and is considering an expansion of the 100 year flood boundary along River Corridors. The comprehensive plan also recommends creating and expanding vegetated drainage swales to slow runoff and filter out pollutants. This is consistent with Easton's comprehensive plan recommendations of complete streets that incorporate stormwater management systems.

Palmer Township Comprehensive Plan

Palmer Township adopted its most recent comprehensive plan in 2003 and revised it in 2011. The township shares a boundary with Easton at Hackett Park, where it primarily consists of single family residential and agricultural land uses. Although the LVPC comprehensive plan identifies Palmer Township as one of the top five growth municipalities of Northampton County, the township comprehensive plan recommends balanced urban development and discourages high-density development along its River Corridors, natural resource protection areas and agricultural areas. Future urban development in the township is contingent on extensions to public water and sewer infrastructure, and greater road capacity. This is consistent with Easton's plan along its natural corridors, which emphasizes environmentally responsible development to enhance the recreational potential of its waterways.

One of the ways in which the Palmer Township comprehensive plan proposes to accommodate future growth is by reconfiguring and subdividing lot patterns to increase residential densities and accommodate neo-traditional neighborhood patterns that encourage pedestrian activity and provide a greater variety of housing choices. Easton's comprehensive plan also proposes to maintain its housing variety, which will provide greater variety for Easton's diverse demographic.

A major open space goal of the Palmer Township comprehensive plan is to acquire additional public open space to allow trail access along the rivers and creeks to connect existing parks and neighborhoods. This directly complements Easton's goal to integrate its open spaces and waterways closely with upland communities, and suggests a long-term potential for region-wide trail access along the River Corridors.

Glendon Borough

Glendon Borough shares a boundary with Easton at its southwestern edge on the south shore of the Lehigh River, adjacent to Hugh Moore Park. Since Glendon Borough does not have a comprehensive plan, the borough's 2006 code of ordinances was reviewed concerning land use and zoning in areas adjoining Easton. Most of the Glendon Borough has mixed-density residential uses except for the northwestern part of the borough that is zoned as industrial-office space. For the most part the residential uses are compatible with the park and light tourism activities at Hugh Moore Park, which are seasonal. The areas zoned as industrial do not necessarily pose a threat to Hugh Moore Park recreational activities, as long as they do not rely on Easton's road network (particularly West Canal Street and Glendon Avenue) for their industrial traffic movement.

West Easton Borough

West Easton is a small community located at the southwest corner of the West Ward neighborhood. The borough of West Easton is predominantly residential; the area directly adjacent to Easton's boundary and along the Lehigh River has light industrial

uses. This is consistent with the pocket of light industrial uses directly adjacent to West Easton Borough.

Town of Phillipsburg, New Jersey

Although the town of Phillipsburg is separated from Easton by the Delaware River and lies across the State line, it is connected to Easton both socially and economically. Most importantly, the two communities share a common connection to the Delaware River, and in 2013, the Town of Phillipsburg adopted a Riverfront Redevelopment Plan that recognized the Delaware River as one of its primary underutilized assets.

In general, the Riverfront Redevelopment plan is a move away from Phillipsburg's previous light industrial riverfront toward one that promotes public access, recreation and tourism. This more closely complements the recommendations of Easton's new comprehensive plan and opens the potential for coordinated activities and events on both sides of the Delaware River. The plan recommends new residential neighborhoods, redevelopment of underutilized and nonproductive

Phillipsburg Riverfront Redevelopment Plan
Source: Revised Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, Phillipsburg Town Council

↑ Recreational and Heritage District facing South Side Neighborhood

← Union Square District facing Downtown Easton Area

← Riverside Residential District facing South Side Neighborhood

properties, improved riverfront access, including the use of railroad properties, for new trails and bike paths. The plan also puts greater emphasis on tourism and attracting more educational and arts related uses to the waterfront, which is consistent with Easton's goal of integrating its waterway more closely with the upland communities. Furthermore, the plan also recommends that the Town encourage and aid the relocation of incompatible nonresidential uses to more appropriate locations.

Cities of Allentown and Bethlehem

Allentown and Bethlehem do not share a boundary with the City of Easton, but it is worth considering their comprehensive plans as these two cities have the bulk of population of the greater Lehigh Valley region of which Easton is the third largest municipality. Both the Allentown and Bethlehem comprehensive plans emphasize the regional scale and refer to the Comprehensive Plan for Lehigh and Northampton Counties as a clear guide for their future growth in the larger region. As business and entertainment centers, they influence commuting patterns and offer retail alternatives for Easton residents. Both communities are seeking to improve inter-municipal cooperation, which is viewed as the key to implementing coordinated growth strategies, regional transportation planning and region-wide flood management. Most importantly, these cities offer leadership to address many of the challenges facing Easton in the future: population growth, low-income housing, coordinated mass transit strategies, and the preservation of natural resources, agricultural lands and character and quality of life that is shared by all residents of the Lehigh Valley. Easton should continue to participate in regional planning efforts through the LVPC,

3-D build out of Lehigh Valley City Center in Allentown, PA
Source: City Center Lehigh Valley

alongside Allentown and Bethlehem.

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The process of preparing the comprehensive plan began in 2013 and was initiated by the Planning Bureau. Prior to initiation of the process, the Planning Commission appointed a Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Community Taskforce, comprising the Planning Commission, Planning Bureau, City Administration, City Council, citizens and business owners. The process essentially consisted of two distinct stages of work: community assessment and listening sessions and the comprehensive plan development phase.

Community Assessment and Listening Sessions

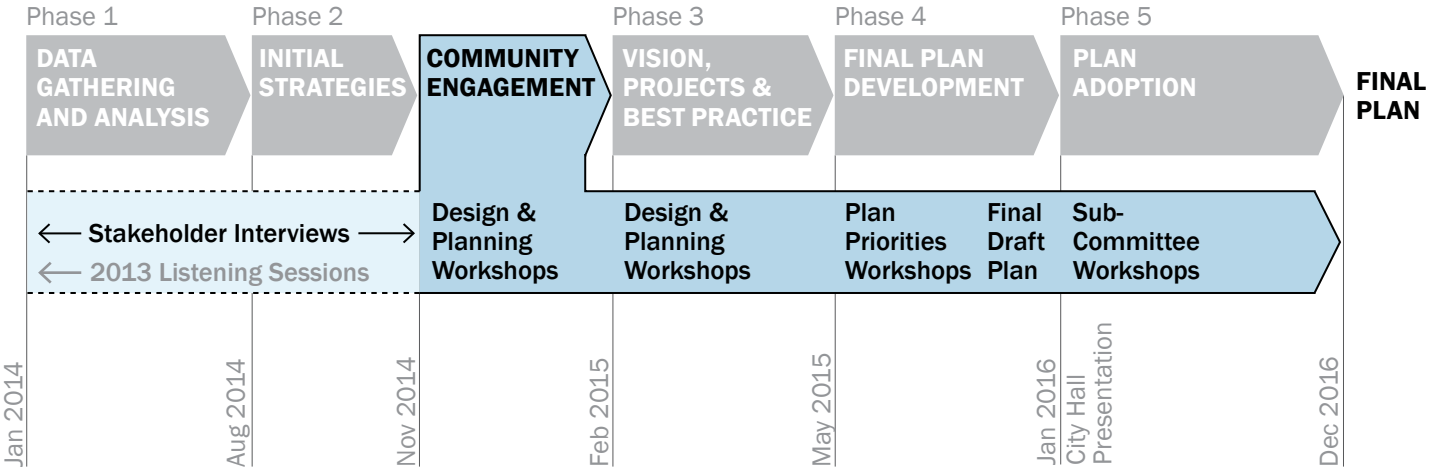
Over a period of 14 months, the Planning Bureau met with over 800 individuals including residents from each neighborhood group, business owners, school students (from grade school to college), the arts community and special focus groups in over 40 listening sessions to determine high-level concerns and desires that citizens of Easton have from their City.

At the end of the community assessment sessions, the City of Easton floated a request for proposal (RFP) to retain the services of a planning firm. In January 2014, after a competitive process, the Urban Matrix Team, consisting of Metropolitan Urban Design Workshop, AKRF Inc., and John Shapiro, were retained as the consulting team to create a graphically rich comprehensive plan with visualizations that help envision Easton's future.

Comprehensive Plan Document Preparation

The second stage of the work, which was led by the consultant team, involved technical analyses, outreach and recommendations to influence current trends and achieve goals envisioned by Easton residents.

Technical Analysis: During the first four months of the comprehensive plan rewrite process, the consultant team conducted numerous reconnaissance surveys, one-on-one outreach with key stakeholders, and a detailed technical analysis including demographic and economic projections,



Easton Comprehensive Planning Process Overview and Community Outreach

and updating existing maps and drawings based on latest GIS information and site surveys. This technical analysis, which resulted in a detailed Strength Weakness Opportunity Threats (SWOT) assessment, was packaged into an existing conditions report for further input from the Planning Commission.

Community Outreach: Upon reviewing the findings of the technical analyses and feedback from the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Community Taskforce, the Planning Commission recognized the need for additional community outreach to envision specific projects in light of this new information. This community outreach process, which was designed in the form of workshops, design charrettes and interviews with key stakeholders, is described in greater detail in the next section.

Plan Organization: The technical analyses and community outreach were packaged by the consultant team into specific projects, strategies and overall themes that speak to the citizens' aspirations for the future of Easton. Members from the Planning Commission, Planning Bureau, City Administration and City Council were then engaged in prioritizing these projects and creating an action plan for the future. The resultant comprehensive plan has three main sections:

1. **Comprehensive Planning Themes** The comprehensive plan has three basic themes - Transform, Unify, Thrive - that communicate the vision of the people of Easton. These themes have emerged from specific objectives ascertained during community outreach and are described in greater detail in the following chapters.

2. **Projects and Actions**
   Specific projects and action items that support the objectives of the planning themes were identified during the planning and design workshops and are described with their respective themes.

3. **Phasing, Implementation and Plan Monitoring**
   Using parameters such as project costs, community aspirations, etc., the plan phasing and implementation section provides a framework for ranking each project and action, and setting priorities for each year. These priorities and progress are recommended for review each year, and the framework provides for an opportunity to continually re-evaluate priorities in light of changing circumstances. The section on Phasing and Implementation describes this framework for phasing and monitoring as well as determines the first set of short-, medium-, and long-term projects and actions for implementation.

Lastly, the comprehensive plan provides appendices including data sets and a complete documentation of the existing conditions technical analysis and community outreach. An important part of this is the alignment with the traditional function elements of a comprehensive plan described in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code. This alignment matrix has been created to categorize the different projects under these function heads for future granting purposes.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Beginning in 2013, the comprehensive rewrite process engaged Easton's diverse community and constituencies, over a period of over two years, in developing a vision for the City's future. The public outreach process had two distinct phases. The first phase, consisting of listening sessions and developing broader goals, was led by the Planning Bureau.

The second phase of the public outreach that took place at the beginning of the comprehensive plan rewrite process was led by the Urban Matrix and MUD Workshop consultant team ('the consultant team') and was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Consolidate broader goals into planning themes that reflect community aspirations, and define specific objectives that support these themes
2. Determine actions and projects that further the objectives in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
3. Closely align ongoing planning efforts with the comprehensive planning recommendations
4. Engage potential partners in the implementation of the comprehensive plan
5. Create a blueprint for implementation and ongoing monitoring

To achieve these objectives, the consultant team developed a innovative set of techniques for outreach and engagement that maximized and maintained citizen involvement throughout the planning process. These techniques are described in greater detail in the following pages.

Focus Groups and One-on-One Interviews

At the onset of the comprehensive plan rewrite, the consultant team held a series of phone and in-person interviews with key stakeholder agency groups, LVPC, not-for-profit organizations, Crayola and Lafayette College to determine their future goals and current plans. These interviews, conducted over a period of two months, informed the current planning context and efforts already underway in Easton. The consultant team used this feedback to develop the local planning context and align it with the recommendations of the comprehensive plan to ensure the close coordination among the many different ongoing efforts. These interviews are documented in the appendices of this report.

The technical analysis that was conducted in parallel to these interviews revealed the different socio-economic characteristics of Easton's four broad neighborhoods. Since the pattern of development and future projections are also quite varied among these neighborhoods, the consultant team engaged with neighborhood association leaders in separate focus groups to determine neighborhood specific issues.

Design and Planning Workshops

The consultant team held a series of three design and planning workshops that provided the opportunity for community members to review ongoing work and refine their goals into specific projects and initiatives. These workshops employed a number of creative techniques that included presentations, breakout sessions, and drawing and planning activities. These workshops were held on different days and at different times of the day to ensure participation from all communities. The workshops were held at the Council Chambers in City Hall, which is conveniently

accessible from all neighborhoods. Though most of the workshops had specific neighborhood focus, an additional citywide workshop was also held to ensure participation from members who may have been unable to attend prior workshops.

Workshop 1: The first workshop was held to define community aspirations and areas of consensus on the most important issues facing the future of Easton. To set the context for outreach, the workshop began with a presentation of the findings of technical analyses, existing trends and community feedback received in various listening sessions conducted by the Planning Bureau prior to beginning the comprehensive rewrite. Community members were then asked to participate in the following planning activities:

1. **Mark Your Neighborhood**
   In this exercise community members drew loops around the City area that they perceived as their neighborhood. The prime objective of this exercise was to determine patterns of driving, shopping, recreation and how City of Easton depends on its neighboring municipalities.

2. **SWOT Ranking**
   The listening sessions conducted by the Planning Bureau in 2013 were organized into five preliminary goals that emerged from the analysis of these community sessions. Each community member ranked the top three strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that Easton faced for the advancement of these preliminary goals. These SWOT rankings were analyzed to refine the goals and determine common planning themes for the comprehensive plan.

3. **Breakout Sessions**
   The planning exercises were followed by breakout sessions that organized the community members into smaller groups. These smaller group sessions used neighborhood scale drawings to map place-based urban design, traffic and public realm issues.

Workshop 2: The second workshop built on the first workshop to develop specific urban design ideas for physical sites and specific programs for issues identified in the first workshop. This workshop began with a presentation that summarized and recapped the findings from the first

Eastonians providing feedback at the planning and design workshops; Mark Your Neighborhood and SWOT Ranking

Eastonians and EAC member Tess Mondello advising on challenges faced by property owners in the maintenance of street landscapes

Map of feedback from a community break out session

workshop. Following this presentation the community was introduced to precedents and best practice examples from around the United States and the world, to demonstrate how projects in similar contexts have addressed issues that Easton is facing currently. These precedents were then used as a tool to visualize the type of development, public realm improvement, environmental management and programs in Easton.

1. **Precedents Analysis**
   The precedents analysis included best practice examples on waterfront development, transit-oriented development, designing for flood risk, public realm improvement, streetscapes and right-of-way distributions, as well as numerous programs on blight revitalization and infill development.

These precedents were provided to the community as a deck of cards, where each card highlighted lessons learned from a single precedent. The community used these precedent cards to visualize and refine their ideas about specific sites and programs in their neighborhoods. Using stickers and colored markers they matched each precedent with specific sites, streets and public realm locations.

2. **Projects Prioritization**
   Following the mapping, a preliminary prioritization categorized projects and programs into short-, medium- and long-term goals.

Workshop 3: Workshops 1 and 2 were conducted individually for each of Easton's neighborhoods; the third and final workshop was left open to all citizens who were unable to participate in the first two workshops. This workshop, which was similar to the second workshop, conducted a precedents analysis and focused on gathering specific place-based feedback.

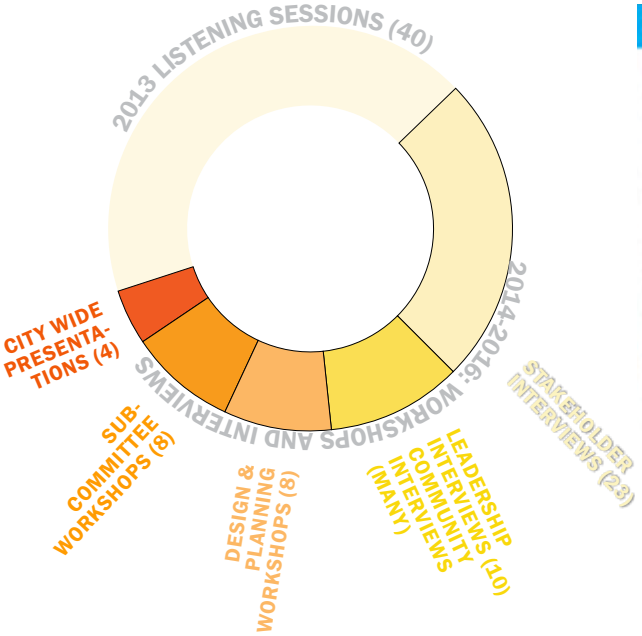
Phasing and Implementation Workshop

The phasing and implementation workshop was limited to members from the Planning Bureau, Planning Commission, representatives from City Council and the City Administration. The focus group started with a presentation of comprehensive plan themes and touched upon individual projects and programs supporting each theme. The consultant team then introduced the ranking parameters and framework for prioritizing action and projects on an ongoing basis.

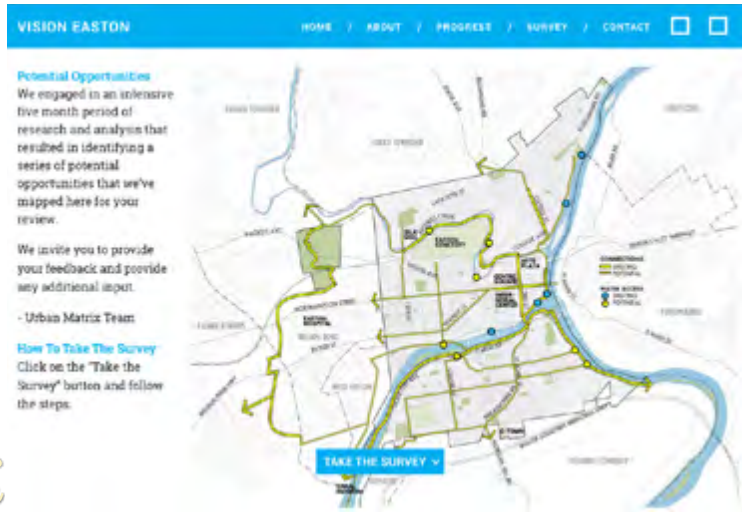
Each focus group member used the prioritization framework and matrix to rank individual projects that resulted in the final short-, medium- and long-term opportunities for the City.

Interactive Website

To reach out to community members of all ages, interests and abilities, the consultant team set up an interactive website to capture the participation of Easton's younger demographic including students and professionals. The website, featuring a place-based survey, is accessible on mobile phones and computers and provided input on public realm. Along with providing updates, the website also linked with the City of Easton Facebook page and Twitter feeds, giving the opportunity for ongoing feedback. The website now hosts digital versions of all plan documents.



Distribution of Outreach Techniques



Place-Based Web Survey:
An online place-based survey gave respondents the opportunity to interact with a live map and draw specific spatial / physical localities, providing 'place-based' input.

Website visioneaston.org hosts information on plan development, place-based community survey and information updates.

Leadership and Community Voices Interviews with the planning and community leadership were used to represent the voices of the City's diverse community and are featured on the website.

"...Easton is the fastest growing municipality of all the 65 municipalities in the Lehigh Valley in age group 25 to 35. We're hip! I'm happy about that. When you walk around our City, it's a small City with a big City feel..."

- Salvatore J. Panto, Jr., Mayor of Easton

"...mixed income is important to us. We want people to move here, neighborhoods rehabbed, and we want them to be cleaner and safer but we don't want to gentrify. We want to be a place where we remain affordable for people to live..."

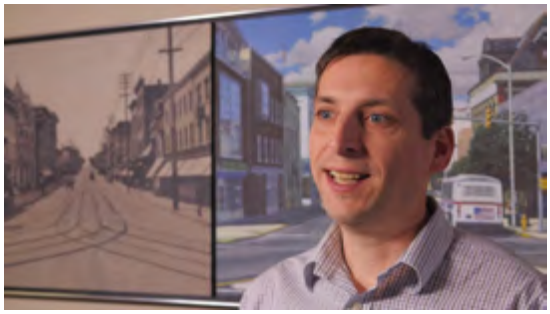
- Dr. Elinor Warner, Council Member

"...Easton is becoming another important jewel for people to look at and reinvest. Housing prices are more than reasonable, and people are looking at buying a house and rehabbing it..."

- Glenn Steckman, City Administrator

"...we're really at a pivotal moment both broad societally and in particular for the City. I think we are poised to capitalize on a shifting movement toward an increasing urban life..."

- Charles Elliott, Chair, Easton Planning Commission



"...Easton has a very diverse neighborhood character and a beautiful place to live with a very well-preserved historic architectural character. We've invested in some large-scale projects including the Simon Silk Mill which when complete will connect West Ward, College Hill and Downtown and essentially create a new neighborhood..."

- Carl Manges, Chief Planner, Easton Planning Bureau

"...we're developing more connections to NY and Philly by the day as more people work in those cities. I love that I can just hop on a bus straight on the street and be into Manhattan in 90 minutes and am looking forward to the intermodal transit center which'll make that even easier..."

- Mike Handzo, Planner, Easton Planning Bureau

ADVANCING ONWARD | HISTORIC PAST AND THE NEXT 20

Easton is situated at a dramatic confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers at a point where the river valleys open out on a wider flatter landscape. All cities evolve differently, but the seeds for their future are embedded in the context of their placement. With Easton, the topography and the land form have had a tremendous effect on the shape and organization of the city, leading to the four distinct neighborhoods that comprise the modern City of Easton.

The Rivers were also responsible for Easton's early prosperity as the canals and then the rails followed the river valleys and all converged here. Easton was a key destination between the coal regions and the iron works as well as a transportation hub connecting the steel industries of the Lehigh Valley to the cities of Trenton, Philadelphia and New York City. Although there were several industries and mills along the Bushkill Creek and in the downtown, and the railroads skirted the city along the Lehigh River, Easton itself was less an industrial town than it was a center of trade, commerce and learning. As a regional capital, it was also a seat of government, which explains its selection for one of the first public readings of the Declaration of Independence at the outset of the Revolutionary War.

Were Easton still a stand-alone city in the wilderness, its current form might resemble a hilltown settlement such as Sienna, Italy, where separate, independent communities joined together to develop a common city center between them. But our modern day cities are actually part of a much larger urban region knit together by a framework of roads and highways designed almost exclusively for the automobile. This modern day transportation pattern functions at a much greater scale than the smaller, pedestrian scale of the earlier city and has become so ubiquitous that even the closure of the city's only rail station seems to have happened without much concern. Automobiles travel further and faster, so the context of the city has expanded far away from the original downtown core. In fact, in the case of Easton, like many cities throughout the region, perception of where the center is located has changed. It is not inconceivable that a resident of the South Side or from College Hill will commute to destinations far outside City boundaries to conduct business, meet with friends or simply to buy groceries. In addition to expanding the scale of the city, the automobile prompted many people to move out of the city, which appealed to those looking to live in a more rural, or sub-urban environment, but also diminished the role of the city as the primary center and meeting point for its citizens.

The movement away from cities during the 20th century took place at the same time as industrialization throughout the Lehigh Valley entered a steep decline. This had a profound effect on the relationship among the cities of the region, particularly the relationship of Easton to the larger urban centers on the coast. As factories and mills were shuttered, transportation to these destinations tapered down to the point where even the passenger rail linking cities of the Lehigh Valley was closed. Today, the region is emerging from its industrial past and looking to reinvent itself into something new.

Easton's strength lies in the diversity of its neighborhoods. The four areas of Easton - College Hill, West Ward, South Side and Downtown - are all distinctly different from each other. This can be seen at all scales including architecture, property sizes, road

Lafayette College's Arts Plaza at the foothill of College Hill

patterns, landscaping, landforms, land uses, history of the places and people that inhabit these neighborhoods.

The Downtown is the oldest part of the City and as such is included entirely in a historic district. Founded at the river edge, portions of Downtown are highly prone to flooding. It contains the tallest buildings and a concentration of commercial and government uses. The undisputed middle of Downtown is Centre Square, around which the entire downtown plan is organized, and to which lead all primary roads in the City. These roads form the backbone of the circulation pattern for the entire City and run across the rivers and over ridges to connect Downtown with the other neighborhoods of Easton and to the communities beyond.

College Hill sits on the highest part of the city overlooking Downtown, the Delaware River and Bushkill Creek. The neighborhood takes its name from Lafayette College, which is located directly on axis with Third Street and Center Square. The College Hill neighborhood extends outward to the east and west and effectively touches the Delaware River and Bushkill Creek. At these lower levels are opportunities to reach the riverfront parks and trails. College Hill was historically an area for the wealthy and today has many larger houses built during an era of prosperity. Many parts of this neighborhood are considered historic so there is a greater emphasis here on neighborhood preservation and retaining the existing neighborhood character. Of all the neighborhoods, College Hill is perhaps the most isolated from the rest of the City.

It is on higher ground, and there are only a few streets that lead up the hill. As a student, it is possible to attend school and never leave College Hill, so it is fortunate the College has recently built a new theater and performing arts center at the bottom of the hill in Downtown. This means students will be more likely to leave College Hill and go into the downtown now that there is a major destination for them. Absent this draw, students and residents are as likely to head north to shop and do business in Palmer or Forks Townships.

The West Ward lies directly west of Downtown with Northampton Street passing directly through its center. As Northampton heads west, the land on which the City is sitting expands outward, so several streets branch out from Northampton to form sub-communities along either side of the Northampton corridor. One of these is the Gallows Hill area, south of West Ward, where the county courthouse and associated government buildings and legal offices are located.

The neighborhoods of the West Ward consist of a variety of different groups, incomes and activities. The West Ward is more closely connected to Downtown than the other neighborhoods, and it is less apparent where one neighborhood ends and the other begins. Because of the topography, the only continuous streets run east-west. Nearly all north-south streets

Ninth Street Houses in the West Ward Neighborhood

dead end at the edges of the ravines, or at the Easton Cemetery and Easton Heights Cemetery that occupy a large part of the northern edge of the West Ward. Other than North 13th Street, there are no connections directly from the West Ward to either College Hill or the South Side. This lack of road connections and the steep topography of the ravines limit access to the riverfront parks and trails along the Lehigh River and Bushkill Creek. The topographic constraints and the orientation of the roads yields a condition where West Ward residents find that areas to the west of Easton are more accessible for shopping and other business activities than downtown Easton.

The South Side was the last area to be annexed to the City of Easton. It is only connected to the downtown by the South Third Street bridge over the Lehigh River. It is closely situated next to I-78 and so has great vehicular access to New Jersey and the rest of the Lehigh Valley. The South Side is predominantly a working class neighborhood with a smaller housing type than in other parts of the city. One of the earlier industries in the neighborhood was the Black Diamond Coal Factory, which now sits vacant at the approximate middle of this community. The South Side encompasses a wide area and is somewhat divided by the series of roads that connect downtown Easton to the Interstate. Because of recent residential development to the east of these roads, the neighborhood almost appears to be two different places. As with the other Easton neighborhoods, the South Side is accessible by only a few streets, but there are more ways to reach the rivers and associated parks and trails than from any of the other neighborhoods. What the South Side lacks, however, is a clear sense of a middle. The main road leading to the downtown tends to divide the neighborhood more than creating an identifiable main street. Most activity in the South Side happens along Berwick Street, which runs perpendicular to the more trafficked streets of Philadelphia and St. John – so is somewhat invisible to those who pass through the neighborhood on the way to Downtown.

The neighborhoods are what define Easton. In addition to activities that occur there and characteristics of the resident population, the character of the City is a product of the connectedness of the individual parts. If the City is perceived to be divided it will evolve as separate parts, whereas if residents see their community as an integral part of the rest of the City, then the City's future growth and economic activity will advance further. In many ways, the recommendations aim to bring the City together and reduce the perception of separate communities. Although each neighborhood has its own unique priorities and concerns, each can contribute to the broader challenges facing the City of Easton.

The future image of Easton will include a new immigrant population settling in the West Ward and South Side neighborhoods. Both these areas house a working class community, some of whom are veterans of the industrial activity that took place nearby.

Residents in these immigrant communities are poorer than their predecessors but no less driven to build a new life for themselves. If given the opportunity and the resources, it is quite possible to imagine these groups completely rebuilding the derelict areas of the City. Another face of the future can be seen in the students and recent graduates of Lafayette College and other schools and universities in the region. This younger population is also geared to build new lives for themselves and ideally, they will choose to do so within

Movies at the Mill: Silk Mill

the City itself. The key to empowering this next generation of citizens is in creating the conditions needed to facilitate this process of renewal – whether through grants, low interest loans or tax deferrals for new business investments, there needs to be a mechanism to equip these different groups with tools to move forward.

There is great value in the City as it stands today when compared to many cities that fell to ruin during nearly a century of anti-urban sentiments and a movement away from cities. Unlike many of its peers, Easton has benefited by not undertaking expensive renewal efforts like the ones that destroyed the downtowns of many American cities and turned them into vast parking lots. With an intact urban infrastructure and despite an aging building stock, the City of Easton stands to benefit from the spillover of neighboring metropolitan regions. As the urban population in the U.S. expands, a growing number of people will be looking for exactly the type of urban environment that Easton has to offer.

It is perhaps not a question of 'if' people will come to Easton, but rather 'when?'. Demographic projections anticipate Easton returning to its peak population of 35,000 in the next 20 years, and this shift toward Easton could happen very quickly for a variety of reasons. Therefore it is critical at this time that the City begin to anticipate a much larger population and more robust urban condition in the years ahead. This preparation entails much more than simply providing more housing as has been done in some parts of the South Side. It also requires thinking of wider variety of housing types and of putting into place alternative means to move about the City, considering where people will want to go, what park

space is accessible to them, and what will be needed to support a stronger business community.

Fortunately, many of the pieces are already in place: an authentic pedestrian scaled downtown, a well reputed college, new arts facilities, public parks and open spaces, a riverfront and extensive recreation opportunities, the potential for a revived rail station. As well the City has shown the propensity to nurture new features such as the Crayola Experience, the Easton Intermodal Transportation Center, Sigal Museum, Larry Holmes Drive, the Simon Silk Mill and public realm investments along the Delaware River. But what is needed now is to build on these strengths and this heritage to create conditions that are conducive for the next 10 years of growth and that will appeal to the next generation of citizens.

Easton will need to consider its role within a changing context. The City of Allentown, for example, is just completing construction of City Center, which includes an aggressive development of new commercial office space, a hotel and a new 10,000 seat arena. This move will change the image of Allentown and is anticipated to reverse the suburbanization trend of the 20th century, luring residents back to a new and dynamic downtown.

Easton is a different type of city than Allentown and should cast itself as the place where people come for a higher quality of cultural entertainment such as can be found at the State Theatre or Lafayette College. Add to this a diversity of restaurants and boutique retail establishments, and there is an environment already in place that is generating more foot traffic in the evenings than Crayola Experience. Herein lies the seeds of an image of Easton as an Arts and Entertainment destination.

The next chapter of Easton's history must cope with a changing environment. Though we can dispute the reasons for this change, the trend toward a warming planet, larger and more powerful storms, an exhaustion of nonrenewable energy sources and a growing population is indisputable. Easton by its very nature stands as a remedy for these conditions simply by providing the urban infrastructure needed for a population to live comfortably with fewer resources. In order to facilitate this, Easton will need to become a city where pedestrians and bicyclists can move freely along roads and in public spaces as motorists do today. Easton will need to become a place where one can shop for groceries and basic staples by simply walking there. It will need to become a place where young entrepreneurs and start-up companies will find it easier and more pleasant to conduct business in Easton than somewhere else. It will be a City where the past and the present can co-exist and still maintain the beloved character that Easton has today. It will be a place where the river is not an edge, but rather an integral part of how the city functions and is experienced. The citizens of Easton can achieve all these things and must do them in order to set the stage for what is an inevitable next chapter to its history.

PICTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF EASTON'S HISTORY AND PRESENT

18th Century: Early Foundations

1/ Thousand Acre Tract: Place at the Forks: Founded in 1752 by Thomas Penn. The town was laid out with the same innovative concept used in Philadelphia: a grid around a "Great Square."

2/ Declaration of Independence: Robert Levers reads the Declaration of Independence on the City's Centre Square, July 8, 1776. Easton is one of three places where this iconic document was announced publicly.

19th Century: The Canal and Industrial Years

3/ Transportation Center: In the first half of the 19th century the City gained importance as a transportation and industrial center. The rivers and canals played significant roles in shaping the economic and social activity of the City.

4/ Educational Foundations: Lafayette College, founded in 1826, and State Theatre constructed in 1910, laid the cultural and educational foundations for the City.

5/ Railroads: Four railroad lines built through Easton after the 1850s, and Easton prospered as a center for industry, manufacturing, commerce and culture at the Forks of the Delaware and along the great rail lines.

6/ Manufacturing Capital: Easton formed its first industrial association in 1883. Robert and Herman Simon Silk Mills located here and provided employment to 1,200 workers.

20th Century: Economic Boom And Bust

7/ Architectural Heritage: The economic success of Easton is reflected in architecturally rich buildings that exist in College Hill and were once concentrated in Downtown and along Northampton.

8/ Commercial Downtown: Northampton Street emerged as the central commercial spine and shopping place for the City of Easton.

9/ Sprawl: Advent of the car and suburban lifestyles led to movement of people to outer city areas. Businesses followed the migration of people, and as in any other American City, this area too witnessed an era of sprawl.

10/ Suburbs+Shopping: Opening of Palmer Park and Lehigh Valley Malls led to the contraction of downtown as a retail center, and many businesses closed in the City.

Present Day: Revitalization

11/ The Crayola Experience: In an effort to revive its vitality, the City made strategic investments such as the Crayola Experience in 1996, which have since attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors to the City.

12/ New Visions: Strategic investments such as the Silk Mill development along Bushkill Corridor, Farmers' Market, Main Street Program and close partnership with Lafayette College have initiated the era of Easton's regeneration

1: TRANSFORM

1.1 Establish area around Centre Square as Easton's premiere business district

1.2 Connect and redevelop Easton's River Corridors as an integral part of the City

1.3 Manage and reduce vacancy, underutilization and blight throughout the City

1.4 Discourage irresponsible development and renovation, and prevent deterioration of historic buildings

2: UNIFY

2.1 Re-envision public right of ways for multimodal travel and sustainable infrastructure

2.2 Adapt and reuse critical sites at the seam of neighborhoods

2.3 Integrate Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek with upland communities through a connected system of pedestrian, bike and open space networks

2.4 Improve access to and create new parks and open spaces

2.5 Manage parking and promote sustainable transportation

3: THRIVE

3.1 Attract new businesses through a 'business ready' environment

3.2 Promote strong and well-balanced neighborhood centers

3.3 Connect residents with employment and workforce training centers, and increase resident earning capacity

3.4 Diversify and strengthen economic activities, entrepreneurship opportunities and tourist attractions

3.5 Promote closer regional ties

3.6 Strengthen emergency response and services throughout the City

PLAN VISION

The Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 is a planning and urban design framework that embodies the aspirations of Eastonians, and sets forth a collective vision and action plan to develop the City into a vibrant place to live-work-play for its residents and visitors. Three themes that are reinforced by a set of 15 strategies and 52 supporting initiatives phased over a period of 20 years will work synergistically to inform this vision.

1: TRANSFORM

Building on Easton's rich architectural heritage, ongoing revitalization efforts in West Ward and Downtown's recent resurgence as Easton's retail center, the plan recommends a series of actionable strategies to define Easton's identity as its region's cultural and economic hub.

1.1 Establish area around Centre Square as Easton's premiere business district
1.2 Connect and redevelop Easton's River Corridors as an integral part of the City
1.3 Manage and reduce vacancy, underutilization and blight throughout the City
1.4 Discourage irresponsible redevelopment and renovation, and prevent deterioration of historic buildings

2: UNIFY

Capitalizing on Easton's scenic setting at the fork of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and on strategic opportunity sites at the seams of its four neighborhoods, site-specific urban development, transportation infrastructure and public realm projects integrate urban and natural landscapes, create an open space network with urban amenities, and provide integrated solutions for sustainable development, stormwater management and climate resiliency.

2.1 Re-envision public right of ways for multimodal travel and sustainable infrastructure
2.2 Adapt and reuse critical sites at the seam of neighborhoods
2.3 Integrate Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek with upland communities through a connected system of pedestrian, bike and open space networks
2.4 Improve access to and create new parks and open spaces
2.5 Manage parking and promote sustainable transportation

3: THRIVE

Neighborhood scale investment in urban conveniences and social services, citywide scale investments in infrastructure and closer partnerships with key stakeholders lay the groundwork for increasing livability, attracting new businesses and building a strong economy.

3.1 Attract new businesses through a 'business ready' environment
3.2 Promote strong and well-balanced neighborhood centers
3.3 Connect residents with employment and workforce training centers, and increase resident earning capacity
3.4 Diversify and strengthen existing tourist attractions
3.5 Promote closer regional ties
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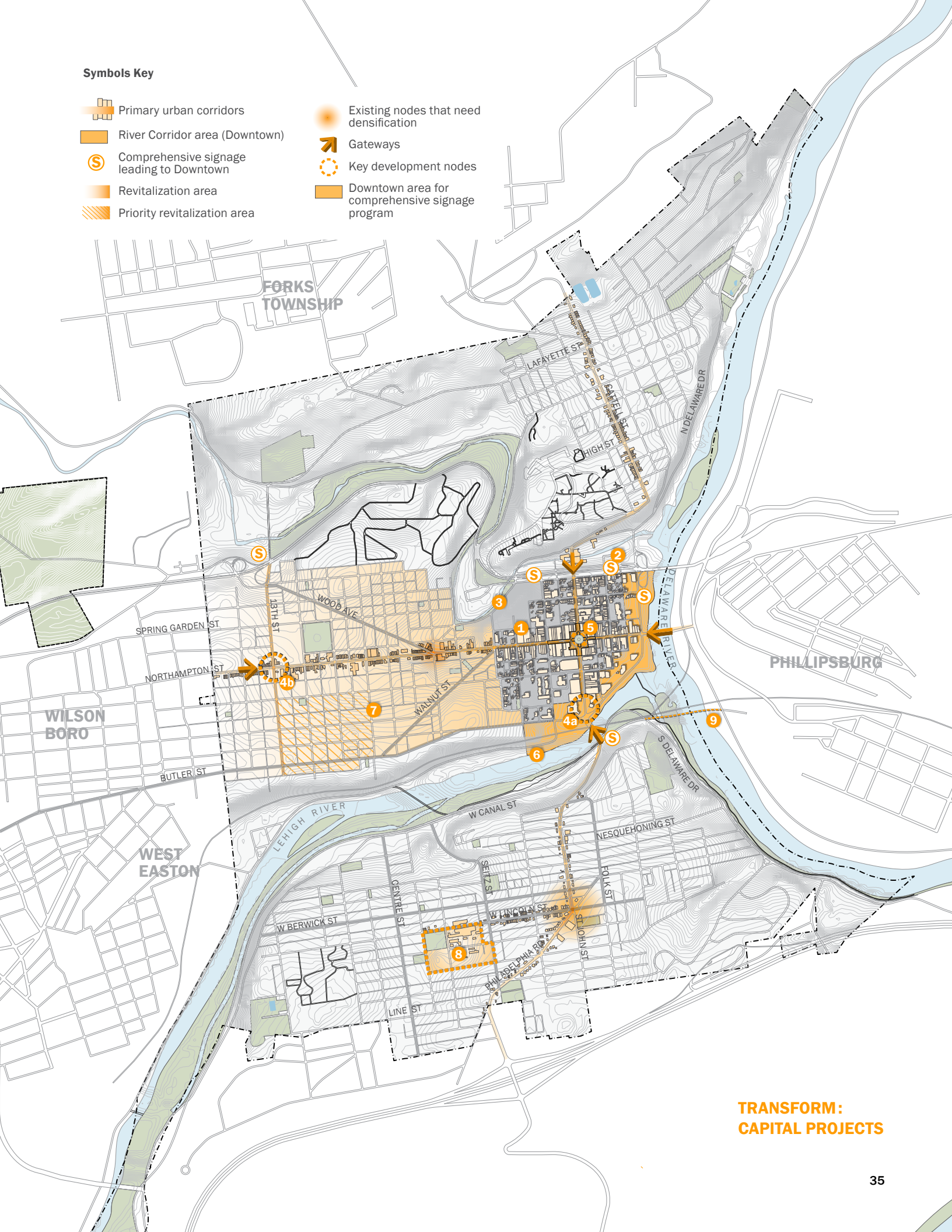
Building on Easton's rich architectural heritage, ongoing revitalization efforts in West Ward and Downtown's recent resurgence as Easton's retail center, the plan recommends a series of actionable strategies to define Easton's identity as its region's cultural and economic hub.

TRANSFORM / CAPITAL PROJECTS (and related actions)

1. Retrofit vacant office spaces in Downtown
2. Install highway signage on Route 22 and PA Route 611
3. Design and install consistent signage for Downtown business district

4a Southern Gateway into Downtown
4b Gateway into Easton (signage, landscape improvements, lighting and development guidelines)

5. Remodel Centre Square
6. Create master plans for the City's River Corridors
7. Implement Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (reduce vacancy, blight and underutilization)
8. Prioritize development of Black Diamond Site
9. Evaluate the feasibility of creating a walking trail on the historic trestle that crosses the Delaware River



TRANSFORM: CAPITAL PROJECTS

Objective 1.1

ESTABLISH AREA AROUND CENTRE SQUARE AS EASTON'S PREMIERE BUSINESS DISTRICT

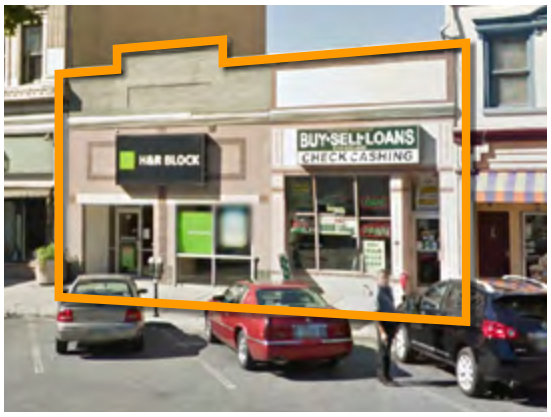
1.1a / Encourage active uses and storefronts that enhance Downtown's image as a place to visit and do business

Over the last decade, the area around Centre Square has become the focal point of Easton's commercial activity, drawing residents and visitors to its cultural events, dining and entertainment establishments. Crayola Experience was an early leader in this trend, attracting crowds to the City's center at a time when retailers were looking for more suburban locations. Following the success of Crayola Experience, Easton capitalized on Centre Square's resurgence with events like the Garlic and Bacon Festivals and new retail and restaurant establishments. Today Downtown Easton is gradually on its way to becoming a mixed-use neighborhood with day- and nighttime activities. The appeal of urban living and attraction of historic building stock have led to a rise in residential development in Downtown, which also offers ample office space to support a worker population.

Centre Square has limited space availability; however, visitors, residents and workers would like to see increased retail and entertainment opportunities in Downtown. And while Centre Square's attractions have been successful at drawing Easton residents and visitors from throughout the region, there still isn't enough threshold of activities to retain this temporary population Downtown.

In order to continue to attract visitors and support the residential and worker population in this commercial district, Centre Square should be a place of vibrant commercial activity that offers high-quality amenities for all ages. Attracting and retaining retail and active uses at street level, Centre Square can be a destination even when there is not an event or crowd at Crayola Experience. Filling in gaps in the retail frontage will help to create a more consistent stream of foot traffic and potential customers, supporting existing businesses and helping ensure their continued presence in the area.

Blank opaque walls along side walk



Non-retail services

Existing uses and urban design conditions at Centre Square that do not contribute to a vibrant commercial environment and street life

Sette Luna, a refurbished building hosting a business owned by native Eastonians

1.1a / Projects and Actions

- Identify and attract retailers, such as restaurants, bars, grocery stores and local services that generate high foot traffic
- Limit uses that are inward-looking and do not engage with the street. Discourage uses such as pawnshops that threaten the vibrancy of Downtown and its image as Easton's premiere business district
- Work with property owners, brokers and businesses to identify obstacles in building code and other difficulties with retail space in Centre Square, and develop financial incentives and support for desired tenants
- Discourage speculation through fines and fees on vacant properties
- Develop a program to support pop-up retail in vacant spaces to encourage new businesses and showcase empty storefronts
- Recruit a recreation/entertainment tenant (e.g., bowling, arcade, sports bar, movie theater) in Downtown to encourage recreational opportunities for all age groups
- Retrofit existing vacant office spaces like empty spaces in the Wells Fargo building, building opposite Sette Luna and others to accommodate remote offices for larger corporations and, where possible, create mixed-use opportunities

1.1a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Main Street Initiative
- Private Sector
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Easton Business Association
- Easton Redevelopment Authority

1.1b / Install effective signage at highway exits and entrances to the City, and within the Downtown area, to steer people toward Centre Square and inform them about Easton's main business district's diverse offerings

Regional and interstate traffic moving on Route 22 and PA Route 611 have convenient access to Easton's Downtown via off-ramps that lead to North Fourth Street and Larry Holmes Drive respectively. However, given the drastic topography, Downtown's modest built form and lack of any directional signage on the off-ramps, it is difficult for fast moving traffic on the highway to visually connect with and access Downtown. This is especially true for occasional visitors and tourists who don't frequent Easton on a regular basis.

In addition to these highway entrance points in the north and east, St. John Street, South Side's main traffic artery, carries regional traffic and intersects with South Third Street and Larry Holmes Drive, at the southern gateway to Downtown. This gateway has a modest and inconspicuous sign welcoming visitors to Easton, and is not effective in orienting traffic and pedestrians toward the City's main shopping area.

Over the last decade, Centre Square and surrounding area have attracted a number of diverse establishments featuring restaurants, theaters, museums, retail, events, and educational and recreational amenities, all within a short walk from each other. The area around Centre Square is emerging as the prime district with well-balanced urban activities for all age groups. However, given the many restrictions on signage in the Downtown historic district, it is often hard to locate these amenities, and perceive the compactness – and thus walkability – of this urban scale downtown.

Creating and installing a consistent signage system that provides information about Downtown's amenities, parking and walking distances will give more visibility to businesses, guide visitors to discover multiple offerings and encourage walking by creating an identifiable and easily navigable Downtown district.

1.1b / Projects and Actions

- Install highway traffic signs that clearly indicate off-ramps on Route 22 and PA Route 611, and direct traffic to Downtown
- Create an inviting and welcoming gateway including lighting, landscape, inviting pedestrian access and visible street signage to direct traffic and pedestrians to Centre Square and Downtown parking facilities
- Design and install a consistent signage to demarcate the Downtown business district and provide information on locations and walking distances for major attractions and amenities

1.1b / Potential Implementation Partners

- PennDOT
- Easton Main Streets Initiative
- Easton Business Association
- Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Discover Lehigh Valley
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

Entrance gateway from PA 611 with no directional signs leaves unfamiliar motorists disoriented.

PHILADELPHIA CENTER CITY DISTRICT SIGNAGE SYSTEM

Regarded as one of the most comprehensive signage systems in the United States, the program has three components: Walk!Philadelphia, Ride!Philadelphia and Direction Philadelphia. Together these create a sense of district, encourage transit use and walking and provide directions for visitor attractions - all while adding color and excitement to downtown streets. Initially concentrated in Center City, the program has now spread to other neighborhoods and engaged multiple stakeholders attracting both public and private funding.

Hyperlinks

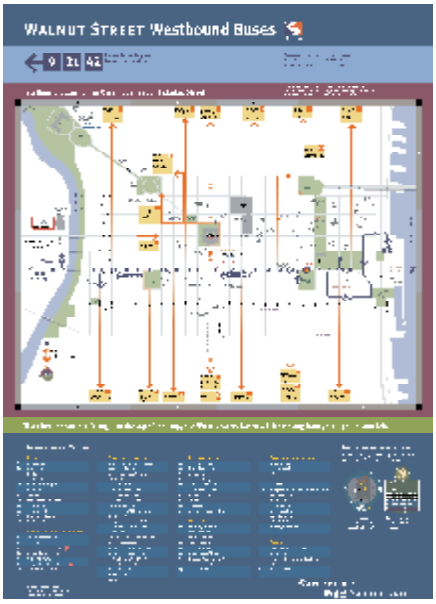
- Center City Philadelphia, Signs and Banners
- Direction Philadelphia
- Walk!Philadelphia
- Ride!Philadelphia

Walk!Philadelphia

Key Features

1. Organizes navigation around the presence of distinctive City Districts
2. Signage emphasizes the ease of walking in the City
3. Color-coded “heads-up” disk maps highlight destinations within 10-minute walking radii
4. Directional arrows orient pedestrians and enforce route choice

Ride!Philadelphia



Key Features

1. Route maps and information panels at bus stops provide information to those waiting for a bus or passing by
2. Historical interpretive panels on the reverse focus on urban planning and development
3. Financed by a grant from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration through PennDOT and DVRPC

Direction Philadelphia

Key Features

1. Conceived and supported by over 300 private stakeholders
2. Lead motorists to City’s most prestigious attractions
3. Four distinct hierarchies - Gateway, District Directional, Destination Directional and Arrival Signs - provide a common identity to all destinations in the City

1.1c / Update existing guidelines to encourage businesses in Downtown and on Northampton Street to create a visually engaging and inviting environment for their customers

Given the restrictions imposed by the strict signage and development guidelines of Easton's historic district, businesses struggle for greater visibility. In some cases, these guidelines also restrict Downtown's potential to develop into a visually attractive and engaging neighborhood that encourages active street life and walking.

Though Centre Square and the surrounding blocks are attracting more businesses, they are not very successful in engaging with the streets. A compilation of urban design strategies that includes recommendations and best practices for responsible building façades design, use of sidewalks as an extension for active street level retail and restaurants, street furniture, unobtrusive yet effective signage, will equip business owners with guidelines to make their business more visible and attractive for their customers.

These strategies will also equip City authorities and Easton Main Street Initiative to ensure businesses that locate in the Downtown district engage actively with the street and encourage an attractive walkable environment for pedestrians. Furthermore, they can become the basis of selecting the kind of retail and commercial activity suitable for promoting active street life in Easton's business district.

1.1c / Projects and Actions

- Review and update existing guidelines and identify issues that limit street engagement
- Develop a compilation of urban design guidelines and best practices that includes recommendations for façade design, signage and street level engagement for Easton's business district
- Extend Downtown business activity on Northampton between Sixth and 15th Streets, and redesign/rebrand streetscape beyond Sixth Street

1.1c / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Main Streets Initiative
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- Easton Business Association
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

1.1d / Redesign Centre Square for better access to pedestrians and as a place for recreation

Centre Square serves both as an open space for Easton's visitors and residents, as well as the traffic junction from where all of Easton's neighborhoods can be easily accessed. High traffic volumes in this area restrict the enjoyment of this historical site by visitors and residents alike. As Centre Square draws more people through its active programming, it also faces the possibility of additional traffic volume generated by the new transit hub being developed on South Third Street. This could further take away the peace and tranquility this central open space has to offer.

To balance traffic and pedestrian needs, currently, the City makes use of orange traffic cones for directing vehicles. However, an integrated open space design and transportation plan that provides guidelines for potential expansion of Centre Square and limiting traffic could provide a more permanent solution to balancing

pedestrian, parking and traffic movement in this area.

Along with this integrated study, a simultaneous urban and landscape design plan that visualizes planting, seating, materials, information signage and pedestrian access plan for the entire square will greatly enhance the value of surrounding properties and the experience of this place for shoppers, visitors, office workers and business owners.

1.1d / Projects and Actions

- Conduct an integrated community space and transportation study to assess the feasibility for expanding Centre Square
- Create a plan and design for remodeling Centre Square as a central recreation place with easy pedestrian access

1.1d / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Main Streets Initiative
- PennDOT
- Easton Business Association
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

THE UPTOWN CIRCLE NORMAL, IL

The Uptown Circle in Normal is a roundabout intersection connecting five streets while calming traffic. The Circle acts as a gateway for people entering Normal from the adjacent Amtrak station. The design features a central park, which provides a gathering space with seating and shade. This central park is surrounded by a water feature and open plaza. One of the most creative and sustainable elements of the Circle is its extensive stormwater system, which captures rainwater and treats it through natural processes by pumping it from a cistern beneath the streetscape into a series of filtration bogs. This water is then returned to the site in the form of a fountain and later recycled to irrigate the adjacent street planting.

Aerial view of The Circle

Stormwater management system that is used both aesthetically and for irrigation purposes

Hyperlinks

- Uptown Normal, Normal IL
- The Uptown Normal Circle, “A Living Plaza”
- Sustainable Stormwater in Public Space

Objective 1.2

CONNECT AND REDEVELOP EASTON'S RIVER CORRIDORS AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CITY

1.2a / Develop master plans for Easton's River Corridors

Historically, Easton's riverbanks have had residential (mixed use), industrial and recreational developments creating a well-balanced mix of uses that attracted people to the rivers. Today, a number of sites along the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek lie underutilized due to threat of flooding, lack of development incentives and perceived high barrier to entry given the strict laws for development in flood zones. However, these sites still present great potential for waterfront recreation, tourism and housing development that together can greatly enhance economic activity and quality of life for Eastonians.

A comprehensive master plan, outlining development guidelines for flood zones, permissible uses and mechanisms for public-private partnerships will help achieve the development potential of these areas in a responsible way. It is recommended that this master plan envision a community centric sustainable development strategy that successfully knits urban and natural landscapes for Easton, and promotes tourism development in coordination with the Phillipsburg waterfront.

The City should also work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and key local stakeholders to obtain data and develop a conceptual plan evaluating the feasibility of a walking trail on a historic rail trestle that crosses the Delaware River. This project would link existing and proposed trails on both sides of the river, taking full advantage of spectacular views.

1.2a / Projects and Actions

- Identify development sites and conduct a market potential study for housing, tourism and mixed-use development along Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek
- Conduct preliminary urban design analysis to determine environmental and infrastructure challenges and development potential
- Engage in a public planning process to develop a vision for each River Corridor
- Create an urban design master plan that outlines community vision, sustainable development guidelines, site-by-site development program and public-private partnership mechanisms
- Conduct a feasibility analysis for the reuse of abandoned rail bridge on Delaware River as a pedestrian trail connecting existing trails on Delaware and Lehigh Rivers

1.2a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- Easton Public Works Department
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
- Town of Phillipsburg
- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Morris Canal Greenway
- National Canal Museum

1.2b / Establish a waterfront development committee dedicated to soliciting proposals, marketing, and finding funding for development of River Corridors

As part of the previous initiative, Easton's waterfront development should be guided by a committee dedicated to realizing the vision of the River Corridors master plan. The committee, consisting of both professionals and community stakeholders, should be the point of contact between the City and private developers, and work with the City to conceive the best development structure on both public and privately owned land. This committee should also be responsible for marketing the River Corridors master plan and developing requests for proposals (RFPs) for any City-owned parcels that best reflect the City's goals and concerns along the waterfront. The committee should engage with developers to solicit competitive responses to the RFPs and ensure that design and development of these parcels furthers the vision of the River Corridors master plan.

1.2b / Projects and Actions

- Simultaneous with River Corridors master planning, identify waterfront stakeholders including leaders in business, government partners, residents, property owners, and other community members
- Form a committee of professionals and community stakeholders, charged with marketing the River Corridors master plan and actively seeking funding for development
- Develop RFPs with detailed development program for publicly owned sites and guide development of privately owned sites
- Identify funding, including public, private, and philanthropic sources
- Explore the feasibility of forming a non-profit development corporation to guide the process in the long term

1.2b / Potential Implementation Partners

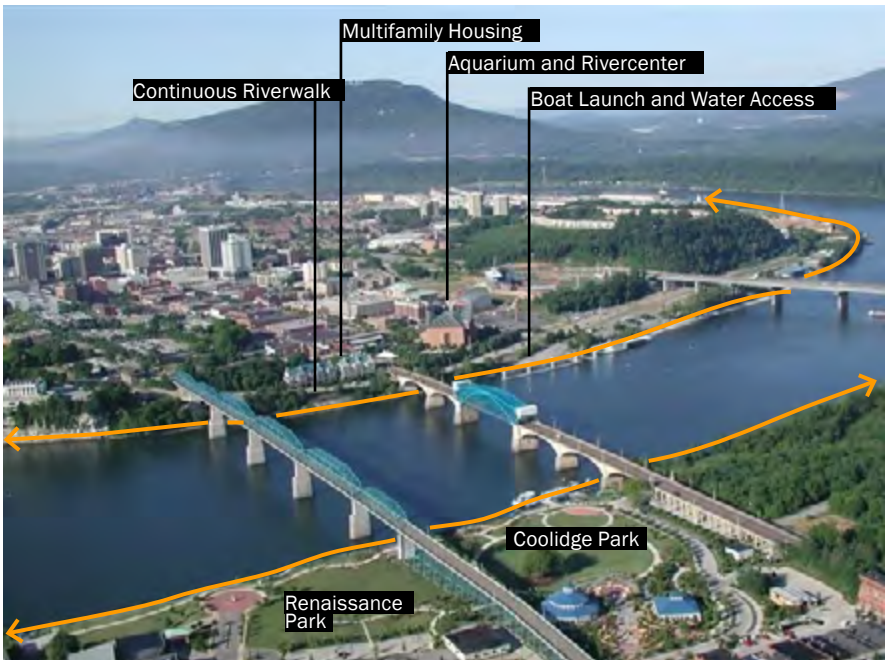
- Easton Main Street Initiative
- Representative Robert Freeman
- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Easton Business Association
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

Underutilized and vacant lots at the fork of Delaware and Lehigh Rivers and gateway to Downtown Easton

CHATTANOOGA WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION

The City of Chattanooga riverfront revitalization extends over 129 acres and has raised $120M in funds. The project uses the Tennessee River as a primary resource to revive the City's downtown.

A former industrial center, the riverfront was once a highly polluted and uninhabitable area. Over a period of two decades, the riverfront has become the primary tourist attraction.



Continuity along waterfront through mixed-use development and recreational activities

Opportunities to get down to the water, launch boats and use water for transportation

Key Features

1. **Long-Term Vision:** Ongoing civic input guided by professionals who use urban design to spur long-term revitalization. One master plan (vs. piecemeal development) for the entire waterfront that gave the waterfront district a common identity and coordinated all future developments
2. **Urban Design Elements:** Mixed-use development, pedestrian friendly waterfront district, continuity along waterfront through activities and connectivity to downtown
3. **Local Development Corporation:** River City Company, a not-for-profit organization funded through foundations, was formed to guide redevelopment, raise funding and market the area.
4. **Partnerships:** Used public investment as a catalyst for private development e.g., public space, art and three museums used State and City dollars, and River Pier Landing received support from private developers, for retail and residential.
5. **Catalytic Sites:** Development on strategic sites with greatest potential and ability to catalyze additional development in adjacent areas was prioritized

Hyperlinks

- River City Company

DESIGNING IN FLOOD ZONES

LOWER VENICE ISLAND

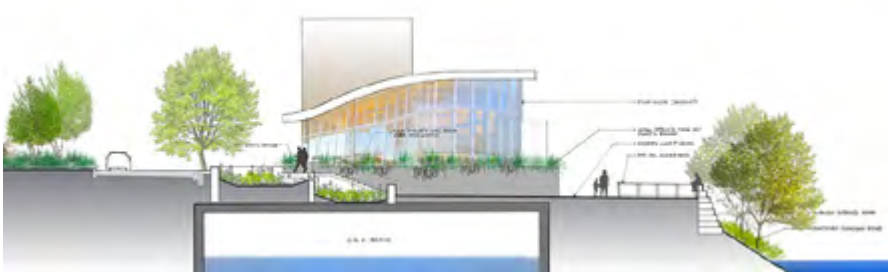
This five acre island located between Manayunk Canal and Schuylkill River, is prone to flooding and designated for a 3M gallon combined sewer overflow tank by the EPA. The community saw this area as a recreational resource and conceived a master plan with high-performance landscape focused on sustainable management and display of water in the urban environment.

Key Features

1. **Site Design:** Central to the plan is the Performing Arts and Recreation Center, elevated 7Ft above the floodway
2. **Protecting Infrastructure:** Central spine located safely beyond the floodway manages pedestrian traffic, stormwater flow and lighting – crucial to lowering long-term mitigation costs through flood hazard
3. **Recreational Elements:** Structured, active landscape is complemented by a program of passive landscapes that include a children's water garden and riverbank restoration.

Hyperlinks

- Philly Watersheds
- Viva Venice



Performing Arts Center located 7Ft above the floodway

Integrated stormwater management and recreational landscape

FLOOD RESISTANT DESIGN

Cities faced with high risk of flooding have incorporated structural and programmatic requirements within their building codes. These simple requirements do not limit the development potential but instead prescribe methods to prevent and reduce impact of damage caused by flooding.

Key Features

1. Locate all mechanical equipment above design flood elevation (DFE)
2. Use of dry flood-proofing up to DFE
3. Materials and structural requirements

Hyperlinks

- Designing for Flood Risk

Objective 1.3

MANAGE AND REDUCE VACANCY, UNDERUTILIZATION AND BLIGHT THROUGHOUT THE CITY

1.3a / Prioritize development of vacant lots and rehabilitation/revitalization of vacant buildings throughout the City, and establish policies for neighborhood sustainability

Vacancy has been a persistent problem in Easton for decades and is a major obstacle for growth. In 2000, the residential vacancy rate was 9.5% for Easton as a whole, but the rate was over 10% in West Ward and approximately 15% in Downtown. By 2012, residential vacancy reached 20% in Downtown and doubled in West Ward. Blight works in direct opposition to efforts of growth in the City and it is often seen as a precursor to crime. In response to this problem, the Easton Redevelopment Authority reactivated a Certificate of Blight Process, by which the City can flag for renovation and in some cases condemn and resell blighted properties. While the process is a step in the right direction, it is largely reactive and can be slow. Renovation and infill development can prove challenging in Easton, where existing buildings and infrastructure are often over 100 years old and parcels are small. At the same time, Easton's density can be an advantage, as transportation infrastructure and community services are already in place, and existing retail can support new uses in otherwise vibrant communities.

Vacant and blighted lots should be systematically targeted for revitalization. Financial incentives should be developed to encourage commercial and residential development as well as historic preservation where appropriate. The City should prioritize development, offering incentives for private developers where feasible, and partnering with private sector developers to tackle larger, more challenging parcels.

Boarded up properties of historic and architectural value on Northampton Street

1.3a / Projects and Actions

- Create and maintain a neighborhood scale inventory of underutilized / vacant buildings and lots
- Educate property owners on property maintenance; create informational videos for homeowners and promote recycling/'RecycleBank' program
- Identify specific challenges to renovation / redevelopment (e.g., zoning, contamination, etc.) and create programs and incentives (e.g., grants, tax incentives) to target these challenges on vacant buildings and lots
- Identify areas with high concentration of blighted properties to create revitalization zones and target State and Federal funding for revitalization
- Partner with Lafayette College to assess possibility of developing homeownership programs for post-grads, young professors and non-faculty staff in revitalization zones
- Prioritize acquisition of and refurbish abandoned, vacant and tax defaulting properties at important nodes such as Northampton Street and Centre Square
- Use rigorous tenant ownership programs, gap financing, development bonuses and other public incentives to attract small-scale developers and interested homeowners
- Where necessary escalate fines and fee on vacant/abandoned lots to encourage reuse and discourage speculation
- Work with property owners and neighborhood residents to host programs such as the better block project, artistic board up and beaux arts ball to generate interest and raise funds for improvements
- Finalize and implement a comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for West Ward and South Side neighborhoods including
  1. Systematic assessment of blighted and vacant properties
  2. Creation of an acquisition fund
  3. Potential land banking program
  4. Development of strategic disposition strategies
- Establish policies for walkability, green spaces and plantings, urban nodes and uses, child care, garbage handling and block watch

1.3a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Neighborhood Associations
- Private property owners
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

THE BETTER BLOCK PROJECT

Community led temporary urban interventions and demonstration projects that bring greater attention to underutilized areas and / or redevelopments prior to buildout. These interventions promote revitalization by envisioning the true potential of blighted areas as well as increase the potential for pre-leasing while sites await redevelopment. In addition, this exercise can help test infrastructure improvements in partnership with future developers and get a better understanding of priority improvements required to increase the project's financial returns for developer and overall attractiveness of the property and tenant quality of life.

Hyperlinks

- The Better Block Project
- How to Build a Better Block

1.3b / Increase capacity to accelerate transformation of blighted properties

Beyond issues that private developers face in renovating and redeveloping infill lots, problems persist in the public sector due to the fact that no one department or agency is charged with fixing the problem. While the work to mitigate blight largely depends on efforts of private developers, City authorities can better facilitate this process, working as a partner.

Although the Easton Redevelopment Authority has had successes in the past, the process of transforming blighted properties needs to be accelerated. As part of the previous initiative, City authorities should consider increasing capacity in this area by creating a dedicated position to centralize efforts of multiple departments and direct all efforts related to blight. In addition, the individual at this position should be responsible for creating and maintaining up-to-date information on vacant, abandoned and tax-defaulting buildings and lots, available incentives for private developers, targeting funding at all government levels, and innovating site-specific revitalization strategies.

1.3b / Projects and Actions

- Create and maintain up-to-date records on vacant, abandoned and tax-defaulting buildings and lots
- Increase capacity dedicated to fighting blight and continually explore site-specific revitalization strategies

1.3b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Redevelopment Authority
- Greater Economic Development Partnership
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Vacant Property Committee
- Easton Planning Commission

1.3c / Conduct assessment and rehabilitation of the six public housing projects in Easton and create more opportunities for affordable housing

While there is significant demand for new housing units in Easton, there are also pressing needs in the existing public housing portfolio. An integrity study revealed that many of the 50-year-old structures are in need of renovation to ensure they can continue to serve residents in Easton for years to come.

The renovation of public housing developments has an important role to play in mitigating blight conditions. Because the City has a compact development pattern, conditions within public housing developments have the potential to affect the larger community. Problems of neglect and blight in public housing are problems for the neighborhoods in which they are located as a whole. At the same time, public housing developments provide the opportunity for public investment to directly address blight. The success of the Home at Neston Heights is a testament to the potential for public housing to lead to positive change.

1.3c / Projects and Actions

- Conduct inspections and produce an assessment of the capital improvement needs of Easton's public housing Prioritize improvements, identify funding sources and rehabilitate public housing
- Create a citywide affordable housing task force that identifies and promotes the City's most affordable neighborhoods and units

1.3c / Potential Implementation Partners

- Housing Authority
- Greater Economic Development Partnership

BLIGHT REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

VACANTS TO VALUE

Decades of population decline in the City of Baltimore has left over 16,000 properties boarded up or vacant. The 'Vacants to Value' program encourages redevelopment of targeted properties and buildings.
The City classified vacancies by location into three broad categories: without development demand (65%); with development demand (31%); and emerging markets (4%) and enforced a six-point strategic plan to reduce vacancies.

Six Point Plan

1. Streamline the disposition process
2. Streamline code enforcement on 'transitional blocks'- areas mostly occupied but challenged by scattered vacant structures
3. Facilitate investment in emerging markets
4. Offer targeted incentives to home buyers and developers
5. Support large-scale development in distressed areas with little demand
6. Maintain, clear, hold and identify non-housing units in distressed areas (includes demolition, land banking and marketing to create long-term value)

Hyperlinks

- Vacants to Value

PENN HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM

Deeply rooted in an understanding that the health and vitality of the University is inextricably linked to maintaining a diverse, safe and thriving urban community, the Penn Homeownership Program is an urban revitalization initiative of University of Pennsylvania (UPenn). The program provides direct financial assistance and educational programs as incentives to full-time employees of UPenn or UPenn Health Systems (including all affiliated health institutes and hospitals). These incentives are targeted to properties within the predetermined revitalization boundary. Since its inception (1965), 1,400 families and individuals have participated in the program and in the transformation of West Philadelphia neighborhood.

Summary of Incentives

1. $7,500 in forgivable loans toward home improvements
2. $7,500 in forgivable loans toward a home purchase
3. Closing Cost Reduction Program offers mortgage financing options with discounted closing costs for the purchase and refinancing of a home

Hyperlinks

- Penn Homeownership Services

Revitalization and program boundaries for each incentive created by urban and real estate analysis by Penn Homeownership Services

COMBATING PROBLEMS OF VACANT AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES

In June 2006, the United States Conference of Mayors Task Force on Vacant and Abandoned Properties compiled a report on best practices and successful efforts to combat the problems of vacant and abandoned properties in cities throughout the United States.

Hyperlinks

- Combating Problems of Vacant and Abandoned Properties

Objective 1.4

DISCOURAGE IRRESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION, AND PREVENT DETERIORATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

1.4a / Conduct a study to identify areas and buildings of historic significance, and define clear guidelines for their renovation and development

Though Easton's Downtown indisputably has the highest concentration of historic and architecturally significant buildings, many areas in the City's other neighborhoods also have rich history and build form that are worth preserving. Since the current historic district ends on Sixth Street, many buildings in West Ward that are over a century old are either being renovated without proper consideration to their architectural character, or being razed to the ground for new development. Without the benefit of clear guidelines to preserve the character of existing development, the appeal of these areas is bound to gradually erode.

To balance demand for new growth with protection of historic character, preservation districts that are a lot less restrictive to development should be designated where necessary. Beginning with West Ward neighborhood, a comprehensive inventory of historic and architecturally significant buildings should be created. Where historic districts are necessary, State guidelines should be used as the basis for creating this inventory. However, in areas with high growth potential, preservation guidelines to uncover and preserve original building details and provide recommendations for new additions should be developed in coordination with neighborhood associations, the Easton Planning Bureau and the Historic District Commission.

1.4a / Projects and Actions

- Develop a neighborhood level inventory of historic and architecturally significant buildings and areas
- Recommend State historic districts where applicable and designate preservation districts in areas with high up- /incoming development potential
- Create development guidelines for preservation districts

1.4a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- Neighborhood Associations
- Historic District Commission

1.4b / Explore City, State and Federal incentives for preservation of historic architectural character

Maintenance, development and renovation works for historic buildings is often cost prohibitive for private developers, forcing them to use cheap methods or neglecting their properties. A number of grants at City, State and Federal levels are available that can be utilized for historic preservation. In addition to these grants, development incentives such as permit and fee waivers, parking requirement reductions, development bonuses such as heights, Floor Area Ratio (FAR), density, etc., can mitigate development costs and encourage responsible development.

In some cases e.g., Northampton Street, where building codes restrict development, relaxation of requirements that do not fit within the framework of historic structures can prevent further deterioration and incentivize development. Many cities across the U.S. have adopted special Historic Building Codes, that allow rehabilitation and restoration of buildings without strict conformance to all requirements of the uniform construction code. This has incentivized development and prevented deterioration of historic areas, and Easton should consider protecting its historic fabric by adopting its own Historic Building Code.

1.4b / Projects and Actions

- Create, maintain and make available to developers and private owners, a categorized list of applicable City, State and Federal grants available for building maintenance, façade improvements and renovations
- Create and adopt Historic Building Codes that allow rehabilitation of historic structures to be made without conformance to all requirements of uniform construction code
- Encourage use of historic tax credits

1.4b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- Neighborhood Associations
- Historic District Commission

REHAB CODE, NJ

Most building codes are designed with new construction in mind, requiring existing buildings to take on expensive retrofits that can be a barrier in renovation and adaptive reuse. In an effort to reduce this barrier, the State of New Jersey adopted a “Rehab Code” in 1999. This code requires structural and safety regulations that work with an existing building’s height, area and fire resistance ratings.

The Rehab Code is based on three basic premises intended to make sure that buildings built to this code are safe, and yet can be rehabilitated in a reasonable and fair manner

1. Maintaining building safety
2. Predictability - establishes a clear set of requirements
3. Proportionality - does not impose requirements that would significantly extend the owner’s scope of work

In the first year of implementation, the amount of money dedicated to renovation in New Jersey increased by 41%. The code has resulted in reduced costs for building owners and increased historic preservation efforts in many older cities across the state.

Example of a historic building rehabilitated into residential use using the Rehab Code

Hyperlinks

- NJ Rehab Code

2: UNIFY

Capitalizing on Easton's scenic setting at the fork of Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and on strategic opportunity sites at the seams of its four neighborhoods, site-specific urban development, transportation infrastructure and public realm projects integrate urban and natural landscapes, create an open space network with urban amenities, and provide integrated solutions for sustainable development, stormwater management and climate resiliency.

UNIFY / CAPITAL PROJECTS (and related actions)

1. Prioritize streetscape redesign for Butler, Ferry, Lehigh, Wood, Washington, Cattell and Northampton Streets

2. Continue Line Street across Philadelphia Road

3a. Redevelop Black Diamond Site to accommodate-mixed use development

3b. Acquire and redevelop Quonset Huts site

4. Create secondary gateway at Wood Avenue and Northampton Street

5. Develop underutilized lots at South Third gateway as a mixed use TOD

6. Create guidelines for appropriate development scale at Northampton and North 13th Streets

7a. Connect to D&L Trail

7b. across Delaware Drive at Nesquehoning and Highlands

8. Create bike and pedestrian friendly connection to D&L trail

9. Showcase the ethnic diversity of South Side along the Lehigh River, through temporary programming

10. Explore pedestrian connections between Nevins Park and Karl Stirner Arts Trail

11. Use part of prison parking lot for passive recreation

12. Reintroduce pedestrian bridge over Lehigh River connecting South Side and West Ward Neighborhoods

UNIFY:
CAPITAL PROJECTS

Objective 2.1

RE-ENVISION PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAYS FOR MULTIMODAL TRAVEL AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

2.1a / Create guidelines for balanced use of public right of way to ensure safe and efficient travel by all modes of transportation, landscaping and stormwater management

A number of cities across the United States are embracing walking and biking as popular modes of transportation, and Easton has the right size and compact urban form to encourage this. These non-polluting modes are not only cost effective, but also contribute to a healthy population, improved air quality and lower household costs. However, most of Easton's streets are predominantly designed for the movement of motor vehicles and parking and other than these two primary functions, there are very few streets that cater to pedestrian movements, biking or other infrastructure. Since bicyclists and walkers remain the most vulnerable users of our roadway system, in order to encourage walking and biking in Easton, the right of way (ROW) of the City's streets will need to be reconfigured to make it safe and comfortable for all modes of transportation. Easton is already exploring the concept of 'Complete Streets' for its 13th Street corridor, that'll accommodate all modes of transportation as well as sustainable methods of stormwater management. This concept can be extended to all City streets for a safer walking and biking environment and sustainable infrastructure.

Given that a large part of Easton was developed before the automobile era, there are many narrow streets that cannot accommodate every mode of transportation, and a citywide study documenting existing street characteristics such as ROWs, materials, etc., can help create a multimodal network plan. In addition, Easton should consider adopting a street classification system that is based on the urban function a street serves: e.g., residential, market, community collector etc. This system of classification that addresses adjacent land use, level of pedestrian activity and urban functions versus just traffic volume will provide a more holistic and effective approach in planning for different modes and parking.

2.1a / Projects and Actions

- Prepare a set of 'complete streets' guides with standards for re-adapting existing streets to accommodate all modes of transportation
- Adopt a system of classification based on type of urban function the street serves versus volume of traffic it carries: e.g., residential street, market street, community collector, etc.
- Conduct a citywide study to classify streets based on the new classification system, and based on this information, create a citywide plan of multimodal transportation network
- Review potential for two-way travel on one-way streets throughout the City
- As streets are reconstructed, redesign and rebuild them based on the complete streets guide and where streets are not being rebuilt in the near future, improve quality of sidewalk and add bike racks where necessary
- Create a pedestrian (and business)

friendly environment by concealing overhead utilities under street ROWs
- Adopt guidelines for handicap accessibility for street infrastructure and public building access from streets
- As a priority, re-envision and redesign Butler, Ferry, Lehigh, Wood, Washington and Northampton Streets. If needed, reassess on-street parking on these streets and potentially provide parking for buildings from rear entrances
- Establish a 'goods delivery system and plan' to reduce truck traffic in the City

2.1a / Potential Implementation Partners

- PennDOT
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- Environmental Advisory Council
- LANTA
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Infrastructure companies such as Met-Ed, Verizon, UGI, Easton Suburban Water Authority, RCN, Service Electric

Upgraded streetscape on South Third Street showing curb bump outs for safer pedestrian crossings and new street planting with infiltration for stormwater

2.1b / Create friendly and safe environments for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reduce traffic speed in residential neighborhoods

Along with balancing the distribution of ROWs to accommodate non-motorized transportation, one can encourage more bicyclists and pedestrians on the streets by minimizing conflict points, reducing traffic speed and increasing safety measures.

2.1b / Projects and Actions

- Maximize pedestrian and bicyclist comfort; use proper lighting, signage, crosswalk marking, curb extensions etc.
- Promote urban character by eliminating front set-backs and requiring buildings to 'build to street edge'
- Determine the City's urban forestry needs, particularly on roads that carry through traffic
- Wherever needed, limit driveways and parking lots in front of commercial establishments to protect sidewalks and minimize points of conflict between pedestrians and motor vehicles
- Employ traffic calming methods to slow traffic and increase safety for all users, especially Cattell and 13th Streets
- Identify and redesign intersections that have high accident rates: e.g., Berwick and Iron Streets intersection
- Provide crosswalks and traffic stop signs / pedestrian crossing signs at end of all step streets
- Promote pedestrian crossings enforcement during peak travel times
- Redesign the Route 22 and 13th Street intersection to accommodate increased traffic from Simon Silk Mill

2.1b / Potential Implementation Partners

- PennDOT
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
- LANTA

Existing Right of Way (ROW) of 13th Street featuring traffic centric distribution of space that favors speeding and discourages pedestrian and bicyclists (Total ROW ranges from 52Ft to 60Ft)

Redistributed ROW accommodating all modes of travel, utilities and stormwater management

Stormwater management systems

1. Tree trench system that collects runoff for irrigation and infiltration, redirecting overflows to CSOs
2. Permeable on-street parking that infiltrates water into the ground reducing runoff
3. Rain garden that infiltrates water and restores natural habitat

PRELIMINARY URBAN STREET CLASSIFICATION BASED ON LAND USE

These typical street sections accommodate stormwater management and non-motorized transportation modes along with cars and parking

Curbless / Civic Street
These streets double up as public space/plaza that host events and festivities on special days and support daily spillover recreational and retail activity from the primarily commercial context. The leveled surface promotes easy pedestrian movement and maintains emergency vehicle access.

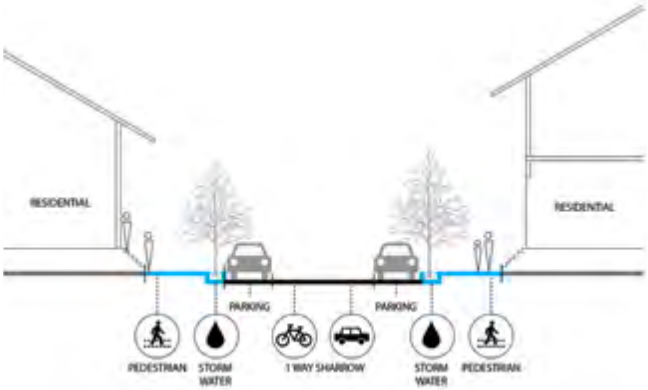
E.g., Northampton between Larry Holmes Drive and Centre Square. (See page 67 for a rendering of curbless street at this location)

Community / Neighborhood Collector
These streets are the nexus of neighborhood life, with high pedestrian and car volumes and bicyclists all fitting within the same right of way. These generally host schools, hospitals, neighborhood shops or other major community facilities on them.

E.g., 13th Street Corridor

Typical City Arterial Street
Major streets that connect neighborhoods. They have significant automobile traffic volumes at peak hours but also provide for safe pedestrian and bike movement for access to community/ neighborhood arterial streets and community destinations. Note separate bike lane marking, which can be made on a sharrow.

E.g., Philadelphia Road and St. John Street



Local Streets (Option A)
These streets are primarily in residential environments where drivers are expected to travel at low speeds. They have infrastructure that has a safe pedestrian realm and may be configured to include a shared bike lane / sharrow. On-street parking can be provided on either side of the street.

E.g., Ferry Street

2.1c / Incorporate green infrastructure to manage storm runoff and improve quality of waterbodies

In urban areas, water originating from storm events and snow/ice melt is a major source of water pollution and urban flooding. Impervious surfaces on our streets limit infiltration, and stormwater runoff carries with it surface pollutants, discharging them into nearby water bodies. In addition to delivering high loadings of surface pollutants, increased stormwater flow can lead to stream erosion, encourage weed invasion and disturb the natural habitats for aquatic flora and fauna as well as paths of migratory birds. It can overwhelm the capacity of traditional urban drainage systems in periods of high precipitation.

Street and roadway systems equipped with green infrastructure are becoming important sites for stormwater management across U.S. cities. Green Infrastructure has been successfully employed in many urban areas to increase infiltration, reduce runoff, mitigate water pollution, reduce pressure on traditional urban drainage systems and restore natural habitat. In addition to these many environmental benefits, green infrastructure greatly enhances the visual appeal of our urban streets. The new ROW on South Third Street, featuring rain gardens, is a great example of integrated urban green infrastructure, and Easton should explore and employ all typologies of stormwater management on its streets and open spaces.

2.1c / Projects and Actions

- Along with the classification of Easton's street network, conduct a study to create and manage a network of green streets and sidewalk that employ green infrastructure
- Educate and encourage private building owners to employ building systems such as green roofs, green walls, cisterns, rain barrels, etc.
- Promote use of pervious surfaces, vegetation and other natural infiltration mechanisms to manage stormwater
- Undertake a detailed utilities infrastructure study to replace combined sewer systems with separate sanitary sewer, and stormwater networks in the long run
- Undertake preparation of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plan for stormwater management

2.1c / Potential Implementation Partners

- PennDOT
- Environmental Advisory Council
- Department of Environmental Protection

2.1d / Connect the two portions of Line Street directly with Philadelphia Road and prevent through traffic from using residential street

Line Street is a collector road that runs through the residential South Side neighborhood and feeds into the City's major arterial Philadelphia Road, eventually leading to I-78. However, to the east of Philadelphia Road, Line Street is interrupted between Davis Street and Philadelphia Road, and it runs from Folk Street to the C-Town parking lot, where traffic is routed south along the northern edge of the parking lot to connect to Davis Street. As a result of this interruption, there is no direct connection to the main arterial road, and through traffic is routed onto other residential streets (Palmer Street and Williams Street). As Easton's traffic grows in the future, to avoid congesting residential

Demonstration of natural stormwater management strategies on Ferry Street (view looking west from intersection of Ferry and Ninth Streets)

streets, the City should work with property owners and look into mapping the eastern side of Line Street all the way through to connect with Philadelphia Road. This will provide direct access to I-78 and keep through traffic out of residential areas.

2.1d / Projects and Actions

- Work with private owners to map Line Street and connect it to Philadelphia Road

2.1d / Potential Implementation Partners

- Private Property Owners
- PennDOT

GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Philadelphia's Water Department developed the Green City, Clean Waters plan to revitalize the City by protecting and enhancing its watersheds, using innovative green infrastructure systems that assist or mimic natural processes. Strategies promote economic and social growth, and meet environmental, ecological and business missions.

Hyperlinks

- Green City Clean Waters

Objective 2.2

ADAPT AND REUSE CRITICAL SITES AT THE SEAM OF NEIGHBORHOODS

2.2a / Redevelop Black Diamond Site to accommodate mixed-use development with residential units

The property owned by Black Diamond Enterprises at 620 Coal Street has been vacant and in a state of blight for a long period of time. It is an approximately 4-acre former mill complex that occupies a full block in South Side neighborhood. The site is adjacent to Cheston Elementary School and is surrounded by residential uses. It is located in close proximity to I-78. While the site poses significant challenges for redevelopment, including grade changes and environmental contamination, it is a designated Pennsylvania Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ), which reduces state and local taxes for the owner.

Despite the KOZ incentives and multiple proposals for redevelopment, the site remains vacant. Redevelopment of the site must be integrated with the surrounding South Side neighborhood, and should include a mix of uses at a scale appropriate for the surrounding area. The site is located in the South Side zoning district, which does not allow commercial uses as-of-right. As the site is privately owned, the City should work with potential developers and provide incentive by rezoning it to allow for mixed-use development. To ensure that the uses, scale and type of development respect the surrounding urban fabric, the City should conduct a community visioning session for the design and development program of this site in coordination with the developer.

2.2a / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a visioning session for the design and development program of the site
- Work with owner to accept potential developers as partners
- Work with Lehigh Valley Land Recycling Initiative to facilitate the environmental investigation work and provide report as an incentive to the developer
- In consultation with potential developers, implement site-specific rezoning or planned unit development zoning that encourages a mix of uses at a scale appropriate for surrounding South Side neighborhood and represents community vision for this area

2.2a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Black Diamond Enterprises
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

View of Black Diamond Silk Mill from Storm Street showing limited existing activity

View of Black Diamond Silk Mill from West Milton Street showing potential for rehabilitation into medium-scale residential / mixed use development

2.2b / Acquire and redevelop Quonset Huts site

Just south of Black Diamond Enterprises site is a lot containing two vacant Quonset huts. The site is underutilized and vacant buildings create opportunities for crime and have a blighting effect on the surrounding area. The site should be redeveloped in coordination with Black Diamond Enterprises site, to include a mix of uses appropriate for the surrounding South Side neighborhood.

2.2b / Projects and Actions

- Explore options for site acquisition
- Coordinate with planning effort for Black Diamond Site to target complementary uses for the site

2.2b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

2.2c / Create a secondary gateway at intersection of Wood Avenue and Northampton Street

Wood Avenue is an entryway into Easton from Route 22, and leads directly into the West Ward neighborhood, and is a gateway into Downtown. A number of residents and visitors use this street as a bypass to get to main commercial areas of Easton. However, as this avenue intersects with Northampton and North Seventh Streets, there is little activity and a number of vacant lots and buildings around the intersection that do not provide a welcoming arrival experience. Though there are a few small buildings with street level retail at this intersection, they are interspersed with larger underutilized or vacant buildings and lots such as the Armory Building, its adjacent lot and Jacob's Produce.

Although there have been a few proposals for the larger sites, the community in this area hasn't been satisfied with them and would like to see this area develop as a mixed-use medium-density development with community centric facilities and retail. In recent years, this area has also seen an influx of young singles and families looking for residences. Given the street corridor overlay here, sites at this location provide the opportunity for infill development, which can cater to both residential demands and the community desire for facilities such as a grocery store and community center, helping establish this area as a welcoming secondary gateway to the City.

The City should involve private property owners and the community to map and create preliminary development scenarios for these sites visualizing continuous retail and light industrial uses such as studios and workshops at street level, and residential developments on upper levels. These scenarios will help market a community vision to private developers and assist the City in identification of any regulatory obstacles that might hinder development. Based on this development study, the City should assess incentives that could accelerate development. The City should also consider public investments such as reconfiguration of the five-way traffic junction, a potential new public plaza, signage, planting, street improvements, and temporary interventions to draw interest.

2.2c / Projects and Actions

- Create development scenarios for mixed-use medium-density development in coordination with private property owners and the community
- Identify any planning / technical obstacles in development of these sites and provide incentives to overcome these obstacles
- If needed, create a Local Development Corporation that can work with the community or envision a Planned Unit Development and make use of tools such as transfer of development rights, reconfiguration of lots, etc., to maintain character and make parcels more developable
- Create a welcoming environment through public investments and generate interest in the area through temporary events and programming
- Create a comprehensive strategy to attract active street level uses, grocery store and community center to this area

2.2c / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- Private property owners
- Easton Business Association

MEDIUM-SCALE ADAPTIVE REUSE

RICE SILK MILL

Rice Silk Mill is a former factory complex in Pittsfield, MA, that was converted to a multifamily residential development. The site was remediated, several non-historic buildings were demolished to create green space, and the 132-year-old main building was re-purposed as a 45-unit residential building with 43 affordable units (below 60% of AMI), and two market rate units.

Creative Financing

Federal low-income housing tax credits awarded by the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) played a major role in financing the development. In addition, the City of Pittsfield provided financial incentives to build smart growth-consistent housing, near downtowns and transportation centers. The city also provided a total of $525,000 through federal block grant and stimulus funds. A $300,000 State grant was provided to construct new water and sewer connections and sidewalks. The project also received state historic tax credits and brownfield tax credits.

Key Features

1. **Transit-Oriented Development:** Project combines a mix of uses and takes advantage of downtown location and transit access.
2. **Remediation:** The site had leakage from underground storage tanks, and volatile organic compounds were found under the site related to chemicals used at the former factory. The project used brownfield tax credits to remediate the site.
3. **Creative financing:** (See above)

Hyperlinks

- History and Development
- Financing

LANTERN HILL

A mixed-use and traditional neighborhood development (TND) in historic Doylestown, PA, Lantern Hill is located on an 18-acre brownfield site. The site was formerly occupied by an automobile part production facility and had groundwater contamination. Prior to development, the site was remediated to residential standards and cleared by the PA Department of Environmental Protection and EPA. The site employed sewage facility upgrades building floodplain modifications, and TND zoning ordinance to allow mixed uses. The TND district was created in 2000, and the site was developed into 117 market rate units of detached homes and townhomes, as well as 62,400 square feet of office and retail space, pocket parks and walking paths. Residential units were designed to fit in with surrounding traditional Victorian architecture and provide a variety of housing types and prices. The development encourages walking to work by providing office space on site and residential development located within walking distance of downtown Doylestown.

Key Features

1. **Mixed-use development and context specific form:** In contrast to many other mixed-use developments that favor denser development patterns, this project was developed as a traditional neighborhood, where various uses were integrated within their low-rise context.
2. **Remediation:** This was a major effort involving State and Federal agencies. Remediation began in 1995, and the site received grant money from Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development through the Industrial Sites Reuse Program.

Hyperlinks

- PA Residential Site Development Best Practices
- DVRPC Report on Residential Investment in Centers
- DVRPC Report on Financing Mixed-Use Development

2.2d / Develop the underutilized and vacant lots on South Third and on Lehigh River as a mixed-use TOD with medium-rise buildings including residential, offices and co-working places

Easton has recently invested in a regional transportation center and new garage on South Third Street that will attract a number of commuters to this area in coming years and help grow the developing mix of retail and commercial establishment on this street. This new transportation hub is within a short walking distance from the Lehigh Valley Railroad Passenger Station, located at South Third and Canal Streets, which has been lying unused for a few decades. Though the passenger rail line has been unused for a long time, there is overwhelming support from the community to work toward bringing this rail connection back to the City. Together the transportation center, parking garage, and bike and pedestrian connections proposed in this comprehensive plan can turn this area into a true multimodal transit hub.

As the area gradually develops, it is bound to attract new economic development activity, offices, commercial uses and demand for more housing and entertainment options – a mix that can easily support a walkable transit-oriented district. Currently there are a number of underutilized parcels in this area including the old bowling alley, Third Street garage building, gas station site with a large parking lot and store, Quality Inn site and McDonalds site. The City should consider developing a compact medium-density transit-oriented development taking into account all of these underutilized parcels that currently discourage pedestrian movement toward the waterfront. Uses at this TOD should include modern office spaces and infrastructure needed to support 21st-century small- and medium-scale businesses, co-working space for start-ups, residential on higher floors, a new higher quality hotel and conference/banquet center, and continuous retail on street level. Transit-oriented development can bring in new businesses, residents and retail activity to Easton and its main commercial area, create a much needed gateway at the intersection of Larry Holmes Drive and South Third Street, and promote the use of waterfront, integrating it with the upland.

2.2d / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a community visioning session to determine uses, type and scale of development
- Explore options for site acquisition and assemblage, or alternatively identify and work with private developers
- Create a transit-oriented development district, in consultation with private owners, and implement site specific rezoning that encourages mixed-use, transit-oriented development
- Work with regional organizations to generate higher level interest in restoring the Lehigh Valley Railroad Passenger Line
- Develop low lying areas along the Lehigh River for active and passive recreation: e.g., skate park, dog park etc.

2.2d / Potential Implementation Partners

- Private property owners
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- LANTA
- SEPTA
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation

WYANDANCH VILLAGE, BABYLON, NY

Wyandanch Village is a 40-acre development in Babylon, NY. The area includes former strip malls and auto repair shops, and is adjacent to a regional train station. The project involves redevelopment of a number of brownfield sites and creation of a new transit-oriented residential, civic and commercial core for Wyandanch. The project has been designed to reflect traditional villages in the region and to have a mix of public and private space. Currently under construction, the first phase of development includes two mixed-use buildings containing 177 residential units and 37,500 square feet of retail, restaurant and gallery space, as well as a 77,000sf commercial building.

Key Features

1. **Political Will and Leadership:** Supported by State, County, and Local leaders who kept the spotlight on and ensured funding commitments from government agencies
2. **Long-Term Vision:** Connected the opportunity for transit-oriented-development (TOD) with the need for housing and economic development
3. **Implementation and Financing:** Incorporated funding from all levels of government including Federal tax credits, brownfield subsidies and Local tax abatements

Hyperlinks

- New York Times Report
- Wall Street Journal Report
- Architect Magazine's Feature

2.2e / Provide guidelines for development of appropriate scale and uses at intersection of Northampton and North 13th Streets

The intersection of Northampton and North 13th Streets serves is a gateway to Easton from the west. In addition, the 13th Street corridor is an important north-south connector, providing a vital link between College Hill and new Simon Silk Mill development in the north and residential neighborhood West Ward in the south. Efforts are now underway to re-purpose this street on the complete streets model and cater to multiple modes of transportation, utilize green infrastructure and simplify intersections. These improvements and activity nodes are bound to attract higher uses at key locations in the future. To deter speculation and encourage appropriate development in high growth areas such as the intersection of Northampton and North 13th Streets, the City should work with West Ward Neighborhood Partnership to develop a set of guidelines including mix of uses, type and scale of development.

2.2e / Projects and Actions

- Work with West Ward Neighborhood Partnership to develop guidelines for development at Northampton and North 13th Streets intersection
- Develop incentives to encourage retail uses in ground floor storefronts
- Identify any technical obstacles / barriers for developers and make use of planning tools to overcome these obstacles

2.2e / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- Private property owners
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership

Objective 2.3

INTEGRATE DELAWARE AND LEHIGH RIVERS, AND BUSHKILL CREEK WITH UPLAND COMMUNITIES THROUGH A CONNECTED SYSTEM OF PEDESTRIAN, BIKE AND OPEN SPACE NETWORKS

2.3a / Create safer pedestrian access to Delaware River across Larry Holmes Drive

Larry Homes Drive is predominantly a vehicular street that carries high volumes of fast-moving traffic and is a physical barrier for pedestrians who want to access recreational amenities on the Delaware River. In the future, as underutilized parcels along the waterfront become more developed and attract higher traffic volumes, pedestrian movement will be further restricted across Larry Holmes Drive. Street improvements, including traffic calming, safe crosswalks, landscaping and proper signage, will need to be employed to minimize risk for accidents and integrate Delaware River with upland areas.

2.3a / Projects and Actions

- Simultaneous with the River Corridor master planning, plan and execute traffic calming measures on Larry Holmes Drive
- Provide for wider sidewalks and pedestrian plazas wherever possible
- Provide proper marking, stop signs and traffic signals, and signage leading to river amenities

2.3a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- PennDOT
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation

2.3b / Improve and where possible create additional waterfront access points from upland areas

Easton's dramatic topography separates its upland from the waterfront and limits access to its rivers. In some cases, existing access points, such as those across West Canal Street and the train tracks on South Side, are inconspicuous and unsafe. Other areas such as the boat launch at Municipal Beach in the north are in a state of disrepair and unfit for access. And yet others such as the connection to the D&L trail from Lehigh Bridge are not integrated with upland pedestrian and bike networks. Given the proximity to its waterbodies and new developments such as Karl Stirner Arts Trail and 13th Street Complete Street Corridor, Easton has a unique opportunity to create an integrated 'blue-green' system to link its urban and natural landscapes. Along with waterfront programming, this blue-green system could have the potential to become a major attraction for residents, tourists and natural lovers, and provide both recreation and environmental learning for its users.

2.3b / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a feasibility study and community visioning session to create a continuous 'blue-green' path linking urban open spaces, bike and pedestrian paths with waterfront access points, and the waterfront

Rendering of Northampton Street between Centre Square and Northampton Bridge. The concept features active storefronts and a curbless street favoring use of space for events and uninhibited pedestrian connection to the Delaware Waterfront. The right of way (ROW) accommodates for emergency vehicle movement

- Design and install signage in dense urban areas directing people to 'blue-green' path, and along this 'blue-green' path directing people to waterfront access points and amenities
- Install directional signage along D&L trail to lead visitors to urban destinations in Easton
- Develop broken or missing links in 'blue-green' network and make it a continuous circuit
- Create new waterfront access points across 611 S / Delaware Drive and at the end of Nesquehoning Street and Highland Boulevard
- Create a bike and pedestrian friendly connection from Lehigh Bridge to D&L trail below
- Improve and increase safety for existing upland connections to the waterfront and D&L trail
- Use events, awareness campaigns and marketing methods to promote use of 'blue-green' network and increase awareness about Easton's waterfront amenities

2.3b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Parks and Recreation Board
- Environmental Advisory Council
- PA Department of Environmental Protection
- Easton Planning Bureau
- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation

2.3c / Establish a waterfront committee dedicated to programming and development of the waterfront

There are a few revenue generating waterfront attractions that are currently underutilized. As an example, the Delaware River has two amphitheaters – a 400-seat open-air amphitheater in Scott Park just south of Northampton Street Bridge; and a 568-seat covered-stage amphitheater at Spring Garden Street, in Riverside Park. While these areas and parks are utilized for events such as Riverside Festival of the Arts, concerts and performances, the amphitheaters and other existing infrastructure still remain underutilized. They could host events throughout the year and be marketed in the larger region. The City along with Easton Main Street Initiative should consider a dedicated team focused on marketing the amphitheaters and its facilities within the region and host as many events as possible throughout the year. Along with marketing, this team should provide guidance as well as ground assistance with hosting events and facilitate any permits that might be needed, e.g., food trucks, power needs, etc.

Additionally, events such as the Shad Festival have drawn thousands of people from the region each year, but are no longer hosted. The committee should work with concerned agencies to upgrade infrastructure for such popular events and continually maintain all waterfront facilities.

2.3c / Projects and Actions

- Establish a waterfront committee for marketing and programming the River Corridors of the City
- Establish partnership with Nurture Nature Center as center for flooding and environmental quality information for the region
- Create an inventory of improvements to be made to waterfront infrastructure
- Work with D&L National Heritage Corridor and parks and recreation to maintain and continually improve waterfront amenities

2.3c / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Main Street Initiative
- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Nurture Nature Center

Municipal Beach Pier in College Hill in a state of disrepair with invasive plants overgrowing onto pedestrian pathway

2.3d / Market potential of the passive recreation corridor on lands and escarpment areas as described by existing plans

The lands and escarpment areas along the north side of Lehigh River are underutilized and prevent access to the waterfront from West Ward and Downtown. In addition, topography and issues of flooding limit development in these areas. However, the lands are accessible via Lehigh Drive, and there are multiple potential access points to the waterfront through escarpment areas. The historic railroad bridge provides a potential connection to the D&L Trail and Hugh Moore Park on the south side of the Lehigh River. Building on the Urban Ecologic Park concept advanced by the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley and the West Ward Neighborhood Partnership, the City should examine new uses for this environmentally sensitive area.

2.3d / Projects and Actions

- Investigate ownership of railroad right of way, escarpment areas and adjacent vacant parcels, and study feasibility of recreational, commercial, cultural and educational uses
- Conduct environmental remediation where feasible and restore riparian edges with native vegetation as needed
- Study existing structures and potential for adaptive reuse, potential changes to RC zoning district in this area

2.3d / Potential Implementation Partners

- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Discover Lehigh Valley
- Northampton County
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- Environmental Advisory Council

2.3e / Showcase the ethnic diversity of South Side along Lehigh River, through temporary programming

The canal along the south side of Lehigh River switches from one side of the land to the other providing unique opportunities to program the banks in this area. Though this low lying area may not be fit for permanent development, temporary programming that showcases the ethnic diversity of South Side neighborhood will connect the community back with its waterfront. As the City draws the blue-green plan described above, South Side Civic Association should work with its community and Easton Planning Bureau to determine and host programming such as festivals, ethnic food trucks, crafts and arts along Lehigh River, making this area a destination for residents and tourists alike.

2.3e / Projects and Actions

- Conduct community workshop to envision sustainable development and programming along the south banks of Lehigh River
- Engage professional design and engineering consultants to study feasibility and determine sites for temporary programming urban intervention
- Work with D&L National Heritage Corridor to secure funding and implement project

2.3e / Potential Implementation Partners

- South Side Civic Association
- Parks and Recreation
- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Easton Planning Bureau

Objective 2.4

IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND CREATE NEW PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

2.4a / Create a recognizable network of recreational and entertainment amenities in College Hill

College Hill neighborhood has a number of recreational and neighborhood entertainment destinations such as Nevins Park, Karl Stirner Arts Trail and restaurants on Cattell Street. Though these destinations are within easy reach from one another, they exist in independent pockets that are not interconnected through a recognizable network. In addition, the pedestrian infrastructure outside the Lafayette College Campus is weak and neighborhood streets are designed primarily for vehicular circulation, making pedestrian and bike access to these destinations challenging.

College Hill Neighborhood Association should work with Easton Planning Bureau and Lafayette College to create a network map connecting existing destinations and future development projects. This map should be made the basis of determining priority connections, e.g., connection between Nevins Park and Karl Stirner Arts Trail, and priority actions, e.g., streetscape design for bikes and pedestrians, intersection design for safe crossings, signage, etc.

2.4a / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a neighborhood workshop to create a network map linking recreational and entertainment amenities
- Create list of priority actions to make this network pedestrian and bike friendly
- Work with PennDOT to execute priority actions
- Explore pedestrian connections between Nevins Park and Karl Stirner Arts Trail as a priority
- Better integrate Eddyside Pool with neighborhood

2.4a / Potential Implementation Partners

- College Hill Neighborhood Association
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Parks and Recreation
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- Family YMCA

Nevins Park in the eastern part of College Hill is disconnected from other public realm improvements such as the Karl Stirner Arts Trail

2.4b / Create a catalog of empty/underutilized parcels throughout the City and where possible, create new open space

Throughout the City, there exist a number of parcels currently underutilized or vacant. Some of these spaces, especially ones that are publically owned, can be transformed into new community open space. Additionally, given that Easton's zoning ordinance authorizes the zoning officer to issue temporary certificates of use and occupancy, parcels that aren't publically owned can also be temporarily activated to house community gardens, parks, community activities and events. This will provide neighborhoods access to open spaces, make them safer, potentially increase value of properties and provide a voice to the community in future planning of these sites.

West Ward neighborhood has a few successful examples of community gardens in partnership with Lafayette College. In addition to all the benefits outlined above, these community gardens have also engaged neighborhood youth, educating them about urban farming. This program can be extended to other neighborhoods and taken on formally at a citywide level for greater neighborhood vitality. The City should work with each neighborhood to create an inventory of empty parcels, explore funding and forge partnerships to activate underutilized spaces.

2.4b / Projects and Actions

- Create a catalog of empty/underutilized parcels throughout the City that might be suitable as future recreation spaces.
- Work with neighborhood associations and property owners to determine temporary programming
- Explore funding and partnerships for activating these vacant areas

2.4b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Neighborhood Associations
- Lafayette College
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- City Departments for Recreation, Planning, and Public Works

2.4c / Revive and protect pocket parks within West Ward

West Ward neighborhood has about nine pocket parks of which four are not in use. These pocket parks provide much needed open space for the neighborhood and are in need of a formal maintenance program that can ensure their upkeep. The Parks and Recreation Board should work with West Ward Neighborhood Partnership to revive existing pocket parks, explore funding and resources for ongoing maintenance, and potentially create new pocket parks to activate vacant lots. In addition, the board should team with West Ward Neighborhood Partnership to explore the possibility of establishing a park trust that will preserve shared open spaces and prevent their conversion to other uses.

2.4c / Projects and Actions

- Make an assessment of maintenance needs for Bushkill Street, Jackson Street, North Seventh Street and Raspberry Pocket Parks
- Explore funding opportunities and resources to reopen and maintain all pocket parks in West Ward
- Establish a park trust with goal of protecting shared open spaces and acquiring new land for new parks

2.4c / Potential Implementation Partners

- Parks and Recreation
- West Ward Partnership
- Lafayette College

2.4d / Open Cottingham Stadium to West Ward Neighborhood residents

Cottingham Stadium is a centrally located active recreation use that can serve an entire neighborhood and beyond. However, it is currently gated and primarily used by students of Paxinosa Elementary School and Easton Area High School. Since there are limited recreational opportunities for residents in West Ward neighborhood, Parks and Recreation Board should work with the Easton Area School District to determine ways in which residents can access this facility. These conversations could include security requirements, access on certain days / times of days, access IDs, etc., so that use of this facility doesn't interfere with student schedules and security measures.

2.4d / Projects and Actions

- Work with Easton Area School District to increase residents' accessibility to Cottingham Stadium

2.4d / Potential Implementation Partners

- Parks and Recreation Board
- West Ward Partnership
- Lafayette College

2.4e / Use part of the County parking lot for passive recreation

The County parking lot on the south side of Washington Street between South Fifth Street and Wolf Avenue, is located at a high elevation and has potential for providing uninhibited and expansive views over the Lehigh River. The large parking area that flanks both the north and south sides of Washington Street is seldom full and has higher utilization in the north due to its proximity to the Government Center. The section of parking in the southeast is potentially underutilized and should be explored for passive recreation and seating.

2.4e / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a parking assessment to determine daily parking needs
- Explore alternative parking locations for peak events
- Explore feasibility of a passive park in southeast corner of parking lot
- Research funding and work with the County for implementation

2.4e / Potential Implementation Partners

- Northampton County
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Parks and Recreation Board

View of Cottingham Stadium from North 12th Street

2.4f / Reintroduce pedestrian bridge over Lehigh River connecting South Side and West Ward neighborhoods

A suspension footbridge called the Upper Suspension Bridge once provided pedestrian connectivity between South Side and West Ward neighborhoods. In the absence of this bridge, the only direct connection between South Side and the rest of the City is via South Third Street, and this is primarily a vehicular connection. The City should consider investing in reconstructing a pedestrian bridge to connect 10th Street in West Ward with Centre Street in South Side. This bridge will provide expansive views of the Lehigh River and provide pedestrian continuity between the City's neighborhoods and its green (parks) and blue (waterfront) networks.

2.4f / Projects and Actions

- Engage designers and engineers to plan pedestrian bridge connecting South Side and West Ward
- Explore funding opportunities and partnerships for design and implementation

2.4f / Potential Implementation Partners

- Parks and Recreation
- West Ward Partnership
- South Side Civic Association
- D&L National Heritage Corridor

Historic image of Upper Suspension Bridge over Lehigh River

LIBERTY BRIDGE, GREENVILLE, SC

Liberty Bridge connects the two parts of Greenville's downtown bisected by falls of the Reedy River. It navigates a dramatic topography while allowing for programming both above and below the bridge. Costing an overall $4.5 M, this bridge replaced a six lane highway bridge and is located just downstream from Reedy River falls. The clear, curved span of this foot overpass provides visitors with an aerial platform to view the falls and park below. The span is supported by twin inclined towers and a single suspension cable, allowing for unobstructed views. Capital funds for this bridge came from the City of Greenville's Hospitality Tax, to be spent on tourism related facilities.

Hyperlinks

- Metropolis Magazine Feature
- Falls Park on the Reedy

View of Liberty Bridge over Reedy River and Falls

2.4g / Explore possibility of programming St. Anthony Church parking lot on Walnut Street for community uses such as a park or weekend events

The parking lot on Walnut Street is a large fenced off area seldom used, even for parking. West Ward Partnership has had some initial conversations with Church Diocese of Allentown to consider possible alternative uses for this parking lot, right across from Easton Community Center, but has not had any formal outreach. Park and Recreation Board should work with West Ward Partnership and formally reach out to Church Diocese of Allentown to develop alternative programming that can benefit the surrounding community. These uses could include park space, community garden space, active recreational programming and activation through event programming.

2.4g / Projects and Actions

- Reach out to and hold conversations with Church Diocese of Allentown
- Explore funding and partnerships for programming the parking lot

2.4g / Potential Implementation Partners

- West Ward Partnership
- Church Diocese of Allentown
- Parks and Recreation Board

2.4h / Develop an improvement strategy for the City's swimming pool facilities

The City should assess the condition of its swimming pool facilities and create a plan for maintenance and upkeep of all its pools.

2.4h / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a study to determine longevity implications for each pool

2.4h / Potential Implementation Partners

- YMCA
- Pool Management and Swim Team Coaches
- Easton Public Works Department

View of St. Anthony Church parking lot at intersection of Walnut and Washington Streets

Objective 2.5

MANAGE PARKING AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

2.5a / Improve parking infrastructure

As an old and densely developed City, Easton faces challenges accommodating auto-oriented uses in the CBD, and parking is a constant challenge for visitors and businesses. In Downtown Easton, parking needs are driven by the many restaurants, cultural attractions and events. The City and Easton Parking Authority completed a parking study in March 2012. Specific improvements already identified for the Downtown area should be implemented, and further study should be conducted once Easton Intermodal Transportation Center is in use. Alternative modes of transportation should be encouraged in Downtown and throughout the City, with programs focused on walking and biking.

2.5a / Projects and Actions

- Implement recommendations of previous parking studies (e.g., rate changes, wayfinding, enforcement, etc.)
- Upon completion of Easton Intermodal Transportation Center, monitor usage and conduct a follow up study as necessary
- Build people friendly bus stop infrastructure that offers seating and shelter and encourages transit use
- Develop parking strategies for all City neighborhoods and encourage off-street parking where possible

2.5a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- PennDOT

2.5b / Encourage alternative transportation such as walking and biking

Easton's age and density also create advantages for alternative modes of transportation. Despite some topographical challenges, Easton's neighborhoods are walkable and bikable. With bridges connecting to South Side, stairs providing connections to College Hill, and connections available to D&L Trail, Easton's geography naturally encourages walking and biking. Easton should build on these advantages by including these modes of transportation in right-of-way improvements. Shifting to these greener and health-focused transportation options could also help alleviate Easton's parking challenges.

2.5b / Projects and Actions

- Market and encourage use of proposed 'blue-green' way
- Incorporate bike facilities with street rehabilitation and other right-of-way improvements, where appropriate
- Study feasibility of a bike share program or other programs to encourage biking
- Educate Easton's population and especially youth about health benefits of walking and biking

2.5b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- PennDOT

3: THRIVE

Neighborhood scale investment in urban conveniences and social services, citywide scale investments in infrastructure, and closer partnerships with key stakeholders lay the groundwork for increasing livability, attracting new businesses and building a strong economy.

THRIVE / CAPITAL PROJECTS (and related actions)

1 Expand free public Wi-Fi beyond Centre Square and develop high-speed internet infrastructure

2a 2b Develop a South Side neighborhood center serving neighborhood level commercial and retail needs for entire neighborhood

3 Develop comprehensive signage system to reinstate historic neighborhood and street names in West Ward neighborhood

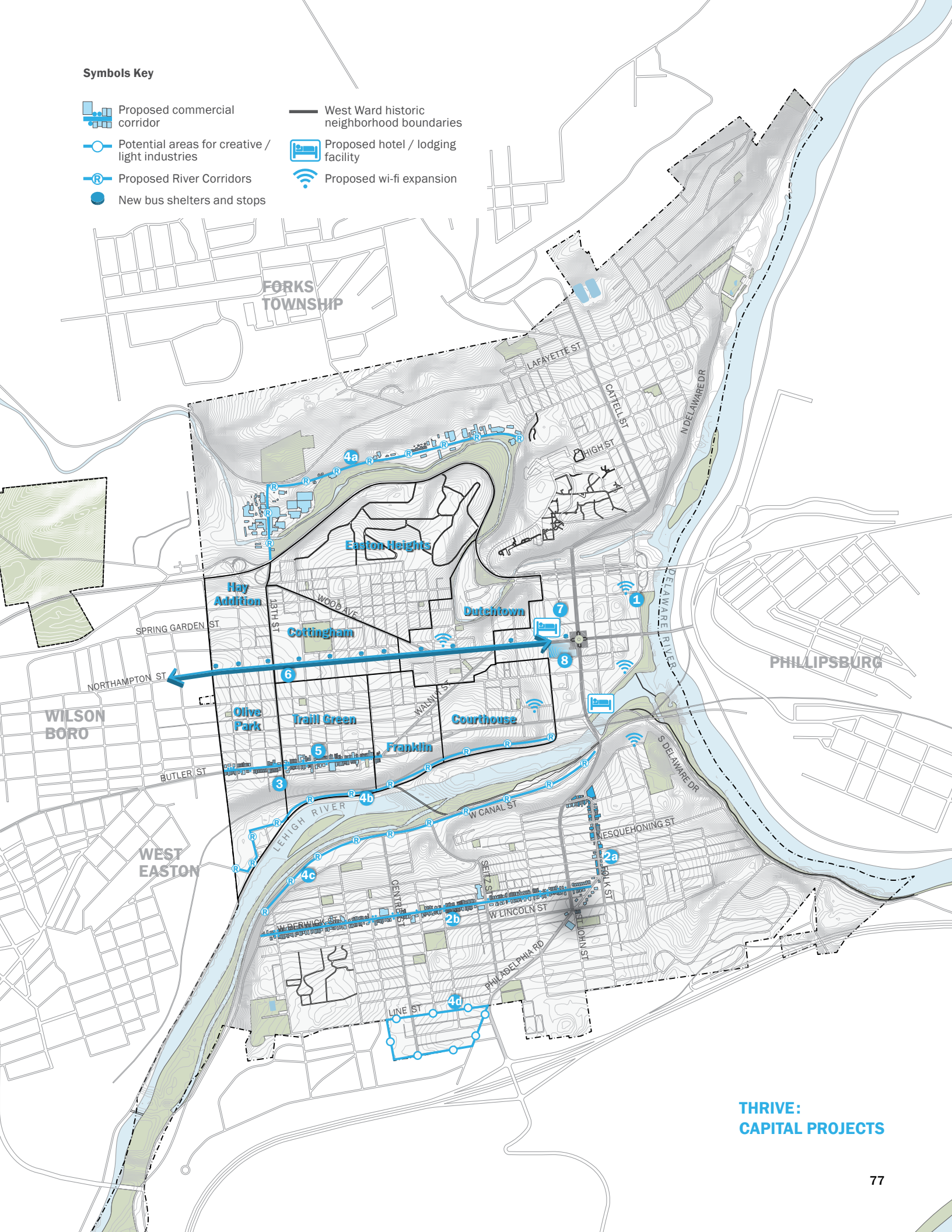
4a 4b 4c 4d Attract light manufacturing and small industries within existing underutilized and vacant buildings, and enhance River Corridors with appropriate uses

5 Develop Butler Street into a secondary commercial corridor for the City

6 Add more frequent bus service and sheltered bus stops

7 Develop new lodging facilities in Downtown

8 Integrate Crayola building and facilities with Centre Square



THRIVE:
CAPITAL PROJECTS

Objective 3.1

ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES THROUGH A 'BUSINESS READY' ENVIRONMENT

3.1a / Establish a business outreach center within City Hall equipped with an inventory of business incentives and a new economic development liaison to aid new and existing business owners

While Easton Main Street Initiative promotes and assists businesses in Downtown Easton, there is no party responsible for providing these services to businesses throughout the City. There is also no single point of entry for new businesses interested in establishing operations in Easton. Since navigating the regulatory process necessary for starting a business can be a challenge, the City should partner with new and existing businesses to proactively market Easton as a place to do business.

There are multiple incentives at Federal, State, County and Local levels that can help businesses grow and succeed in Easton. These include tax credits, grants, loans and loan guarantees. For example, the City and community groups offer façade grants and sidewalk grants, the City offers partial tax abatements for properties in the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) district and Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ), and Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation offers loans through a revolving fund. However, it can be difficult for business owners to identify which funding programs and incentives are applicable to their business, and for City staff to track funding availability and eligibility requirements for each program. Creating and maintaining an accessible inventory of these programs will facilitate the City's business recruitment and retention efforts.

In addition, establishing a business, which might include renovation or new construction, requires navigating multiple regulatory and approval processes controlled by various agencies and departments. The City should channelize these processes for aspiring business owners to establish their operations in Easton. By providing a single and direct point of communication, maintaining business inventory and creating customized incentive packages, the City can save prospective businesses time and money and accelerate process of establishing a business.

The City should also proactively market the City as a place to do business and recruit businesses in targeted industries. Information should be regularly collected and disseminated online and in person-to-person consultations about current economic conditions in Easton, including the industry mix and workforce information. The economic development liaison could maintain information about available inventory of commercial space, rental rates, and property taxes. Based on a market study, the City should identify target industries and develop a plan to actively recruit them.

3.1a / Projects and Actions

- Compile an inventory of Local, County, State and Federal incentives for businesses. Organize an online

database to be easily searchable using a variety of criteria, so that business owners can find programs that match their circumstances
- Increase capacity to provide single and direct point of contact for communications with aspiring business owners and assist them with identifying funding and navigating the approvals and permitting process
- Conduct an updated citywide market study to identify suitable target industries
- Develop a more robust plan to market Easton to businesses and actively recruit businesses in target industries

3.1a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Main Street Initiative
- Easton Business Association
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
- Discover Lehigh Valley

EGRSO, AUSTIN TX

The Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (EGRSO) of Austin, TX, has several economic development functions, including business recruitment, small business development and expanding Austin's reputation as a cultural arts center. EGRSO has been successful, in part, by collaborating with Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, that has similar goals.

Hyperlinks

- Economic Development Department, Austin TX

3.1b / Expand free public Wi-Fi and build high-speed internet infrastructure

Currently, there is no readily available business-class high-speed internet infrastructure in Easton, which limits the ability to attract commercial and industrial establishments to the City. As Easton focuses on urban projects such as Simon Silk Mill, Multimodal Transportation Center, infill developments and public realm programming, it is also generating greater interest among the commercial / office / industrial communities that are looking to locate in urban areas. For Easton's community, this is an opportunity to attract high quality jobs, promote a close knit live-work relationship in its urban fabric, and leverage these projects to foster overall economic development. To accelerate the process, Easton should focus on developing contemporary infrastructure systems such as business-class high-speed internet and work with private companies to overcome obstacles in developing these. In addition, the City should also expand its free Wi-Fi network to as many public places as possible and encourage its use.

3.1b / Projects and Actions

- Work with private companies to identify obstacles in development of high-speed internet and partner with them to overcome these obstacles

3.1b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Service Electric
- Residential Communications Network (RCN)
- Verizon
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

3.1c / Streamline the process of starting a business in Easton

Starting a business in Easton requires coordination with various City departments and involves multiple approval and permitting processes. While there is information about these processes and contacts for each department potentially involved in the "Ready Set. Easton Pennsylvania Business Guide" document, the process can still be cumbersome for business owners.

The City should work to streamline these approval and permitting processes, working with existing business owners and economic development partner agencies (such as West Ward Partnership and Easton Main Street Initiative) to identify regulatory burdens and potential solutions. The City should work to consolidate overlapping licenses, permits and rules. Materials should be accessible online and in multiple languages. City staff should work with businesses to counsel them through the regulatory process.

3.1c / Projects and Actions

- Conduct an assessment of approval and permitting processes, and identify areas that can be made more efficient
- Develop a process to counsel business owners through approval and permitting process

3.1c / Potential Implementation Partners

- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Easton Main Street Initiative
- Easton Business Association
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership

Objective 3.2

PROMOTE STRONG AND WELL-BALANCED NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

3.2a / Investigate opportunities and appropriate locations for a grocery store that is central to West Ward neighborhood

A number of Eastonians currently rely on neighboring municipalities for their grocery needs and have to drive to get to them. C-Town, the only full scale grocery store in Easton, is located at the southern tip of Easton and is popular among South Side residents but is not in close proximity to other neighborhoods. Given that West Ward is projected to be one of the fastest growing neighborhoods and also has a lower median income than the rest of the City, many of its residents rely on public transportation and cannot afford to access supermarkets outside the City. The City should try to attract a grocery store that is centrally located in West Ward but can serve a catchment area beyond West Ward and also attract shoppers from Downtown, College Hill and nearby municipalities.

Two such opportunities would include the Armory building and the intersection of Northampton and Ninth Streets. Given the compact urban fabric of Easton, it should focus on creating a multistory urban model grocery store that can minimize its parking requirements.

3.2a / Projects and Actions

- Determine a feasible location to attract a grocery store in West Ward neighborhood
- Work with private owner and grocery store operator to determine an appropriate model for grocery store in a dense urban fabric
- Identify and appropriately address code related issues for development

3.2a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Easton Planning Bureau
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership

The Armory Building and adjacent lot could potentially be rehabilitated for a grocery store and other community facilities.

3.2b / Better connect Easton's neighborhood centers by providing enhanced multimodal transit options

LANTA buses run primarily north-south along St. John, Third, and Cattell Streets, and east-west along Northampton Street, Walnut Avenue, Washington Street and Lehigh Street in Easton. These routes provide connections between South Side, Downtown and College Hill neighborhoods, circulators in College Hill and South Side neighborhoods, and connections to neighboring municipalities to the west. Lafayette College Area Transportation (LCAT) shuttle provides supplemental service for Lafayette College students to Downtown, however, during weekends, the LCAT provides shuttle service between College Hill and neighboring malls.

Easton's neighborhoods would benefit from better and more frequent transit connections between its neighborhoods. This would increase the likelihood of Easton residents patronizing local businesses, rather than depending on retail and services outside of the City. Easton should improve cross-town bus service to increase access for residents to employment centers and to better connect Lafayette College to the rest of the City. The City should work with Lafayette College to provide more frequent LCAT access to Downtown and extend it to other Easton neighborhoods. In addition, the City should coordinate with LANTA to create bus routes connecting all neighborhoods, including a possible route along 13th Street connecting West Ward to Simon Silk Mill redevelopment. For narrower streets, the City should work with LANTA to explore the option of narrower shuttles. A neighborhood circulator service should include bus stops at all neighborhood nodes and run until at least midnight. In addition, bike racks and a potential bike share program located at bus stops and other neighborhood nodes would encourage residents and visitors to use a wider variety of transit modes, improving connectivity throughout the City and promoting a healthier lifestyle.

3.2b / Projects and Actions

- Consult with Lafayette College to provide more frequent LCAT service to Downtown and to extend shuttle service to other areas in Easton
- Coordinate with LANTA to add new bus routes circulating Easton's neighborhoods and longer and more frequent service
- Develop a plan to add bike racks to bus station and neighborhood nodes or explore creation of a bike share system

3.2b / Potential Implementation Partners

- LANTA
- PennDOT
- Lafayette College
- Easton Coach
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation

3.2c / Develop a South Side neighborhood center serving neighborhood level commercial and retail needs for the entire neighborhood

South Side neighborhood historically had a number of stores that offered a variety of choices that served the needs of its diverse resident groups. These stores were located all over the neighborhood but mainly concentrated along Berwick Street. Today, only a handful of these remain, and South Side residents depend on C-Town, CVS and neighboring municipalities for their regular shopping needs. There is no central area within the neighborhood that provides a community focus as well as caters to residents' shopping, entertainment and

convenience needs. Through outreach, residents expressed a strong desire to have a central location within the neighborhood that could serve for both entertainment and convenience shopping needs, and highlighted the area around the new CVS store on St. John Street as a possible node with presence on both St. John Street and Philadelphia Road. Another potential node is the area around the current King Mart on West Holt Street. In addition to exploring these nodes as potential neighborhood centers, the City should also focus on reviving smaller retail establishments and providing necessary infrastructure for attracting restaurants along Berwick Street.

3.2c / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a focused community visioning session to determine uses, program and preferred location of a neighborhood center on South Side
- Based on community vision, work with property owners and community leaders to develop urban design and architecture concepts that fit the urban fabric
- Use development incentives and target State and Local grants to leverage public position in attracting appropriate retailers and shops to the community node and on Berwick Street

3.2c / Potential Implementation Partners

- South Side Civic Association
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Private property owners

C-Town Grocery Store, located at the southern most edge of the City, is the only full scale fresh food grocery store in South Side neighborhood. Most of the small stores located on Berwick Street that served daily convenience needs are no longer operational.

3.2d / Reinstate historic names of smaller neighborhoods and of streets within West Ward neighborhood

West Ward neighborhood is originally made up of eight smaller neighborhoods, each with a distinct architecture, history and identity, and there is a strong desire among residents of West Ward neighborhood to revive the local identities of these smaller areas. West Ward Partnership should work with the City to create a signage program that will help to break up West Ward into its original neighborhoods and promote better navigation for residents and visitors. This signage system will help orient visitors and residents in West Ward, call out places of interest and provide information on transit access to promote walkability.

3.2d / Projects and Actions

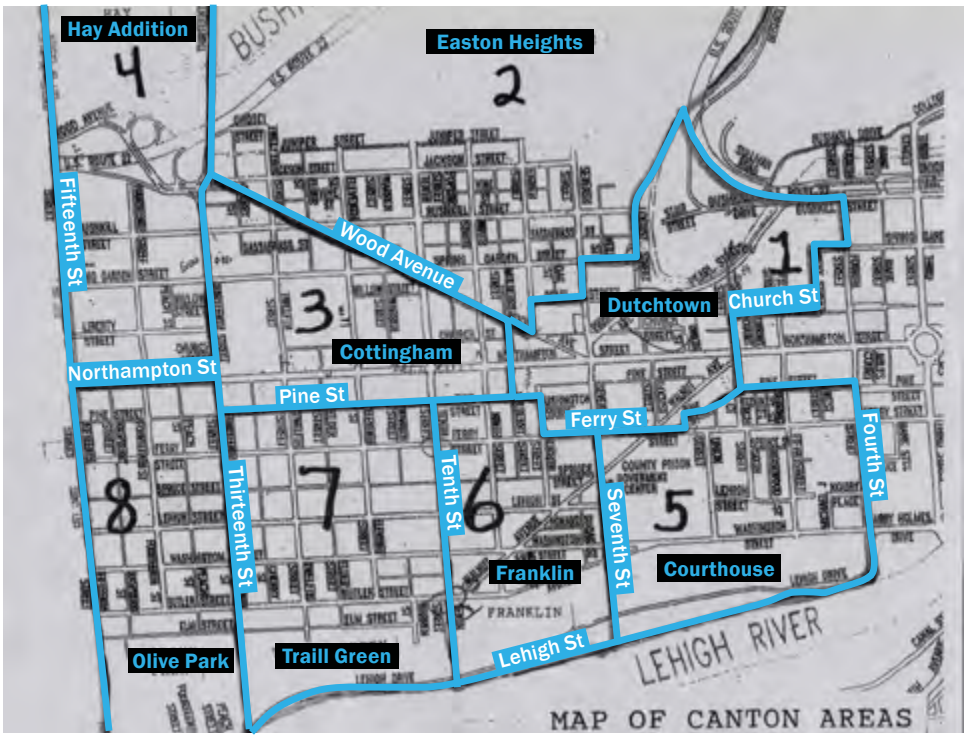
- Conduct a community visioning session to develop a map of preliminary locations to install signage
- Work with consultants to develop signage design and final map of locations for installing signage
- Work with Easton Planning Bureau and PennDOT to install and signage program

3.2d / Potential Implementation Partners

- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- Easton Planning Bureau
- PennDOT

3.2e / Continue to work with Lafayette College to have more physical presence outside of College Hill

Lafayette College recently completed the Williams Visual Arts Building at 248 North Third St., and the Film and Media Studies/ Theater Building is currently underway at 219 North Third St., south of main campus in Downtown. Collectively, the arts campus project is helping to connect the campus to Downtown, linking students in the arts with



Map of historic neighborhoods in West Ward. Source: West Ward Neighborhood Partnership

artists in Easton. These efforts recognize that the future of the College and the City are inextricably linked, and that each has much to gain from close collaboration.

The College recently leased space for over 80 employees in the City's Downtown Centre Square Area. The College has also property along the Bushkill Creek, near their campus. The College intends to renovate an existing building for their plant operations department and provide for student parking.

Building on these recent investments the College has made within the City, Easton should continue to work with Lafayette College on other community initiatives. With a physical presence Downtown, Lafayette College students and employees will be more likely to patronize local businesses rather than leaving the City to spend money elsewhere. In addition, students would be exposed to opportunities to be involved civically and professionally in the City. This would help blur the line between the City and the campus, creating a situation in which Lafayette students can both benefit from and build on Easton's economic success.

3.2e / Projects and Actions

- Maintain a positive working partnership with Lafayette College with regard to future campus planning, economic development initiatives and services needed for students and faculty
- Study potential sites and identify community incentives/opportunities to work together with Lafayette College

3.2e / Potential Implementation Partners

- Lafayette College
- Easton Planning Bureau

3.2f / Address health concerns within the City

The City of Easton has health concerns stemming from opiates, lead paint, asbestos, homelessness and mental health disorders. While these issues are mitigated through various non-for-profit agencies, City authorities can better facilitate this process, working as a partner.

3.2f / Projects and Actions

- Increase awareness and capacity dedicated to alleviating health concerns with opiates, lead paint, asbestos, homelessness and mental health disorders

3.2f / Potential Implementation Partners

- City of Easton
- ProJect of Easton
- Safe Harbor
- Northampton County

Objective 3.3

CONNECT RESIDENTS WITH EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE TRAINING CENTERS, AND INCREASE RESIDENT EARNING CAPACITY

3.3a / Attract environmentally responsible and creative businesses and industries within existing underutilized and vacant buildings, that will enhance the River Corridors

Easton has pockets of established industrial areas along Bushkill Creek, Lehigh River, and south of Line Street in South Side, but these uses don't tap into the creative capital that the City has attracted over the last decade. A citywide strategy for investing in and attracting creative businesses and industries that engage with artists and traditional forms of industries alike could create a number of job opportunities and activate existing underutilized and vacant buildings in certain areas of the City. In addition, developing the River Corridors along Bushkill Creek and Lehigh River with appropriate water dependent uses that create greater environmental awareness and preserve the serenity of these environs, while attracting tourists and residents, can bolster Easton's emerging tourism and creative economy.

The City should develop a River Corridors Plan which will determine types of creative businesses and industries to target and geographical areas that are most appropriate, considering factors such as benefits of clustering similar uses, proximity to workforce, and importance of green industries. For example, light industrial facilities would be complementary to Easton's already thriving arts and food scenes. Easton already has the creative capital in place to build a "maker" economy, and should leverage this advantage to spur new economic activity.

Building on momentum of Simon Silk Mill, in those areas targeted for light industrial use, the City should discourage development of new housing, unless it can be planned for mixed-use that includes creative industries, artist live-work studios, retail featuring local crafts, etc. The City should also encourage renovation of existing buildings that are appropriate for light industries and commercial uses, and conversion of existing warehouse space into more job-intensive uses. The Pennsylvania KOZ program and other incentives to reuse existing brownfields for a mix of uses can be useful resources for adaptive reuse of qualifying sites. Where light industrial uses are created, the City should proactively work with property owners and businesses to mitigate parking problems and provide recommendations for site enhancements.

In addition to providing jobs, introduction of new creative businesses and industries provides opportunities to train underemployed residents with knowledge and skills to match the new economic activity. Best practice examples include

- Brooklyn Navy Yard, Brooklyn, NY: Provides an on-site employment center to place local residents with its tenants
- Etsy (peer-to-peer e-commerce): Partnered with 15 cities through its Craft Entrepreneurship program to support adult self-sufficiency and student entrepreneurship education in lower income communities

Belmont Street in West Easton is adjacent to South Side and is attracting a number of light and specialty industries, e.g., Anvil Craft Corporation featuring metal fabrication. Emerging industrial pockets in South Side shoud be incentivized to attract creative industries and light manufacturing and can take advantage of the emerging industrial cluster.

3.3a / Projects and Actions

- Conduct education and jobs skill training within the City
- Conduct outreach and visioning to determine best uses for enhancing Bushkill and Lehigh River corridors
- Pinpoint the best geographical areas, businesses and industries for growth, including an inventory of vacant buildings and land appropriate for future development
- Identify and correct any zoning / building code barriers preventing this planned development and employ guidelines to protect such uses
- Offer incentives for businesses in target industries to redevelop properties
- Explore possibility of including workforce training

3.3a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Northampton County
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Private property owners

GMDC, BROOKLYN, NY

Started in the 1980s, the Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (GMDC) has two main goals: reclaiming derelict factories in North Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood and sustaining industry and manufacturing in New York City. The organization has been successful at renovating manufacturing buildings in Brooklyn and occupying them with small manufacturers, artisans and artists.

The non-for-profit developer focuses on underutilized industrial properties and acts as planner, developer and real estate manager to support small industrial businesses and committed artists.

Hyperlinks

- GMDC

3.3b / Develop Butler Street into a secondary commercial corridor for the City

Butler Street is an important east-west corridor for the City, carrying traffic into Easton from West Easton, Wilson, Old Orchard and Palmer Heights. Butler Street is in a Street Corridor Overlay district, but is lined primarily with residential uses west of South 13th Street, where it carries two-way traffic. East of South 13th Street, residential uses are interspersed with local-serving retail, several vacant lots and vacant ground floor spaces appropriate for retail. This portion of Butler Street is one-way eastbound into the City.

While some corners along Butler Street are occupied by longstanding restaurants and bars, there are few storefront spaces in the existing buildings. However, the high volume of traffic along this corridor represents expenditure potential that could be captured by existing and new businesses. New retail could mix with these established businesses to cater to traffic coming from outside the City as well as local residents. The City should find opportunities in existing buildings and on vacant lots, and target these properties for active retail use or infill mixed-use development, utilizing incentives and collaborating with local development corporations as appropriate. In order to facilitate the conversions of residential buildings to commercial or mixed use, the City should create an inventory of properties that can feasibly be converted. By reaching out to property owners and offering incentives for conversions and mixed-use infill development, the City could encourage retail along this corridor.

In addition to new retail, the corridor should be reconfigured with transportation and urban design improvements to accommodate and attract new retail activity. Street furniture and pedestrian elements could encourage street life. The City should study the possibility of traffic calming converting Butler Street into a two-way street east of South 13th Street to accommodate westbound traffic.

3.3b / Projects and Actions

- Inventory vacant lots and storefronts along Butler Street
- Study the possibility of making Butler Street a two-way street east of South 13th Street, and ways to address any new parking demand that could be created by new retail
- Work with property owners and any community partners to target existing buildings and vacant lots for retail or mixed use - new development should have a retail frontage requirement
- In conjunction with recommendations about the flats and escarpment areas along Lehigh River, create wayfinding connections that lead people to the waterfront from Butler Street
- Design transportation and urban design improvements to attract and accommodate new retail

3.3b / Potential Implementation Partners

- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- Easton Business Association
- Easton Planning Bureau
- PennDOT
- Private sector

3.3c / Add more frequent bus/transit service for and between the City's West Ward and South Side neighborhoods

West Ward is a gateway from other areas west of Easton to Downtown, and is Easton's most populous neighborhood. At the same time, the neighborhood currently suffers from high unemployment, and

median income is lower than in the rest of the City. While LANTA provides bus routes east-west through West Ward, the northern route along Northampton Street is not easily accessible for residents who live up to six blocks north of Northampton Street. In addition, since the bus serves communities outside of Easton, it does not circulate within the City, and as a result service is infrequent. While many City residents depend on the bus to commute to jobs outside of Easton, the bus schedule does not reflect this commuting pattern. For example, for many people who work late shifts, there is no bus for the return commute since service ends at 11 pm.

The City should work with transit agencies to improve bus service in all City neighborhoods, increasing access to employment and institutional centers, and expanding bus service to more riders. Alternative routes should be studied to access areas of the City that are farther away from Northampton Street. Bus routes should reflect commuting patterns of residents, with specific attention paid to night commuting. In addition, bus stops should be built with appropriate shelters for harsh weather conditions and to provide a place of refuge with proper seating for commuters waiting for buses.

3.3c / Projects and Actions

- Conduct a study of bus service throughout the City to determine the most appropriate improvements to better connect residents to employment
- Work with LANTA and PennDOT to implement improvements

3.3c / Potential Implementation Partners

- LANTA
- PennDOT
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation

3.3d / Set up a business incubator in collaboration with Lafayette College

While Easton has a steady stream of college students and graduates at Lafayette College, few remain in Easton after graduation. This exodus of Lafayette College graduates represents a missed opportunity for both the City and the College.

The City should collaborate with Lafayette College and local businesses and entrepreneurs to create a business incubator in the City that is focused on industries of mutual interest to the City and College. The business incubator should provide resources and services designed to support successful development of small businesses and also allow college students to gain meaningful work and entrepreneurial experience in a collaborative environment.

The incubator should be modeled to offer mentorship with industry leaders, and financial and technical assistance to both students and entrepreneurs, helping them to build skills, craft business plans and raise capital. The incubator could serve a new “class” of students and entrepreneurs each year and would benefit a wide audience. This facility could include flexible co-working spaces with basic common amenities such as Wi-Fi, electric, conference facilities, etc., so that a variety of businesses could use the space. Ultimately the incubator would aim to position fledgling businesses for longer-term growth and help them transition their operations from the incubator facility to other locations in the City. This could be facilitated with an annual prize offered by the City in the form of low-cost real estate or other business incentives.

Such an effort would support local businesses and entrepreneurs, and provide Lafayette College students with valuable real-world professional experience. The accessibility of the City to students would provide a more meaningful internship or co-op experience than the traditional internship in another location, and would foster connections with the City and Easton businesses. In addition, the business incubator could include on-site production space and/or retail space, leading to new jobs and economic activity.

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), in partnership with the state of Virginia and City of Richmond, created the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park in the 1990s. VCU faculty research has led to new companies in the research park, and the business school contributes support services for new ventures. The research park has led to new businesses and jobs, and VCU has been recognized as a leader in Richmond's revitalization. NYU Polytechnic School of Engineering (NYUPoly) operates three incubators in New York City, each charged with creating successful new ventures and generating economic impact measured as new jobs created, products launched and capital raised. The NYUPoly incubators support ventures in the fields of technology, media and clean energy, half of which come from the school and half of which come from the City.

3.3d / Projects and Actions

- Engage Lafayette College in a planning process to develop a business incubator
- Identify local businesses and/or business associations to partner with and find a suitable site in the City
- Launch the incubator and accompanying programs, enrolling both students and entrepreneurs

3.3d / Potential Implementation Partners

- Lafayette College
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Easton Business Association

NYU POLY INCUBATOR

New York University Polytechnic School of Engineering (NYUPoly) operates three incubators in NYC to encourage new successful ventures in technology, media and clean energy. The incubators are 50:50 joint ventures between NYU and the City of New York and focus on innovation and commercialization of R&D. Companies represented in the incubators align with NYU's research strengths in urban systems, information technology, and health and wellness. In its three locations the program provides preferred access to talent and capital, below market rate space, shared administrative services, and support software and office infrastructure. Since its inception in 2009, the companies launched at the NYUPoly incubator have created more than 1,250 jobs, raised more than $145M in capital, and had an overall local economic impact of $352M.

Hyperlinks

- NYU Poly Incubator Program

Objective 3.4

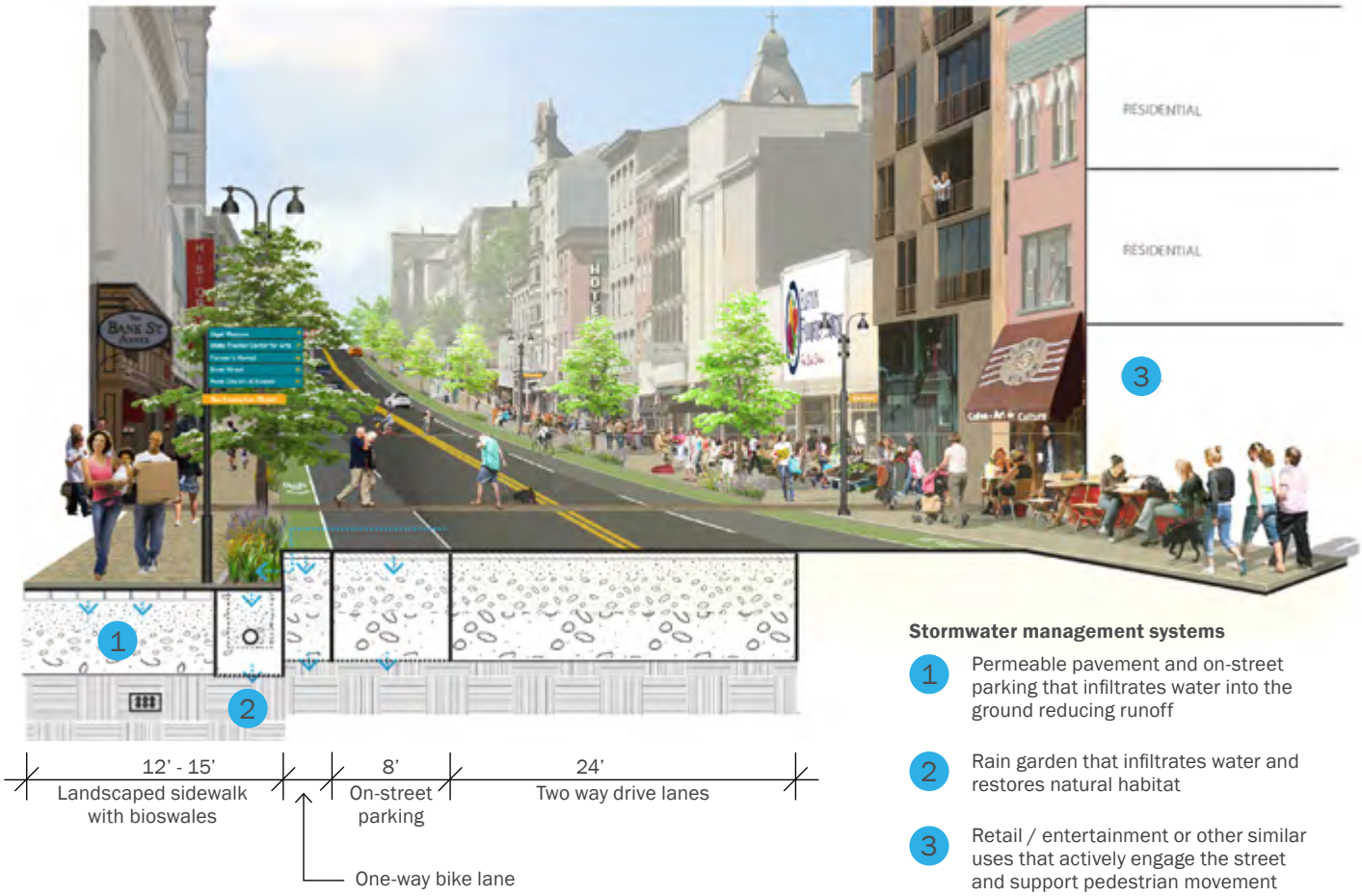
DIVERSIFY AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

3.4a / Expand role of Department of Community and Economic Development to market City's tourist attractions

Tourism is an economic driver in Easton. With multiple attractions, including State Theatre, Crayola, waterfront open space, Lafayette College events, Centre Square events, Hugh Moore Park, Karl Stirner Arts Trail and a concentration of historic resources, Easton has a concentration of tourist destinations in its relatively small geography. The restaurant industry is a complementary economic engine for the City, and Easton's food culture has become a draw of its own.

However, Easton lacks a centralized party responsible for marketing all of these disparate attractions. In addition, Easton does not have a large supply of hotel

Rendering showing infill development, street level retail and streetscape improvements on Northampton Street. These improvements will attract greater tourism and economic development to Easton.



Stormwater management systems

1. Permeable pavement and on-street parking that infiltrates water into the ground reducing runoff
2. Rain garden that infiltrates water and restores natural habitat
3. Retail / entertainment or other similar uses that actively engage the street and support pedestrian movement

rooms to keep tourists in the City overnight and to provide a significant source of tax revenue to fund marketing work. Working with existing businesses, institutional and cultural partners, Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) should explore complementary ways of generating revenue for tourism marketing, including formation of a Tourism Marketing District, which would utilize assessments on businesses and attractions within the District to fund tourism marketing efforts.

In addition, DCED should explore ways to increase visitors and their length of stays. Possible strategies include developing and marketing overnight or weekend visits to Easton, attracting new tourist attractions that complement existing tourism attractions (e.g., children's museums to complement Crayola Experience), and organizing historical or environmentally themed walks. Along with these strategies, planning for bread and breakfast facilities will provide more choices and price points to tourists for overnight stay.

An example includes the City of New Hope that has successfully marketed itself as a heritage tourism destination. New Hope Chamber of Commerce developed a website and guidebooks, and organizes historic house tours. The City also promotes local events related to the City's history and culture, including local artists and artisans.

3.4a / Projects and Actions

- Create a citywide marketing plan including business retention and recruitment strategies, development of City's River Corridors, and promotion of events and attractions
- Establish a marketing plan work group that routinely updates the plan
- Encourage employers, businesses, residents and College faculty/students to invest in the City's Downtown
- Work with business owners, institutions and cultural destinations to understand current marketing needs and issues
- Conduct a study of tourism industry in Easton, including an assessment of potential for new lodging
- Explore creation of a Tourism Marketing District (public-private model) to provide funding for tourism marketing efforts and explore ways to market Easton attractions and increase visitors and their length of stays

3.4a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Discover Lehigh Valley
- Easton Main Street Initiative
- D&L National Heritage Corridor
- Lafayette College
- State Theatre
- Crayola
- Sigal Museum
- Easton Business Association
- Greater Easton Development Partnership

'Artists in the Alley' Festival on Bank Street

3.4b / Integrate Crayola and its ancillary uses with Downtown

Crayola Experience alone attracts close to a half million visitors each year to Easton. However, all of Crayola's facilities are inward looking with little presence on Centre Square, which prevents visitors from exploring other attractions the City has to offer. Ancillary uses to the museum such as restaurant, gift shops, etc., if located along the street frontage can provide better presence for Crayola on Centre Square. In addition Crayola's integration with Centre Square will provide tourism opportunities for adults, potentially increasing duration of stay for both children and adults in Easton. The City and Easton Main Street Initiative should work closely with Crayola to develop closer tourism ties, integrating opportunities for all age groups as well as providing incentives for greater presence on Centre Square.

3.4b / Projects and Actions

- Work with Crayola to determine an urban design strategy and incentives to encourage greater presence of its ancillary uses on Centre Square

3.4b / Potential Implementation Partners

- Crayola Experience
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Easton Main Street Initiative

Crayola Experience, located at one of the most prominent locations in Easton's Centre Square, is very inward looking with little presence or activity on the street.

Objective 3.5

PROMOTE CLOSER REGIONAL TIES

3.5a / Define and market Easton's role in the region and work with regional authorities to realize large-scale projects

Easton is fast growing as the creative hub of the Lehigh Valley Region, attracting creative types by its charming scenic setting, contemporary housing developments, and walk-to-work compact urban form, which will be complemented by innovative industrial initiatives laid out in this comprehensive plan. The City's population diversity has provided the base for a number of diverse festivals, foods and cultures, all adding to the vitality of Easton.

In consultation with Eastonians, the comprehensive plan has crafted long-term initiatives and development such as River Corridors Master Plan, Transit-Oriented Development District, industrial attraction and retention strategies, and more to grow a diverse economy and position Easton as a place that offers high quality of life for residents and many attractions for visitors. These initiatives will require coordination with and support of regional agencies, neighboring municipalities and the larger cities in the Lehigh Valley. Easton should continue to have presence at all regional assemblies, meetings, events, and promote closer ties with regional agencies and funding organizations. The City should work with other major players in the region to complement their offerings and foster an atmosphere of competitive collaboration to grow and promote the region as a whole. Easton should also work closely with initiatives such as Discover Lehigh Valley to market all its assets aggressively and shape its role as creative capital of the Lehigh Valley Region.

3.5a / Projects and Actions

- Continue to work with Phillipsburg in creation of a walking trail on a historic rail trestle crossing the Delaware River
- Market and update information on all Easton's assets in the wider region
- Maintain a list of and create competitive applications for funds to realize projects that will impact entire region
- Work with other cities in the region and create an environment of competitive collaboration and complement their offerings to market the region as a complete package
- Strengthen cultural ties with neighboring municipalities

3.5a / Potential Implementation Partners

- Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
- Easton Planning Commission
- Easton Planning Bureau
- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Commission
- Surrounding Municipalities

Objective 3.6

STRENGTHEN EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE CITY

3.6a / Continue to Improve Emergency Services for the City

Given the changing needs of the City as well as State and Federal service requirements, emergency services needs have become a difficult and costly topic of discussion. In 2016, Easton Police Department is constructing a new police station on North Fourth Street. This new station will be outfitted with offices, firing range, ammunitions room, interrogation room, equipment and parking for patrol vehicles and visitors. As a part of the Comprehensive Plan outreach process, an interview with the Easton Fire Chief highlighted site-specific priority renovations for the City's three fire stations.

3.6a / Projects and Actions

- Complete renovation or replacement of the 110-year-old South Side Fire Station
- Renovate College Hill and West Ward fire stations with male and female bathrooms, kitchen upgrades and training rooms
- Purchase equipment that modernizes police and fire departments
- Discuss and evaluate joint training for fire and police services needs
- Develop stronger coordination regionally with surrounding Municipal Public Service Departments

3.6a / Potential Implementation Partners

- City of Easton
- Lafayette College
- Easton Emergency Squad
- Northampton County
- PA DCED
- State and Federal Emergency Management Agencies
- Surrounding Municipalities

Easton and Phillipsburg across the Delaware: Partnerships with Phillipsburg can help establish synergies to create a unified Riverfront Corridor across the Delaware.

Citizens brainstorming ideas for the future of Easton

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, PHASING AND MONITORING

Realizing the vision set forth by Eastonians in this comprehensive plan will require the support of many stakeholders – community members, businesses, institutions, not-for-profits and City government. Through careful planning, project phasing and coordination of efforts between different agencies, Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 will be able to guide development and growth of the City over the coming decades as well as serve as an important framework for City leaders in making decisions about priorities and fund allocations

The previous section described projects and actions ("projects") that'll advance the comprehensive plan vision and identify potential partners for implementation. The plan implementation section provides a framework for phasing, identifies next steps, and outlines the potential plan monitoring methodology.

Since the comprehensive plan addresses only the current political, social and economic contexts, the success of this plan will depend on its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Therefore, along with recommending next steps, key to the implementation section are the frameworks and methods used to arrive at the next steps. These frameworks should be used as tools in future decision making and determining priorities based on current circumstances by City leaders.

RANKING AND PHASING PROCESS

While all projects and actions described under the three themes are critical in realizing the comprehensive plan vision in its entirety, some of these projects have a higher probability of being realized than others. This is because of varying levels of stakeholder support, funding availability and various project feasibility parameters such as costs, partnerships, time frame, etc.

Capturing early successes that build momentum for implementation of the comprehensive plan will require clearly defined short-, medium-, and long-term actions that can guide and differentiate between immediate next steps versus long-term initiatives. To achieve this, the consultant team developed a ranking framework that can help provide a well-informed and logical sequence for project implementation within current political, social and economic landscapes. This framework was used by the City leadership including Planning Commission, City Council, Mayor's Office, and Planning Bureau to determine next steps.

Criteria for Ranking

Implementation of each project will largely depend on a number of key factors such as the support each project will receive (both from the community and municipal leaders), available funding through either public and/or private sources, and complexity of the project itself. More complex projects tend to require more resources and time to implement.

These factors directly translate into quantifiable parameters such as funding amount, implementation costs, project time frame, etc. However, at this stage, accurate information on these criteria is not available, and therefore the ranking framework employs a simplified and relative scoring system based on information obtained through community outreach session. Ranking parameters include community aspirations, partnership opportunities, project duration and project costs.

Community Aspirations: Ongoing engagement with community and stakeholders groups, and an assessment of the listening sessions conducted by the Planning Bureau in 2013 revealed five major community aspirations that were common to all neighborhoods, City agencies, institutions, not-for-profits and businesses. These are 1) Quality of Life, 2) Growth Management, 3) Resiliency, 4) Tourism, and 5) a Strong and Healthy Core. Each project was awarded one point per community aspiration that it fulfilled. Projects can fulfill multiple community aspirations and receive a higher score. For example, the project "Redesign Centre Square for better access to pedestrians and as a place for passive recreation for citizens" makes Centre Square appealing to tourists, improves quality of life of residents by providing a better public realm amenity, and creates a healthy and memorable image of Downtown (strong and healthy core). Since this project fulfills three community aspirations, it received three points for this parameter.

Project Duration and Project Costs: Project duration and project costs were used as direct feasibility parameters. At this comprehensive planning stage, determining actual costs and schedules for each individual project / initiative was premature, and the consultant team used a broad range for time and cost considerations. Both cost and time considerations were indirectly proportional to scores awarded to each project. So, the longer and costlier a project, the lesser its score, as it would require a long-term investment and greater funding. For example, projects such as additional recommended studies, signage projects, and projects to improve collaboration and communication received the highest ranking in this category as they require less time and money investment. On the other hand, projects that require an extensive planning process and a large amount of resources, such as neighborhood redevelopment projects, received a lower score.

Partnership Opportunities: To implement projects, initiatives need strong support, not only from planning officials and municipal leaders but also from within the community. To account for this aspect, the study ranked the amount of support a project is expected to receive by introducing the Partnership Opportunities ranking criterion. Projects that have so far only garnered informal support (e.g., they are on the wish list of a community organization) received the lowest score. Projects that have already received official support were given a medium score. For example, the recommendation 'Establish area around Centre Square as Easton's premiere

business district' is on the radar for the City, Easton Main Street Initiative and College Hill Neighborhood Association and therefore received a medium score. Lastly, projects that have support of multiple agencies received the highest score. Example, 'Define market opportunities and development program for a new downtown district' that received one of the highest scores is on the radar for a number of not-for-profit groups, agency groups as well as the City.

Cumulative Ranking and Phasing

To develop a cumulative ranking, numerical values were assigned to all the criteria. Score ranges are given below. Higher scores represent 'low-hanging fruits' or projects that can easily be taken up in the short term to set momentum for other projects. Lower scores represent greater project complexity, greater political, financial and time commitment and therefore require careful planning upfront and need to be spread out over a period of time. These lower scored projects were phased later for implementation.

All initiatives and projects were scored by members representing Easton's City Council, Planning Commission, Planning Bureau, Mayor's Office and City Manager's office. Based on the cumulative scores for each project, they were phased as short-, medium- and long-term projects and are included in the following section. However, it is recommended that during annual plan monitoring, the ranking framework be used to reassess phasing based on changing circumstances.

Scoring System

Parameter	Score	Value	Definition
Project Duration	Low	1	> 5 years
	Medium	2.5	1 to 5 years
	High	5	< 1 year
Project Cost	Low	1	> 10 M
	Medium	2.5	500K to 10M
	High	5	< 500K
Potential Partners	Low	1	Informal Support
	Medium	2.5	Formal Support
	High	5	Strong Support
Community Aspirations		1 to 5	Each community aspiration that the project fulfilled, it received one point

PHASING OF RECOMMENDATIONS / YR. 2015

S. No.	Description	Overall Points (Max. = 5)	Phasing	Details on Pg. No.
Objective 1.1 **Establish area around Centre Square as Easton's premiere business district**				
1.1a	Encourage active uses and storefronts that enhance Downtown's image as a place to visit and do business	3.98	Short-term	36
1.1b	Install effective signage at highway exits and entrances to the City, and within the Downtown area, to steer people toward Centre Square and inform them about Easton's main business district's diverse offerings	3.44	Short-term	38
1.1c	Update existing guidelines to encourage businesses in Downtown and on Northampton Street to create a visually engaging and inviting environment for their customers	3.34	Short-term	40
1.1d	Redesign Centre Square for better access to pedestrians and as a place for recreation	2.88	Medium-term	40
Objective 1.2 **Connect and redevelop Easton's River Corridors as an integral part of the City**				
1.2a	Develop master plans for Easton's River Corridors	3.54	Short-term	42
1.2b	Establish a waterfront development committee dedicated to soliciting proposals, marketing, and finding funding for development of River Corridors	2.82	Medium-term	43
Objective 1.3 **Manage and reduce vacancy, underutilization and blight throughout the City**				
1.3a	Prioritize development of vacant lots and rehabilitation/ revitalization of vacant buildings throughout the City, and establish policies for neighborhood sustainability	3.97	Short-term	46
1.3b	Increase capacity to accelerate transformation of blighted properties	2.83	Medium-term	48
1.3c	Conduct assessment and rehabilitation of the six public housing projects in Easton and create more opportunities for affordable housing	2.13	Medium-term	48
Objective 1.4 **Discourage irresponsible development and renovation, and prevent deterioration of historic buildings**				
1.4a	Conduct a study to identify areas and buildings of historic significance, and define clear guidelines for their renovation and development	2.81	Medium-term	50
1.4b	Explore City, State and Federal incentives for preservation of historic architectural character	2.97	Medium-term	50

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Transform Unify Thrive

S. No.	Description	Overall Points (Max. = 5)	Phasing	Details on Pg. No.
Objective 2.1 **Re-envision public right of ways for multimodal travel and sustainable infrastructure**				
2.1a	Create guidelines for balanced use of public right of way to ensure safe and efficient travel by all modes of transportation, landscaping and stormwater management	3.36	Short-term	54
2.1b	Create friendly and safe environments for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reduce traffic speed in residential neighborhoods	3.22	Short-term	55
2.1c	Incorporate green infrastructure to manage storm runoff and improve quality of waterbodies	2.84	Medium-term	58
2.1d	Connect the two portions of Line Street directly with Philadelphia Road and prevent through traffic from using residential street	1.54	Long-term	58
Objective 2.2 **Adapt and reuse critical sites at the seam of neighborhoods**				
2.2a	Redevelop Black Diamond Site to accommodate mixed-use development with residential units	3.16	Short-term	60
2.2b	Acquire and redevelop Quonset Huts site	1.53	Long-term	61
2.2c	Create a secondary gateway at intersection of Wood Avenue and Northampton Street	2.99	Short-term	62
2.2d	Develop the underutilized and vacant lots on South Third and on Lehigh River as a mixed-use TOD with medium-rise buildings including residential, offices and co-working places	2.79	Medium-term	64
2.2e	Provide guidelines for development of appropriate scale and uses at intersection of Northampton and North 13th Streets	2.54	Medium-term	65
Objective 2.3 **Integrate Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek with upland communities through a connected system of pedestrian, bike and open space networks**				
2.3a	Create safer pedestrian access to Delaware River across Larry Holmes Drive	3.23	Short-term	66
2.3b	Improve and where possible create additional waterfront access points from upland areas	3.10	Short-term	66
2.3c	Establish a waterfront committee dedicated to programming and development of the waterfront	2.94	Medium-term	68
2.3d	Market potential of the passive recreation corridor on lands and escarpment areas as described by existing plans	2.69	Medium-term	69

Color Key

Transform Unify Thrive

S. No.	Description	Overall Points (Max. = 5)	Phasing	Details on Pg. No.
2.3e	Showcase the ethnic diversity of South Side along Lehigh River, through temporary programming	2.14	Medium-term	69
Objective 2.4 **Improve access to and create new parks and open spaces**				
2.4a	Create a recognizable network of recreational and entertainment amenities in College Hill	2.98	Medium-term	70
2.4b	Create a catalog of empty/underutilized parcels throughout the City and where possible, create new open space	2.91	Medium-term	71
2.4c	Revive and protect pocket parks within West Ward	2.81	Medium-term	71
2.4d	Open Cottingham Stadium to West Ward Neighborhood residents	2.28	Medium-term	72
2.4e	Use part of the County parking lot for passive recreation	1.98	Long-term	72
2.4f	Reintroduce pedestrian bridge over Lehigh River connecting South Side and West Ward neighborhoods	2.17	Medium-term	73
2.4g	Explore possibility of programming St. Anthony Church parking lot on Walnut Street for community uses such as a park or weekend events	1.84	Long-term	74
2.4h	Develop an improvement strategy for the City's swimming pool facilities	N/A	N/A	74
Objective 2.5 **Manage parking and promote sustainable transportation**				
2.5a	Improve parking infrastructure	3.73	Short-term	75
2.5b	Encourage alternative transportation such as walking and biking	3.73	Short-term	75
Objective 3.1 **Attract new businesses through a 'business ready' environment**				
3.1a	Establish a business outreach center within City Hall equipped with an inventory of business incentives and a new economic development liaison to aid new and existing business owners	3.33	Short-term	78
3.1b	Expand free public Wi-Fi and build high-speed internet infrastructure	2.80	Medium-term	79
3.1c	Streamline the process of starting a business in Easton	2.73	Medium-term	80
Objective 3.2 **Promote strong and well-balanced neighborhood centers**				
3.2a	Investigate opportunities and appropriate locations for a grocery store that is central to West Ward neighborhood	3.74	Short-term	81

Color Key

Transform Unify Thrive

S. No.	Description	Overall Points (Max. = 5)	Phasing	Details on Pg. No.
3.2b	Better connect Easton's neighborhood centers by providing enhanced multimodal transit options	3.05	Short-term	82
3.2c	Develop a South Side neighborhood center serving neighborhood level commercial and retail needs for the entire neighborhood	2.70	Medium-term	82
3.2d	Reinstate historic names of smaller neighborhoods and of streets within West Ward neighborhood	2.15	Medium-term	84
3.2e	Continue to work with Lafayette College to have more physical presence outside of College Hill	1.83	Long-term	84
3.2f	Address health concerns within the City	N/A	N/A	85
Objective 3.3 **Connect residents with employment and workforce training centers, and increase resident earning capacity**				
3.3a	Attract environmentally responsible and creative businesses and industries within existing underutilized and vacant buildings, that will enhance the River Corridors	3.88	Short-term	86
3.3b	Develop Butler Street into a secondary commercial corridor for the City	2.85	Medium-term	88
3.3c	Add more frequent bus/transit service for and between the City's West Ward and South Side neighborhoods	2.58	Medium-term	88
3.3d	Set up a business incubator in collaboration with Lafayette College	2.50	Medium-term	89
Objective 3.4 **Diversify and strengthen economic activities, entrepreneurship opportunities and tourist attractions**				
3.4a	Expand role of Department of Community and Economic Development to market City's tourist attractions	3.20	Short-term	91
3.4b	Integrate Crayola and its ancillary uses with Downtown	2.74	Medium-term	93
Objective 3.5 **Promote closer regional ties**				
3.5a	Define and market Easton's role in the region and work with regional authorities to realize large-scale projects	2.67	Medium-term	94
Objective 3.6 **Strengthen emergency response and services throughout the City**				
3.6a	Continue to Improve Emergency Services for the City	N/A	N/A	95

Color Key

Transform Unify Thrive

MAP OF PRIORITY CAPITAL PROJECTS AND RELATED ACTIONS

Priority Projects (Numbers Key)

TRANSFORM

1. Retrofit vacant office spaces in Downtown
2. Install highway signage on Route 22 and PA Route 611
3. Design and install consistent signage for Downtown business district

4a Southern Gateway into Downtown

4b Gateway into Easton (signage, landscape improvements, lighting and development guidelines)

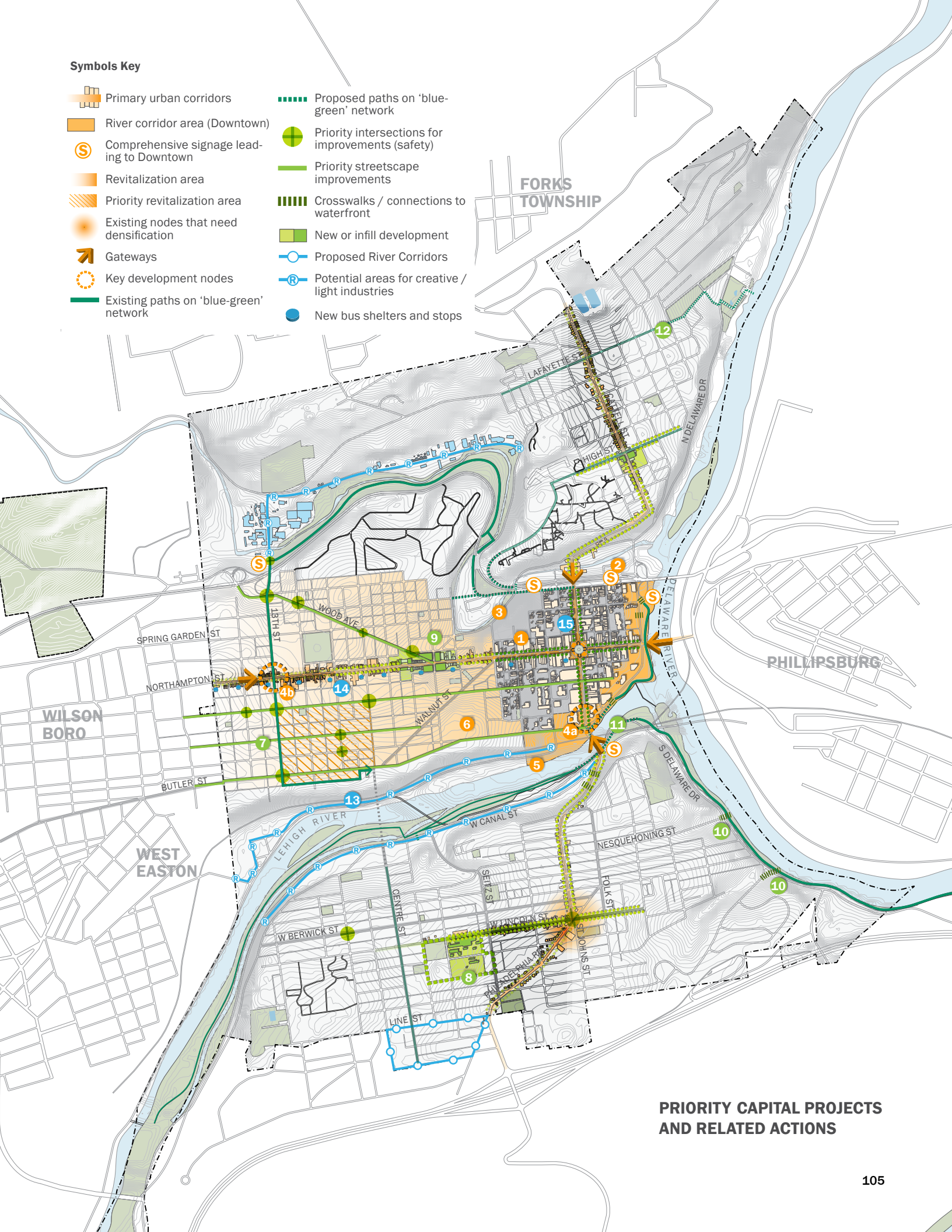
5. Develop master plan for River Corridors and proritize development of Riverfront Area in Downtown
6. Implement Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (reduce vacancy, blight and underutilization)

UNIFY

7. Prioritize streetscape redesign for Butler, Ferry, Lehigh, Wood, Cattell, Washington and Northampton Streets
8. Redevelop Black Diamond Site to accommodate mixed-use development
9. Create secondary gateway at Wood Avenue and Northampton Street
10. Connect to D&L Trail across Delaware Drive at Nesquehoning and Highlands
11. Create bike and pedestrian friendly connection to D&L Trail and historic rail trestle
12. Explore pedestrian connections between Nevins Park and Karl Stirner Arts Trail

THRIVE

13. Attract light manufacturing and small industries within existing underutilized and vacant buildings, and enhance River Corridors with appropriate uses
14. Add more frequent bus service and sheltered bus stops
15. Develop new lodging facilities and tourism in Downtown



PRIORITY CAPITAL PROJECTS AND RELATED ACTIONS

PLAN MONITORING

Without evaluation, a plan is little more than an aspirational list. Consistent evaluation of Easton Comprehensive Plan is crucial to its effectiveness as a planning document and a tool to successfully implement recommendations. Plan monitoring will ensure that Planning Commission, City Council, other City agencies and departments, partner organizations, and the community as a whole stay informed about the Plan's progress and have the opportunity to adjust and recalibrate the City's response to its planning needs. It will give all parties the opportunity to reevaluate the Plan's recommendations based on effectiveness, progress and changed circumstances. In short, it will serve as a gauge of success, call for feedback, and prod to action.

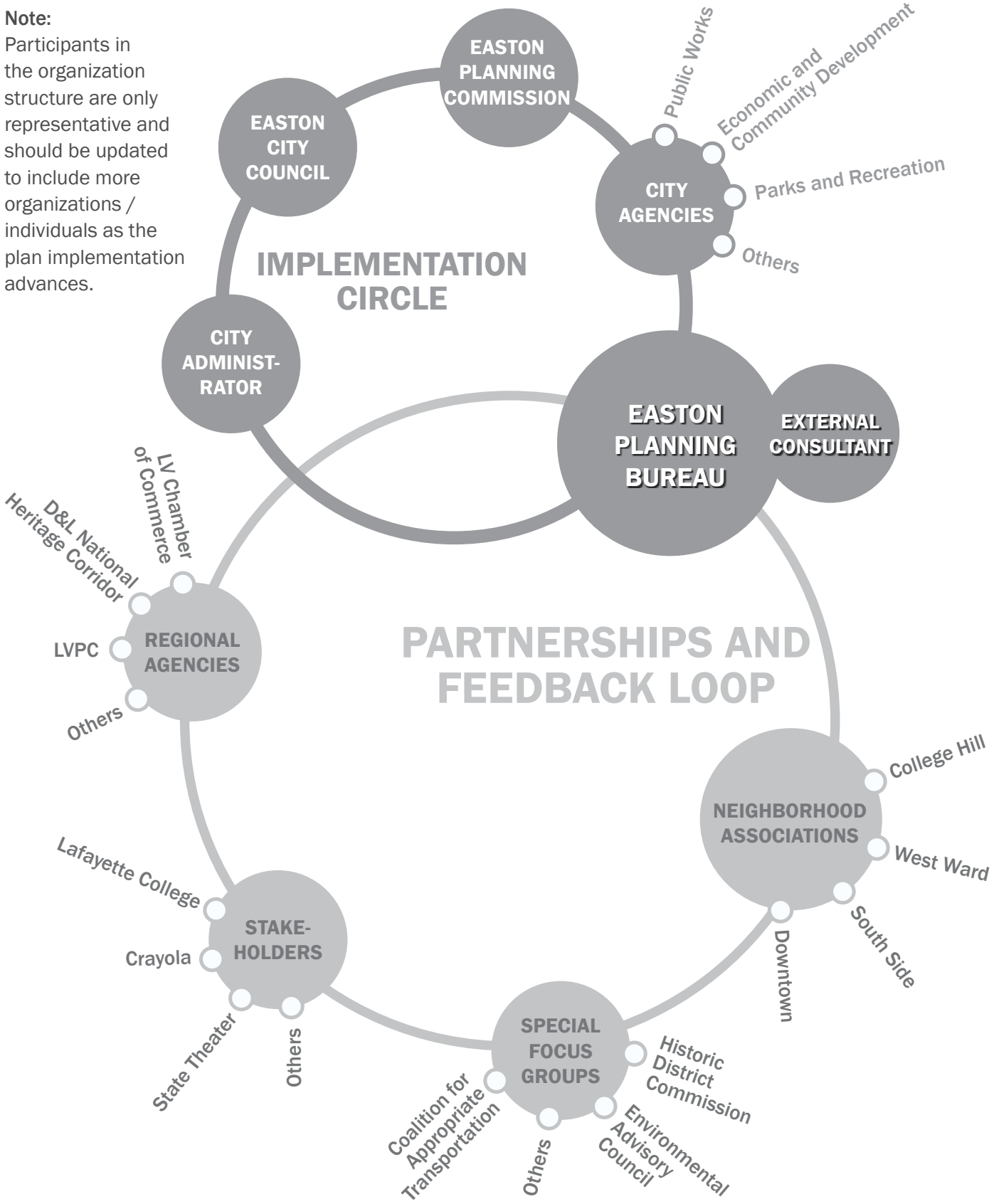
A combination of internal and external reviews will be the most efficient and effective approach. Internally, the Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis by Easton Planning Bureau. During this process, the Planning Bureau should ensure that the Plan's recommendations are still in line with needs of the community. It should also note progress of each recommendation and assign a value of "no progress," "advancing" or "complete" to each recommendation. Easton Planning Bureau should consult with community groups and other stakeholders and seek their input when evaluating progress of the recommendation and overall alignment of the plan with community needs. Based on this feedback, recommendations should be revised as necessary, and the revised list should be re-scored according to process described earlier in this section.

In addition to presenting results of the evaluation, Planning Bureau should provide information about changes to background conditions since prior review, such as changes in demographics, economic and fiscal condition of the City, or changing trends in the larger region. Planning Bureau should then submit a report on results of the evaluation to the Planning Commission for approval or modification. Planning Commission should use the adjusted/modified Plan recommendations as input when advising on recommended capital projects.

After every two years of internal review, the Plan should be reviewed by an external party. The City should engage a consultant or other external source to conduct a similar evaluation of the Plan's progress. Like the internal review, the external review should rate progress of the specific recommendations and should involve public feedback. The external review should also consider whether projects and actions that have been implemented as part of recommendations have achieved or advanced the larger goals of the Plan, and if not, work with the City to develop new recommendations, projects and actions. The external review should assess public participation in the monitoring process, and make recommendations to improve the process if necessary. The goal of the external review is to capture a broader view of the Plan's progress and to gain insight from an impartial source. The external reviewer should work with the Planning Bureau to produce a report for approval or modification by the Planning Commission. In addition, the City should consider outside consulting to aggressively pursue funding for plan implementation.

Potential Organization Structure for Plan Monitoring and Implementation

Note:
Participants in the organization structure are only representative and should be updated to include more organizations / individuals as the plan implementation advances.



View of Easton's Historic Centre Square from College Hill

We seek an America where our cities, towns and neighborhoods are financially strong and resilient. There is no shortcut to that kind of enduring prosperity. It must be built, block by block, day after day, by people who care about the places they live in.

- Charles Marohn, Strong Towns Vision Statement

AFTERWORD

In the two decades that have followed the adoption of our 1997 comprehensive plan, Easton has made remarkable progress. Since 1998, we reversed a long population decline and are now poised to bring our population back to its historic peak of 35,000. We have successfully transformed Easton from a declining industrial center into a celebration of tourism, arts and community. We have strengthened our relationships with Lafayette College and others into strong and enduring partnerships that are powerful engines for development and positive changes in every neighborhood of the City. We have witnessed a rebirth of civic engagement, community spirit and creative activity that generates excitement across the region, draws nearly a million visitors every year, and has encouraged tens of millions of dollars in new investment. Major Downtown buildings that were vacant or underutilized for decades have been revitalized and redeveloped into full occupancy mixed retail and residential uses. The City has significantly expanded its parkland with the addition of the 2.4 mile Karl Stirner Arts Trail along Bushkill Creek. Smart growth policies were adopted along with a form-based zoning code that respects our historic urban form. A downtown historic district was established to protect our beautiful historic architecture. New bike-and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure has been created, emphasizing the City's intention to become a model of a truly walkable community. A new intermodal transportation and parking facility is nearing completion, incorporating new City Hall facilities that herald a new beginning for Easton.

The City's 1997 comprehensive plan was but one catalyst for this remarkable change, along with a creative economic development plan for the central business district, whose recommendations have been faithfully followed. We have the singular advantage of building on Easton's inherent assets: its strategic location, its magnificent natural setting at the Forks of the Delaware, its beautiful historic districts and architecture. Yet we would never have fared so well were it not for the City's greatest asset: the energy, commitment and engagement of its people. Easton's prosperity as a strong town has been "built, block by block, day after day, by people who care about the place they live in."

As this new 2015 comprehensive plan shows, there is much work to be done. The new plan is intended to be a guide and framework for action. It identifies a range of projects and ideas that are crucial to carry forward the vital momentum of Easton's progress. It should be implemented, not with a myopic focus on its text, but with a broad view and resilient adaptation to changing conditions. The expected 20-year lifespan of the plan is embedded in its subtitle: Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035. In an age of ever-accelerating change, 20 years is a very long time. We cannot truly see that far into the future. Yet Easton is poised to become the City its people envision at its best. We believe that this plan can encourage and inspire us to actualize that vision, so that we may "**TRANSFORM, UNIFY AND THRIVE.**"

APPENDICES

A: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ALIGNMENT WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES CODE

Similar to most other states, Pennsylvania in its Municipalities Code addresses comprehensive plan requirements / expectations in discrete planning topics (parks, transportation, natural resources, economic development, etc.), each of which includes its own maps, charts and textual matter. This type of an approach often tends to consider issues and their solutions in isolation and without an appropriate understanding of the interrelationship between these elements, which is pertinent to full comprehension of any urban context.

The Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 seeks to overcome limitations of this siloed approach and capitalize on synergies that can be created by working across the discrete plan elements. Hence, while existing conditions and analysis for the comprehensive plan have been done in accordance with Pennsylvania Municipalities Code, for recommendations, instead of focusing on distinct plan elements, the Consultant Team has developed strategies that straddle multiple comprehensive plan elements and as a result are more effective in leveraging limited resources to steer the City in the desired direction.

The following tables highlight the overlap and interrelationship between traditional planning elements and Easton Comprehensive Plan Strategies.

Aligning Easton Comprehensive Plan Strategies with Pennsylvania Municipalities Code

S. No.	Goal / Objective Description	Overlapping Planning Element	Details on Pg. No.
Objective 1.1 Establish area around Centre Square as Easton's premiere business district			
1.1a	Encourage active uses and storefronts that enhance Downtown's image as a place to visit and do business	Economic Development, Urban Design and Built Environment, Tourism	36
1.1b	Install effective signage at highway exits and entrances to the City, and within the Downtown area, to steer people toward Centre Square and inform them about Easton's main business district's diverse offerings	Economic Development, Urban Design and Built Environment, Historic Preservation, Transportation	38
1.1c	Update existing guidelines to encourage businesses in Downtown and on Northampton Street to create a visually engaging and inviting environment for their customers	Urban Design and Built Environment, Zoning, Economic Development, Tourism	40
1.1d	Redesign Centre Square for better access to pedestrians and as a place for recreation	Parks and Recreation, Urban Design and Built Environment, Transportation, Tourism	40

Color Key
Transform Unify Thrive

S. No.	Goal / Objective Description	Overlapping Planning Element	Details on Pg. No.
Objective 1.2 **Connect and redevelop Easton's River Corridors as an integral part of the City**			
1.2a	Develop master plans for Easton's River Corridors	Economic Development, Land Use, Zoning, Transportation, Urban Design and Built Environment	42
1.2b	Establish a waterfront development committee dedicated to soliciting proposals, marketing, and finding funding for development of River Corridors	Urban Design and Built Environment	43
Objective 1.3 **Manage and reduce vacancy, underutilization and blight throughout the City**			
1.3a	Prioritize development of vacant lots and rehabilitation/ revitalization of vacant buildings throughout the City, and establish policies for neighborhood sustainability	Economic Development, Housing, Zoning,	46
1.3b	Increase capacity to accelerate transformation of blighted properties	Economic Development	48
1.3c	Conduct assessment and rehabilitation of the six public housing projects in Easton and create more opportunities for affordable housing	Housing, Urban Design and Built Environment	48
Objective 1.4 **Discourage irresponsible development and renovation, and prevent deterioration of historic buildings**			
1.4a	Conduct a study to identify areas and buildings of historic significance, and define clear guidelines for their renovation and development	Historic Preservation, Economic Development, Tourism	50
1.4b	Explore City, State and Federal incentives for preservation of historic architectural character	Economic Development	50
Objective 2.1 **Re-envision public right of ways for multimodal travel and sustainable infrastructure**			
2.1a	Create guidelines for balanced use of public right of way to ensure safe and efficient travel by all modes of transportation, landscaping and stormwater management	Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Environment	54
2.1b	Create friendly and safe environments for pedestrians and bicyclists, and reduce traffic speed in residential neighborhoods	Transportation, Land Use, Zoning	55
2.1c	Incorporate green infrastructure to manage storm runoff and improve quality of waterbodies	Environment, Natural Resources	58
2.1d	Connect the two portions of Line Street directly with Philadelphia Road and prevent through traffic from using residential street	Transportation	58

Color Key

Transform Unify Thrive

S. No.	Goal / Objective Description	Overlapping Planning Element	Details on Pg. No.
Objective 2.2 **Adapt and reuse critical sites at the seam of neighborhoods**			
2.2a	Redevelop Black Diamond Site to accommodate mixed-use development with residential units	Economic Development, Urban Design and Built Environment, Housing, Historic Preservation, Land Use, Zoning	60
2.2b	Acquire and redevelop Quonset Huts site	Urban Design and Built Environment, Parks and Recreation	61
2.2c	Create a secondary gateway at intersection of Wood Avenue and Northampton Street	Economic Development, Urban Design and Built Environment, Housing, Historic Preservation, Land Use, Zoning, Tourism	62
2.2d	Develop the underutilized and vacant lots on South Third and on Lehigh River as a mixed-use TOD with medium-rise buildings including residential, offices and co-working places	Economic Development, Urban Design and Built Environment, Housing, Historic Preservation, Land Use, Zoning, Tourism	64
2.2e	Provide guidelines for development of appropriate scale and uses at intersection of Northampton and North 13th Streets	Urban Design and Built Environment, Land Use, Zoning, Transportation, Tourism	65
Objective 2.3 **Integrate Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek with upland communities through a connected system of pedestrian, bike and open space networks**			
2.3a	Create safer pedestrian access to Delaware River across Larry Holmes Drive	Transportation, Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation	66
2.3b	Improve and where possible create additional waterfront access points from upland areas	Transportation, Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation	66
2.3c	Establish a waterfront committee dedicated to programming and development of the waterfront	Natural Resources, Environment, Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation	68
2.3d	Market potential of the passive recreation corridor on lands and escarpment areas as described by existing plans	Natural Resources, Environment, Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation	69
2.3e	Showcase the ethnic diversity of South Side along Lehigh River, through temporary programming	Economic Development, Natural Resources, Environment	69
Objective 2.4 **Improve access to and create new parks and open spaces**			
2.4a	Create a recognizable network of recreational and entertainment amenities in College Hill	Urban Design and Built Environment, Parks and Recreation, Community Facilities	70

Color Key
Transform Unify Thrive

S. No.	Goal / Objective Description	Overlapping Planning Element	Details on Pg. No.
2.4b	Create a catalog of empty/underutilized parcels throughout the City and where possible, create new open space	Economic Development, Community Facilities	71
2.4c	Revive and protect pocket parks within West Ward	Parks and Recreation, Community Facilities	71
2.4d	Open Cottingham Stadium to West Ward Neighborhood residents	Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation	72
2.4e	Use part of the County parking lot for passive recreation	Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation	72
2.4f	Reintroduce pedestrian bridge over Lehigh River connecting South Side and West Ward neighborhoods	Environment, Transportation	73
2.4g	Explore possibility of programming St. Anthony Church parking lot on Walnut Street for community uses such as a park or weekend events	Community Facilities, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation	74
2.4h	Develop an improvement strategy for the City's swimming pool facilities	Community Facilities, Parks and Recreation	74
Objective 2.5 **Manage parking and promote sustainable transportation**			
2.5a	Improve parking infrastructure	Transportation	75
2.5b	Encourage alternative transportation such as walking and biking	Transportation, Environment	75
Objective 3.1 **Attract new businesses through a 'business ready' environment**			
3.1a	Establish a business outreach center within City Hall equipped with an inventory of business incentives and a new economic development liaison to aid new and existing business owners	Economic Development	78
3.1b	Expand free public Wi-Fi and build high-speed internet infrastructure	Economic Development	79
3.1c	Streamline the process of starting a business in Easton	Economic Development	80
Objective 3.2 **Promote strong and well-balanced neighborhood centers**			
3.2a	Investigate opportunities and appropriate locations for a grocery store that is central to West Ward neighborhood	Economic Development, Urban Design and Built Environment, Land Use, Zoning, Historic Preservation	81
3.2b	Better connect Easton's neighborhood centers by providing enhanced multimodal transit options	Transportation, Economic Development	82
3.2c	Develop a South Side neighborhood center serving neighborhood level commercial and retail needs for the entire neighborhood	Economic Development, Community Facilities	82

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Transform Unify Thrive

S. No.	Goal / Objective Description	Overlapping Planning Element	Details on Pg. No.
3.2d	Reinstate historic names of smaller neighborhoods and of streets within West Ward neighborhood	Urban Design and Built Environment	84
3.2e	Continue to work with Lafayette College to have more physical presence outside of College Hill	Economic Development, Tourism	84
3.2f	Address health concerns within the City	Economic Development, Community Facilities, Zoning	85
Objective 3.3 **Connect residents with employment and workforce training centers, and increase resident earning capacity**			
3.3a	Attract environmentally responsible and creative businesses and industries within existing underutilized and vacant buildings, that will enhance the River Corridors	Economic Development	86
3.3b	Develop Butler Street into a secondary commercial corridor for the City	Economic Development, Tourism	88
3.3c	Add more frequent bus/transit service for and between the City's West Ward and South Side neighborhoods	Transportation, Economic Development	88
3.3d	Set up a business incubator in collaboration with Lafayette College	Economic Development	89
Objective 3.4 **Diversify and strengthen economic activities, entrepreneurship opportunities and tourist attractions**			
3.4a	Expand role of Department of Community and Economic Development to market City's tourist attractions	Tourism, Economic Development	91
3.4b	Integrate Crayola and its ancillary uses with Downtown	Urban Design and Built Environment, Tourism, Economic Development	93
Objective 3.5 **Promote closer regional ties**			
3.5a	Define and market Easton's role in the region and work with regional authorities to realize large-scale projects	Tourism, Economic Development	94
Objective 3.6 **Strengthen emergency response and services throughout the City**			
3.6a	Continue to Improve Emergency Services for the City	Community Services, Urban Design, Economic Development	95

Furthermore, in accordance with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, it is recognized that:

1. Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals may impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities
2. Commercial agriculture production may impact water supply sources

Color Key
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B: SPECIAL NOTE ON SUSTAINABILITY

The Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 has proposed a number of forward-looking strategies that balance development with conservation and environmental protection. This balance is embedded in all the plan's strategies, actions and projects. Below is a preliminary and non-exhaustive list of key sustainability concepts proposed in the Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035. A number of these concepts align with the Environmental Advisory Council's (EAC) Environmental Vision for Easton's Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use

- Emphasis on compact development patterns and infill development not only reduces blight and vacancy but also promotes walkability. For example, strategies under Objective 2.2 / Adapt and reuse critical sites at seams of neighborhoods, and under Objective 1.3 / Manage and reduce vacancy, underutilization and blight throughout the City, address these concepts.
- Urban design guidelines and wayfinding increase security, character and attractiveness of place, thereby further promoting walkability. Key concepts can be found in strategies under Objective 1.1 / Establish area around Centre Square as Easton's premiere business district.

Neighborhood Development

- Proposals for mixed-use development in key areas, promotes development of urban nodes that celebrate neighborhood character, provide neighborhood scale centers and convenience facilities, mixed income housing, and potential for planned unit development models with reduced automotive dependency and greater walkability. For example, Objective 2.2 / Adapt and reuse critical sites at seams of neighborhoods, and Objective 3.2 / Promote strong and well-balanced neighborhood centers.

Historic Preservation

- Strategies for historic preservation and adaptive reuse of antiquated building stock and infrastructure prevent sprawl and maintain character. Examples of strategies and action items are included under Objective 1.4 / Discourage irresponsible development and renovation, and prevent deterioration of historic buildings.

Parks and Recreation

- Throughout the document and especially under the theme *Unify,* there are a number of strategies to protect parks, where possible create new or revive existing open spaces, increase access to parks and recreational facilities, and closely create an interconnected system of public realm that includes the three major waterbodies of Easton. Multiple strategies can be found throughout the document, but a few key objectives such as Objective 2.3 / Integrate Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek with upland communities through a connected system of pedestrian, bike and open space networks, and Objective 2.4 / Improve access to and create new parks and open spaces, list the key action items and implementation partners.

Transportation

- While the City of Easton has made headway into creating its multimodal transit hub on South Third Street, visions for a sustainable use of street infrastructure have been provided

for all types of streets and roadway systems in the City. Furthermore, the comprehensive plan emphasizes multimodal transportation, addressing bike and parking infrastructure, and strategies that campaign health benefits of using non-motorized means of travel. Some of the action items and strategies can be found under Objective 2.1 / Re-envision public right of ways for multimodal travel and sustainable infrastructure, and Objective 2.5 / Manage parking and promote sustainable transportation.

- Public transit infrastructure improvements suggested in the comprehensive plan are also tied to economic development strategies. Example includes Objective 3.3 / Connect residents with employment and workforce training centers.
- Lastly, keeping in mind that Lehigh Valley Passenger rail system may become functional once again, the comprehensive plan proposes a transit-oriented development (TOD) that includes the passenger rail station site into a vibrant mixed-use development including commercial, residential and entertainment programming.

Natural Features and Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and Resource Protection

- The plan provides recommendations to integrate Easton's waterbodies closely with upland areas, maintaining them as "no-build" zones that can be used for low-impact and water related recreation purposes. Example includes Objective 2.3 / Integrate Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek with upland communities through a connected system of pedestrian, bike and open space networks.
- Urban stormwater management systems that protect the quality of our water bodies and mitigate effects of flooding are closely integrated with transportation systems. In addition building infrastructure including green roofs, stormwater cisterns, etc., are also encouraged.

Energy Conservation

- While the comprehensive plan inherently encourages green concepts and practices such as LEED certification, use of energy efficient City vehicles, lighting fixtures, low flush toilets, etc., it is out of the scope of this document to provide recommendations at this micro scale as they would lack analysis of development costs, building typologies, market availability, etc., needed to create meaningful green strategies. Therefore, while the comprehensive plan supports all recommendations in EAC's Greening Easton document, it proposes additional studies of building typologies, market and development analysis to create cost-effective strategies for both public and private developers.
- However, even as detailed energy conservation strategies need more research and development efforts, organizations such as Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority have begun to provide grants to local governments, schools and businesses for alternative and clean energy projects. Easton could lead by example and renovate public buildings into energy efficient green buildings, or even employ simple strategies such as energy efficient / LED lighting on its streets.

C: LIST OF HYPERLINKS

Pg. No.	Text Reference	URL
33	Center City Philadelphia, Signs and Banners	http://www.centercityphila.org/about/Signs.php
33	Direction Philadelphia	http://www.centercityphila.org/docs/directionphila_infosheet.pdf
33	Walk!Philadelphia	http://www.centercityphila.org/docs/walkphila_infosheet.pdf
33	Ride!Philadelphia	http://www.centercityphila.org/docs/ridephila_infosheet.pdf
35	Uptown Normal, Normal IL	http://www.hoerrschaudt.com/project/uptown-normal/?parent=90
35	The Uptown Normal Circle, "A Living Plaza"	http://www.normal.org/DocumentCenter/View/4409
35	Sustainable Stormwater in Public Space	http://www.illinoisfloods.org/documents/2011_IAFSM_Conference/2%20Wednesday/3D_Water%20Feature%20Fed%20by%20Stormwater%20Runoff%20in%20Normal,%20IL.pdf
38	River City Company	http://www.rivercitycompany.com/new/rcc
39	Philly Watersheds	http://www.phillywatersheds.org/category/blog-tags/venice-island
39	Viva Venice	http://hiddencityphila.org/2013/04/viva-venice-how-a-water-department-project-is-transforming-manayunks-social-civic-hub/
39	Designing for Flood Risk	http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/sustainable_communities/designing_flood_risk.pdf
41	The Better Block Project	http://betterblock.org/
41	How to Build a Better Block	http://betterblock.org/how-to-build-a-better-block/
43	Vacants to Value	http://archive.baltimorecity.gov/OfficeoftheMayor/NewsMedia/tabid/66/ID/691/Mayor_Announces_Vacants_to_Value_Plan_to_Reduce_Blight.aspx
43	Penn Homeownership Services	http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/homeownership/closing-cost-reduction-program.html
43	Combating Problems of Vacant and Abandoned Properties	http://www.usmayors.org/bestpractices/vacantproperties06.pdf
45	NJ Rehab Code	http://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/codes/codreg/pdf_regs/njac_5_23_6.pdf
53	Green City Clean Waters	http://phillywatersheds.org/what_were_doing/documents_and_data/cso_long_term_control_plan
57	History and Development	http://preservationmass.org/2014/08/success-story-sunday-rice-silk-mill-apartments/
57	Financing	http://www.mhp.net/rental_financing/news.php?page_function=detail&mhp_news_id=479

Pg. No.	Text Reference	URL
57	PA Residential Site Development Best Practices	http://www.clintoncountypa.com/PA%20Wilds/PA%20Standards%20for%20Residential%20Site%20Development%20Guide/1%20ResDev_Final.pdf
57	DVRPC Report on Residential Investments in Centers	http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/04011.pdf
57	DVRPC Report on Financing Mixed Use Development	http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/08037.pdf
59	New York Times Report	http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/01/business/in-a-long-island-hamlet-a-downtown-is-being-built-from-scratch.html?mwrsm=Email&_r=2
59	Wall Street Journal Report	http://www.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324600704578400733512237030
59	Architect Magazine's Feature	http://www.architectmagazine.com/project-gallery/wyandanch-rising-5825
67	Metropolis Magazine Feature	http://www.metropolismag.com/Point-of-View/June-2015/Site-Visit-A-River-Corridor-Renaissance-Frees-the-Falls-and-Transforms-Downtown-Greenville/
67	Falls Park on the Reedy	http://www.fallspark.com/167/Falls-Park
73	Economic Development Department, Austin TX	https://austintexas.gov/department/economic-growth-and-redevelopment-services-office
81	GMDC	http://www.gmdconline.org/
84	NYU Poly Incubator Program	http://engineering.nyu.edu/business/incubators

D: IMAGE SOURCES

Unless listed below, or in the image captions, all rendering, visuals and images were created by Metropolitan Urban Design Workshop and Urban Matrix

Pg. No.	Image	Source
06	Aerial image of Easton at fork of Delaware and Lehigh Rivers	Panoramio, Google Maps Link: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/42467748
11	Zoning map showing the major road network and permitted uses across the Lehigh Valley Region	Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Link: http://www.lvpc.org/pdf/maps/generalizedZoning.pdf
13	Future land use plan for Wilson Borough	Council of Borough of Wilson Link: http://elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/Northampton_County/1908;%20Wilson%20Borough/4209585592mcp.pdf
15	Phillipsburg Riverfront Redevelopment Plan	Revised Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, Phillipsburg Town Council Link: http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/warren_county/phillipsburg/adopted/RiverfrontRedevelopmentPlan.pdf
16	3D build out of the Lehigh Valley City Center in Allentown, PA	City Center Lehigh Valley Link: http://www.keystoneedge.com/features/centercityallentown0613.aspx
23	Leadership and Community Voices	Video stills from interviews shot by Andy Harmon, Best Wishes Studio
25	Lafayette College's Arts Plaza at the foothill of College Hill	Arch Daily Link: http://www.archdaily.com/355593/lafayette-college-arts-plaza-spillman-farmer-architects
26	Ninth Street Houses in the West Ward Neighborhood	Easton is Home: A blog about local flavors Link: http://www.eastonishome.com/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/IMG_4464.jpg
28	Movies at the Mill: Silk Mill	Movies at the Mill
42	Historical development along the Delaware River	Sigal Museum Historical Archives
73	Historic image of Upper Suspension Bridge over Lehigh River	Sigal Museum Historical Archives
84	Map of historic neighborhoods in West Ward	Drawing created from original 'Map of Canton Areas' provided by West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
92	'Artists in the Alley' Festival on Bank Street	Easton Main Street Initiative
95	Easton and Phillipsburg across the Delaware: Partnerships with Phillipsburg can help establish synergies to create a unified River Corridor across the Delaware	Altered Panoramio, Google Maps Image Link: http://www.panoramio.com/photo/42467748

NOTES

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EASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2035

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