



Collegeville Revitalization Plan

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Task Force Members:

Andrea Baptiste, Collegeville Borough Council

Dale Bondanza, Collegeville Fire Company

Vic Brown, Ursinus College

Brian G. Dubas, Collegeville Economic Development Corp

Linda Flederbach, Collegeville Borough Main Street Manager

Catherine Kernan, Collegeville Economic Development Corp

Joseph Nixon, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Gary Pearson, Collegeville Borough

Craig Penuel, Collegeville Fire Company

Debbie Riegner, Collegeville Economic Development Corp

Matthew Schelly, Montgomery County Planning Commission

Geoff Thompson, Collegeville Borough Manager

Report prepared by:

Montgomery County Planning Commission

Montgomery County Courthouse

PO Box 311

Norristown, PA 19404

*All photos and graphics provided by MCPC unless otherwise noted

Table of Contents

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1: Study Areas.....	1
Chapter 2: Community Profile and Background.....	11
Chapter 3: Key Issues and Opportunities.....	23
Chapter 4: Guiding Principles.....	29
Chapter 5: Goals and Objectives.....	37
Chapter 6: Physical Improvements.....	43
Chapter 7: Economic Incentives.....	51
Chapter 8: Special Projects.....	59
Chapter 9: Project Implementation Schedule.....	67
Appendix 1: Town Center District Model Ordinance Design Guidelines prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission.....	75
Appendix 2: Shopping Center Redesign.....	81
Appendix 3: Main Street.....	87

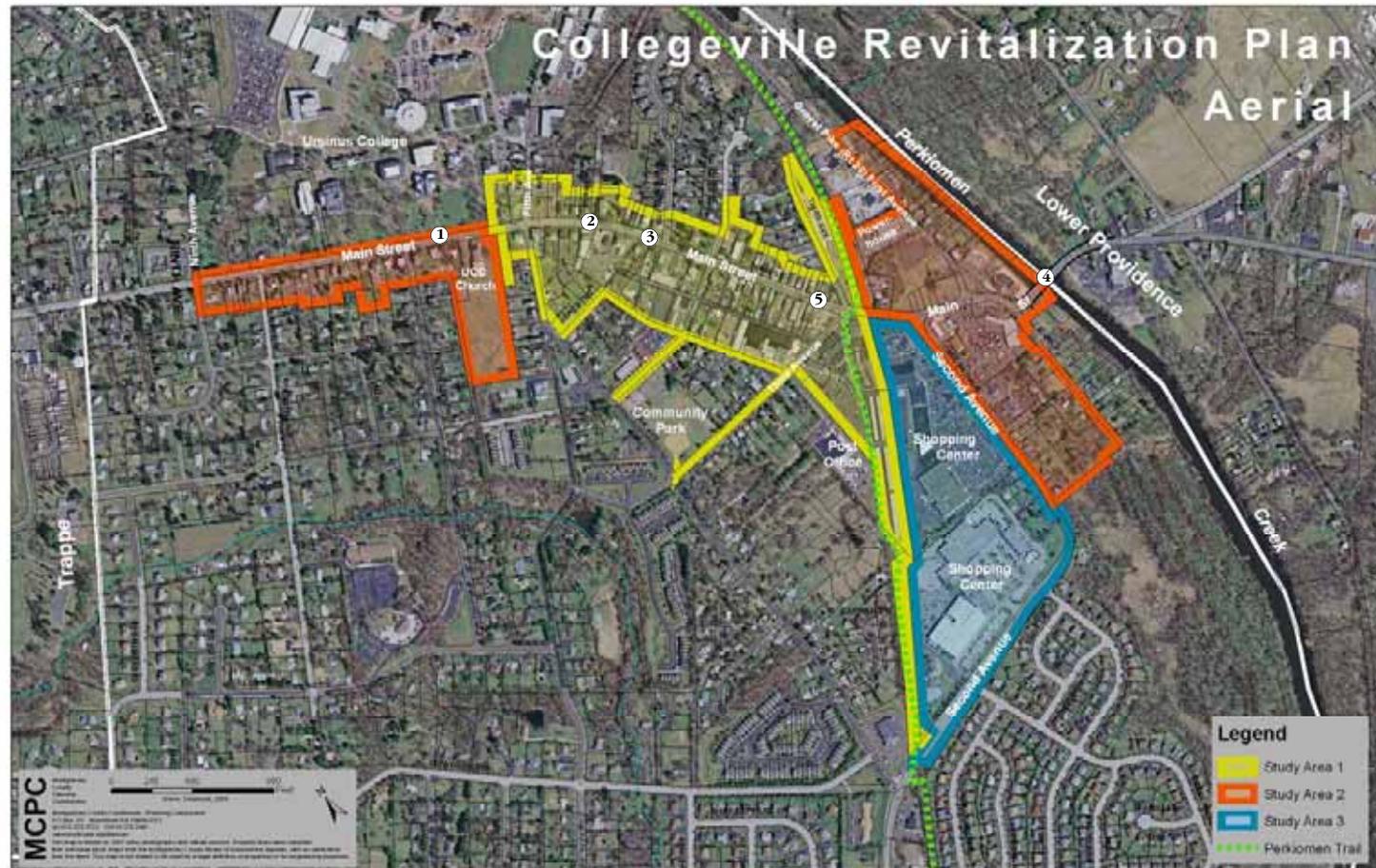
Chapter One

Study Areas

Study Areas

In order to focus Collegeville's revitalization efforts, this report will revolve mainly around three study areas, mostly along Collegeville's Main Street. These areas are the commercial and economic

heart of the Borough, and the best opportunity for Collegeville to build on past successes. The three study areas are detailed on the map below. The numbers locate photos on the next pages.



These photos from the study areas provide some idea as to the existing character of the study areas and their context. All the photos are looking northwest along Main Street. The photo locations are indicated on the previous map.



1

View 1 is in front of Ursinus College in Study Area 2(A). Note the large trees and lawn on the right.



2

View 3 shows a historic hotel in Study Area 1 that has been converted into an office building while on the right are, again, tree-fronted homes.



3

View 3 shows a historic hotel in Study Area 1 that has been converted into an office building while on the right are, again, tree-fronted homes.



4

View 4 is the view from the Perkiomen Bridge toward the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel and the Perkiomen Creek on the right. View 5, on the next page, is in the downtown area. Businesses and residences in old and new buildings are on both sides.

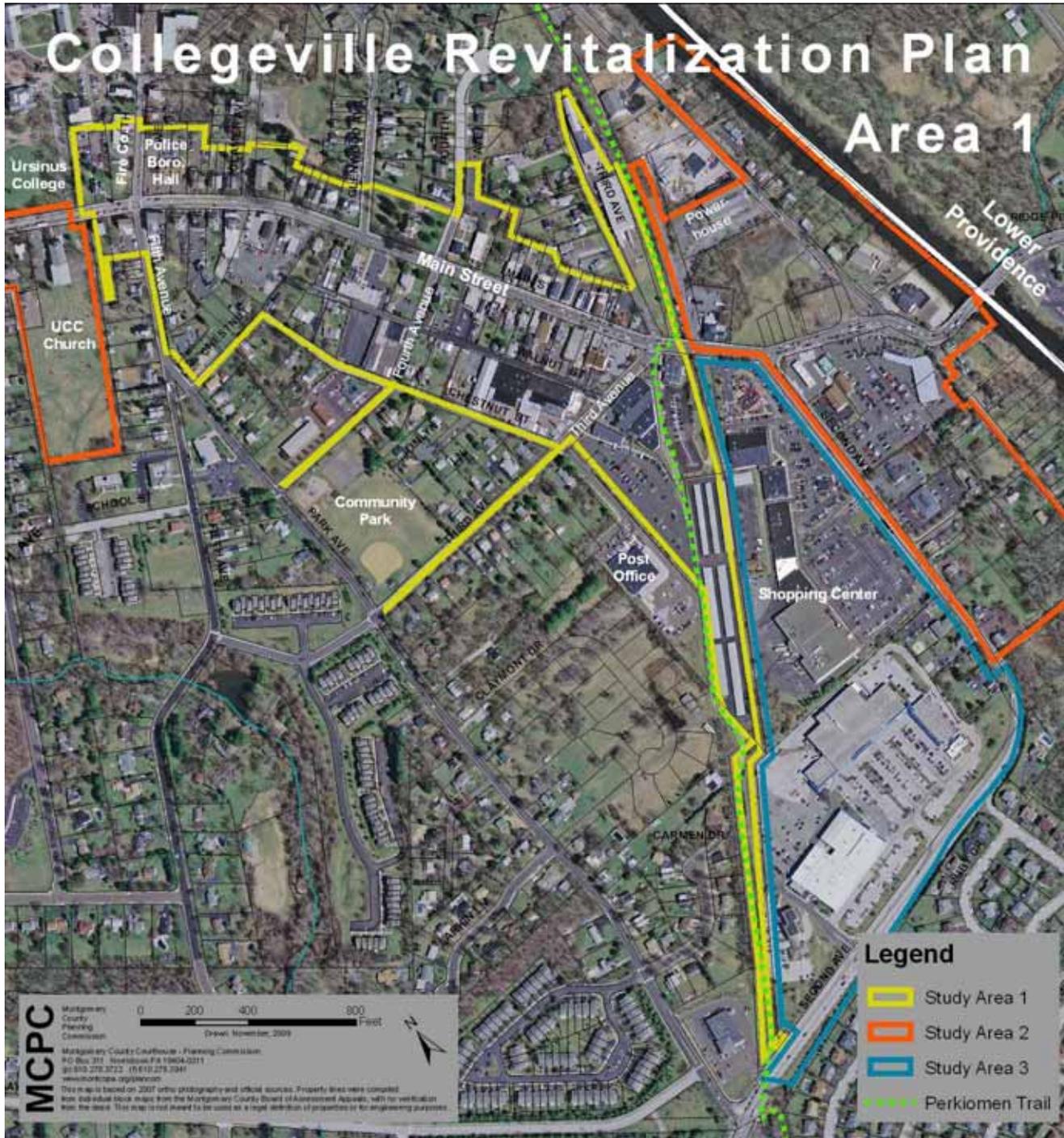


View 5 is in the downtown area. Businesses and residences in old and new buildings are on both sides. This panoramic photo shows the heart of Collegeville’s downtown in 2000, before a new infill building was added in the space on the right with the green shrubs. This is true small town Main Street character — a variety of small buildings with a mix of uses, usually retail on the street level and either residential or offices above. There is on-street parking and also parking behind the buildings.

Study Area 1

Study Area 1, as shown at right, is the primary focus of this revitalization plan. It extends along Main Street from Third Avenue to just past Fifth Avenue. It includes the properties along Main Street as well as the properties south of Main to Chestnut Street. Further, in an effort to enhance the pedestrian network, Third and Fourth Avenues, from Main Street to Park Ave have been included as part of this study area. These segments do not contain sidewalks, representing a gap in the Borough’s connections between its residential and commercial areas, as well as between Main Street and

Community Park, an important amenity. Finally, Study Area 1 also includes the portions of the Perkiomen Trail that run through the Borough and contact its primary commercial areas. The Perkiomen Trail is an important recreational amenity for the borough as well as an economic generator, bringing thousands of visitors through Collegeville. Study Area 1 is the core of this revitalization plan because it is the heart of Collegeville’s small-town charm and the intersection that links Ursinus College, the rest of the Borough’s commercial corridor, and the Perkiomen Trail.



Study Area 2

Study Area 2, as shown below, is made up of two subareas. One is the portion of Main Street in front of Ursinus College up to Ninth Avenue (Area 2A). The other is comprised of the commercial areas along Second Avenue/Route 29 to the South of Main Street and the commercial areas north of Main Street along First Avenue/Route 29. Businesses in this subarea include banks, a car dealer-

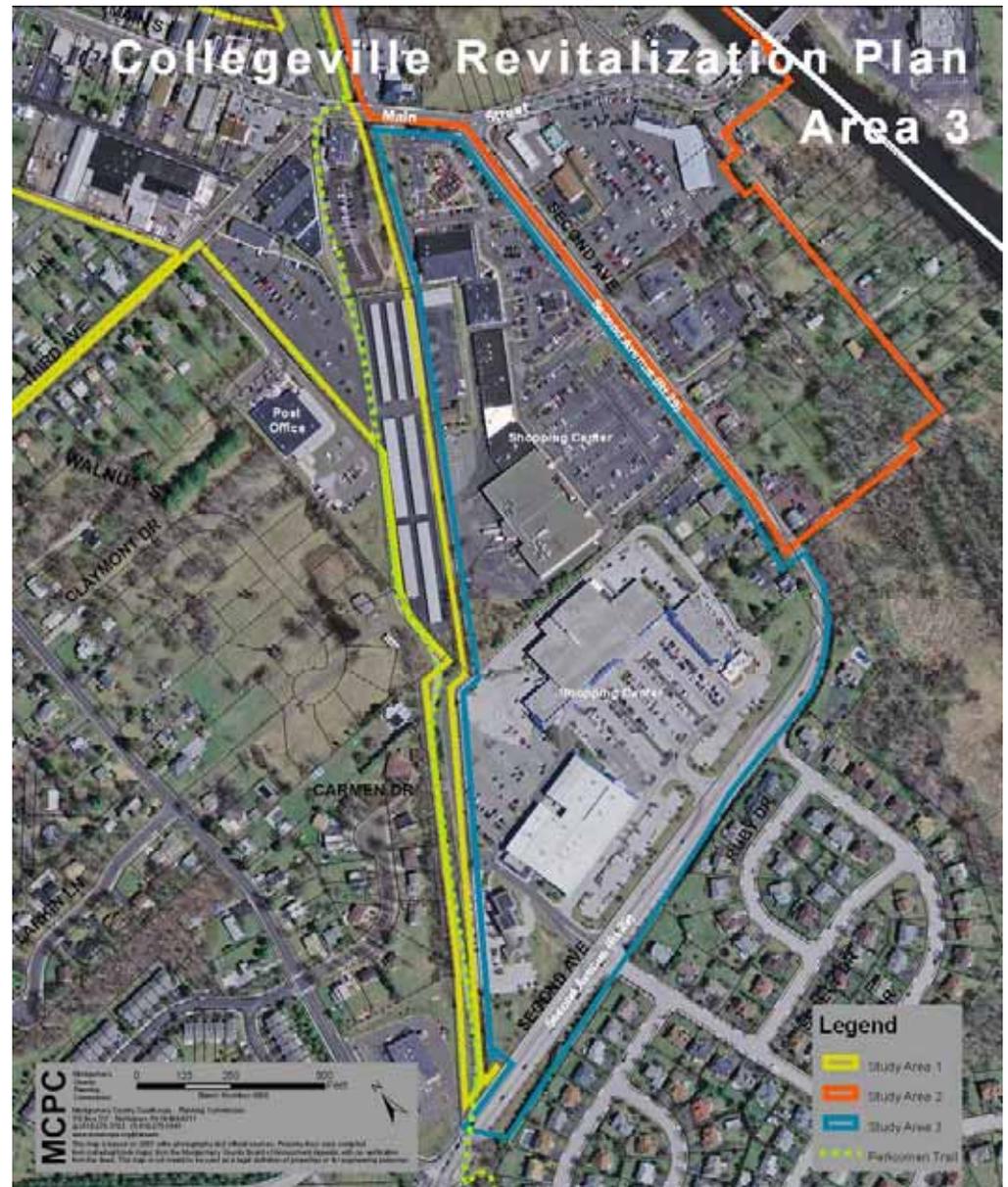
ship, retail establishments, and several offices. Although Study Area 2 is a lower priority for revitalization than Study Area 1, it is important to enhance the connections to and from this area of the Borough. In particular, improvements to the area in front of Ursinus College would do a great deal to help unite all of Collegeville's diverse attractions and amenities.



Study Area 3

Study Area 3, shown at right, mainly consists of the shopping centers along Route 29. Due to increased pressure from newer, larger shopping centers in the area, there are a number of newly vacated storefronts throughout the centers, including anchor stores like the Acme and Blockbuster Video. As the shopping centers reconsider their business strategy, there may be an opportunity to redesign these shopping centers in ways that link them to Main Street, the Perkiomen Trail, and Ursinus College in ways that benefit the entire community.

Allowing a mix of uses, including commercial, office, and residential, these centers could be completely re-imagined as an extension of Main Street. Smaller buildings located on the roadways, with parking to the rear, and design standards that require visual continuity with buildings on Main Street would be an exciting new direction for these flagging shopping centers. There are even opportunities for new transportation alternatives that could help relieve some of the traffic backups that clog Main Street between First and Second Streets at peak times.



These photos show how the character of areas 2B and 3 along Second Avenue are quite different from the attractive, small town character of Main Street as shown on pages 2, 3 and 4. Primarily, Second Avenue is auto-oriented: the buildings are set far back from the road, parking is located between the road and the building, sidewalks are along the curbs, there is no on-street parking, the crosswalks are missing or unsafe for handicapped persons, there are no bike lanes, the lane widths are generous, and traffic speeds through the area. Shopping here is done by car, which makes it easy for customers to go elsewhere, like Providence Town Center, to spend their money instead of at the local businesses in Colledgeville.



Area 2B (orange) is on the left and the northernmost corner of Area 3 (blue) at the intersection of Main Street (foreground) and Second Avenue/Route 29 is on the right. Note sidewalks, street trees and a bulbout on the Second Avenue side of the corner are already present. This location is critical to connecting the Second Avenue commercial area to the Main Street downtown.



Pedestrian view northeast along Second Avenue/Route 29 at the main entrance to the Colledgeville Shopping Center. Note that while sidewalks are present, the driveway crossings on both sides of the street are problematic for handicapped people since they slope into Second Avenue. A few street trees are already present (three on the right of the photo).



Pedestrian view southwest along Second Avenue/Route 29 from near the main entrance to the shopping center. Note how close the narrow sidewalk is to the high-speed road. This does not seem to be a pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages walking or biking. Farther down the road, street trees are achieved with a creative solution to the steep slope.



A view of the buildings on the eastern side of Second Avenue and looking down Chestnut Street Extension. Some maintenance and upgrades could make the older home more valuable. The zoning for this building already allows it to be used not only as residences but also for professional offices, a day care, an art, music, or dance studio, or similar uses. A crosswalk, sidewalk and street trees would encourage pedestrians to walk in front of this and the neighboring buildings and could be extended to the residential area around the curve of Second Avenue.



This panoramic view shows both directions along Second Avenue/Route 29 at the main entrance to the Marketplace at Collegeville shopping center. Note the absence of sidewalks on the residential side of Second Avenue and the curbside sidewalks and the lack of a crosswalk on the shopping center side.



This panorama shows the view of the southern entry to the revitalization areas on Second Avenue/Route 29. The pharmacy is not in any of the revitalization areas, however Area 3 starts where the pavement changes colors and includes the buildings on the left in the distance; and Area 1 includes the trail which is seen in the center of the view and passes between the two rows of trees.

Chapter Two

Community Profile and Background

Community Profile

The Community Profile Chapter of the Collegeville Revitalization Plan is designed to provide residents the necessary background information to make well informed decisions regarding

the future economic challenges and opportunities facing the Borough. It consists of three parts: Historical Background, Regional Setting, and the Community Demographic Analysis.

Historical Background

Collegeville, like all of Pennsylvania, was originally part of a grant made to William Penn by Charles II of England in 1682. Penn designated the area which is now the Borough as the Gilbert tract. This tract also included the present townships of Upper and Lower Providence and parts of Perkiomen and Worcester.

The first family of settlers was the Lane family. In 1689, Edward Lane constructed a house that has been enlarged and remodeled into the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel, a major landmark in the region. The hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as is the nearby bridge.



The Perkiomen Bridge Hotel in 2000.

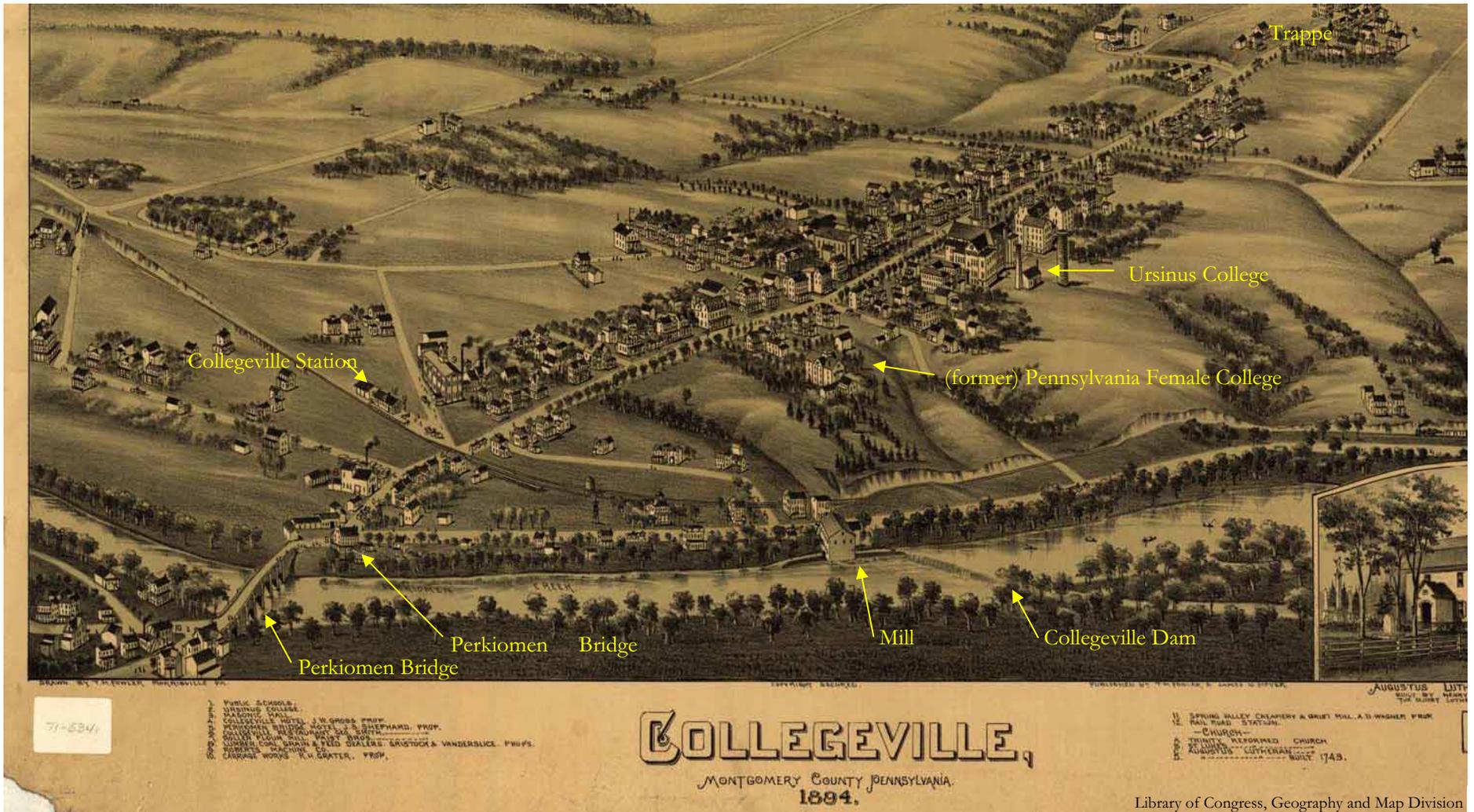
In 1708, Edward Lane constructed the first mill on the Perkiomen Creek. It was located near the site of the old Collegeville Dam. This mill, which survived until 1972, was a major element in the early settlement of Collegeville. However, it was not until 1799, with the construction of the Perkiomen Bridge, that settlement began in earnest. It was located along the banks of the creek and soon developed into a village known as Perkiomen Bridge.

By the mid-nineteenth century another village, called Freeland, was founded. About one-half mile to the west of the older village, it was clustered along Main Street, while the village of Perkiomen Bridge continued in its location near the creek. Collegeville began to take on its present form after 1868 when the railroad arrived. The two villages had vied for both the location and name of the train station. The railroad settled the matter with a compromise. The station



Bill McManus

The Perkiomen Bridge in 2005.



Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

Excerpt from a historic drawing depicting Collegeville in 1894. Features mentioned in the text are pointed out here.

was placed between the two villages and named Collegeville, after the nearby Pennsylvania Female College. As the two villages began to grow together and with the founding in 1869 of Ursinus College, Collegeville became the accepted name. The present Borough of

Collegeville was incorporated in 1896 when it was formally separated from Upper Providence Township.



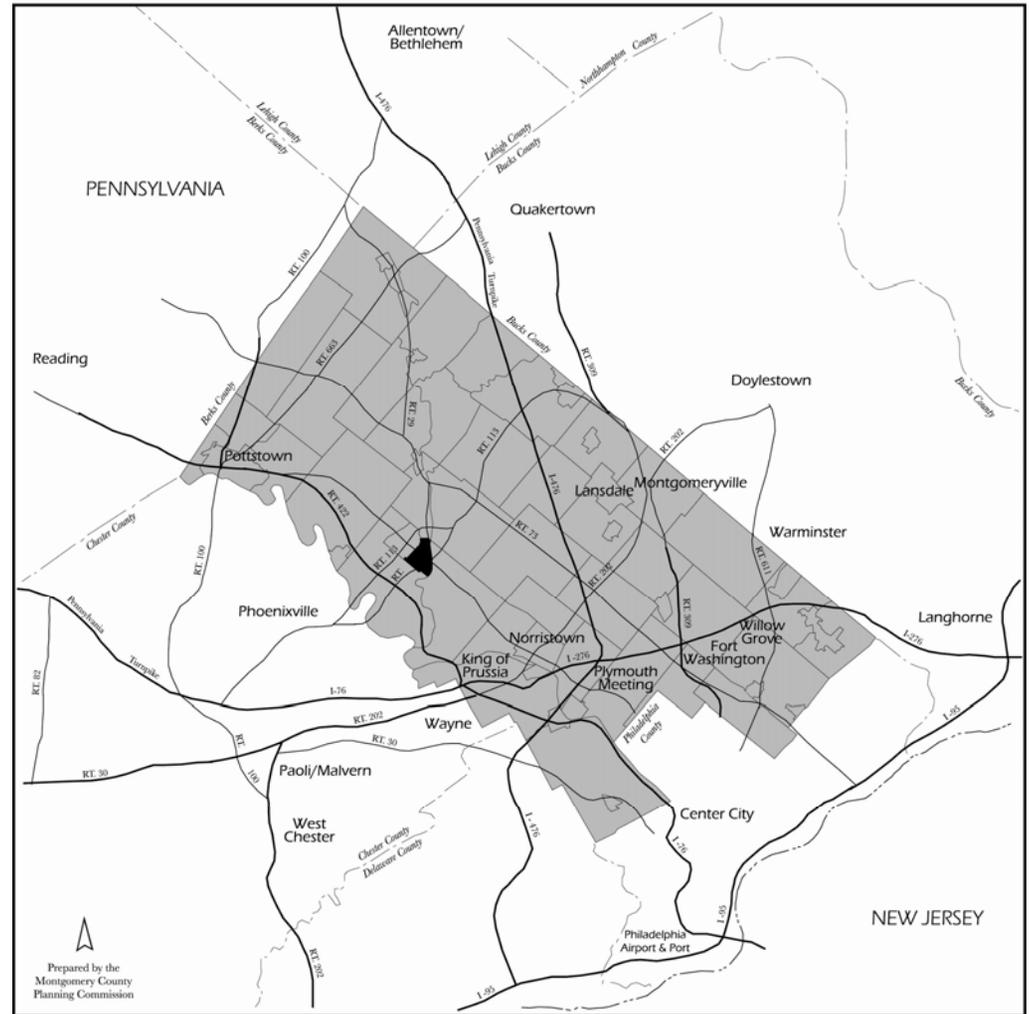
Collegeville Station.

Regional Setting

Collegeville Borough is a small college town in the heart of a rapidly developing section of Montgomery County. Its location has put enormous development pressure on the Borough and what was once farmland is now residential development and shopping centers. However, it enjoys a position of importance in the region as the downtown center of the central and lower Perkiomen Valley. Because of the presence of Ursinus College, as well as its Main Street and proximity to natural features, Collegeville has cultural, educational, and economic advantages that many of its neighbors do not.

Transportation has always played a vital role in the development of the Borough. Construction of the stone arch bridge across the Perkiomen Creek in 1799 and the arrival of the railroad in 1868 enabled Collegeville to become the prosperous college town that it is today. The railroad is gone, but the Borough's location at the crossroads of two regionally significant roadways that cross Montgomery County, Route 29 and Ridge Pike, mean that the Borough is still an important destination in the region.

Ridge Pike extends west through Limerick Township to Pottstown and east through Norristown and on to Philadelphia. Route 29 travels north through Perkiomen Township to the northwest corner of Montgomery County and south to Route 422 and on to Phoenixville Borough. Route 422



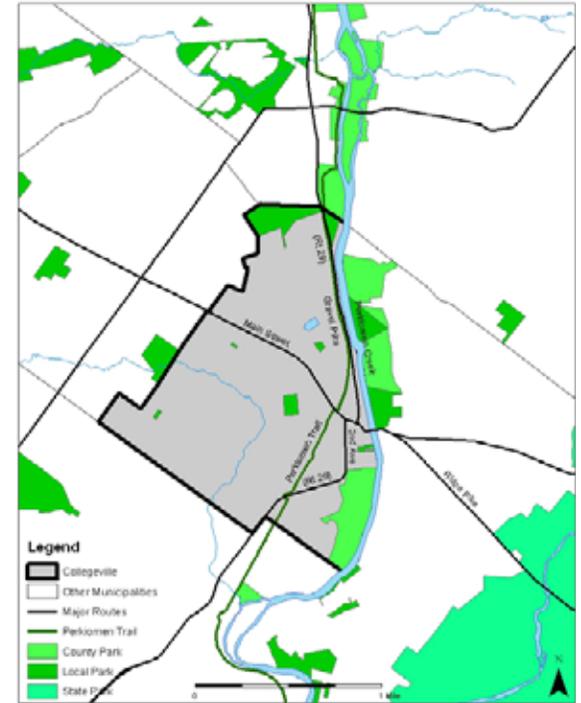
provides access to Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the east and Pottstown as well as Reading farther to the west. This means Collegeville has easy access to all the cultural, political, and economic advantages of Philadelphia, King of Prussia, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Reading, and Norristown. Further, because of the crossroads and its location in the center

of Montgomery County, the Borough can be seen as a gateway to western Montgomery County.

Collegetown is flanked by the Perkiomen Creek, the Borough's most significant natural feature. This creek on the Borough's eastern border is part of a vast watershed that extends far beyond the Montgomery County. Following along the creek, the Perkiomen Trail is a great new addition to the Borough that extends from Oaks to Green Lane. It allows access to Valley Forge National Historic Park, the county's Norristown Farm Park, and the Upper Perkiomen

Valley/Green Lane Reservoir Park. The Perkiomen Creek and Trail are phenomenal amenities that have contributed greatly to Collegetown's current success and will figure prominently in its future revitalization.

With the presence of a redeveloping commercial district on Main Street and the existing shopping centers on Route 29, the Borough is thriving as a subregional shopping center. It provides convenient shopping and everyday goods and services to much of the lower portion of the Perkiomen Valley.



Community Demographic Analysis

The Community Demographic Analysis consists of information relating to Collegetown's population, housing, and economics. With a few exceptions, the source of the information is the decennial U.S. Census. Demographic characteristics such as employment

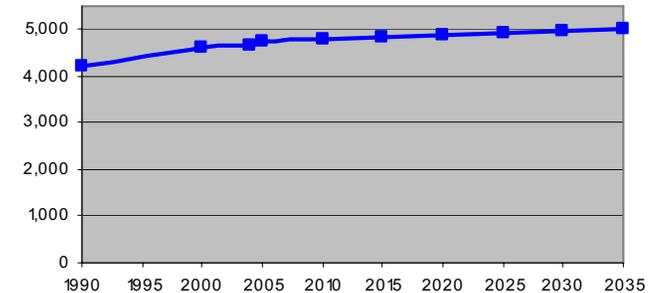
forecasts and population projections can provide insight when planning for economic revitalization. Demographic statistics can assist in determining the local market for certain Main Street and downtown businesses.

Population

In 2000 the population of Collegetown Borough was 4,628 residents. As part of one of Montgomery County's designated growth areas, the Borough population increased 10% between 1990 and 2000. Because there has been no additional census information for the Borough since 2000 it is difficult to estimate the current population; however, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) estimates that the population for the Borough is expected to increase to 4,900 by 2010. This growth is projected to continue until 2015, when the Borough will reach 5,200

Population Projection

Year	Population
1990	4,227
2000	4,628
2004 *	4,676
2005 *	4,750
2010 **	4,798
2015 **	4,843
2020 **	4,886
2025 **	4,927
2030 **	4,965
2035 **	5,000



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 2000; DVRPC projections and estimates.

* Estimated population

** Projected population

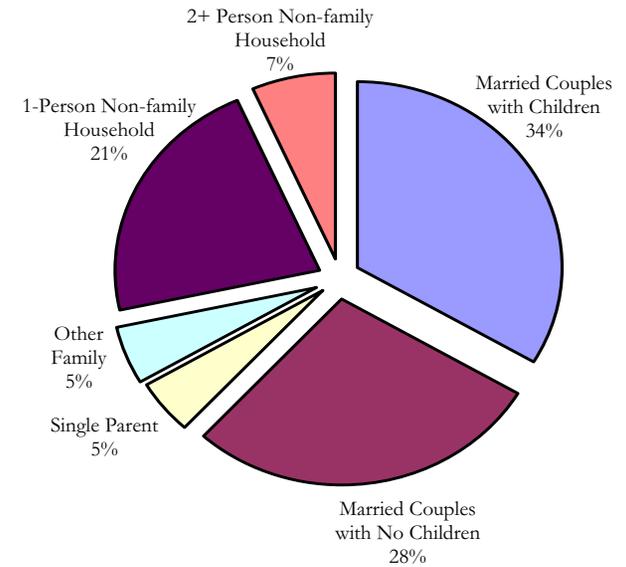
residents. Subsequently, the Borough's population will level off at around 5,000 residents by 2030. These projections are based on several factors, including past levels of development, proximity to employment centers, recently proposed development, available land, and public facilities (particularly sewers).

The rate of municipal population change is an important measure of the overall change that has occurred in a community over time. Further, as the market base for new and existing businesses in the Borough, it is an important indicator of the health of the economic climate in Collegeville. This continued growth over the next twenty years is a good sign for the Borough.

Many smaller communities and boroughs in the region have experienced population decreases, particularly in the young family and professional demographics, which stymie revitalization efforts. Between 1990 and 2000 the number of married couples

with children increased 16.2% and the number of married couples without children increased 7.3%. Although the Borough did experience a decline in its 18-34 year old population, in 2000 that group comprised nearly 34% of the Borough's total population. This is significantly greater than Montgomery County on average, a result of the student population at Ursinus College.

The Borough has a stable population and is expected to continue growing for another twenty years. The largest household type in the Borough are married couples with children, and the number of married couples – with or without children – increased by 12% between 1990 and 2000. These families, when combined with the student population and staff of Ursinus College, make for a fairly broad consumer base for Borough businesses. Providing a wide range of goods and services for this growing market represent an enormous opportunity for the Borough and bode well for its revitalization efforts.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

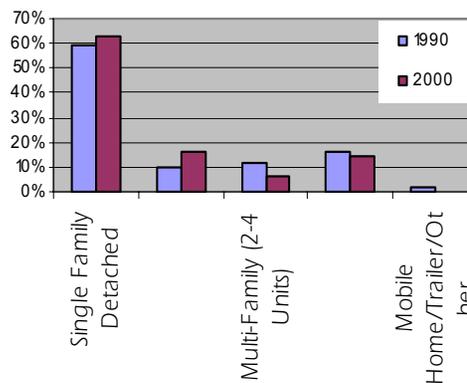
Age	1990		2000		1990 - 2000 % Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	
0-4	234	5.5%	272	5.9%	16.2%
5-17	625	14.8%	762	16.5%	21.9%
18-24	1,195	28.3%	1080	23.3%	-9.6%
25-34	650	15.4%	478	10.3%	-26.5%
35-44	570	13.5%	736	15.9%	29.1%
45-54	380	9.0%	587	12.7%	54.5%
55-64	222	5.3%	336	7.3%	51.4%
65-74	199	4.7%	197	4.3%	-1.0%
75+	152	3.6%	180	3.9%	18.4%
Total	4,227	100%	4,628	100%	9.5%
Median Age	26.1		34.8		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

Housing

Collegeville's dominant land use is residential, accounting for 50% of the Borough's total land use. In 1990 there were a total of 1,312 housing units in the Borough; by 2000 that number had increased 9.6% to 1,438 units. Meanwhile, multifamily dwellings of 2-4 units decreased nearly 40% during the same period and mobile homes decreased almost 83%.

The most common housing type in the Borough is single-family detached,



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

comprising 62.5% of all housing units in 2000. Besides the sections of the Borough that developed prior to zoning (first adopted in Collegeville in 1948), most detached dwellings are zoned R-1 and exist at a density of approximately two units per acre.

However, as development pressures increased during the 1990's, the Borough began to be developed at greater densities. The housing type that grew the most between 1990 and 2000 was single-family attached: from 131 units to 228 units, a 74% increase. The attached housing units are the two townhouse developments (College Park and Collegeville Greene), the modern twins

on Carmen Drive, and the old twins in the Main Street area. Even areas of the Borough with single-family detached units saw increases in density: Collegeville Crossing and Collegeville Glen contain up to 5.4 units per acre.

These increases in density are likely to continue as population continues to grow over the next two decades. In addition, as a smaller borough, there is less room to fit this growing population, leading to an increased likelihood of higher density development. Fortunately, these densities are indicative of the kind of close-knit, walkable communities that Collegeville Borough is trying to emulate as it revitalizes.

Housing Values

Although home values are affected by many variables it is still useful to examine home values as an indicator of Collegeville's overall prosperity. In 2000 the median home value in the Borough was \$186,700. This puts Collegeville at number 12 in Montgomery County, up from number 14 in 1990. The quality of the housing stock in Collegeville is also relatively high; there are a very low percentage of substandard units or units

lacking adequate plumbing (both less than 1%) and virtually no overcrowded units.

Meanwhile, between 2000 and 2008, the sales price for homes in Collegeville increased about 54%, or 23% after adjusting for inflation. This is less than the comparable changes for the county, but the prices are higher than the median price in the county.

Median Housing Values

	1990		2000		1990 - 2000
	Median Adj. Value*	Rank in County	Median Value	Rank in County	Change in Adj. Value
Collegeville	\$208,082	14	\$186,700	12	-10.3%
County	\$185,077		\$160,700		-13.2%
State	\$90,949		\$97,000		6.7%
US	\$103,424		\$119,600		15.6%

* Value adjusted to year 2000 value using a ratio of the 1990 and 2000 annual Consumer Price Indices (1.2997)

Sources: US Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000

Median Sales Prices

	2000		2008		2000-2008	2000 Price in 2008 Dollars	2008 Price in 2000 Dollars	Change in Adjusted Price	
	Median Price**	# of units sold	Median Price**	# of units sold	Change in Median Price			2000 - 2008, year 2000 \$	2000 - 2008, %
Collegeville	\$190,000	67	\$292,450	42	53.9%	\$237,558	\$233,902	\$43,902	23.1%
County	\$158,750	14,713	\$269,700	9,623	69.9%	\$198,486	\$215,707	\$56,957	35.9%

** Price is for all sales recorded in the Montgomery County Board of Assessment, excluding all sales less than \$20,000, and the 2008 price has not been adjusted to year 2000 values. The CPI changed 25% from 2000 to 2008.

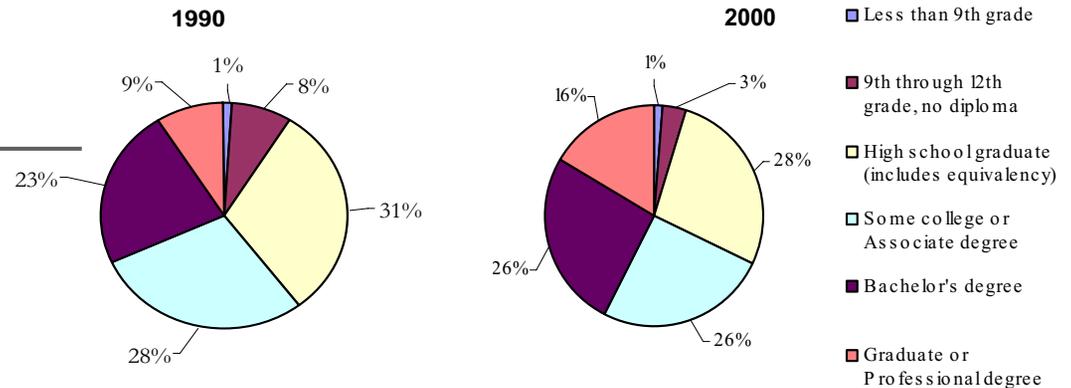
Sources Montgomery County Board of Assessment, 2000, 2008

Education

Between 1990 and 2000 the number of residents with a Bachelor's, Graduate, or Professional degree in the Borough increased from about 32% to 42% of the working age population. The increase of Professional or Graduate degree holders was particularly pronounced, more than doubling over the decade. In Montgomery County as a whole, 38% of the population hold a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Further, the decade saw a decrease in the number of residents without a high school diploma among the working aged population of the Borough. All of this adds up to a high level of educational achievement, a good sign for a community looking to revitalize as a desirable place to work, shop, and live.

Education Level	1990		2000		1990 - 2000
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	% Change
Less than 9th grade	26	1.2%	33	1.4%	26.9%
9th through 12th grade, no diploma	175	8.1%	78	3.3%	-55.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	659	30.3%	648	27.3%	-1.7%
Some college or Associate degree	619	28.5%	606	25.5%	-2.1%
Bachelor's degree	503	23.1%	616	26.0%	22.5%
Graduate or Professional degree	191	8.8%	391	16.5%	104.7%
Total Pop. 25 years and older	2,173	100%	2,372	100%	9.2%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.



Income

Collegeville experienced significant growth in two income categories during the 1990s. While Montgomery County experienced a 4.9% increase in per capita income and a 3.8% median household income increase, Collegeville experienced a 23% per capita income increase and a 28% median household income increase. Although income per capita is below the county mean, median income per household is ranked 7th in the county. This ranking is up from 23rd in 1989. In all likelihood this is describing an increase in two-income households, which is consistent with the rise of married couples and educational attainment in the Borough.

Income	1989		1999		% Change	
	Collegeville	Mont. Co.	Collegeville	Mont. Co.	Collegeville	Mont. Co.
Per Capita	\$21,798	\$29,463	\$26,979	\$30,898	23.8%	4.9%
Median Household	\$60,552	\$58,577	\$77,499	\$60,829	28.0%	3.8%

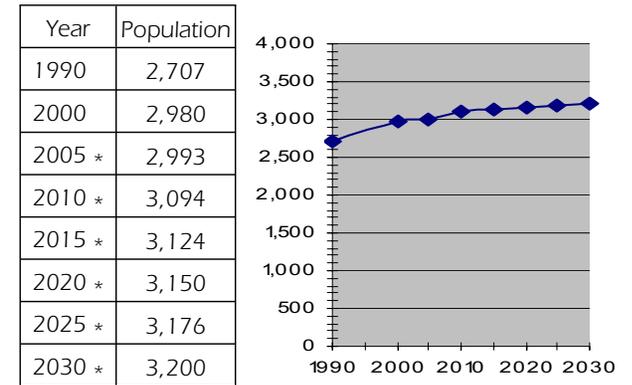
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

Employment

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission stated that in 2000, 3,000 jobs were located in the Borough, thereby making it a local employment center within Montgomery County. The Borough effectively has fewer jobs within its borders than workers between the ages of 18 and 65; however, it should be noted that the Ursinus College student population is included in this population. Otherwise, the working age population is well balanced with employment opportunities.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission also develops employment forecasts based on census data, past trends, the job market, and available land. Employment opportunities in the Borough are expected to increase 7% from 2000 to 2030. This projection estimates there will be 3,200 jobs in the Borough at that time, keeping pace with expected population growth.

Projected Employment



* Projected employment
Source: DVRPC projections.

Occupation

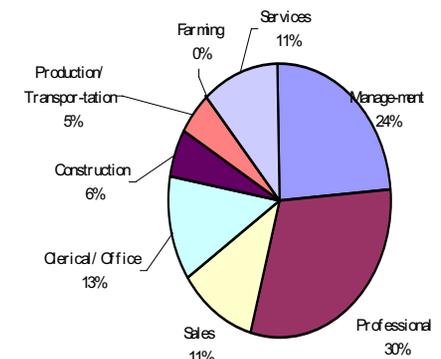
The U.S. Census Bureau categorizes occupations into three broad groups that combine more refined job descriptions. In Collegetown, white-collar workers make up 77% of the workforce, while blue-collar workers make up 11%. Comparatively, in Montgomery County,

73% of the workforce consists of white-collar workers and 18% blue collar.

The remaining 11% of Collegetown workers work in the Service industry. Collegetown has a well-diversified labor force to embrace a growing, changing, and diversified economy.

Occupation	Collegetown		County	
	Number	% Total	% Total	
White Collar	Management	497	24%	17%
	Professional	631	30%	27%
	Sales	229	11%	12%
	Clerical/Office	262	13%	16%
Blue Collar	Construction	127	6%	7%
	Production/Transportation	106	5%	10%
	Farming	0	0%	1%
	Services	240	11%	8%
Total	2,092	100%	98%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 2000.



Land Use

Collegetown's land use pattern is similar to many smaller Boroughs in Pennsylvania, with residential uses making up the bulk of the existing land uses. (See chart on next page.) About 50% of existing land uses are residential uses, the largest proportion of those being single-family detached homes. Due to the presence of Ursinus College, institutional uses make up the second largest single use at 16.7%. Retail, office, and industrial uses make up a combined 8.2%. Because Collegetown is a

traditional small town it contains a significant portion of mixed use areas, comprising 1.6%. This is roughly on par with boroughs surrounding Collegetown, but it may be a land use the Borough wishes to expand as it revitalizes. It is interesting to note that in the 1970 Comprehensive Plan, vacant or farmland accounted 43 percent of all the land in the Borough. Currently, vacant land accounts for only 2% of Borough land and farmland no longer exists.



Land Use	1994		2005		1994 - % Change
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	
Residential	549	54.2%	512	50.2%	-6.7%
Commercial/	74	7.3%	72	7.1%	-2.7%
Industrial	0	0.0%	11	1.1%	-
Institutional	161	15.9%	170	16.7%	5.6%
Parks/Recreation/	86	8.5%	131	12.8%	52.3%
Utilities	8	0.8%	2	0.2%	-75.0%
Roads	-	0.0%	106	10.4%	-
Total Developed	878	86.7%	1,004	98.4%	14.4%
T o t a l	135	13.3%	16	1.6%	-88.1%
Total Acreage*	1,013	100%	1,020	100%	0.7%

Commercial Corridor

Although Main Street is primarily a commercial and retail area, there is a significant segment of the population of Collegeville living adjacent to or even on Main Street. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 796 residents lived along or on the blocks immediately adjacent to Main Street between Third and Fifth Avenues. When combined with the other commercial areas of Collegeville, which include First Avenue, the shopping center areas along Route 29, and Main Street from Third to First Avenues and the Ursinus College Area, 37% of the Borough's residents live in almost direct contact with Collegeville's commercial and retail amenities.

A majority of those living in this area reside in owner-occupied units, however that majority is small: 47% of these residents rent their homes. This does not include the residents living in group quarters, which in this case primarily excludes the 1,700 Ursinus College students. This is fairly typical for any smaller, walkable community organized around a main street or dense, commercial center. This pattern can be seen in several Pennsylvania communities that have successfully revitalized their retail centers, such as Phoenixville and Ambler.

Previous Studies And Plans

The most prominent existing planning document for Collegeville is the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan. This plan is designed to focus residential growth and commercial development around the boroughs and villages in the region and relieve some of the development pressure affecting the rural areas. The Boroughs of Schwenksville, Collegeville, and Trappe are identified as prime targets for infill and redevelopment, while conservation is the goal for more rural areas like Upper and Lower Frederick Townships. Perkiomen Township is also involved in the plan. It functions as a largely residential area containing much of the region's typically suburban style development.

As a growth area Collegeville's revitalization efforts are encouraged by the plan as a benefit to the entire region. Additionally, the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Planning Commission



unknown



unknown

Images used to illustrate ideas from the Regional Transportation and Community Character Study showing, on the left, bulbouts that were suggested could be appropriate for Main Street in downtown Collegeville and, on the right, a median that is reminiscent of the flush, decorative concrete median proposed in the Main Street traffic calming and beautification plan for the area in front of Ursinus College.

has undertaken a Regional Transportation and Community Character Study that suggests a number of transportation improvements with the idea of enhancing the community character instead of detracting from it. For Collegeville, the study endorses streetscaping and beautification efforts along Main Street and the reconfiguration of the intersection of Route 29 and Main Street. The Transportation and Community Character Study was finalized in 2009 and has become an official part of the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Plan .

Collegeville has already begun its efforts to beautify and improve its Main Street. In 2004 the Borough conducted a visioning session, called the Collegeville Business District: Vision & Action Strategy Project, to gauge the interest and support of improving Main Street among Collegeville's residents. The session examined residents' perception of the

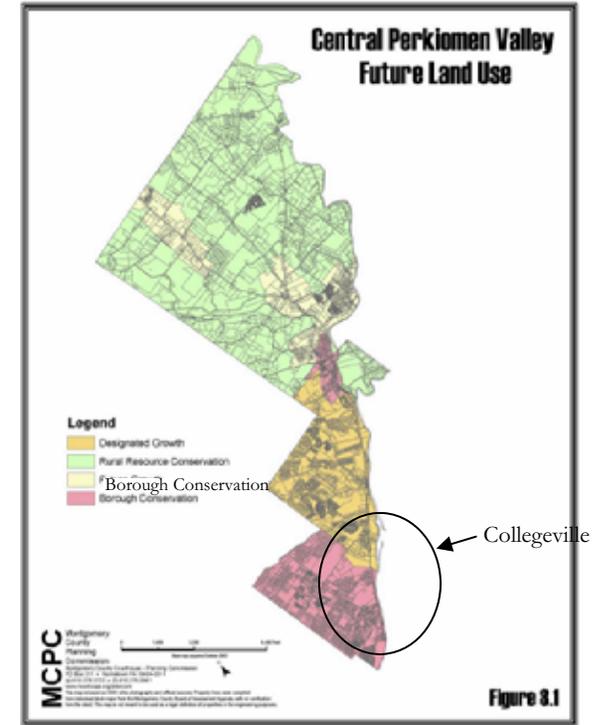
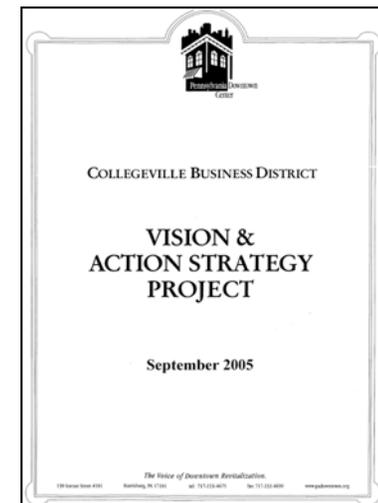


Figure 8.1

Future Land Use Map from the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan



A Community Visioning effort conducted by Collegeville in 2005.

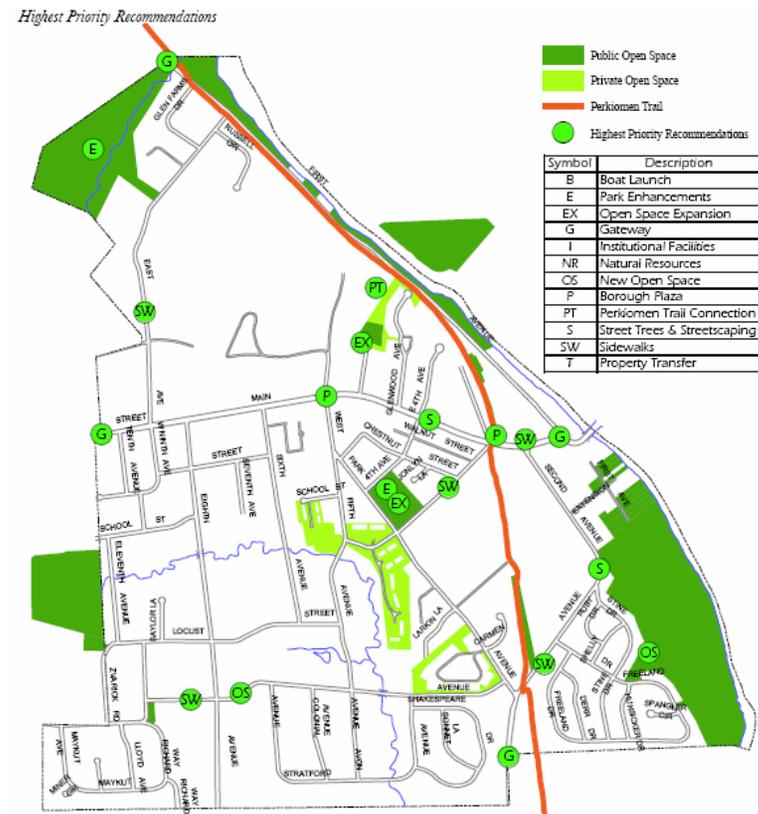
community, the issues facing the Borough, its assets, and its weaknesses. The study found there was strong support for beautification and economic revitalization. As a result, the Borough was able to apply for a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's Main Streets Program to hire a Main Street Manager and improve its central business district.

In 1999 the Borough entered a joint plan with Trappe Borough to create a conceptual master plan for the entire Main Street corridor through both boroughs. The partnered communities applied for and received a grant from DVRPC. Although Trappe Borough reconsidered the plan before it was completed, Collegeville was able to keep the grant money it was awarded. Those funds provided the basis for the current beautification efforts and many of the concepts established in the unfinished plan were incorporated into the current streetscape designs.

In 2006 the Borough completed its Open Space Plan. The plan establishes the Borough's goals for the preservation of its natural features and potential open space and recreation opportunities. The Open Space Plan is especially relevant to Collegeville's revitalization because the plan makes specific recommendations concerning the Perkiomen Trail, a major amenity and one of the Borough's biggest assets. The Borough has already used the plan to obtain funds from Montgomery County to improve certain areas around the Trail and build a new parking area and trailhead on the corner of Third and Main Streets.



Retouched photo image showing the addition of street trees and street lights to Main Street in Trappe from the conceptual master plan for the entire Main Street corridor through both boroughs for the study area.



Highest Priority Recommendations from the 2006 Open Space Plan showing recommendations in the study area including gateways, sidewalk improvements, borough plazas, street trees and streetscaping. The plan also included other recommendations for the study area.

Chapter Three

Key Issues and Opportunities

Key Issues and Opportunities

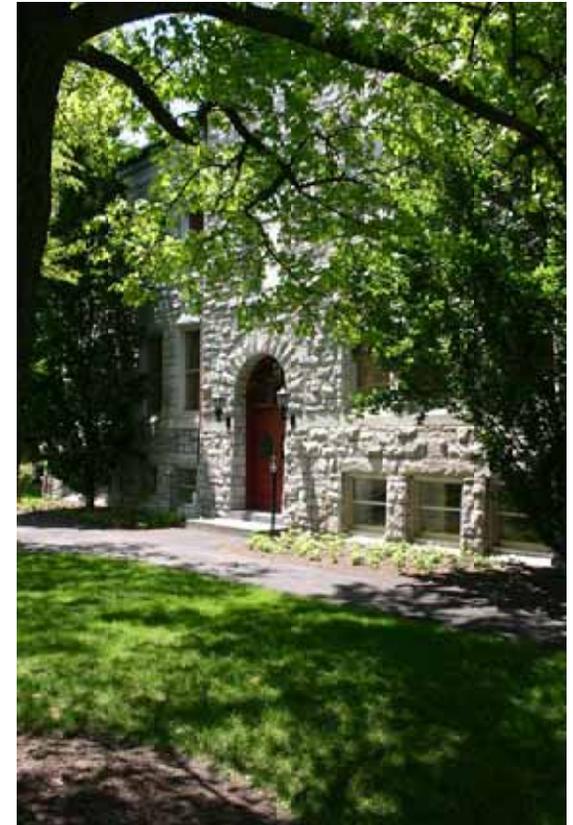
By analyzing all of the information from the previous chapter, including demographic and historical trends, a clearer picture of Collegeville's strengths and weaknesses emerges. As Collegeville Borough looks to revitalize its Main Street and other commercial areas it is

important to examine these strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats facing Borough as it revitalizes. This Revitalization Plan seeks to build on Collegeville's inherent strengths and mitigate its weaknesses.

Strengths

A. *Ursinus College*. This private college located within the Borough is a regionally significant institution, hosting sporting events, arts festivals, concerts, and theater productions. Besides attracting visitors with sporting or cultural events, the student body, faculty, and other em-

ployees bolster Collegeville's strong residential base, helping to support businesses on Main Street. Further, Ursinus College understands that it has a stake in Collegeville's success and is an active participant in the community.



Ursinus College is a major educational and cultural amenity for Collegeville as well as being a major employer for the Borough



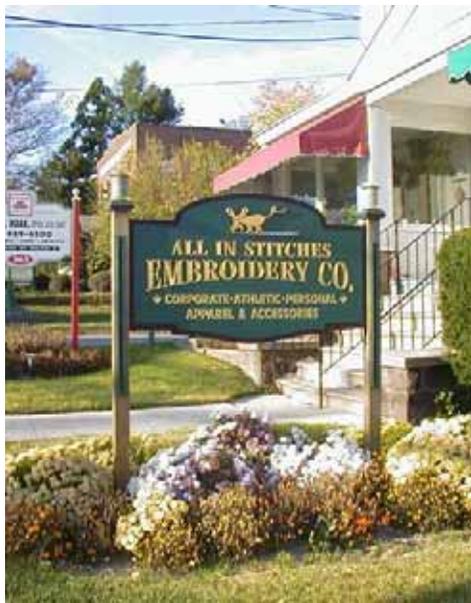
Photo: Ursinus College

The Berman Museum of Art on the Ursinus Campus draws thousands of visitors to Collegeville to view its regular collection and special exhibits.

B. *Main Street.* A walkable, centrally located commercial area, Main Street offers a number of residential, commercial, and dining opportunities. This kind of mixed-use downtown with a prosperous residential base within easy walking distance is a resource for communities engaging in revitalization efforts.

C. *Perkiomen Trail.* This 19-mile long trail that connects the Schuylkill River Trail to Green Lane Park runs directly through Collegeville Borough. Not only does this amenity provide access to open space, but it also brings thousands of visitors a month through Collegeville and across Main Street.

D. *Existing businesses.* Collegeville has a viable downtown with a variety of retail and dining options. Further, enhanced



A local business along Main Street in Collegeville

pedestrian connectivity could help to entice Perkiomen Trail users and Ursinus College students and faculty walk to businesses on Main Street.

E. *Location, location, location.* As a gateway to western Montgomery County and at the confluence of several major roadways, thousands of potential visitors from other parts of the County pass through Collegeville every day. This is a prime opportunity to make the Borough a destination that will attract visitors and businesses.

E. *Unique identity.* As a borough with a definable character, strong building stock, and aesthetic appeal, Collegeville is poised to capitalize on its unique identity. Beyond its infrastructural bones, as noted above, Collegeville is also home to Ursinus College, presenting the Borough a chance to capitalize on its image a historic “college town.”

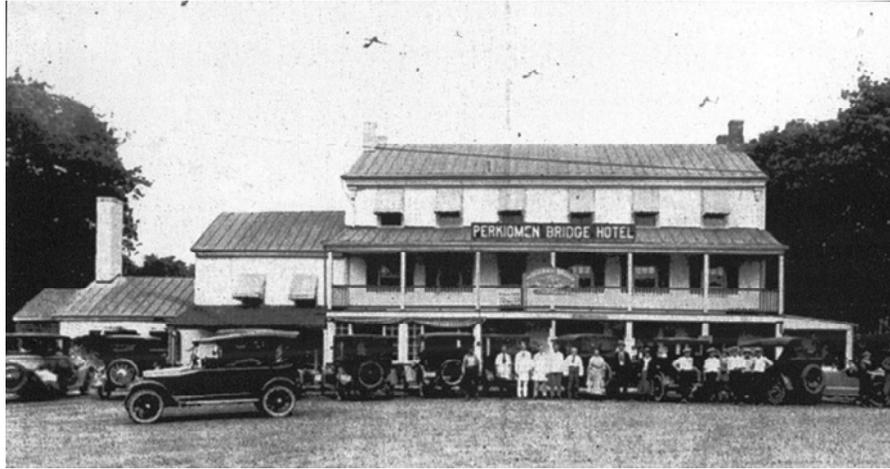
G. *Walkability.* Collegeville Borough is a small, compact community with sidewalks on most streets. It is an easy walk for almost every resident to reach schools, open space, shops, cultural events, or restaurants within minutes.



The Perkiomen trail in Collegeville.



A statue of a soldier in Community Park is a reminder of Collegeville's history and unique identity.



The Perkiomen Bridge Hotel is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the Borough and is a historic amenity the Borough would like preserve.



An office converted from a single family-home is a good example of Collegetown's architectural heritage and the unique sense of place it helps to create throughout the Borough

Weaknesses

A. *Traffic.* Although Collegetown's location brings thousands of visitors to the Borough every day, there are some unintended consequences of being such a hub:

1. For all the drivers who pass through Collegetown on Route 29 or Main Street, most are doing just that, passing through. Many of these drivers consider Collegetown a place to get through on their way to work or home and not a destination for dining, retail, or entertainment uses.
2. Because there is so much traffic on Main Street and Route 29, many key intersections become choked with cars at peak times, backing traffic up along both roadways. This congestion detracts from the character and aesthetic quality of the Borough.

3. Attempts to relieve the congestion have resulted in some intersections that are especially unfriendly to pedestrians. The intersection of Route 29 and Main Street, for example, is a confusing tangle of roadways that are particularly difficult for pedestrians (especially older or younger ones) to navigate.
4. At times when Main Street isn't backed up it often seems that people drive too fast through the Borough, enhancing the perception that Collegetown is a place you pass through on the way to other places, not a destination in its own right. This also has the negative effect of making it seem unsafe to cross Main Street, further diminishing the Borough's small-town feel.



When cars aren't moving too quickly, traffic often backs up into intersections along Main Street at peak times, creating hazards for drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and making Main Street seem less appealing.

B. *Main Street design issues.* Most of the buildings along Main Street are well maintained and aesthetically pleasing; however, there are a few notable exceptions. The Verizon building is one such building, whose blank wall facing Main Street is completely out of character with the downtown setting.

C. *Existing businesses.* Although there are many businesses along Main Street that are consistent with a viable downtown, there is a lack of options in certain areas. There is an opportunity for greater op-



The bunker-like façade of the Verizon building on Main Street detracts from the small college-town atmosphere the Borough is trying to promote.



Despite the presence of crosswalks, students attempting to cross Main Street to reach the Ursinus College campus face a challenge. Decorative crosswalks, signage, better lighting, and possible landscaping would make this crossing easier, nicer, and safer.

tions for dining, entertaining, and boutique shopping in the Borough.

D. *Signage.* There is a definite lack of signage throughout Collegeville. The intersection of Route 29 and Main Street should act as a gateway into Collegeville, alerting visitors to the cultural and retail amenities in the Borough. Certainly, there should be signs celebrating and directing visitors towards Ursinus College. There are no directional or decorative promotional signs for the college or local businesses.

E. *Pedestrian Gaps.* Most of Collegeville Borough has sufficient sidewalks, but there are some notable gaps in the sidewalk network. As mentioned above, certain intersections make crossing streets difficult, or even dangerous. In addition, there are no sidewalks along the shopping center side of Route 29 or connecting Main Street to Community Park.

F. *Parking.* Although there is some off-street parking available in the Borough, more may be needed as the commercial sector expands.



Gaps in the pedestrian network make it difficult to reach certain destinations in the Borough and even make some intersections dangerous to cross.

Threats and Opportunities

There is one potential threat to Collegeville's position as the downtown of the Central and Lower Perkiomen Valley Region. The new Providence Town Center being built in Lower Providence Township is planned to be a lifestyle shopping center that will mimic some of Collegeville's assets, such as a walkable "Main Street." This, in addition to other nearby shopping centers near Limerick could draw away some of the shoppers or businesses who would otherwise come to Collegeville. It is important to note, though, that this type of shopping center focuses on big box retailers and generally excludes smaller scale, local businesses, a niche Collegeville is already in a position to fill.

Although these weaknesses can seem insurmountable, the good news is that the strengths of Collegeville Borough greatly outweigh the weaknesses. Also, by capitalizing and improving the strengths, many of the weaknesses will be nullified. For example, the current improvements to the intersection at Route

29 and Main Street include enhancements that could make this the gateway into Collegeville it should be.

By marketing itself properly the Borough could exploit a niche not being served by the larger shopping centers and their big-box stores. A market study is necessary to adequately investigate this opportunity.

There is also a major opportunity to reinvent the shopping centers in Study Area Three as an extension of Main Street. The Providence Town Center development may siphon off businesses from Collegeville's shopping centers, leaving them with increasing vacancies. In addition the centers only have a few owners, making comprehensive renovations easier and less complicated. The time is ripe for these shopping centers to redevelop and the Borough should be an active participant in this process.



Collegeville has a genuine Main Street with small-town charm, a strong sense of community, and cultural institutions that the new Providence Town Center cannot match.



Community-oriented festivals, like this concert in Community Park, accentuate Collegeville's strong sense of place

Chapter Four

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles: A Town Center Strategy

After understanding the historical background, the regional setting, the demographic analysis, the land use, the commercial corridor, the previous studies and plans, and the key issues and opportunities, there are four principles that are evident in order to proceed with the revitalization plan: 1) Small Town Character,

2) This is a Borough Plan, 3) Programs and Policies lead to Physical Improvements, and 4) Getting More bang for the Buck. These four principles will serve to guide the goals and objectives and implementation elements of this Revitalization Plan.

1. Small Town Character

The one major overarching principle for Collegeville's Town Center Strategy is "Small Town Character." But, what is "small town character?" The most effi-

cient way to describe this is with photos of other towns with small town character. Here are some examples:



A streetscape in Swarthmore, PA (Swarthmore College)

**Small Town
Character with:**

- New Buildings
- Mixed Use
- Wide Sidewalks
- Street Trees
- On-Street Parking



Looney Ricks Kiss



Looney Ricks Kiss

Princeton, NJ. New mixed use buildings create an upscale, small town character. Notice the shops are close to the sidewalk, but sometimes are set back. Many shops include awnings. Also, there is on-street parking, street trees, and different paving materials. There are also balconies of housing units overlooking the street, which is not very wide.

**Small Town
Character with:**

- Old Buildings
- Mixed Use
- Wide Sidewalks
- Street Trees



Fausta Wertz/blog.nj.com

Princeton, NJ. Nassau Street is the traditional "Main Street" with older mixed use buildings. There are many shops here that cater to the students, parents, and local people. Note the very wide sidewalk. At the time of the photo, the street was blocked off for the annual community festival.



unknown

Santana Row, San Jose, CA. This part of town is new and has small town character. Again, the mixed use buildings, wide sidewalks, street trees and street lights, shop windows and awnings all add to the character. Sidewalk cafes are allowed here. Note here the street and sidewalk are level and there is no curb to trip pedestrians. Drainage is handled other ways.

**Small Town
Character with:**

- Retail Uses
- Sidewalks
- Street Trees
- Small Parks
- Bicycle Parking



Victoria, CA. This “small town” street has retail-only buildings built right up to the edge of the sidewalk. The grass strip between the sidewalk and the road is extra wide and the edge of the sidewalk and the gutter is curved. Street trees and street lights are included. Bicycle racks are used here.



Unknown. This new “small town” street also has retail-only buildings. In this case, the grass strip between the sidewalk and the road has become a small park. Street trees go around the park and here many customers use bikes.

**Small Town
Character with:**

- Old Buildings
- Mixed Use
- Sidewalks with Seating
- Street Trees
- On-Street Parking



Doylestown, PA. This is a view of one of the streets in this historic small town. It is very successful as a pedestrian-oriented town. Note here the narrow roadway with on-street parking on both sides, the sidewalk dining, and the mix of uses.



Unknown. The bery of pedestrian activity shows this place is obviously very successful. Notice the sidewalk is wide enough for some small tables with chairs, a bench, and room to walk through. The buildings, awnings and trees provide shade, and there is on-street parking, banners, and flags. People of many ages are attracted to this place.

Collegeville's Small Town Character

Now that we've seen what other small towns can look like, let's examine Collegeville.

Collegeville's revitalization area is a unique mix of commercial, college, and residential uses, has a somewhat pedestrian-friendly small town atmosphere and is perceived to be safe. This character should be preserved and used to inform all new changes so that the changes actually strengthen Collegeville's own particular small town character.

More specific characteristics of Collegeville's unique small town character are:

- The two-lane, two-way, main arterials (Main Street, Second Avenue, Gravel Pike).
- It is a college town, with Ursinus College along Main Street, just 2 blocks from the downtown area.
- Main Street from Third Avenue to Fourth Avenue is most like a small town downtown with 2- to 3-story storefront buildings which further up the hill becomes a residential and service businesses area followed by

the college and some of its residential buildings.

- Second Avenue is more like a commercial strip with 2 shopping centers and parking in front, some "pad" buildings along the road, and some individual businesses with parking in front. This character is not consistent with good small town character.
- Gravel Pike has a few free-standing businesses (muffler shop, antiques



Main Street, Collegeville (2000): what should be retained the way it is, and what could be improved?



Second Avenue in Collegeville (2009): what should be retained the way it is, and what could be improved?



Gravel Pike in Collegeville (2000): This roadway is being improved with sidewalks, street trees and lights.



Main Street in Collegeville (2000): what are the characteristics that are helpful and should be retained the way it is, and what are those that could be improved?

flea market, and construction yard), a large open area, and some houses.

- There are 4 major entryways into Collegeville's commercial area. Roughly, they are from the north, east, south, and west. Each has a different character experience
- The "Dogleg" area, where Main Street, Second Street, and Gravel Pike meet, is the hub of the commercial area. To/from this area, all four spokes meet each other.

The questions for Collegeville are:

Overall, do you like the current small town character?

What do you like, and what don't you like and you would like to have change?

How do you keep the parts you like and maybe even improve them a little?

How do you change the parts you don't like and what should they come out like?

What parts are you missing and how do you get them?



The eastern entry to Collegeville (2000). What, if anything, should be retained the way it is, and what should be improved?

2. This is a Borough Plan

This is a plan prepared by and for the Borough and will only address the aspects of revitalization over which it has any control or influence. This plan will investigate programs and policies that the borough can carry out, should it so desire. These programs and policies range from items in the borough's exclusive realm (such as zoning and other ordinances, public safety and police powers, expenditures, and public facili-

ties) to public/private partnerships and also endorsements of non-Borough actions.

Revitalization efforts that are within the exclusive realm of the private sector (such as advising an entity on how to improve its business plan) will not be a part of this plan other than expressing that the Borough could work with any private party or organization to coordinate their efforts with the Borough's.



The "Dogleg" area in Collegeville (2000). It is now being totally reconstructed including crosswalks, sidewalks, street trees and lights. The white buildings have been demolished and there is room for a small gateway park.

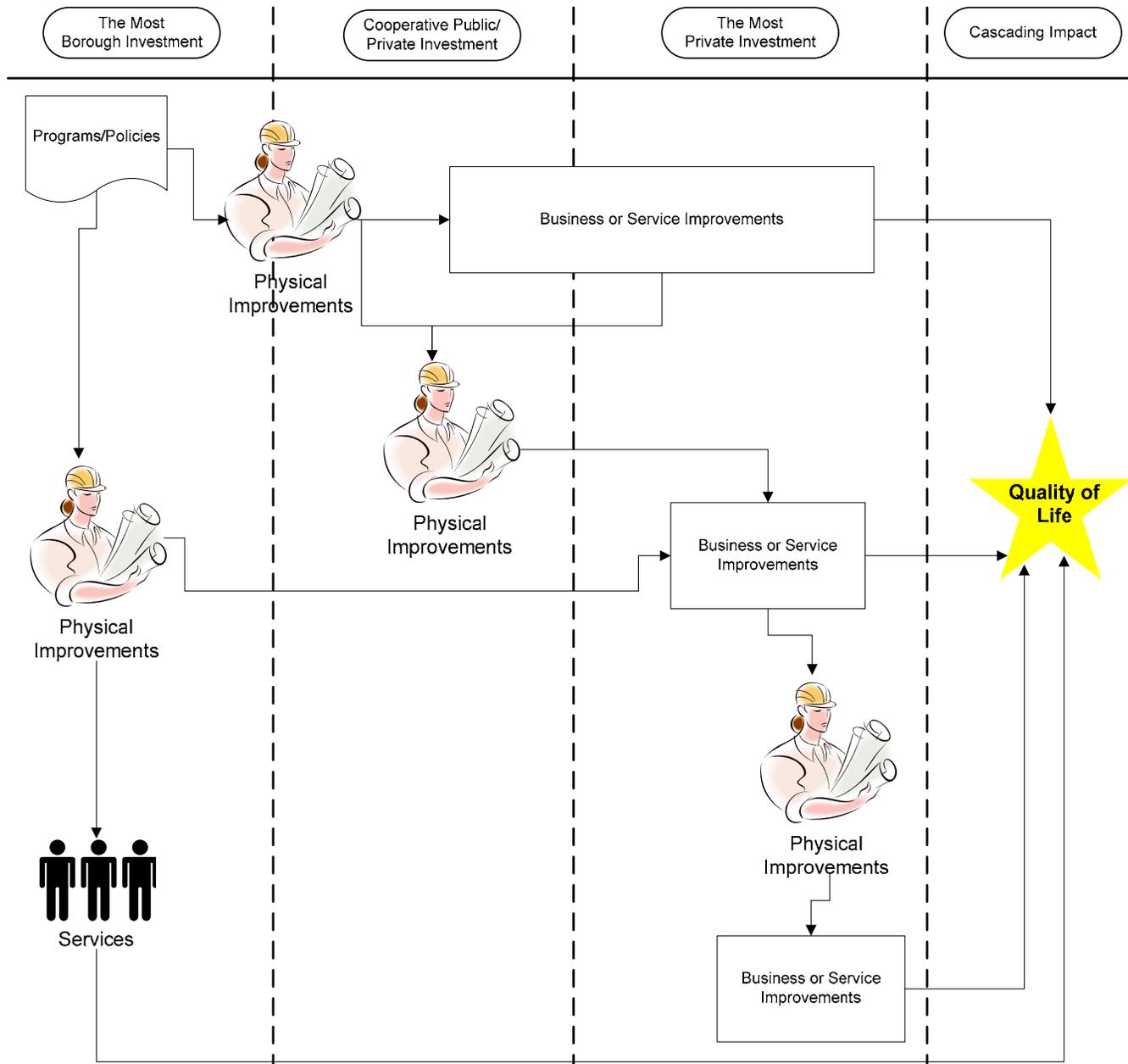
3. Programs and Policies Lead to Physical Improvements

The third principle of this plan is that the programs and policies presented are intended to affect positive changes in the *physical character* of the study areas. These positive physical changes are expected to cause or allow other improvements such as increased or improved businesses or services, which may also cause further physical or business and service improvements. Both the physical and business or service improve-

ments will increase the quality of life for Collegeville's residents, businesses, and visitors. Public investment in physical improvements, therefore, can *trigger a cascade* of improvements in a community leading to a significant increase in the quality of life.

The diagram on the following page helps explain this principle.

How Programs and Policies Lead to Physical Improvements which Result in a Better Quality of Life

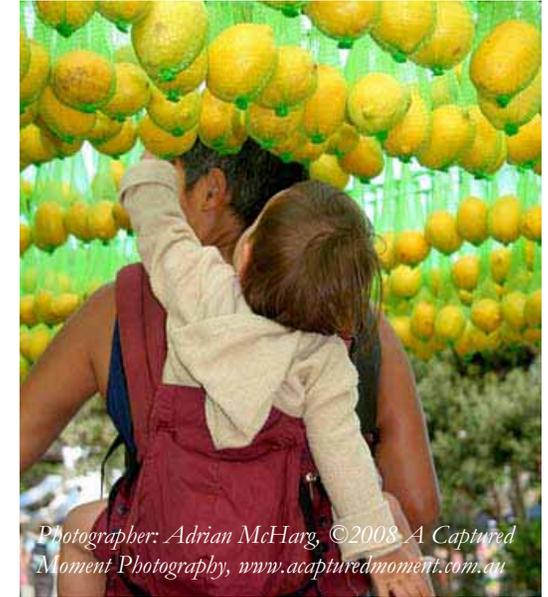


4. Getting More Bang for the Buck.

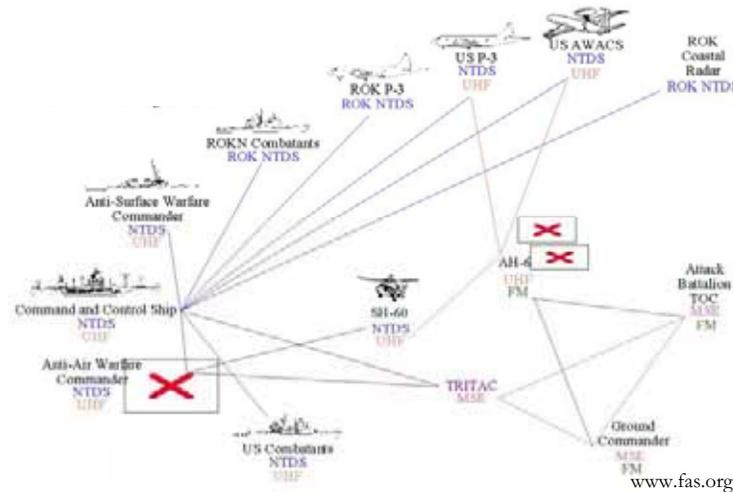
Everyone wants to get the most out of their investment. Two approaches for this will be used in this plan: Low Hanging Fruit and Synergy.

Obvious Projects First. While it can be true that the larger the investment the greater the return, there are sometimes “low hanging fruit” that can produce a larger bounty with less than average investment. Often these are the simple and easy projects that are staring you in the face.

Coordinated Attack. All the revitalization effort to improve a property or a business could be diminished, however, if another part of the revitalization works against it. So, at least as important as the improvements themselves is their coordination. Not only that, but coordinating efforts can compound their benefits so that even more results from the efforts – a synergy is created. Two plus two can equal 6.

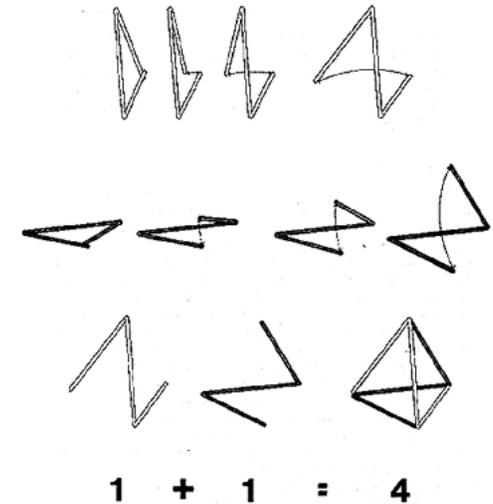


Photographer: Adrian McHarg, ©2008 A Captured Moment Photography, www.acapturedmoment.com.au



From the Federation Of American Scientists: “Using Innovation and Synergy to Solve a Very Real and Substantial Threat”

Syn"er*gy (?), n. [Gr. . See Synergetic.] Combined action; ... 2. An effect of the interaction of the actions of two agents such that the result of the combined action is greater than expected as a simple additive combination of the two agents acting separately.



Triangle and Tetrahedron: Synergy (1 + 1 = 4): Two triangles may be combined in such a manner as to create the tetrahedron, a figure volumetrically embraced by four triangles. Therefore one plus one seemingly equals four.

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Chapter Five

Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives

By examining the key issues and challenges facing Collegeville, the Revitalization Committee has established the following goals and objectives to steer the Borough's revitalization efforts. In addition, these goals and objectives grew out of the findings of the Vision and Action

Strategy Project conducted by the Borough in September of 2005. These goals are meant to build on and enhance the Borough's unique identity, history, and cultural and natural amenities, while providing a path towards future development and prosperity.



Community Park, an open space amenity in Collegeville Borough.

Physical Improvements

Goal: To maintain the economic viability of Collegeville while building on its existing small town character.

Objective: To maintain public safety and Collegeville's history as a safe destination. Currently, Collegeville is regarded as a safe destination. This can be enhanced through revitalization efforts that promote attractive and effective lighting, pedestrian facilities, and traffic calming.

Objective: To improve overall pedestrian connectivity. There are many gaps in Collegeville's sidewalk network. Improvements to sidewalk facilities will enhance the ability of residents to easily reach the business, cultural, and

natural amenities that are some of the Borough's strongest assets.

Objective: To enhance connections to open space from Main Street and the shopping centers. Signage and improved sidewalks will help connect residents and businesses to the Borough's open space.

Objective: To control the speed and volume of traffic moving through Collegeville. Although Main Street and Route 29 are owned by PennDOT, there is still a great deal the Borough can do to slow traffic moving through Collegeville. Traffic calming and streetscape improvements along Main Street



Ursinus College is the Borough's most prominent cultural and educational institution. Greater links between the Borough, the business community, and the College will greatly benefit the Collegeville's revitalization efforts.

will aid the Borough's efforts to improve safety and aesthetics.

Objective: To improve parking facilities for Borough businesses that is consistent with the small town character of Collegeville. Signage and markings directing visitors to existing parking facilities are a good first step towards providing parking for residents and shoppers. Further, encouraging new parking facilities to the rears of buildings will enhance the Borough's small-town appeal.

Objective: To preserve and rejuvenate the historic buildings along Main Street with appropriately sited development that builds on Collegeville's history and identity.

Goal: To enhance physical connections between Ursinus College and Main Street. Improving the physical connections between the College and the Borough's primary business districts will benefit both the College and the Borough. The College will thrive on an active and bustling Main Street and Main Street businesses will be able to rely on a steady influx of students, employees, and visitors from the College. These physical connections are the first step in establishing stronger economic and social ties between Ursinus College and Collegeville.

Objective: To extend streetscaping along Main Street to Ursinus

College. An aesthetically pleasing Main Street with sidewalk furniture and street trees make it far easier and more appealing for pedestrians to move up and down Main Street.

Objective: To improve sidewalk conditions along Main Street. There are some gaps in the sidewalk network throughout Collegeville. There are sidewalks located the entire length of Main Street, but they are not always in the best shape and could detract from Borough businesses.

Objective: To increase signage for Ursinus College and related amenities throughout the Borough. Ursinus College is a major asset to the Borough, just as the Borough is a major asset to Ursinus College. Improving signage and directional markers will increase the visibility of the College and Borough businesses.

Goal: To link Main Street with other commercial areas in the Borough. As the shopping centers along Route 29 may soon be redeveloping, with vacancies being filled by new tenants, there is an opportunity to create a more consistent experience throughout the commercial areas of Collegeville.

Objective: To improve pedestrian facilities between the two business districts. By making it easier to



Sidewalk gaps make walking around in Collegeville far more difficult than it should be in a small-town. These gaps should be filled in and extended to connect to major commercial, cultural, and open space resources.



The shopping centers along Route 29 are largely oriented towards automobile traffic and are difficult to reach on foot.



walk from Main Street to the shopping centers and vice versa, these improvements will make it easier for residents and visitors to experience all of the commercial possibilities in Collegeville without having to drive.

Objective: To consider design regulations which continue the aesthetic appeal of Main Street into redeveloping shopping centers along Route 29. In addition to pedestrian improvements, consistent design schemes between the commercial districts will create a natural flow for all visitors and make the commercial dis-

tricts feel like more of a comprehensive whole, rather than two separate commercial areas.

Objective: To improve signage for businesses, the College, and amenities throughout the Borough. It can be easy for commuters passing through the Borough to be unaware of all the amenities in Collegeville. Better signage for businesses and directional signage for Borough amenities and College events will alert new visitors to all the possibilities in Collegeville.

Does this look like an easy place to walk? Improvements to the pedestrian facilities at the intersection of Main Street and Route 29 will help to unify Collegeville's commercial corridors.

Economic Improvements

Goal: To provide a broad array of retail options within the Borough's commercial areas.

Objective: To retain the businesses that provide necessary services to the Borough. Supermarkets, hardware stores, and convenience stores that provide essen-

tial services to Borough and area residents are facing stiff competition from businesses outside the Borough.

Objective: To retain and enhance existing entertainment and dining options to include evening activities. The Borough has a



Preservation and reuse of the Borough's historic resources, like this building on Main Street, should be encouraged.

number of bars and restaurants that are one element to creating an exciting downtown area. The next step may be to encourage fine dining options and businesses that cater to after-dinner activities, such as a cigar bar, a coffee shop/café, or a movie theater.

Objective: To foster the redevelopment of historic properties. The Main Street area includes a number of historic properties deserving of renovation and reuse, a vital element to the revitalization efforts of many historic town centers.

Objective: To promote a greater diversity of uses beyond Main Street, including residential apartments or offices above businesses fronting the street

Goal: Encourage businesses that cater to the students and faculty of Ursinus College as well as visitors to the Borough.

Objective: To foster cooperation between the Borough, Main Street businesses, and Ursinus College.

Objective: To encourage the expansion of events and programs offered by the College that could include businesses in the Borough.

Goal: Promote Collegeville as a shopping, cultural and civic destination, not just a place to pass through.

Objective: To encourage participation from residents, Ursinus College, local businesses, and the Borough in community festivals that strengthens Collegeville's unique identity and position in the region.

Objective: To define the Borough's market area and identify businesses that would thrive in Collegeville's small-town environment.

Objective: To site appropriate businesses throughout the business districts of Collegeville that cater to students, residents, and trail users.



The Borough should encourage greater diversity of uses throughout its commercial areas and allow for a mix of uses that support an active Main Street, like this one in Doylestown, PA.



Gateways and increased signage will make visitors more aware of local historic, cultural, and open space amenities such as Hunsberger Woods.

Goal: To identify specific businesses or specific sites for businesses that would be appropriate for the Borough. Which businesses decide to move

into Collegeville is largely a market driven decision, but the Borough can offer incentives and work with developers to promote the kinds of businesses and development that will

Special Projects

enhance the Borough's revitalization efforts.

Objective: Bookstore with coffee shop on Main Street

Objective: Mixed-use center on the corner of 5th and Main

Objective: Hotel or Inn

Objective: To redevelop historic sites, specifically the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel.

Goal: To identify potential projects as the focus of public investment. Despite the downturn in the economy, there is still funding available for communities willing to pursue grants. Further, some of the following objectives could be achieved with public/private partnerships that work to the benefit of the local government and the busi-

ness community.

Objective: To bury utility lines along Main Street.

Objective: To redevelop shopping centers along Route 29 as a continuation of Main Street.

Objective: To construct attractive gateways with signage and information kiosks at entrances to the Perkiomen Trail, the College, and the Borough itself.

Objective: To extend streetscape along Main Street past 9th to the Borough line.

Objective: To create more parking throughout the business districts in the Borough.



Streetscaping improvements along Main Street should extend beyond Ursinus College to the Borough Line.



The overhead power lines on main Street are cluttered and detract from Collegeville's small-town charm.



Streetscaping, signage, and crosswalk enhancements would improve the atmosphere on Route 29 around the shopping centers and help to unify Collegeville's commercial areas.

Chapter Six

Physical Improvements: Enhancing Collegeville's Economic Viability by Building on its Small-Town Character

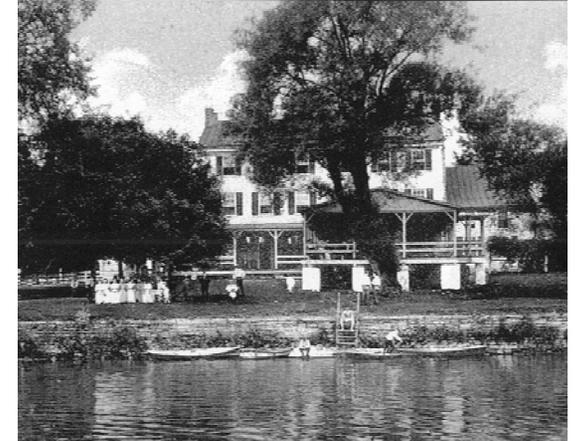
Physical Improvements

Collegeville Borough is looking to revitalize its core business districts by building on its unique character and history. As the Revitalization Task Force reviewed its revitalization options, three main aspects of revitalization emerged: Physical Improvements, Economic Incentives, and Special Projects.

This chapter will examine the physical improvements the Task Force recognized as vital to their revitalization efforts. The decision to pursue these improvements grew out of the goals and objectives described in the previous chapter. They were chosen because they represent the Borough's best opportunity to fulfill its goal of revitalization through investment in Collegeville's history and identity. They will be achieved using a

combination of public and private investment. Private developers, government agencies, public and private institutions, and the Borough itself will all be needed to accomplish these tasks.

As Collegeville Borough looks to revitalize and promote new development, it cannot ignore its unique identity as a historic college town. In fact, these are assets that, along with the Borough's key location, will be essential in attracting new businesses and visitors to Collegeville. The following physical improvements are opportunities for the Borough to shape its physical presence with a combination of public and private investment.



A historic picture of the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel at the entrance to Collegeville.



A streetscape with furniture, lighting, sidewalks, landscaping and street trees in Salisbury, MD.

Streetscape Improvements along Main Street

The Borough is currently installing improved sidewalk facilities and aesthetic improvements along Main Street between First and Fourth Avenues. This is being partially funded by PennDOT as they make improvements to the intersection of Route 29 and Main Street. The Collegeville Main Street Program has been overseeing these improvements and

has been instrumental in securing funds for a full-time Main Street Manager.

The Borough should pursue funding to extend these efforts to include streetscaping past Ursinus College to the border with Trappe Borough. It is important that the Borough continue to support the Main Street Program as there

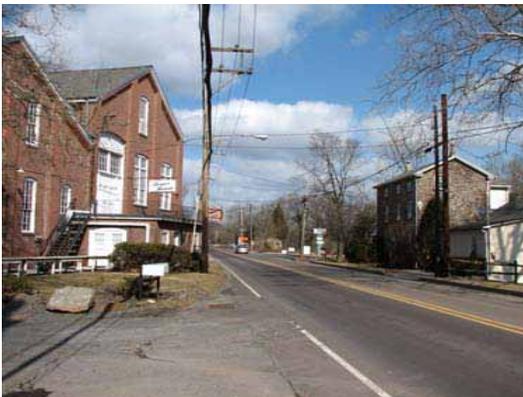
will be opportunities to make these improvements as properties redevelop along Main Street.

Streetscaping improvements include repair of cracked or broken sidewalks, installation of street furniture like benches

and bike racks, street trees and other landscaping, bike lanes, crosswalks, public art, and way-finding signage. These enhancements improve the quality of life in the Borough and make it a more attractive destination for businesses and visitors.

Extend Sidewalk Facilities

One of the priorities of this plan is to enhance connections between the Main Street area and the shopping centers along Route 29. Making the pedestrian connection between these two areas stronger will have several benefits. First, attractive and safe pedestrian connections between the two areas will benefit both by allowing visitors and shoppers to move easily between the two shopping districts. Second, these two areas are separated by the Perkiomen Trail, a major amenity to the Borough that brings thousands of visitors through Collegeville during peak months of activity. By enhancing the pedestrian connection between the two commercial areas, pe-



Sidewalks need to be extended into Study Area 2 along the northern portion of Route 29.

destrian facilities to and from the trail will also be improved, making it easier and more attractive for trail users to stop and shop at businesses in Collegeville.

This plan also includes portions of Third and Fourth Avenues between Main Street and Park Avenue. There are currently no sidewalks along these streets, which represent a vital link between Main Street and Community Park. The installation of sidewalks, complete with benches, lighting, crosswalks, and street trees, will create not only a vital pedestrian link between Main Street and Community Park, but a link to residential portion of the Borough around Community Park that are not currently served by sidewalks.

Other gaps in the pedestrian network exist throughout the Borough. For instance, there is a lack of sidewalks along Route 29, both north and south of Main Street. Although it may not be physically possible to place sidewalks all along Route 29 in Study Area 3 or connect the sidewalks between the shopping centers, the crossings need to be improved to provide easier access for nearby residents. Further, the noticeable lack of sidewalks along the northern section of Route 29 in Study Area 2 makes it diffi-



A revitalized streetscape in Jenkintown Borough



Main Street in Collegeville

cult to walk to local businesses like the Powerhouse or offices like Marshall Geosciences. These areas would greatly benefit from extended pedestrian facilities.

The Borough has ordinances in its Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance requiring sidewalks. As properties in these areas redevelop it is important for Collegeville to remain vigilant in the enforcement of these requirements. Further, the Borough will continue to pursue streetscape improvements that go beyond those currently under way. These improvements are essential elements to an attractive, lively, and walkable downtown that attracts businesses and customers from across the region.



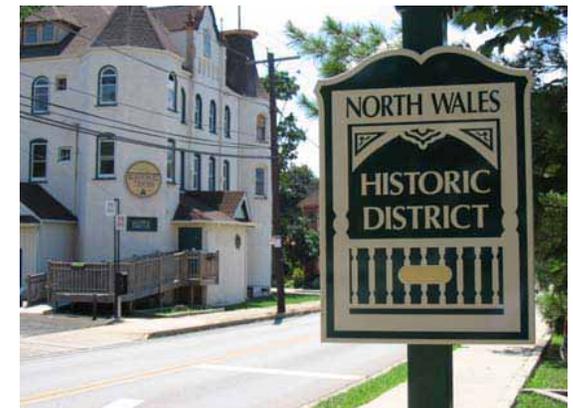
Above: Community Park is poorly served by inadequate sidewalks, making this amenity difficult to access from Main Street and the Perkiomen Trail.

Signs

As noted in the weaknesses of Collegeville Borough, there is a marked lack of signage throughout the Borough. The Borough will pursue options for increased signage in the future. This will include signs indicating entrances to the Borough, such as at the intersection of Main Street and Second Avenue and parts of the Perkiomen Trail. Wayfinding signs showing visitors to parking areas for cars and bikes, local business of interest to trail users and students, government services, parks, and other amenities are a vital aspect of this part of the plan. Many of the Borough's assets are underutilized as a result of a lack of awareness by residents and visitors alike.



A municipal wayfinding sign in Norristown, PA.

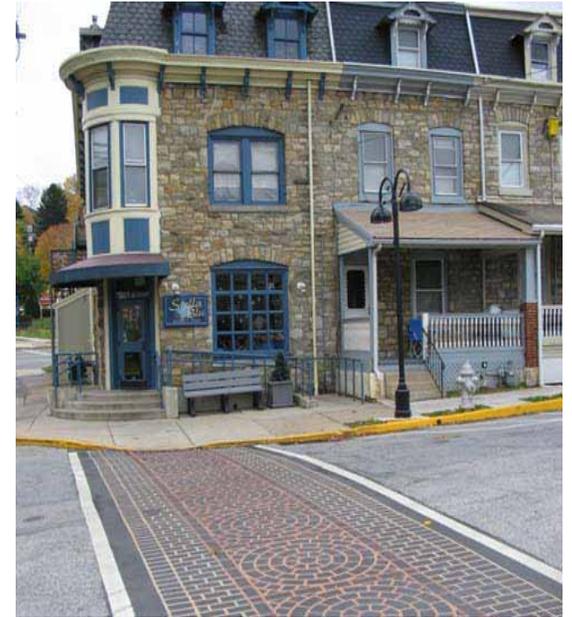


A promotional sign for the Historic District in North Wales Borough.

cently pursued and received funding from the Montgomery County Open Space Program to construct a gateway/Main Street/PerkTrail/Info kiosk where the trail intersects Main Street.

However, there are more entrances to the Borough that would greatly benefit from gateways that advertise the Collegeville and its advantages. Both the northern and southern edges of Route 29 in the Borough would make terrific places

for attractive gateways that alert the many travelers using that roadway in both directions of local businesses and the presence of the College. Further, the southern entry to the Borough along Route 29 is also an access point to the Perkiomen Trail, creating even more reasons to redevelop the area as an attractive gateway to Collegeville Borough, complete with landscaping, information kiosks, and wayfinding signage.



Decorative crosswalks are an aesthetic addition to the streetscape that also make drivers more aware of pedestrian crossings



Street parking increases the available parking in the Borough and helps to slow down traffic because the road seems narrower

Public Safety and Traffic Calming

Because it has its own police department and fire company, Collegeville Borough has always been a safe place to live. Collegeville is, and is perceived as, a terrific community for raising families or owning

a business. Collegeville's public safety issues relate more to protecting pedestrians and managing traffic concerns than they do to persistent crime or recurring vandalism.



Bulb-outs with clearly marked crosswalks make crossings safer for pedestrians and drivers. This type of device will be useful throughout the study areas in Collegeville

The Borough has already begun work with streetscaping, improved pedestrian facilities at high-volume intersections, and traffic controls that will ease congestion when completed. However, there remain gaps in the sidewalk network throughout the Borough and there are many areas which would benefit from traffic calming and streetscaping. For instance, the area of Main Street in front of Ursinus College handles a high volume of automobile traffic as well as students crossing Main Street to access the campus. Enhanced crossings are being considered by the College in order to better protect its students. Similar crossings, with brick pavers to differentiate

the crosswalk and signage, could be used all along Main Street in addition to the area around Ursinus College. These improved crossings would also greatly benefit the shopping center areas along Route 29 which see a great deal of automobile traffic.

In addition to the extension of other streetscaping projects being undertaken at the southern end of the Borough, this would create a unified Main Street. Visitors coming to Collegeville for the College or the Perkiomen Trail will be more easily drawn to Collegeville's many businesses and amenities.



A parking lot behind businesses in Narberth Borough.



Signs directing visitors to municipal parking lots in Ambler Borough.

Parking

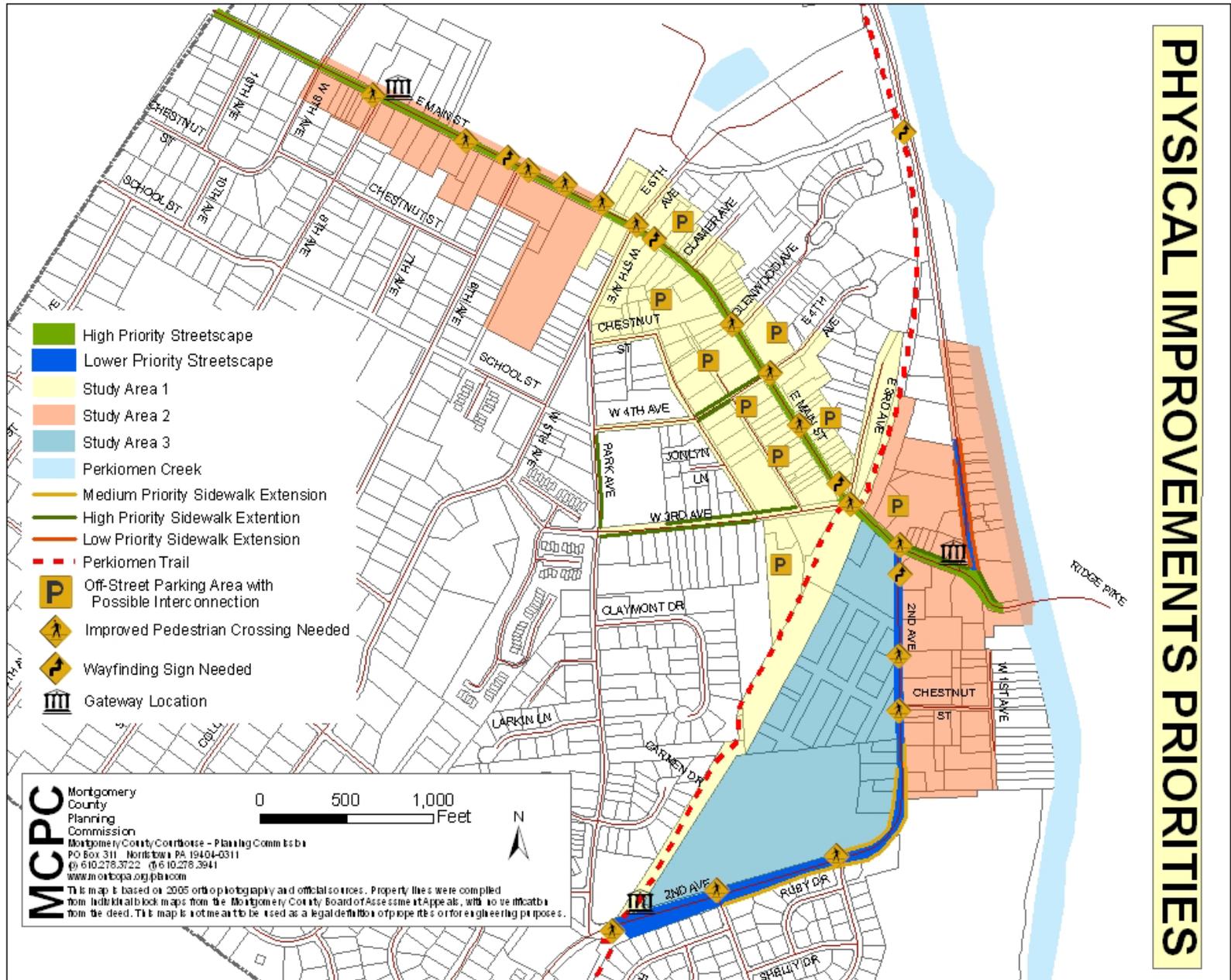
Although there is a good deal of both on and off-street parking available in Collegeville, the Borough's existing parking facilities may not be sufficient to meet the needs of local businesses. As more businesses locate in Collegeville, these facilities could be even more inadequate, making it increasingly difficult to attract new businesses. The Borough should pursue a parking assessment study to



A parking lot in Collegeville.

determine if current parking meets the needs of local businesses and to recommend changes to Collegeville's parking infrastructure to meet the needs of businesses, visitors, and residents.

There are opportunities along Main Street to develop parking areas behind the buildings fronting on Main Street that would allow Main Street to retain its small-town charm. There are lots behind La Fontana's and around the old flag factory that are not currently being used or are underused. Further, the Borough should support interconnections between new and existing parking facilities that will complement its small-town charm. New businesses may be able to provide some funding for parking improvements, but the Borough may also have to seek other funding sources as well.



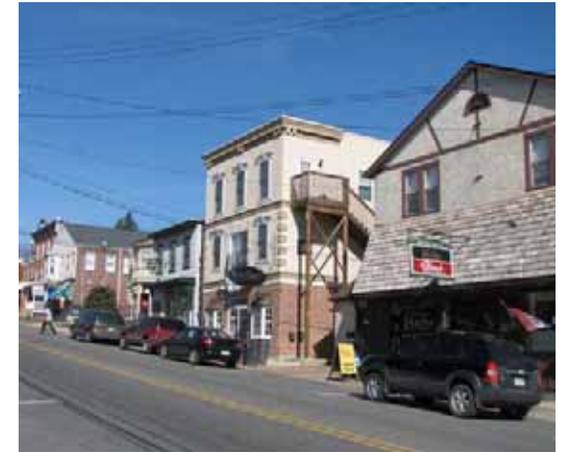
Chapter Seven

Economic Improvements: Promoting New Development and Investment into Collegeville's Commercial Districts

Economic Improvements

This chapter will explore possible economic incentives that will help the Borough to encourage new development and public investment into Collegeville's commercial corridors. Not only do these initiatives represent opportunities to make Collegeville more attractive to new businesses, they also work as tools to help the Borough's existing businesses thrive in a competitive environment. These options were chosen because they

are geared toward improving the Borough's commercial sector without sacrificing Collegeville's unique character and history. Further, by directing resources to the transition areas between the three study areas, creating vital connections between Ursinus College, Main Street, and the shopping centers they can be applied to the effort to create a more unified commercial area.



The mix of uses allowed in the Borough's Main Street Commercial District should be expanded.

Parking Regulations

As noted in previous sections, the Borough feels it needs more parking facilities to meet the demands of current and future visitors to Collegeville. Providing the off-street parking required by any ordinance in a borough setting can be difficult for new businesses because of the confined space along Main Streets and the cost of providing parking in that environment. The Borough already al-

lows for shared parking, but it should also examine allowing new businesses on Main Street to use on-street parking within a certain distance to count towards the parking required by the Zoning Ordinance. This eases the burden of providing parking in a constrained area and helps to encourage a lively commercial corridor.



If this Hess Gas Station on the corner of Route 29 and Second Avenue in Study Area 3 redevelops, allowing a mix of uses and having strong design standards will help ensure development that works as a gateway into the rest of Collegeville.

Extension of Main Street Commercial Uses

Collegeville's Zoning Ordinance provides for uses that are highly compatible with a lively commercial district in its MSC Main Street Commercial District. These uses include restaurants with outdoor dining, art studios, retail stores, and

offices. The Borough should consider extending this district on the north side of Main Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. One of the goals of this plan is to integrate the Ursinus College campus with the business districts along Main

Street and Route 29. This effort, in conjunction with enhanced pedestrian facilities, will help to create connections between Ursinus College and the business districts of Collegeville by allowing for a more diverse mix of uses along Main Street.

Further, the Borough should consider allowing a mix of uses in the current shopping centers along Route 29 in Study Area 3. These centers currently lie in the Borough's SC Shopping Center District. Mixed uses with rigorous de-

sign standards in the SC would allow for the redesign of the shopping centers into an extension of Main Street's small town atmosphere. With parking in the rear, a mix of uses that includes office and residential, and commercial spaces comparable to what already exists in the shopping centers, this could be a bold new opportunity to compete with the new shopping center under construction in Lower Providence Township.



Recently closed Acme Supermarket in Study Area 3. This may be a good time to consider marketing to different types of businesses and new design regulations

Expand Design Standards

To compliment the physical improvements to the streetscape currently underway along Main Street, the Borough should enhance its design standards for its MSC Main Street Commercial Zoning District. Regulations that include standards for building massing, placement of windows, pocket park standards and requirements, and decorative elements like awnings, kiosks, lighting, and decorative architecture will help Collegeville guide its built environment. The guidelines described in *Creating New Opportunities: Town Center District*, a model ordinance prepared by Montgomery County

Planning Commission, are intended to aid revitalizing Boroughs like Collegeville. An excerpt of these guidelines can be found in Appendix 1.

Further, the Borough should extend these design standards beyond the MSC District to include all of Main Street and even the shopping center areas. As these places redevelop and revitalize, Collegeville will want to ensure that its small town character is maintained and enhanced throughout all the business districts with attractive designs and decorative elements.

Signs

As mentioned elsewhere in this plan, there is a distinct lack of signage alerting visitors to Collegeville of its many businesses, institutions and amenities. Wayfinding signs along Main Street, at access points to the Perkiomen Trail, and within the Ursinus College campus area will help to create awareness and the feeling

of a unified commercial corridor that is actively working towards revitalization. In addition, gateway signs at significant entrances to the Borough could be used to promote the presence of Ursinus College as a major institution in the Borough and the many businesses located on Main Street and the shopping centers. The



The Borough needs to commission more signs like this one to increase awareness of and direct visitors to local businesses, open space amenities, and cultural destinations

Borough, the Main Street office, and the Collegeville Beautification Committee should coordinate the efforts to pursue increased signage with funding from Montgomery County, PennDOT (when

transportation improvements occur), new development, Ursinus College, and local businesses.

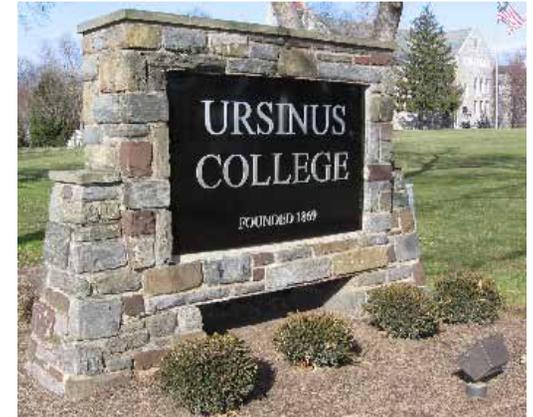
Cross Promotions and Marketing

As part of this revitalization plan, the Borough is seeking ways to encourage visitors to Ursinus College to make use of local businesses. Ursinus College draws visitors from across the region into Collegeville for its various events. Improving sidewalks and signage are part of the puzzle, but it may take more active involvement from all parties to make these elements work together.

The College may want to consider using the Borough’s many amenities as a selling point in its recruitment literature. Part of the appeal of attending school in an atmosphere like Collegeville is the fun and active commercial center. Featuring the many shops and restaurants in Collegeville that appeal to college students in brochures benefits both the College and local businesses. Further, when the College hosts events, such as graduation, exhibitions at the Berman Museum of Art, sporting events, and theater per-

formances it could recommend local restaurants as places to continue the event.

The Borough should begin a “First Friday” program. This promotion could draw attention to Collegeville’s bars and restaurants and lead to visitors discovering other attractions to explore. When paired with the opening of a new exhibit at the Berman Museum of Art, a show at the Ursinus College Performing Arts Center, or other events this becomes a benefit to the entire community. Events along the Perkiomen Trail and community events would also make a nice daytime compliment to an evening “First Friday” promotion. The Borough should also pursue designation as a “Classic Town” from Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission if criteria changes. These events and promotions should be packaged together to help enhance the strong tight-knit community feel that Collegeville already has.



Ursinus College needs to increase its presence throughout the Borough. Wayfinding, gateway, and promotional signs are needed to increase awareness of the College and its many cultural and educational benefits



Creating New Opportunities: Town Center District is a model ordinance designed to aid revitalizing Boroughs like Collegeville.

Retail Business Recruitment

Collegeville Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) and the Borough Main Street Manager have taken active roles in recruiting new businesses to Collegeville and marketing the Borough. They should continue these activities with support from the Borough and con-

sider marketing to businesses that satisfy the needs of both permanent residents and students at Ursinus College. As businesses in the shopping centers close or relocate, the CEDC and Main Street Manager should be actively recruiting proper tenants that fit those criteria.

Further, there may be opportunities for revitalization for the portion of Study Area 2 on the northern end of Route 29 in which the CEDC should be an active participant.

Additionally, the CEDC and Main Street Manager should continue actively pursuing the expansion of the Borough's dining and entertainment options. A cigar bar, coffee shop, small bistro, or boutique are all appropriate businesses for Main Street. In the shopping centers, the CEDC may even want to shop around the idea of a small cinema as an anchor to replace departing tenants. A market assessment should be performed for the Borough to establish the businesses that

are the most appropriate most likely to succeed in different areas of the Borough.

Finally, the Borough should actively recruit businesses that cater to users of the Perkiomen Trail. Thousands of visitors pass through Collegeville on the trail, a unique opportunity for Collegeville. Businesses that market to dog walkers, bicyclists, walkers, runners, and other outdoor activities are ideal in the area of the trail and access points to the trail.



Available commercial and office space should be marketed by the Borough for site-appropriate businesses.

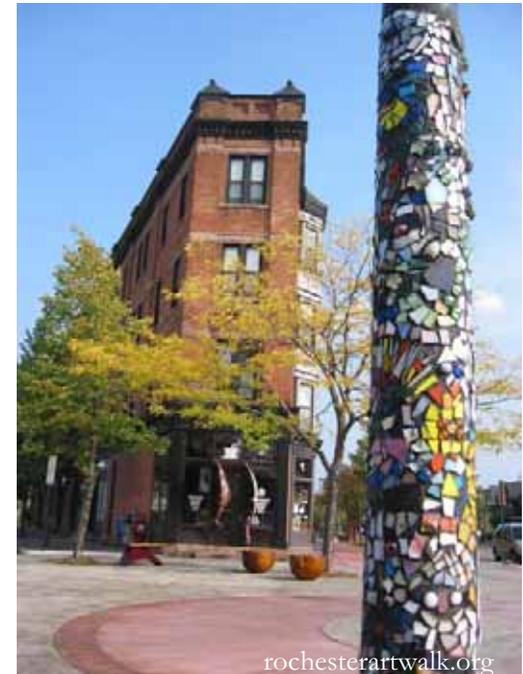
Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a useful tool for municipalities looking to revitalize certain areas of their communities. The Borough should approach the Montgomery County Redevelopment



The Perkiomen Bridge Hotel may be able to take advantage of financing available through the Tax Increment Financing Program.

Authority to begin the TIF process. This will involve hiring a consultant to conduct a blight study, and having certain areas of the Borough declared blighted. Despite the negative connotation of the term "blight", this designation will open up new sources of revenue that will aid Collegeville's revitalization efforts and help attract new businesses to the Borough. Areas in Collegeville that may benefit from this approach include the Flag Factory and the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel. This process will involve the participation of several local and regional entities, such as Montgomery County,



This lamppost in a public square was decorated as part of the Art Walk Program in Rochester, NY.

Small Business

There are a number of businesses in the Borough that are struggling in this economy. Many of them could be successful with a little economic or technical help. A Small Business Assistance Program

will help retain existing businesses and assist those who want to begin new businesses in the Borough. This will be accomplished through education and direct assistance to business owners.

Public Art Program

As part of the Borough's efforts to beautify its Main Street and improve pedestrian facilities, it should consider art installations along Main Street. These can add color and vitality to Main Street and add to Collegeville's distinct identity. Students from Ursinus College could provide this public art at no cost to the Borough, giving the students a chance to display their work while enhancing Main Street at the same time. The Art Walk

Program in Rochester, NY is a similar program unveils this public art as part of a public festival.

Public art programs enhance community identity and help to draw attention to commercial areas. The Borough should coordinate this effort with help from Ursinus College and sponsorship from local businesses.



This bench was created as part of Rochester's Art Walk Program, an example of public artwork that is also a functional piece of street furniture

Celebrating Collegeville

Civic events and celebrations honoring Collegeville's unique history and identity should be encouraged. Civic events, celebrations, and street fairs attract new visitors to the Borough and build on its customer base by reinforcing the perception of Collegeville as a lively town with an active business community. These events could be hosted by Ursinus College, the Collegeville Economic Develop-

ment Corporation, the Collegeville Beautification Committee, Collegeville Main Street Office, local businesses or a combination of these entities.

Because of its position as a civic anchor for the community, Ursinus College should be encouraged to lead and participate in these activities. Such events could be used to promote Borough activities, local businesses, the College, or



Scenes from a festival and concert in Collegeville's Community Park. Civic events like this bring together visitors, residents, sponsors, and local businesses to celebrate Collegeville's unique identity.

historic resources in the community, such as the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel. The Borough should coordinate and promote these community days and outdoor festivals to reinforce the role of the com-

mercial areas as the social and civic heart of Collegeville.

Farmers' Market

The Borough should consider founding and promoting a farmer's market in Collegeville. Farmer's markets are good ways to attract visitors to the Borough and promote local businesses. By partnering with local farms, this event also helps to support farmland preservation. Farmer's markets are typically held through the months of June to October, in a space adequate to house the produce

for sale and the potential shoppers. There are several parking lots that may accommodate this activity, in addition to Community Park and locations on the Ursinus College campus. Additionally, a farmers market could be cross promoted with local businesses, such as the Powerhouse Antique and Flea market, a local flea market and crafts store.



Façade Improvement Program

Some businesses in the Borough are simply in need of a facelift to boost confidence. In fact, many have managed to achieve cosmetic changes without assistance from the Borough. However, there are many local businesses that would greatly benefit from assistance designed to improve the curb appeal of their storefronts. A Façade Improvement Program would improve the visual look and marketability Collegeville's business districts through a grant or loan program.

Main Street Program

The Collegeville Main Street Program is an important non-profit organization, working together with the Borough and other community groups to encourage historic preservation and to revitalize the Main Street business district. The Pro-



Pictures: The Powerhouse Antique and Flea Market could be cross promoted with a farmers' market held at Community Park, on the Ursinus College Campus, or even in its own parking lot.

gram is comprehensive in nature and follows the National Trust for Historic Preservation's four-point approach. The Borough should continue to support the

activities of the Main Street Program, the Main Street Manager, and the volunteers that drive the program.

Chapter Eight

Special Projects

Special Projects

This chapter will examine certain projects that the Borough should pursue to jumpstart its revitalization efforts throughout Collegeville's commercial areas. These projects were identified by the Revitalization Task Force as important focal points of revitalization that could lead to greater reinvestment into the Borough's commercial corridors. Although they could fall into the categories of the previous two chapters, Physical Improvements and Economic Incentives, these projects were chosen as ones deserving special interest and consideration by the Task Force, because they often require a combination of participants and funding sources.

It is not the intention of this plan that the Borough should finance these projects alone. They should be funded through a combination of public and private investment including the Borough, the College, private businesses, community organizations, and grants through government programs and non-profit organizations. The Borough, the Main Street Office, the Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce (PVCOC) and the Collegeville Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) should be actively recruiting businesses and marketing Collegeville to new businesses to fill the opportunities created by these projects.



Hunsberger Woods in Collegeville, P.A.

Redevelopment of Fifth and Main

Collegeville's Borough Hall sits on the corner of Fifth and Main Streets, well landscaped with attractive flower beds and trees. This corner could be improved through redevelopment, though, by relocating the building up to the landscaping adjacent to the sidewalk and placing all parking facilities to the rear and side of the building. The redevelopment could also include a mix of uses beyond Borough and Police offices to



The corner of Main Street and Fifth Avenue. The site of Collegeville's Borough Hall contains attractive landscaping, but a mixed-use building with rear parking would complement the landscaping and the traditional buildings along Main Street.

include retail or residential units, demonstrating the Borough's commitment to the small-town character of the community. Although this project would be cost intensive for the Borough, it would be a great opportunity to showcase the

design and style of construction it wants to encourage on Main Street. Due to the current economic climate this project is unlikely to occur soon, but it is an interesting idea for the Borough to consider in the future as conditions improve.

Parking Study

The Borough feels that current available parking for businesses in Collegeville may be inadequate to meet the needs of visitors and shoppers, particularly along Main Street. In order to fully establish the demand for parking in Collegeville, the Borough should commission a parking study conducted by an

independent planning and engineering consultant. Not only would this study establish the need for more parking but suggest the best possible solutions to any deficiencies uncovered. The CEDC should take the lead in initiating this study and finding possible grants to help cover the planning costs.

Bookstore on Main Street

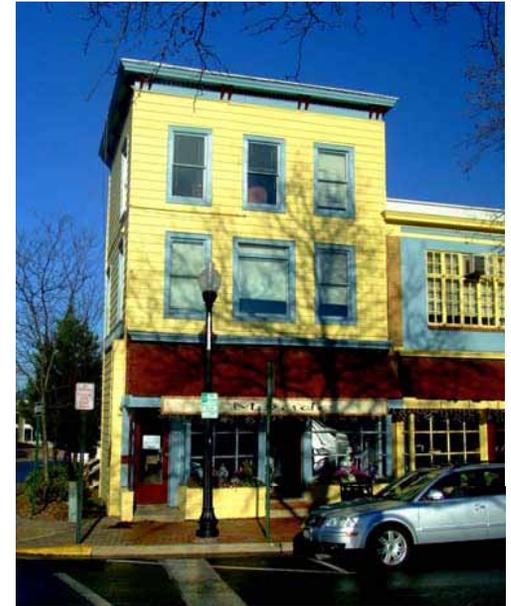
Ursinus College has considered relocating its book store onto Main Street. There may be buildings or storefronts on main Street that provide more space than is currently available on the College's campus and this would help create the lively downtown atmosphere that attracts students to colleges in a small town like Collegeville. Further, this would help to solidify the College's commitment to and investment in the Borough, enhancing the physical and social connections between Collegeville and Ursinus College.

There are opportunities to partner with local retailers who would be willing to move to Main Street as part of an Ursinus College book store. Even if the College decides to keep its book store on campus, a book store on Main Street is worth pursuing. In addition to local booksellers, a coffee shop attached to the book store would be a welcome addition to Main Street. Such a space would function as a social gathering place for students, faculty and staff, visitors to the Borough, and residents.

Children's Activities

Community programs for local children can have an immediate and gratifying impact on a local community. There is no shortage of art, athletic, or cultural programs for children in the Philadelphia area, but Collegeville can take advantage

of one of its signature assets to provide programs that would be unique for the Central Perkiomen Valley Region. Ursinus College already offers a yearly sports clinic for local youths that have been well received. These programs could be ex-



A mixed-use building on a street corner in Herndon, V.A. A similar building on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Main Street in Collegeville would have a dramatic effect.

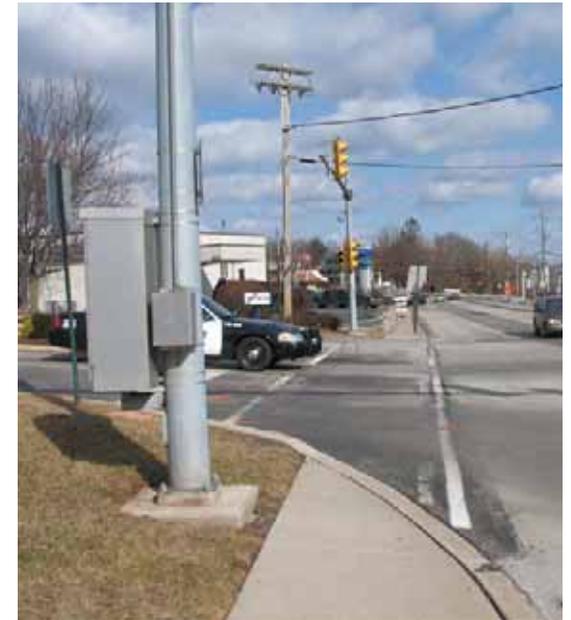


Educational programs for children can help to unify a community and would create an opportunity to partner with Ursinus College.

panded to include art, science and ecology, language, performing arts, and multi-cultural or history day camps. The College's Education Department may find this to be a useful program to give their education students hands-on experience in a local setting.

These programs would enrich the community, provide visibility for the Borough and Ursinus College, enhance the

bond between the Borough and the College, and give students and faculty a chance to engage the community in a unique way. Further, these programs could be sponsored by local businesses, another cross-promotional opportunity between the Borough, the College, and the local business community.



Route 29 in Study Area 3, in front of the Collegeville Shopping Center. A redesigned shopping center would make for a more graceful transition into Collegeville's other commercial areas.

Redesign and Revitalize the Shopping Centers

In the current economic climate the shopping centers along Route 29 in Collegeville are likely to face a number of new or vacating tenants. Although this transition period is difficult for the owners of the properties and the Borough, it may also represent an opportunity to redevelop the centers into something more in keeping with the Borough's

small-town charm.

Remodeling the shopping centers could be as simple as retrofitting the façades to incorporate design elements from historic Main Street and Ursinus College. However, the Collegeville Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) and the Borough should to partner with the



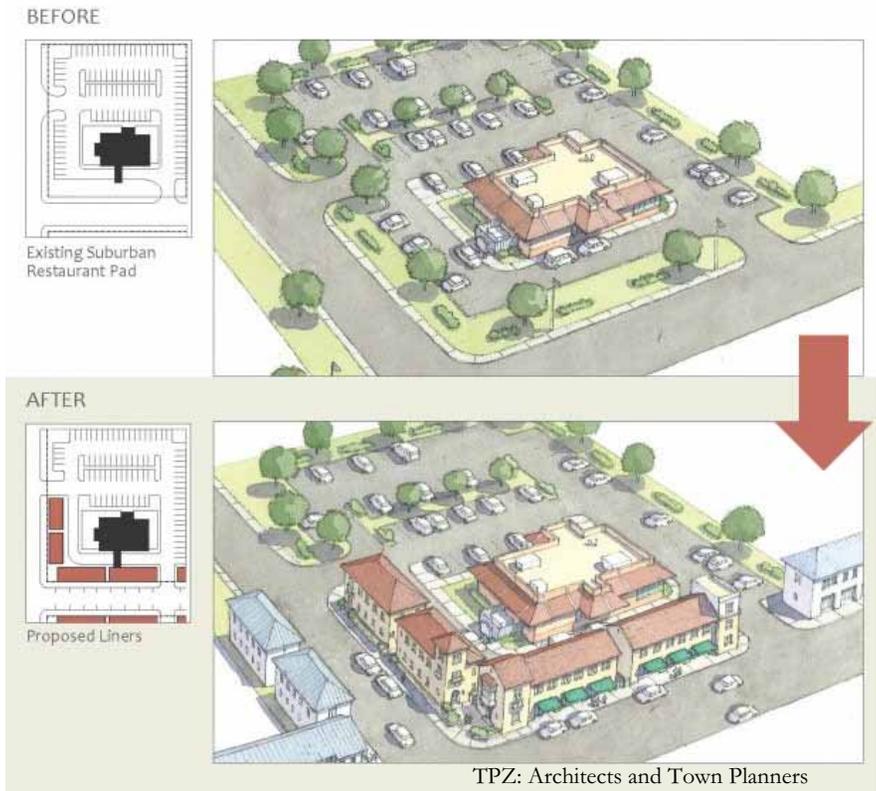
As tenants change in the shopping centers, it may be time to rethink the traditional strip-mall approach and try something new.

owners and tenants of the shopping centers to explore a grander vision for this commercial corridor.

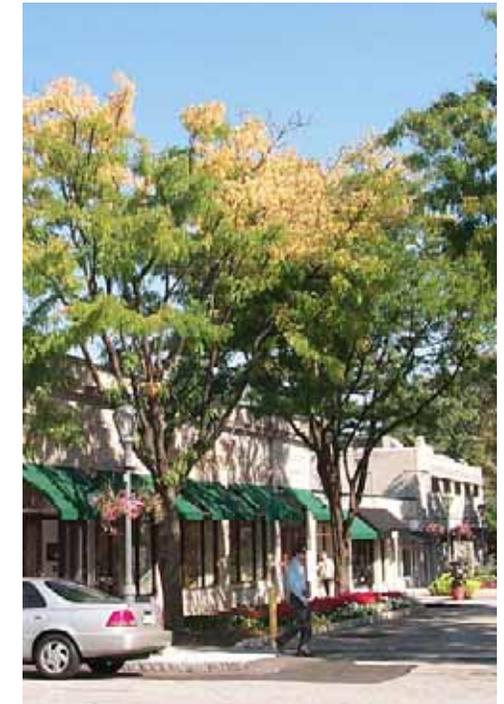
Relocating the businesses up to the street, allowing for a mix of uses, installing sidewalks along Route 29, and placing all parking to the rear or sides of the buildings would create a dramatic new shopping and pedestrian experience and serve to strengthen the connection between the shopping centers and the commercial areas of Main Street. Many communities have taken this approach to revitalize flagging shopping centers that

become eyesores. This approach could also incorporate surrounding underused properties, such as the self storage company to the west of the shopping centers in Study Area 1.

It should be noted that the Collegeville shopping centers have an advantage that these other communities don't: an adjacent Main Street which can provide a template for the design and scale of the new shopping centers. Still, this approach will require significant financial investment on the part of the owners of the shopping center and effort on the



A rendering showing how a suburban, strip-style shopping center can be converted into a destination with a "Main Street" appeal, something Collegeville may want to consider for its shopping centers along Route 29 in Study Area 3



Suburban Square in Ardmore, PA is a good example of a suburban shopping center adjacent to a historic "Main Street" with complimentary businesses and design elements.

part of the CEDC to help secure grant or loan funding from government and non-profit groups. The benefits, though, could be quite dramatic: unifying the two main commercial corridors of College-

ville into a strong and vital whole and revitalizing the shopping center area.

Verizon Building Façade

The Verizon building, which abuts Main Street above Third Avenue, is a blank façade with no windows or design features to mitigate its appearance. It is generally considered to be an eyesore and in need of remodeling. Attempts have been made to contact Verizon about changing the façade, but the company has not expressed interest. If cost is an issue there are alternatives to mitigate its appearance that will be of minimal or no cost to Verizon.

- (1) Landscaping: Simple landscaping may be enough to minimize the impact of this building on Main Street. Flowering trees and shrubs would create an inexpensive and effective screen. Maintenance costs could be shared between Verizon and the Borough

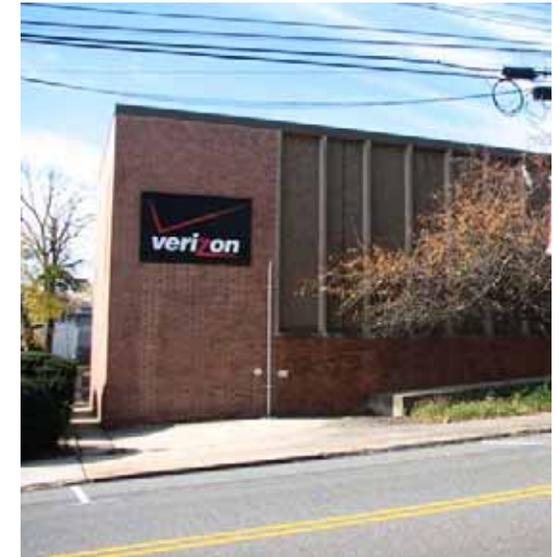
- (2) Mural or other Public Art: A mural or collection of artwork on the façade of the building provided by the students of Ursinus College is another option. This would give Ursinus College greater presence on Main Street, give Verizon a unique showcase for its community involvement, and screen an eyesore from Main Street. The College could hold a competition amongst its students to see whose art gets placed on the building.

There may be other options for this site, but these are the two most likely to have the desired effect and get approval from Verizon, because there is little to no cost attached to them for the company. The Borough should pursue the matter with Verizon in order to minimize its aesthetic impact.

Bury or Move Power Lines on Main Street

Currently, Main Street is cluttered with multiple overhanging power and telephone lines. These lines are aesthetically displeasing and detract from Main Street's small-town appeal. Replacing the overhead wires and replacing them with underground facilities or moving them to rear yards would relieve the Borough of this unsightly feature and help to restore

its character and charm. This option may be prohibitively expensive, certainly the Borough could not undertake this on its own, but it should be kept under consideration as the economy improves and the companies owning the lines look to expand.



The Verizon Building fronting on Main Street, a poor design that could benefit from landscaping, public art supplied by Ursinus College students, or a complete facelift.

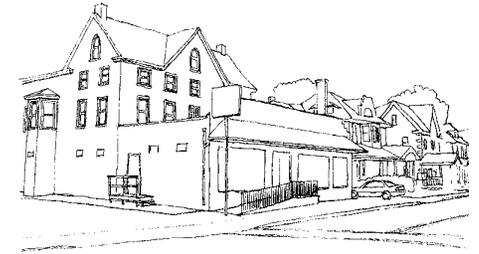


Overhead wires are cluttered and distracting, an eyesore that detracts from Main Street's atmosphere.

Redevelop Historic Properties

As the Borough reconsiders the design regulations in its Zoning Ordinance, special attention should be paid to the historic properties in Colledgeville. These lie sprinkled throughout the Borough, but with a significant concentration along Main Street. The Borough and CEDC should actively promote the reuse and revitalization of these buildings because they are central to maintaining the character and sense of place that the Borough has established over

the decades. There are several properties along Main Street that could benefit from a historically appropriate facelift. The Borough and the CEDC have been very active in promoting the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel, the most visible and recognizable landmark in Colledgeville. In combination with efforts to recruit and site appropriate businesses in the Borough, efforts to promote the rehab of historic buildings should be increased.



There are many historic buildings along Main Street with more recent additions. Colledgeville should promote the reuse and rehabilitation of these buildings in ways that are appropriate for the small college-town setting.



Front and rear renderings of a rehabbed Perkiomen Bridge Hotel with new parking areas, period street lighting, enhanced waterfront, and more recent additions removed. The front-facing rendering also includes recent changes to the intersection of Route 29 and Second Avenue.



Here are two possibilities for revitalization. The first makes use of the existing addition but adds attractive landscaping and a deck overlooking the street. The second restores a more historic character to the building with a covered porch, landscaping, and window box flower plantings.

As Part of that effort to rehabilitate historic buildings, the Borough may also want to consider the creation of a his-

toric district to review and advise the Borough when one of these properties is up for redevelopment.

Promote a Hotel or Inn in Collegeville

As part of its efforts to recruit appropriate businesses to Collegeville, the Collegeville Economic Development Corporation should consider actively marketing the Borough for a hotel or inn. Ursinus College is the most obvious beneficiary, providing accommodations for visiting alumni, parents, staff, and others. However, a hotel or inn in the Borough would benefit the entire community, providing

employment, meeting spaces, and tax revenue for Collegeville. A national hotel chain that uses smaller buildings may be a good fit for several sites throughout the Borough. Further, in addition to the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel, there are several historic buildings that would do well as a small inn. A hotel or inn would be an economic generator for Collegeville and Ursinus College.



A close-up of the artist's rendering of the rear of a refurbished Perkiomen Bridge Hotel. This is one possibility for a hotel or inn in Collegeville that could also include a restaurant.

Chapter Nine

Project Implementation Schedule

Project Implementation Schedule

Title	Project Location	Priority Ranking	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Sources For Funding, Information, and Expertise	Potential Partners
<i>Continue Streetscape Improvements</i>	Entire stretch of Main Street running up to the Borough Line; see physical Improvements Priorities Map	Very High	Continue the streetscape improvements under way at the intersection of Main Street and Route 29	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Three phases at \$400,000 each	Main Streets Program, Ursinus College, Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce (PVCOC)	Main Street Property Owners, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Borough Planning Commission (MCPC), Collegeville Economic Development Corporation (CEDC), Ursinus College, PVCOC
<i>Extend sidewalk facilities to connect important destinations in the Borough</i>	Specific locations indicated on the Physical Improvements Priorities Map	Very High	The streetscape improvements specified in Chapter 6.	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	\$50,000 (per location indicated on the Physical Improvements Priorities Map)	Elm Street Program, Main Streets Program	Main Street Property Owners, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Borough Planning Commission

Title	Project Location	Priority Ranking	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Sources For Funding, Information, and Expertise	Potential Partners
<i>Draft a Marketing Study</i>	n/a	Very High	Writing a plan that would study ways to best attract businesses and improve businesses in the Borough. Plan would include a Vacant Property Inventory	Short Term (0-3 Years)		Main Streets Program, CEDC, PVCOC	PVCOC, Consultants
<i>Business Recruitment</i>	Commercial areas of Collegeville, particularly Main Street and the Shopping Centers	High	Attract and locate appropriate businesses to the Borough that cater to Ursinus College staff, students, and visitors, as well as trail users and residents	Short Term (0-3 Years)	n/a	CEDC, Main Streets Program, PVCOC	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, CEDC, Ursinus College, PVCOC
<i>Add Way-Finding Signage</i>	As specified on the Physical Improvements Priorities Map	High	To help both locals and tourists locate important amenities, historic sites, free parking locations, open space, local businesses, and municipal buildings	Short Term (0-3 Years)	\$6,000 (5 signs at ~\$1,000 a sign, plus installation)	Main Streets Program, CEDC	Borough Planning Commission, Local Property Owners, Local Business Owners
<i>Zoning: Allow mixed-use development throughout the Borough's Commercial areas</i>	Main Street between First and Fifth Streets, and Shopping Centers	High	Allowing a mix of uses appropriate for a borough downtown along most of Main Street and in the Shopping Centers	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Covered by Planning Assistance Contract with Montgomery County Planning Commission	n/a	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC

Title	Project Location	Priority Ranking	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Sources For Funding, Information, and Expertise	Potential Partners
<i>Redevelop and revitalize the Shopping Centers</i>	Shopping Centers along Route 29 in Study Area 2	High	Revitalize declining Shopping Centers with new design that includes new transportation options, public spaces, a mix of uses, and businesses fronting the roadways	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Unknown/ cost estimate dependent on final design	Private Developers, Montgomery County Visioning Fund and Commercial and Industrial Reinvestment Fund, PVCOC	MCPC, CEDC, Collegeville Planning Commission, Collegeville Main Street Manager, PVCOC
<i>Continue to support the Main Street Program</i>	n/a	High	The Collegeville Main Street Manager is responsible for marketing and promoting the businesses on Main Street and managing grant money distributed through the Main Streets Program	Short Term (0-3 Years)	n/a	n/a	All Borough officials and Commissions, Ursinus College, CEDC
<i>More Cross-promotion and Cooperation with Ursinus College</i>	n/a	High	Greater cooperation between the Borough, Ursinus College, and local businesses is needed to fully explore Collegeville's potential	Short Term (0-3 Years)	n/a	n/a	Collegeville Borough Officials, Ursinus College, Local Businesses, PVCOC

Title	Project Location	Priority Ranking	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Sources For Funding, Information, and Expertise	Potential Partners
<i>Explore the possibility of a TIF Program</i>	Specific areas of the Borough's Commercial districts to be determined as part of the TIF process	High	Funding for the redevelopment of portions of the Borough's commercial corridor that are determined to be blighted	Short Term (0-3 Years)	n/a	Montgomery County, CEDC, Main Streets Program	Montgomery County, Collegeville Planning Commission
<i>Establish a First Friday Event</i>	Businesses along Main Street and the Shopping Centers	Medium	Start an event that brings "the arts" to downtown each month	Short to Mid Term (0-6 Years)	n/a	Main Streets Program, CEDC, PVCOC	Collegeville Planning Commission, Local Property Owners, Local Business Owners, PVCOC
<i>Public Art Program</i>	Main Street and any additional locations in need of public artwork	Medium	The Borough partners with Ursinus College's art program to publicly display student artwork along Main Street	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable, depending on scale and maintenance agreements	Ursinus College, Main Street Program, Art Walk in Rochester, NY	Ursinus College, Collegeville Main Street Office
<i>Traffic Calming</i>	Main Street, including Ursinus College, and along Route 29 in front of the Shopping Centers	Medium	Reducing the speed limit on Main Street and Route 29 and look to promote different methods of traffic calming, such as yield to pedestrian signs	Short to Long Term (0-10 Years)	\$800,000	Ursinus College, Main Streets Program, CEDC	PennDOT, Local Property and Business Owners, Ursinus College,

Title	Project Location	Priority Ranking	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Sources For Funding, Information, and Expertise	Potential Partners
<i>Promote the development of a Bookstore on Main Street</i>	To be determined	Medium	A bookstore with coffee shop would be a valuable addition to Main Street. This may or may not be developed as the bookstore for Ursinus College	Short Term (0-3 Years)	n/a	Private Developer, Ursinus College, PVCOC	Collegeville Planning Commission, Ursinus College, Local business community, PVCOC
<i>Bury or Move Power Lines</i>	Main Street	Medium	The power lines along Main Street are distracting and unsightly. Burying them or moving them to the rear of buildings would greatly improve Main Street's small-town charm	Mid to Long Term (4-10 Years)	Unknown	Utility Companies, Main Streets Program	Collegeville Planning Commission, Local Businesses, CEDC
<i>Create Gateways</i>	Key intersections identified in the Physical Improvements Priorities Map	Medium	Improve the entranceways to the Region by adding: Improved Signage, Plantings, and Lighting	Long Term (7-10 Years)	\$20,000 per gateway (lighting and lighting installation, signage, and plantings and planting installation)	Main Street Program, CEDC, Local Businesses	CEDC, Collegeville Planning Commission, Local Property Owners
<i>Parking Assessment Study</i>	Primarily Main Street Commercial Area	Medium	A Parking Study to determine the need for greater available parking facilities along Main Street	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	\$50,000	Main Streets Program, CEDC, Local Businesses	Collegeville Planning Commission, Local Businesses, CEDC, PVCOC

Title	Project Location	Priority Ranking	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Sources For Funding, Information, and Expertise	Potential Partners
<i>Children's educational activities</i>	n/a	Medium	Encourage activities for children that partner with local businesses, environmental groups, and educational institutions	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	n/a	Ursinus College, Local Environmental Groups, Perkiomen Valley Watershed Association	Local Businesses, Ursinus College, Montgomery County Department of Parks and Heritage Services, Local Environmental Groups, Perkiomen Valley School District
<i>Verizon building façade</i>	Main Street, north of Third Street	Medium	Install a student-designed mural or landscaping to mitigate the blank walls facing Main Street	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	\$6, 000 pending scope of project	Verizon, CEDC, Main Streets Program, Ursinus College, PVCOC	Collegeville Planning Commission, CEDC, Verizon, Ursinus College, Main Street Manager, PVCOC
<i>Façade Improvement Program</i>	Main Street	Medium	A program to provide grants and/or loans to improve the look and marketability of buildings along Main Street in Collegeville Borough	Mid to Long Term (4-10 Years)	\$350,000	Main Streets Program	Main Street Property Owners
<i>Pursue "Classic Town" status from DVRPC</i>	n/a	Medium	This program assists communities designated as "Classic Towns" with marketing and promotion to the region and business community. Although the Borough is not currently eligible, it should pursue this opportunity if the criteria is changed	Long Term (5-10 Years)	n/a	Main Streets Program, DVRPC, Montgomery County	Main Streets Program, CEDC, Local Business Owners, Montgomery County, DVRPC

Title	Project Location	Priority Ranking	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Sources For Funding, Information, and Expertise	Potential Partners
<i>Reevaluate and strengthen Design Guidelines</i>	Throughout the Commercial Areas of the Borough, particularly in the Shopping Centers	Medium	Reevaluate design guidelines to ensure aesthetic cohesion and compatibility between redeveloping properties	Short Term (0-3 Years)	n/a	Expense covered as part of Planning Assistance Contract with Montgomery County Planning Commission	MCPC, Collegeville Planning Commission, Local Property Owners
<i>Redevelop the Corner of 5th Street and Main Street</i>	Corner of Fifth and Main Streets	Low	Redevelop Borough Hall with a mixed-use building with rear parking containing the Borough and Police offices, other office/retail uses and residential uses.	Long Term (7-10 Years)	Unknown	Private Developers, Collegeville Borough, CEDC, Main Streets Program	Collegeville Planning Commission, CEDC, Private Developers, Collegeville Police Department
<i>Small Business Assistance Program</i>	n/a	Low	Provide technical assistance through training, networking, and financial support via a small grants program to businesses in the commercial district.	Long Term (7-10 Years)	\$50,000	Urban Development Program, Main Streets Program, CEDC	Montgomery County, Main Streets Program, CEDC, PVCOC
<i>Start a Farmers Market</i>	To be determined	Low	Sell locally grown produce in a marketplace setting	Short to Mid Term (0-6 Years)	n/a	n/a	Adjacent Municipalities, Collegeville Planning Commission, Local Property Owners, Local Business Owners

Appendix 1

Town Center District Model Ordinance

Town Center Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines are excerpts from Montgomery County's Town Center District Model Ordinance. The Borough may wish to adopt some of these design standards in its MSC Main Street Commercial District or anywhere else it plans to extend Main Street style uses and design regulations. These will

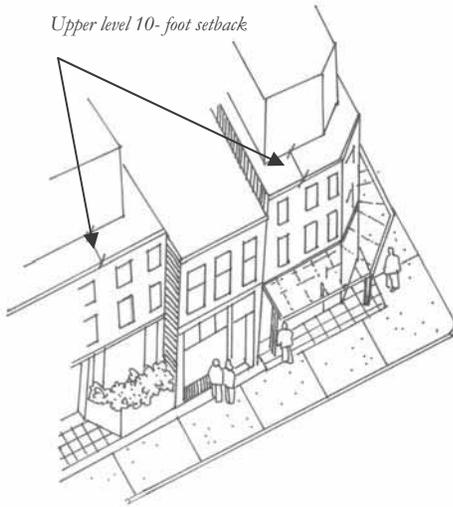
help the Borough maintain and preserve its character and small-town charm in the face of redevelopment and foster greater revitalization. The design guidelines are Sections 4 and 7 of Part 2 of the Model Ordinance and begin on the following page.



Images from the Town Center District Model Ordinance prepared by Montgomery County Planning Commission

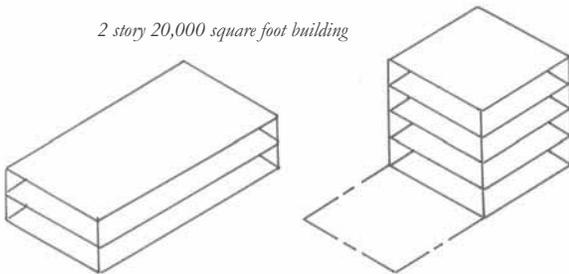


Upper level 10-foot setback



4 story 20,000 square foot building

2 story 20,000 square foot building



2.0 FAR on 10,000 square foot lot

Section 3. Development Standards

- A. Minimum Lot Size: 2,500 square feet.
- B. Minimum Lot Width: 25 feet.
- C. Build-to-Line. Buildings shall be:
 - 1. Built to the sidewalk; or
 - 2. The setback should be the average of the two closest structures on the same side of the street with a maximum setback of 20 feet; or
 - 3. Setback from the sidewalk 10-20 feet for purposes of a plaza, square, courtyard, recessed entrance, or outdoor dining.
- D. Side Yard Setback. There shall be no side yard setback for buildings that share a party wall. The setback between buildings shall be 10 feet (5 feet per each building) when not sharing a party wall.
- E. Maximum Impervious Coverage: 100 percent.
- F. Building Height. Buildings shall be a minimum of two stories or a maximum of 65 feet (if there is a 10 foot setback (on average) after the third story and provided the streetscape and green area standards in Section 5 are followed).
- G. Maximum Building Footprint for Nonresidential Buildings: 10,000 square feet.
- H. Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 2.0. See Section 6, Bonus Provisions, for conditions when a 2.5 FAR is permitted.

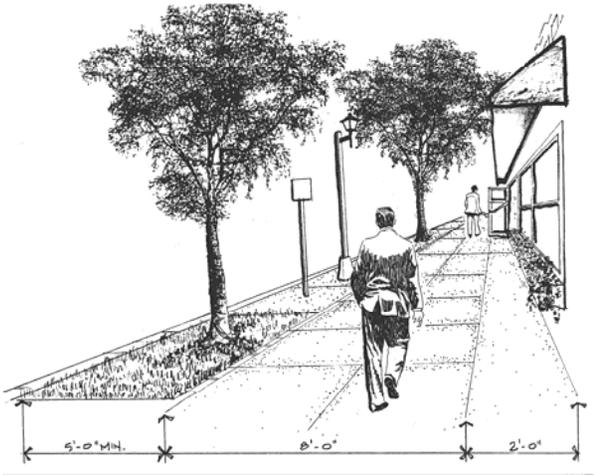
Development Standards:

These regulations are model community standards. Individual municipalities may modify these development standards to meet their needs.

Build-to-lines contributes to the street life of an area by ensuring that building fronts are built to the street.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the ratio of gross building floor area to the total lot area. The advantage of using FAR is that it is more effective in regulating the intensity of a site than building coverage.

For example, if a 10,000 square foot lot has a FAR of 2.0 then a developer can construct a building that has a total floor area of 20,000



Section 7. Design Standards

A. Pedestrian Design Standards:

1. Sidewalks are required along all street frontages with a minimum width of eight feet.
2. Sidewalks are required to connect the street frontage to all front building entrances, parking areas, central open space, and any other destination that generates pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks shall connect to existing sidewalks on abutting tracts and other nearby pedestrian destination points and transit stops.
3. The sidewalk pattern shall continue across driveways.

B. Building Design Standards. Nonresidential buildings and apartment buildings shall meet the following requirements:

1. Building Footprint. The maximum building footprint of nonresidential buildings shall not exceed ten thousand (10,000) square feet.
2. Building Orientation and Entrances:
 - a. The front façade of buildings shall be oriented towards commercial/Main Streets, with an every day public entrance in this front façade.
 - b. When buildings are located on corners, the entrance shall be located on the corner with an appropriate building articulation, such as a chamfered corner, turret, canopy, or other similar building feature. The municipal governing body may allow front façades to face existing side streets, when these façades will extend an existing commercial district along this existing side street.

The design standards can be tailored to the needs of an individual community.

Sidewalks should be wide enough to allow for outdoor dining, window shopping, etc. Our recommended minimum width for Main Street areas is 8 feet, with wider widths when significant numbers of pedestrians are likely. Sidewalks should be free of obstacles and in central business districts, should have an additional two feet of width leaving room for window shopping and door entrances. In addition, a five-foot planting strip is recommended to buffer the sidewalk from the street.

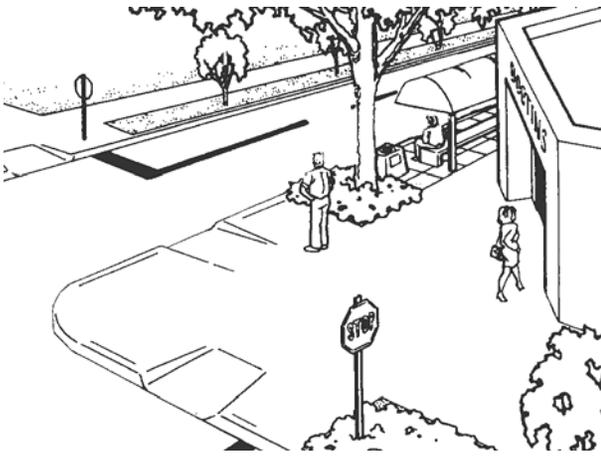
These building design standards are intended to encourage street activity.



Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania



Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania



Projecting cornice



Plinth

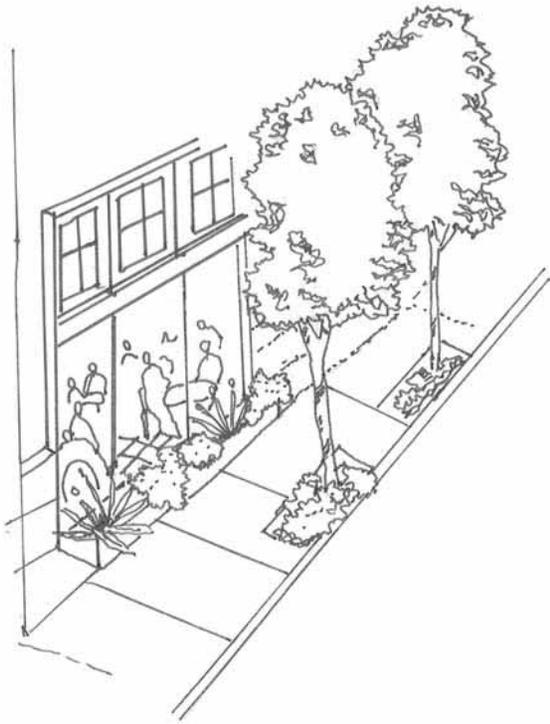
Tile work

- c. All primary building entrances shall be accentuated. Entrances permitted include: recessed, protruding, canopy, portico, or overhang.

3. Walls and Windows:

- a. Blank walls shall not be permitted along any exterior wall facing a street, parking area, or walking area. Walls or portions of walls where windows are not provided shall have architectural treatments that are similar to the front façade, including materials, colors, and details. At least four of the following architectural treatments shall be provided:
 - i. Masonry (but not flat concrete block).
 - ii. Concrete or masonry plinth at the base of the wall.
 - iii. Belt courses of a different texture or color.
 - iv. Projecting cornice.
 - v. Projecting metal canopy.
 - vi. Decorative tilework.
 - vii. Trellis containing planting.
 - viii. Medallions.
 - ix. Opaque or translucent glass.
 - x. Artwork.
 - xi. Vertical/horizontal articulation.
 - xii. Lighting fixtures.
 - xiii. An architectural element not listed above, as approved by the governing body, that meets the intent.

Blank walls along streets create an uninviting pedestrian experience. The requirements at left, encourage a vibrant streetscape experience.



b. Windows:

- i. The ground floor front façades of buildings visible from the pedestrian view shall consist of a minimum of 60 percent window area and a maximum of 75 percent, with views provided through these windows into the business. Ground floor windows shall be a maximum of 12 to 20 inches above the sidewalk.
- ii. Upper story windows of front façades shall not be boarded or covered and shall comprise a minimum of 35 percent window area in the façade above the ground floor and a maximum of 75 percent.
- iii. Smoked, reflective, or black glass in windows is prohibited.

4. Roofs. Roofs shall be in keeping with the character of adjacent buildings or shall have pitched roofs. Pitched roofs shall have a minimum slope of 4:12 and a maximum slope of 12:12.

5. Building Character. New infill development shall generally employ building types that are compatible to the historic architecture of the area in their massing and external treatment.

6. Architectural Rhythm:

a. New infill development shall also retain the historic architectural rhythm of building openings (including windows and entries) of the same block.

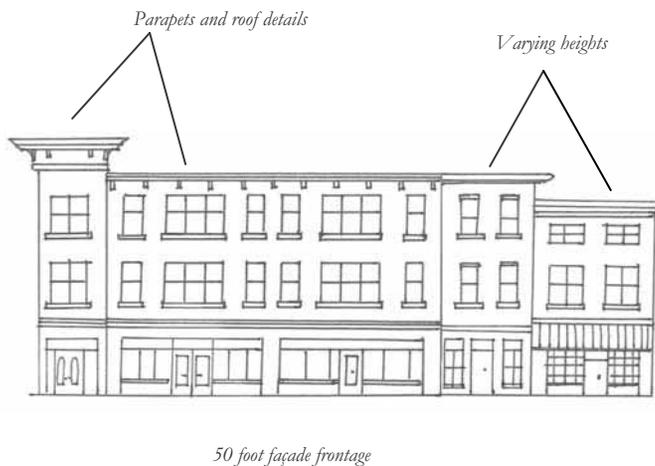
b. New infill development shall also



attempt to maintain the horizontal rhythm of Main Street façades by using a similar alignment of windows, floor spacing, cornices, awnings as well as other elements. This rhythm shall be achieved by aligning the top, middle, and base floors. Buildings shall have a distinct base at ground level using articulation or materials such as stone, masonry, or decorative concrete. The top level should be treated with a distinct outline with elements such as projecting parapet, cornice, or other projection.

7. Massing:

- a. Buildings shall be similar in height and size or articulated and subdivided into massing that is more or less proportional to adjacent structures and maintains the existing architectural rhythm.
- b. The massing of any façade should generally not exceed 50 feet maximum (horizontal dimension). Shop fronts may be broken down even further. Massing variations every 30 feet or less is preferred.
- c. Nonresidential buildings must have at least a 3- to 5-foot break in depth in all street façades for every 50 feet of continuous façade. Such breaks may be met through the use of bay windows, porches, porticos, building extensions, towers, recessed doorways, and other architectural treatments.



Appendix 2

Redesign the Shopping Center to Compete in a new Economic Climate

Shopping Center Redesign

During the process of preparing this Revitalization Plan it became clear that the shopping centers along Route 29 in Study Area 3 were facing even greater challenges than expected. With the opening of the Providence Town Center

shopping center in Lower Providence Township and continued competition from several shopping centers recently constructed in Limerick Township, the vacancy rates in the Collegeville shopping centers has spiked.

A recent image of the shopping center in Collegeville along Route 29 in Study Area 3. The Acme Shopping Market on the left has been closed and the center is facing several vacancies as businesses close or relocate. This same perspective is reproduced on the following page with a completely redesigned shopping center.





This image reproduces the same perspective from the image on the previous page with some dramatic new changes. Instead of being a typical auto-oriented shopping center, it is now a pedestrian friendly mixed-use center that connects with Main Street to make it a complimentary extension of the Borough's historic core.

Acme markets, the anchor for one of the centers has left, leading to a number of businesses in both shopping centers either relocating, considering relocation, or even going out of business altogether. Earlier in this plan a redesign of the shopping centers was suggested as a way to reenergize these flagging commercial properties and reconnect them with Main Street. Because of the vacancies and the potential for even more businesses going under, this idea took on greater urgency.

The Revitalization Task Force met several times to discuss design options for the site and determine the kinds of concepts that would improve revitalization efforts. It is important to note that the images displayed in this plan are purely conceptual and do not represent exactly what Collegeville Borough is looking for at this site. What these renderings are intended to show is what it could be like if the shopping centers were redeveloped as an extension of Main Street, with its mix of uses and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. These renderings focus on



These renderings show how distinctive a redesign of the shopping centers could be along the site's frontage with Route 29. New buildings with parking to the rear or in parking garages front the street. Street trees, banners, and crosswalks create a more inviting atmosphere for pedestrians and other visitors.





A mid-block crossing in the shopping center with several pedestrian-oriented design elements that continue the feel of Main Street. The Borough is currently pursuing plans to construct a similar mid-block crossing with streetscape improvements along Main Street.

the Collegeville Shopping Center, the location of the former Acme and the site of most of the recent vacancies.

Buildings could be up to three stories with office and commercial uses below and residential uses above. Street trees, banners, signs, period lighting, on-street parking, and crosswalks help to create the feel of a town center, allowing the shopping center to build on Collegeville's considerable assets. More parking could be located to the rear of the buildings or

even in garages that have been "wrapped" with commercial or residential uses, as has been done in similar projects in New Jersey and Maryland.

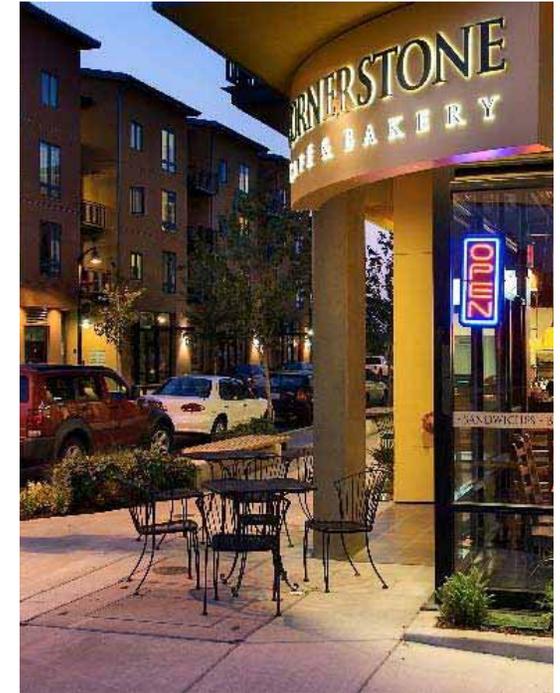
One of the goals of this Revitalization Plan was to increase cooperation and physical connections between the shopping centers, main Street, and Ursinus College. By making the shopping centers an extension of Main Street, easily reached on foot from the Ursinus College campus, these images show how that

could be possible and what it would be like to be in the middle of the reinvented shopping centers. They could even include significant residential portions, further reinforcing the feel of a mixed-use downtown that compliments the historic character of the rest of the Borough.

The types of development depicted are not something the Borough expects to see any time soon. These changes are significant and would take at least a decade to achieve, probably more. However, because of the increased vacancy rates, the owners of the shopping centers may be interested in these concepts as a way to compete with nearby shopping centers that are newer, bigger and use similar design elements to simulate a “Main Street.” Final designs should be

scaled back a bit from what is depicted here, but these images could provide a guide for the type of development the Borough would like to see. Instead of simply renovating the façades of the buildings, this kind of complete redesign is more desirable. It allows the centers to compete with its neighbors while complimenting the goals and objectives of this Revitalization Plan.

Other communities have redeveloped shopping centers to create new “town centers.” Collegeville’s advantage is that it already has a historic town center. New designs and redevelopment efforts should carry that small-town atmosphere into the shopping centers, creating more of an extension of Main Street than competition for its shoppers.



Similar developments that have used these design elements have been constructed in Maryland and New Jersey. These images from those projects help to illustrate the materials that could be used in Collegeville and the scale and massing of new buildings in the reinvented shopping center.



Appendix 3

Main Street

Main Street

As the Revitalization Task Force spent time reconsidering the design of the shopping centers, it became apparent that Main Street was also in need of some analysis. The focus for this effort was to examine existing parking resources, open space, and infill projects that could help the Borough increase its

commercial base, expand its parking resources, and make Collegeville more attractive and livable. The improvements described below could be achieved relatively soon, perhaps even within the next five years, with a combination of public and private input and resources.

A view of Main Street in Collegeville from the intersection of Main Street and Third Avenue.





***Above:** Main Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. The historic house on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Main Street could be used as an inn and public garden/village green. As parking facilities are improved behind the buildings along Main Street a biking/pedestrian path could connect Fifth Avenue to Walnut Street, providing a new physical connection between Ursinus College, Main Street, and the shopping centers that improves public safety.*

Collegeville has been very active in securing funding and pursuing its streetscape efforts along Main Street. There have already been some improvements with new crosswalks on Main Street between First and Third Avenues and street tree

plantings. The plan is to continue these enhancements along the entire stretch of main Street. The Borough also intends to construct a mid-block crossing between Third and Forth Avenues. Further, Ursinus College has been making

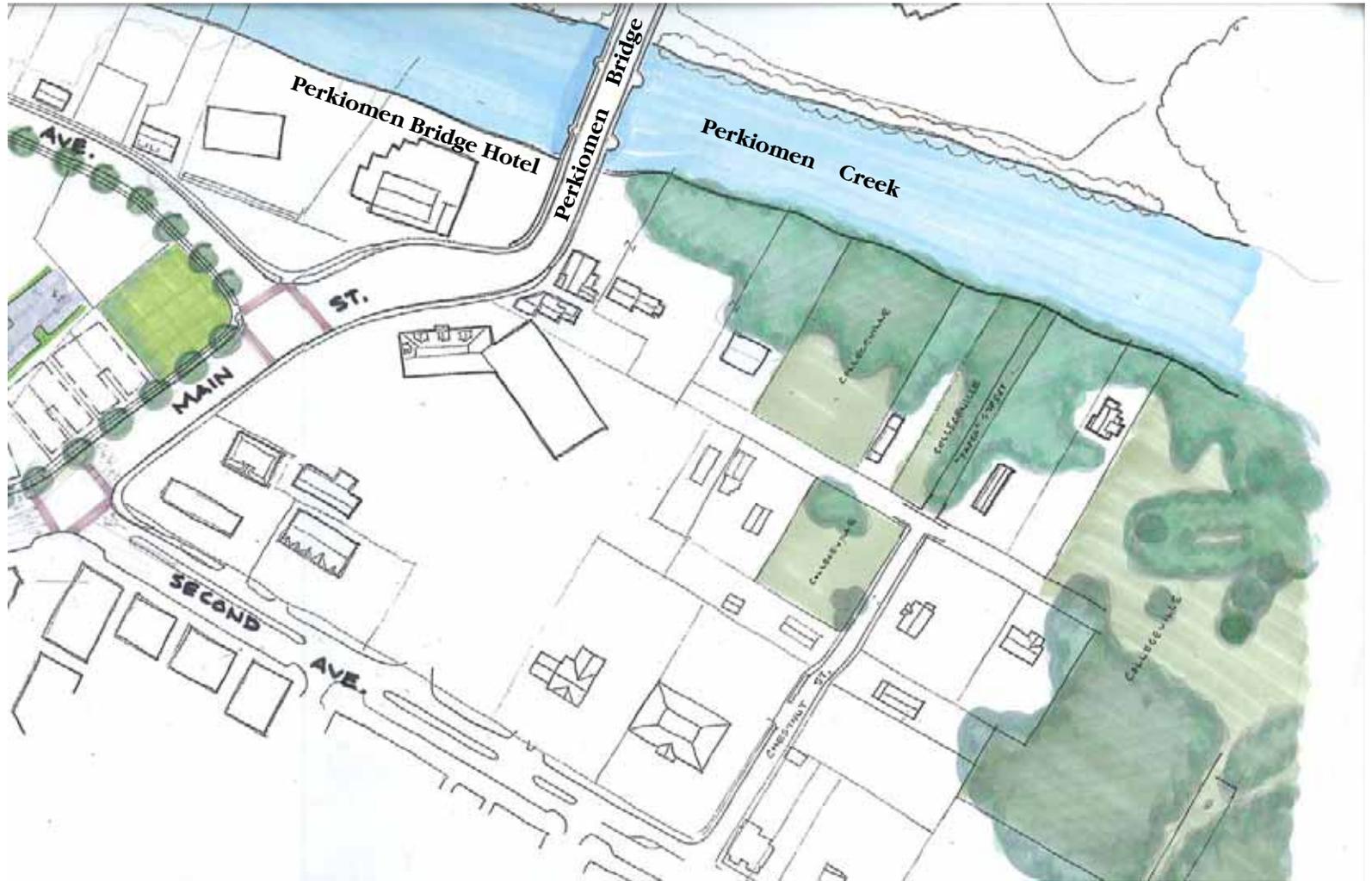


Above: Main Street between Second and Fourth Avenues. Most of the parking areas depicted here already exist; by interconnecting them individual businesses gain spaces and reduce maintenance costs, public safety is improved due to reduced curb cuts and driveways, and the burden to provide parking for new businesses will be eased. Interconnected parking areas behind Da Vinci's Pub between Second and Third Avenues could allow for new businesses in that area. Improved crossings and street trees are already being pursued by the Borough.

headway on pedestrian facilities to improve the safety of its students with new lighting and pedestrian crossing signs. Because of the progress Collegeville has already made in these areas, the renderings depicted here focus mainly on park-

ing resources and a few design options that enhance the small college-town feel.

The Borough already has a number of parking lots located behind buildings along Main Street. This is a typical fea-



The Borough owns a good deal of land along the Perkiomen Creek that could be used for open space or a boat launch for fishing, kayaking, or canoeing. These properties are noted in the illustration above with "Collegeville." A gateway park could be built on Borough land on the corner of First Avenue/Route 29 and Main Street.

ture for older boroughs that initially developed without the need for large parking facilities and with buildings directly fronting their main streets. Fortunately, the parking that Collegeville has may be adequate to meet its needs. This plan recommends creating shared parking

agreements between neighboring property owners with complimentary business schedules. For instance, a bank and a restaurant have different peak hours of operation with the bank busier during the day and the restaurant in the evening. These business could share parking areas

with little overlap or potential for conflicts, reducing the cost to each business to provide and maintain its own parking. Similar agreements have been used by communities to reduce the burden of providing parking in limited physical space. Collegeville's Zoning Ordinance provides for these types of agreements; this plan recommends formalizing existing agreements and actively pursuing more of them.

As these improvements take place there is also the opportunity to provide a pedestrian and bicycle connection along Walnut Avenue, which runs parallel to Main Street between Third and Fifth Avenues. Because of the width of Main Street and the presence of on-street parking, there is less of an opportunity for bike lanes. A biking/pedestrian connection behind the businesses of Main Street in the newly connected parking areas would improve safety and be a step towards the goal of enhancing the physical connections between Ursinus College, Main Street, and the Shopping Centers.

Further, as the drawings show, there are ample opportunities for interconnected lots for the businesses along Main Street. These allow for shared parking that increases the number of spaces for all property owners, reduces overhead as maintenance costs can be shared, and improves safety and pedestrian circulation because of reduced curb-cuts and driveways.

Analysis also shows some unique open space opportunities that will help build on the Borough's revitalization efforts. Land owned by Collegeville along the

Perkiomen creek could be used for passive recreation and as a boat launch for canoes, kayaks, and fishing. The Borough also now owns land on the corner of Main Street and First Avenue/Route 29 that is the perfect location for a small gateway park. The Borough is pursuing this option, as described in Chapter 6 Physical Improvements, and should include decorative signage that directs visitors to local businesses, attractions, and Ursinus College. Finally, a large home on the corner of Main Street and Fourth Avenue is currently used by Ursinus College as student housing. This property could be used as an Inn to house visiting faculty, alumni, or parents of Ursinus College students with the rest of the property used as a village green or public garden.

Unlike the designs for the shopping centers in Appendix 2, these improvements could be made in a relatively short time scale. Shared parking agreements could be made immediately, much of the open space land is already owned by the Borough, and Collegeville is actively pursuing the streetscaping along Main Street. Interconnected parking lots will take more time because of the multiple owners and cost associated, but it is still something the Borough could accomplish soon. All of these improvements will require the cooperation of multiple property owners and entities, but the framework already exists for working out these kinds of agreements. The Main Street Manager's office will be instrumental in moving forward on any of these options. Support of that office will be crucial to the success of these improvements

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Montgomery County Courthouse
P.O. Box 311, Norristown, PA 19404

www.planning.montcopa.org