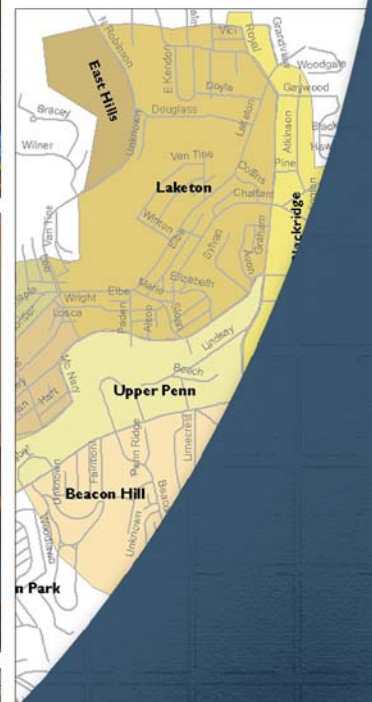




the Wilkinsburg Plan

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



The preparation of the Wilkinsburg Plan was financed in part through a Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, as administered by the Governor's Center for Local Government Services.



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The Train Station - Hay Street

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt



Traditional Main Street Zone
Facade Improvements

Penn Avenue - South



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INTRODUCTION

Located immediately adjacent to the eastern neighborhoods of the city of Pittsburgh in southwestern Pennsylvania, the Borough of Wilkinsburg (the Borough) is currently home to an estimated 18,000 residents.

At one point during the 1950s, the 2.3-square-mile Borough of Wilkinsburg was the most densely populated borough in the country, with a population reported as 31,418 in the 1950 census. By the 2000 census, the population had declined to 19,196 and was estimated to be closer to 18,000 by 2008. Even with the population decline, however, the Borough continues to have one of the highest population densities in Allegheny County, with approximately 8,335 people per square mile.

Wilkinsburg has always been economically linked with Pittsburgh, with many of its residents traveling to Pittsburgh to work. This still holds true today, with over half of the Borough's residents working in Pittsburgh, and only 3.4% working in the Borough. In the past, the Borough had been a transitional area made up of mostly middle-class to upper-middle-class families. As families became more prosperous and moved to other areas in Allegheny County, the community became a more low-income, transitional population. Wilkinsburg still has strong pockets of middle- and upper-middle-class families, but also has large pockets of lower-income families.



With the steel industry as one of the core economic drivers of the regional economy, the industry's massive decline during the 1970s and 1980s contributed to a decline in population for many communities in the Pittsburgh area. Wilkinsburg, no exception to steel industry employment trends, and seeing, like other communities, the national trend of flight from first-ring communities, experienced a steady population decline, and over the years has lost nearly half its peak population. With neighborhoods and a business district built to support a larger population, this decline has left the Borough with a significant number of vacancies in its residential and business district areas, with a corresponding decline in its tax base. The backdrop of national and regional decline in employment, and the movement of higher-income populations to the suburbs, all seemingly outside of local control, provides a vivid picture and understanding of why the Borough has struggled for its very survival.

The Borough has not stood idly by over the last decade and watched this decline occur without trying to reverse the trends. The Borough has actively engaged in planning efforts aimed at

reversing trends and creating a brighter future for the community. While progress has been made, all would agree that there is more work to be done.

It is in this environment that this comprehensive planning process takes place, its intent, to build upon the successes to date and refocus and reinvigorate efforts that will have positive and transformative impacts for the future of the Borough.

In many ways this planning project is similar to other planning initiatives accomplished in the Borough; however, it is also significantly and distinctly different from past planning projects. The plan combines three typically distinct planning processes into one cohesive strategy, a strategy that is focused and narrowed in such a way as to improve the opportunities for success. It combines components of the Borough's operations, economic development objectives, and human and financial resources in new and different ways to find unique opportunities to advance the plan and improve overall conditions in the community. This plan is unique for a comprehensive planning initiative, and the Borough and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development are to be recognized for finding ways to use existing resources in innovative ways and solve old problems. This approach and new way of thinking permeated the entire planning process and provided a springboard for the Mayor, Borough

Council, staff, and stakeholders, to consider resources, understand their relationships, and look for nontraditional alternatives in ways not previously considered.

This plan, funded with a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, combines a traditional comprehensive planning process with a more in-depth business district revitalization plan and the Pennsylvania Early Intervention Program.

This plan, funded with a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, combines a traditional comprehensive planning process with a more in-depth business district revitalization plan and the Pennsylvania Early Intervention Program. Each component has its own plan document; however, all of the recommendations, strategies, and actions are brought together in this comprehensive plan document. The comprehensive plan brings

together all of the strategic recommendations of each of the components in one cohesive, achievable strategy.

Finally, it is important to understand that the early stages of the plan implementation must be focused on a few strategic recommendations. While there are many action items recommended over the 10 years covered by this plan, the strategic recommendations for the next two years are of critical importance. They become the fuel for transformational change in Wilkinsburg, and without them, the other recommendations of the plan will be difficult to achieve.

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive planning is a term used by planners to describe the development of a plan to address the community's goals and vision for long-term community development. The final comprehensive plan document should guide public policy in the areas of transportation, utilities, community facilities, land use, recreation, natural and historic resources, and housing. Comprehensive planning provides an opportunity for local governments to address a broad range of topics and to cover a long-term time frame.

In Pennsylvania, the authority for a community to develop a comprehensive plan is derived from the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The MPC recommends but does not mandate that a community update its comprehensive plan every ten years. The comprehensive plan is not a legally binding document but provides a guide for the community to develop ordinances that can then be adopted in order to implement the various plan components. Comprehensive planning follows a typical process that includes several different steps such as identifying issues, stating goals, collecting data about existing conditions, preparing a plan based on the data, creating implementation strategies, and evaluating alternatives.

The planning process used to develop this comprehensive plan for Wilkinsburg was unique in that it used a variety of studies and tools not typically employed in a comprehensive planning process. By conducting a full municipal operations audit under the Pennsylvania Early Intervention Program and creating a comprehensive Business District Revitalization Plan and strategy, the Borough was able to take a more in-depth look at strategies than would typically be possible in a standard comprehensive planning process. The outcome of this approach provides for a stronger plan which identifies the resources necessary to accomplish its goals.

REVIEW OF PRIOR PLAN

In any planning process, the community must begin by understanding where it has been and gain an understanding of how successful its efforts have been. Therefore, the consulting team first reviewed the previously completed comprehensive plan. In 1998, the Borough of Wilkinsburg through the Wilkinsburg Planning Commission, and, with planning consultant team Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. (HRG), completed a comprehensive plan as recommended under the MPC. This comprehensive plan was developed through a process that included background research and public outreach facilitated by HRG. An existing conditions profile was prepared for the area that included both existing land use analysis and background studies. A community focus group was also included. Out of these three data-gathering activities, HRG comprised the findings by identifying and listing the following:

- Strengths and weaknesses
- Key community goals
- Land use character enhancements

The collected data was then used to prepare a detailed “Action Program Summary” section of the comprehensive plan that summarized and detailed all of the strategies of action that Wilkinsburg should take. On a scale of high, medium, or low, each strategy was then prioritized into one of the three categories. The finalized recommendations for Wilkinsburg from the 1998 plan are summarized briefly below.

Land Use Planning

Land use planning strategies were of high importance to the Borough. The following strategies were identified:

- Updating the zoning ordinance
- Improving the business district corridor – particularly through streetscape enhancements
- Implementing better planning review procedures for specific site plans

An emphasis was placed on correctly identifying nonresidential buildings and establishing guidelines for the exteriors of these buildings.

Housing

Housing conditions were identified as of the utmost importance to the Borough of Wilkinsburg and its residents. A number of strategies in housing related to preservation and rehabilitation of housing stock were included. Many of the strategies discussed keeping track of housing grants (i.e., Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grants) and continually supporting rehabilitation efforts. There were also strategies that involved focusing on addressing tax delinquencies, including the following:

- Developing a process for selling selective tax liens on income-producing properties
- Working with the school district to get tax liens online
- Continuing to support the use and management of the tax parcel data base

Since the plan was adopted, new construction of homes occurred on McNary Boulevard and many abandoned homes were renovated on Penn Avenue, Marlboro Street, Center Avenue and Franklin Avenue. There have been several areas where new construction of housing has been undertaken.

Transportation

Transportation recommendations did not appear to be of high importance for the Wilkinsburg residents and stakeholders. A list of improvements and strategies involved transportation design issues, pavement management, and public transportation. A particular emphasis was on working with the Port Authority to increase bus routes throughout Wilkinsburg, particularly in the neighborhoods. Parking and pedestrian access were also discussed.

In 2002 the Wilkinsburg Borough Council supported expanding transportation services in Wilkinsburg. The expansion came in the form of the extension of the East Busway from Wilkinsburg to Swissvale. This investment in Wilkinsburg included a second stop in Wilkinsburg



at Hamnett Place, an extensive Park & Ride at Pitt Street and Hamnett stops, and the “Joe Healy” linear park. Part of this development was the proposed opening of the previously closed tunnel at Whitney Avenue and Pennwood Avenue. The linear park and the reopened tunnel were included in order to connect neighborhoods and provide additional exercise and recreational areas.

Community Facilities and Services

Many of the strategies for community facilities focused on creating new positions such as a community development director within the Borough organizational structure, and appointing a Borough Council member to be an “official liaison” for the Borough Planning Commission. There was also a focus on staffing and investing resources for the improvement of the municipality’s infrastructure.

The Borough secured a multimillion dollar bond issue to jump start services and improve safety. Bond funds were utilized to replace unsafe and non-functioning equipment in addition to making necessary road improvements. Equipment purchases included a \$625,000 fire department ladder truck and public works utility vehicles. Major paving and demolition projects as well as new computers and the Prism accounting system were acquired with bond funding. The public works building was renovated and a dump site within the Borough was reclaimed.

The Nine Mile Run Watershed was also a focus for reclamation and clean up. Wilkesburg makes up the largest portion of the Nine Mile Run watershed, both by population and land mass. Approximately 27% of the Nine Mile Run Watershed is covered by impermeable surfaces, which allow runoff to flow directly into storm drains instead of being absorbed into the ground. During wet weather periods, Nine Mile Run is quickly overloaded with water, causing stream bank erosion and degrading habitats. The Nine Mile Run aquatic ecosystem restoration was completed by the Army Corps of Engineers in July 2006. It was the largest urban stream restoration in the United States at the time of its completion. The restoration work included stream channel reconfiguration, wetland reconstruction, native wildlife habitat enhancement, and native tree, shrub, and wildflower plantings.

The Borough secured a multimillion dollar bond issue to jump start services and improve safety. Bond funds were utilized to replace unsafe and non-functioning equipment in addition to making necessary road improvements.

Parks & Recreation

Overall, there was not a high concern or focus for parks and recreation in the comprehensive plan. Many residents felt that, although this was an important issue, particularly for the children of Wilkesburg, the Borough had more pressing problems on which it should focus and toward which it should use its resources, such as housing and overall economic development. A few



concerns in the parks and recreation area included creating a “true” community park for Wilkinsburg and having more frequent and aggressive safety audits of the playgrounds.

Community Image and Quality of Life


This area focused on strategies that relate to public relations, beautification projects, community involvement, and schools. The comprehensive plan emphasized that the area of public relations and image was of the highest importance. Many of the strategies for public relations included working with the local media (both television and newspaper) to help promote a more positive image of the community. This included working on better advertising of the community and offering new residents “welcome packets” when moving into Wilkinsburg, as well as encouraging the development of a weekly Wilkinsburg newspaper.

Economic Development, Tourism, and Historic Preservation


The main focus of this section of the comprehensive plan was on economic development and marketing. There was a primary focus on the central business district along Penn Avenue and strategies to help promote the business district to outside businesses. The comprehensive plan also acknowledged that Wilkinsburg needed to more actively seek funding sources. The comprehensive plan also reported that Wilkinsburg had been trying to attract a grocery chain in the Borough. Overall, the Borough recognized its need to develop an economic development strategy to help the Borough’s business community, recruit businesses into the area, and better market the area, as well as capture the potential spending power of the pass-through motorists in the Borough, especially for the Penn Avenue and Wood Street areas.

FOLLOW-UP FROM 1998 PLAN

As part of the 2009 comprehensive planning process, residents were asked, at the neighborhood public outreach meetings, how well the community has done relative to the recommendations from the previous plan. Specifically, a board was presented for attendees at each of the public meetings with the information shown below. Residents were asked to use dots to indicate responses to the questions on the board. Participants weighed in on issues such as housing conditions, parks and recreation, the business district and the overall quality of life issues.



the Wilkinsburg Plan



What Concerns Did We Identify In Previous Studies?

How Have We Done At Addressing These Concerns?

Blue = Good
Yellow = Fair
Red = Poor

From Your Perspective, Which Concerns are Most Important?

Blue = #1 Priority
Yellow = #2 Priority
Red = #3 Priority

Housing Conditions		
Community Image (Crime & Drugs)		
Health & Quality of Life		
Community Facilities Management		
Education		
Economic Development		
Employment Opportunities		
Job Training		
Parks & Recreation		
Public Safety		
Litter & Garbage Strewn Streets		
Community Unity		

In addition to soliciting response at the public meetings, the Borough collected responses through an electronic survey that was posted on its Web site during the same time period. The results from the public meetings and from the electronic survey with the majority rating for each category highlighted reported in Table 1 below.



TABLE 1 – RESPONSES FROM PUBLIC OUTREACH – PREVIOUS PLANS

How Well Have We Done at Addressing These Concerns?			
Issue	Good	Fair	Poor
HOUSING CONDITIONS	5	22	39
IMAGE	6	30	39
QUALITY OF LIFE	4	38	12
COMMUNITY FACILITIES MANAGEMENT	3	10	6
EDUCATION	5	14	46
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	7	30	22
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	2	10	34
JOB TRAINING	3	15	23
PARKS & RECREATION	10	37	13
PUBLIC SAFETY	13	25	19
LITTER & GARBAGE IN STREETS	17	17	30
COMMUNITY UNITY	9	22	24

SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH MEETINGS – SPRING 2009

As shown above, it appears that housing conditions, image, and education continue to be the areas where residents believe that the Borough has not rated very high in addressing problems. Other areas that were rated fair to poor are quality of life employment opportunities, community unity, and economic development. The Borough’s efforts were rated higher by residents for some basic services in the community such as public safety, parks and recreation and the management of community facilities. Efforts to address litter and garbage in the streets got mixed reviews – nearly as many people saw the effort as good as those who rated the efforts as poor.

Results from the second question related to what issues should continue to be priorities for the Borough are tabulated in Table 2 below. The totals for the top five answers are highlighted in yellow in the chart above.



TABLE 2 – RESPONSES FROM PUBLIC OUTREACH – PRIORITY CONCERNS

Which Concerns are Most Important?				
Issue	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Total
HOUSING CONDITIONS	21	11	15	47
IMAGE	20	14	8	42
QUALITY OF LIFE	5	6	5	16
COMMUNITY FACILITIES MANAGEMENT	5	3	0	8
EDUCATION	21	14	6	41
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	21	13	16	50
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	7	7	6	20
JOB TRAINING	5	2	1	8
PARKS & RECREATION	2	7	3	12
PUBLIC SAFETY	22	12	9	43
LITTER & GARBAGE IN STREETS	16	7	8	31
COMMUNITY UNITY	10	1	6	17
SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH MEETINGS, SPRING 2009				

Based on the responses from the sampling of residents at the neighborhood public outreach meetings and through the electronic survey posted on the Borough’s Web site, housing conditions and economic development continue to be areas where residents believe there should be additional attention, resources, and focus. Strong emphasis is also placed on image, education, and public safety. Again the top five responses are highlighted in yellow.

It should be noted that several action items have been implemented by the Borough during the past 10 years that are related to the recommendations from the 1998 comprehensive plan. These include the following:

- The creation of the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) in 2006 as a downtown business district organization with a mission that focuses on “the revitalization of Wilkinsburg and surrounding areas through business and residential development; organizational and individual civic leadership; and cultural enrichment.”
- The opening of a Save-A-Lot grocery store in the 700 block of Ross Avenue accessible from Penn Avenue and located in the heart of the central business district
- The securing of a \$9 million grant based on tax credits for the redevelopment of Hamnett Place
- The construction of townhouses and single-family homes in Peebles Square at market rates as part of Phase I of the redevelopment plan for that area
- The installation of a community development and housing specialist partially funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Allegheny County Economic Development
- The securing of \$600,000 over five years in private investment for economic development activities in the central business district through the WCDC

- The adoption of a tax abatement and tax compromise program that addresses tax delinquencies and vacant properties in the Borough
- The completion of major recreation upgrades and enhancements at several Borough parks, including over \$300,000 in improvements at Hunter Park, the largest of the Borough’s public parks

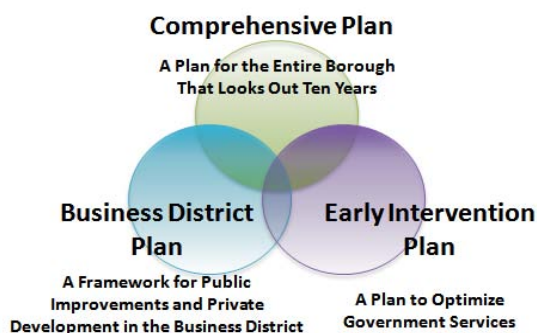
THE WILKINSBURG PLAN 2009

In late 2008, the Borough, funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Governor’s Center for Local Government Services, embarked on an innovative, year-long planning initiative known as the *Wilkinsburg Plan*. Delta Development Group, Inc., headquartered in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, was engaged by the Borough to lead the planning effort, in partnership with Burt Hill (architects); John J. Clark & Associates; Charles “Marty” Fleischer, Police Consultant; and Nicholas Sohyda, Fire Department Consultant. Delta’s Pittsburgh office managed the planning efforts under the direction of a Steering Committee whose members were appointed by the Borough Council. The initiative consists of three separate but interdependent components:

1. An update to the Borough’s existing comprehensive plan, pursuant to the Pennsylvania MPC’s recommendation to update the plan every 10 years
2. An Early Intervention Plan that evaluates the Borough’s financial health and operational capacity and recommends strategies that will facilitate fiscal and operational stability in the future
3. A strategic revitalization plan for the Borough’s business district.

The Borough of Wilkinsburg made a decision to supplement the typical comprehensive planning process by adding the business district revitalization focus and the five-year financial and management review of its organizational capacity. By combining an update of the Borough’s comprehensive plan with a focused business revitalization plan and a five-year financial and management plan, the Borough can better develop the tools and action plans for the actual implementation and monitoring of the plan recommendations. The integrated plans will provide guidance and recommendations about the best use of the Borough’s human and capital resources needed to achieve desired outcomes. A graphic depiction of the Borough of Wilkinsburg’s integrated plan process is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 – THE INTEGRATED PLAN



The Wilkinsburg Comprehensive Plan is designed to provide a general blueprint for the Borough for the next 10 years to ensure that the physical and organizational infrastructure is in place to best serve the Borough’s residents. It also addresses the Borough’s resources, capacity, and ability to maximize its revenue base. As with most

comprehensive plans, the five core considerations in the Comprehensive Plan are as follows

1. Current and future land use
2. Housing and neighborhoods
3. Movement of people and goods
4. Community facilities and utilities
5. Protection of natural and historic resources

The Business District Revitalization Plan, as part of the Wilkinsburg planning process, provides a more strategic plan for revitalizing the business district and providing amenities that will serve the needs of local residents, business owners, and commuters. The Early Intervention Plan (EIP), as envisioned by the state funders and Borough officials, provides a five-year financial and management plan for efficient delivery of services to Borough residents by identifying the financial resources necessary to fund operations and capital infrastructure needs. Together, the integrated plans provide a comprehensive approach to successfully implementing the community's vision and plans.

This document presents the comprehensive planning component of this initiative. However, since the components are interdependent and interrelated, it also includes summaries of the EIP and the Business District Revitalization Plan, with relevant outcomes, recommendations, and goals that directly impact and interface with the implementation strategy.

The Wilkinsburg Plan was developed in four steps that address the critical components of the comprehensive planning process, which are as follows:

Background Research - Researching and documenting existing conditions to serve as a baseline for planning. In *Guidelines for Preparing Urban Plans*, by Anderson and Larz (1995) from the APA Planners Press, it is noted that "to be relevant, the planning process must identify and address not only contemporary issues of concern to residents, workers, property owners, and business people, but also the emerging issues that will be important in the future." The planning process must first, therefore, address those issues that are basic to the community. Toward this end, *The Wilkinsburg Plan* will collect, prepare, and analyze existing data relative to population, environment, traffic, social, and economic conditions.

Public Input - Seeking input from the public to understand public perceptions and to ensure that the vision for Wilkinsburg's future represents the desires of Borough residents. As part of the planning process, the Borough included six neighborhood meetings and a week-long charrette process focused on the business district revitalization effort. The information collected from the public meetings ultimately leads to the formulation of goals, objectives, and action items for implementation.

Synthesis and Analysis - Assessing the planning implications resulting from the research findings and public input, synthesizing the findings of the Comprehensive Plan with those of the Business District Revitalization Plan and the EIP, and developing strategies for moving from existing conditions to the future envisioned by Borough residents. This step allows for discussion of planning implications relative to the information collected and the goals derived from the public involvement process. It is where the consultant team alongside Borough officials and stakeholders analyze the facts and develops broad policy goals and strategy when considering priority issues from the three plan components. The process included identifying the critical factors that are necessary for successful plan implementation. The synthesis and analysis discussion is contained in the individual comprehensive plan element sections.

Priority Strategy Development - Identifying the priority strategies and the tools for implementing strategies that include potential sources of funding and potential public/private partnerships. This step of the plan focuses on cost and effectiveness of the various plan components and delivers alternatives for successful implementation. During this step, each alternative is weighed and the impacts identified. Strategies should be developed based on what will best address the needs and desires of the community leaders for meeting the community goals.

A graphic representation of the comprehensive planning process for *The Wilkinsburg Plan* is shown in Figure 2.


The Borough used this process in the plan development and derived its strategies based on the outcome of these activities and efforts. As adopted, the Comprehensive Plan will become a policy instrument and an official statement of the Borough’s community goals for its future development. Utilizing the action plan, the Borough officials can carry out the goals of the plan

FIGURE 2 – THE WILKINSBURG PLAN PLANNING PROCESS



and monitor its progress and outcomes. The Borough’s Comprehensive Plan is not a static document but a living, dynamic presentation of community vision that will be changed and rewritten over time. In order for the plan to remain relevant to the community, it must remain current and incorporate changes in the environment and in policy direction as new elements are introduced, examined, and confronted.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH



Background Research

- Current Conditions
- Previous Plans

The collection of background data and information and its presentation are necessary in order to evaluate current conditions in the Borough and to understand the patterns of community growth and change. Data collection for this plan was done primarily through information derived from the United States Census Bureau, the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), and other data sources as noted in the report. Outcomes of the data collection process provide baseline information and statistics on which to make policy recommendations and include population projections, economic conditions forecasts, and future housing needs. The collection of the data assists in the study and analysis of existing conditions and leads to the development of future goals.

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS

POPULATION

From a population of 31,418 in 1950, the Borough of Wilkinsburg has seen a steady decline in population over the past five decades. The 1960s through the 1980s saw the greatest losses, averaging over 11% loss per decade. The rate of loss slowed to 8.9% in the 1990s, and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) projects that the loss rate will stabilize significantly over the next 30 years. Table 3 shows the actual population changes between 1950 and 2000, and the SPC’s projections through 2035.

TABLE 3 – POPULATION TRENDS

POPULATION TRENDS				
YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	TIME FRAME	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE	DECENNIAL CHANGE
1950 (Actual)	31,418			
1960 (Actual)	30,066	1950s	-0.4%	-4.3%
1970 (Actual)	26,780	1960s	-1.2%	-10.9%
1980 (Actual)	23,669	1970s	-1.2%	-11.6%
1990 (Actual)	21,080	1980s	-1.2%	-10.9%
2000 (Actual)	19,196	1990s	-0.9%	-8.9%
2010 (Projected)	17,995	2000-2010	-0.6%	-6.3%
2020 (Projected)	17,681	2010-2020	-0.2%	-1.7%
2030 (Projected)	19,135	2020-2030	0.8%	8.2%
2035 (Projected)	18,712	2030-2035	-0.4%	-2.2%

SOURCE: SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION

Since 2000, it is estimated that Wilkinsburg’s population has decreased at a greater rate than that of its neighboring municipalities, and over 60% faster than Allegheny County as a whole.



Table 4 shows the actual population in 2000 and the projected changes in population through 2012 for Wilkinsburg, in comparison to the neighboring municipalities, Pennsylvania, and the United States, as estimated and projected by the ESRI. It should be noted that ESRI's projected growth rate is relatively similar to the SPC's short-term projection.

TABLE 4 – POPULATION COMPARISONS

POPULATION COMPARISONS						
	2000 (ACTUAL)	2007 (ESTIMATED)	2012 (PROJECTED)	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2007	% CHANGE 2007 TO 2012	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2012
Wilkinsburg	19,196	18,206	17,654	-5.2%	-3.0%	-0.7%
Braddock Hills	1,998	1,913	1,857	-4.3%	-2.9%	-0.6%
Churchill	3,566	3,442	3,353	-3.5%	-2.6%	-0.5%
Edgewood	3,315	3,196	3,112	-3.6%	-2.6%	-0.5%
Forest Hills	6,831	6,677	6,525	-2.3%	-2.3%	-0.4%
Penn Hills	46,809	44,915	43,680	-4.0%	-2.7%	-0.6%
Pittsburgh	334,566	318,390	309,390	-4.8%	-2.8%	-0.7%
Swissvale	9,649	9,270	9,019	-3.9%	-2.7%	-0.6%
Allegheny County	1,281,666	1,240,864	1,210,673	-3.2%	-2.4%	-0.5%
Pennsylvania	12,281,054	12,642,856	12,909,599	2.9%	2.1%	0.4%
U.S.	281,421,906	306,348,230	325,526,398	8.9%	6.3%	1.2%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

MOBILITY

Around 47% of Wilkinsburg's population in 2000 reported that they had moved into their current residence within the last five years, compared to 45% during the five years prior to the 1990 Census. The majority of people moving into residences in Wilkinsburg between 1995 and 2000 moved from within Allegheny County. This is a significant amount of mobility within a community and is reflective of the transient nature of the population. Wilkinsburg has substantially less owner-occupied dwellings, at only 42% (2000 census), as compared to 67% in Allegheny County. The high level of mobility, combined with the lower than average number of owner-occupied dwellings, presents important challenges when dealing with a declining population and housing stock. Table 5 shows the rate of mobility and the origin of those who moved to Wilkinsburg.

TABLE 5 – MOBILITY IN WILKINSBURG (2009)

MOBILITY IN WILKINSBURG (2000)		
MOBILITY FACTORS		
Population 5 Years & Older	17,965	
Lived in Same House in 1995	9,530	
Lived in Different House in 1995	8,435	
Mobility Rate (% Movers)	47.0%	
	Number	% of Total Movers
Allegheny County	7,049	83.6%
Elsewhere in PA	426	5.1%
Northeast U.S.	134	1.6%
Midwest U.S.	167	2.0%
South U.S.	308	3.7%
West U.S.	137	1.6%
Abroad	214	2.5%
Total	8,435	100.0%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU		

AGE

Wilkinsburg residents are somewhat younger than residents in most of the neighboring municipalities, with an average age of 37.8 in 2000. Pennsylvania has a higher percentage of its population over 65 years of age compared to the United States. Wilkinsburg’s percentage of population over 65 years of age is lower than many of the neighboring municipalities, and it mirrors that in Pennsylvania. Table 6, Table 7, and

Figure 3 show the trends in median age and in the population over 65 years of age.

TABLE 6 – MEDIAN AGE

MEDIAN AGE						
	2000	2007	2012	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2007	% CHANGE 2007 TO 2012	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2012
Wilkinsburg	37.8	40.1	41.8	6.1%	4.2%	0.8%
Braddock Hills	45.7	48.7	50.3	6.6%	3.3%	0.8%
Churchill	48.0	51.6	52.5	7.5%	1.7%	0.7%
Edgewood	40.2	43.2	44.3	7.5%	2.5%	0.8%
Forest Hills	43.7	46.5	48.0	6.4%	3.2%	0.8%
Penn Hills	42.0	44.4	46.0	5.7%	3.6%	0.8%
Pittsburgh	35.5	36.6	38.1	3.1%	4.1%	0.6%
Swissvale	39.1	40.7	42.0	4.1%	3.2%	0.6%
Allegheny County	39.6	41.9	43.4	5.8%	3.6%	0.8%
Pennsylvania	38.0	40.2	41.4	5.8%	3.0%	0.7%
U.S.	35.3	36.7	37.6	4.0%	2.5%	0.5%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)						

TABLE 7 – POPULATION AGE 65+

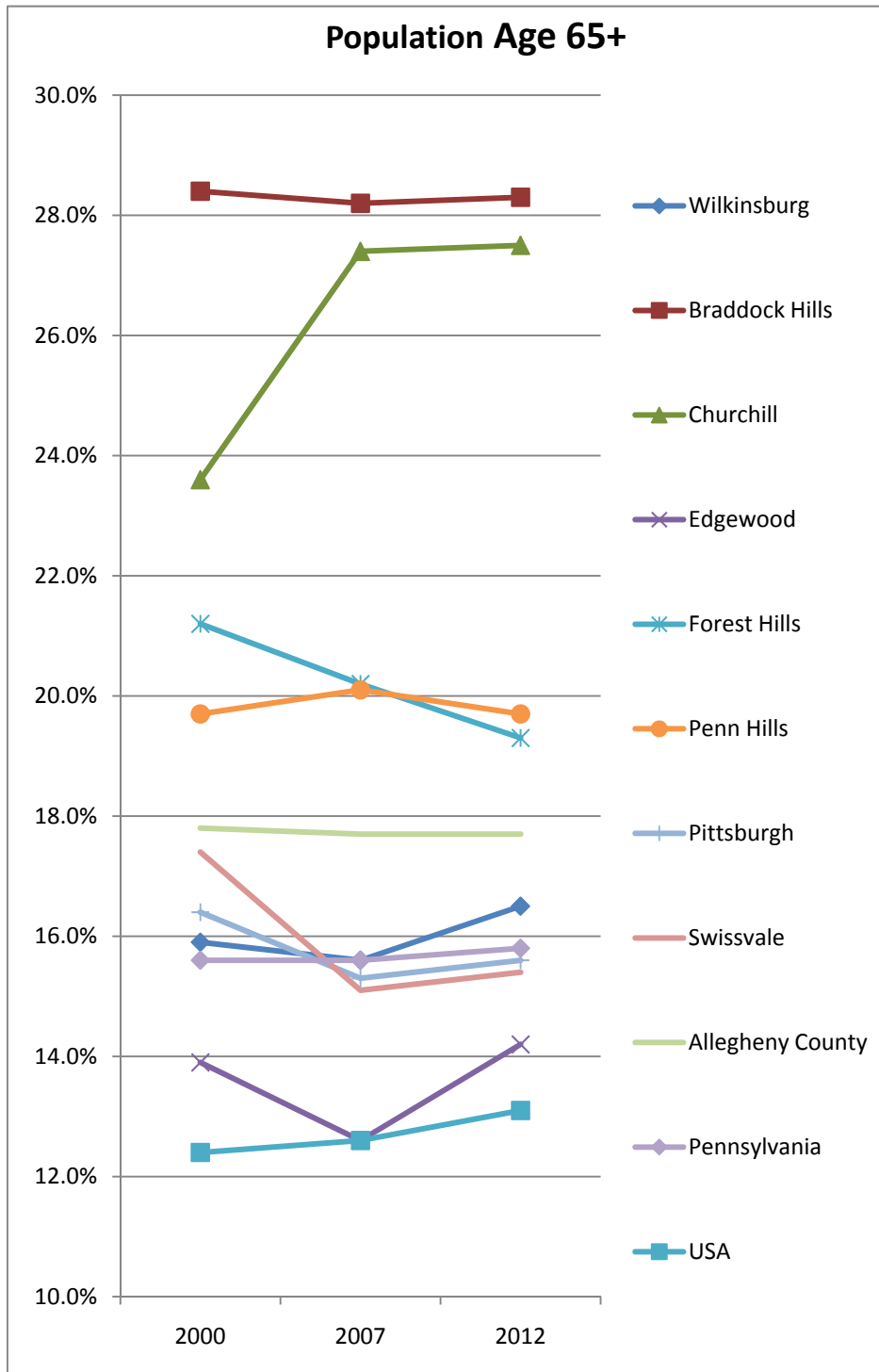


POPULATION AGE 65+						
AGE 65+	2000	2007	2012	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2007	% CHANGE 2007 TO 2012	COMPOUNDED ANNUAL CHANGE 2000 TO 2012
Wilkinsburg	15.9%	15.6%	16.5%	-1.9%	5.8%	0.3%
Braddock Hills	28.4%	28.2%	28.3%	-0.7%	0.4%	0.0%
Churchill	23.6%	27.4%	27.5%	16.1%	0.4%	1.3%
Edgewood	13.9%	12.6%	14.2%	-9.4%	12.7%	0.2%
Forest Hills	21.2%	20.2%	19.3%	-4.7%	-4.5%	-0.8%
Penn Hills	19.7%	20.1%	19.7%	2.0%	-2.0%	0.0%
Pittsburgh	16.4%	15.3%	15.6%	-6.7%	2.0%	-0.4%
Swissvale	17.4%	15.1%	15.4%	-13.2%	2.0%	-1.0%
Allegheny County	17.8%	17.7%	17.7%	-0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Pennsylvania	15.6%	15.6%	15.8%	0.0%	1.3%	0.1%
U.S.	12.4%	12.6%	13.1%	1.6%	4.0%	0.5%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

Figure 3 below graphically depicts the percentage of the population that is over 65 for Wilkinsburg and its surrounding communities.

Figure 3 – Population Age 65+



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

While overall diversity in Wilkinsburg is quite similar to that in the city of Pittsburgh and some of its neighboring municipalities, the racial makeup of the population is significantly different. The



black population was the most prominent race in Wilkinsburg in the 2000 Census, representing 66.5% of the total population, compared to 27.1% in the city of Pittsburgh. This represents an increase of nearly 27% since 1990, when the black population represented only 52.5% of Wilkinsburg’s total population. ESRI estimates that by 2007, the black population represented 71.8% of the total population, and projects that percentage to increase to 74.6% by 2012.

TABLE 8 – TRENDS IN DIVERSITY

TRENDS IN DIVERSITY					
	2000	2007	2012	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2007	% CHANGE 2007 TO 2012
Wilkinsburg	48.4	44.0	41.3	-9.1%	-6.1%
Braddock Hills	34.5	41.9	46.0	21.4%	9.8%
Churchill	22.7	29.6	34.4	30.4%	16.2%
Edgewood	22.1	28.7	33.0	29.9%	15.0%
Forest Hills	11.4	15.5	18.7	36.0%	20.6%
Penn Hills	40.7	45.6	48.2	12.0%	5.7%
Pittsburgh	48.2	51.9	54.3	7.7%	4.6%
Swissvale	40.9	47.4	50.9	15.9%	7.4%
Allegheny County	28.6	32.5	35.5	13.6%	9.2%
Pennsylvania	30.7	34.1	36.6	11.1%	7.3%
U.S	54.6	59.3	62.3	8.6%	5.1%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

Table 8 demonstrates the diversity index in Wilkinsburg to neighboring municipalities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States. The diversity index measures the probability that two people from the same geographic area will be from different racial and/or ethnic groups. The higher the index, the greater the probability that two people will be from different racial and/or ethnic groups. Although there are various definitions for diversity, this particular benchmark deals only with racial and ethnic diversity. It is believed that as the nation’s demographic makeup changes, areas with more diverse populations become more attractive to more people. The thing to note in Wilkinsburg is that, while other communities, the county, the state, and the country are increasing in racial and ethnic diversity, Wilkinsburg is decreasing in diversity, primarily because of the increases in the black population.

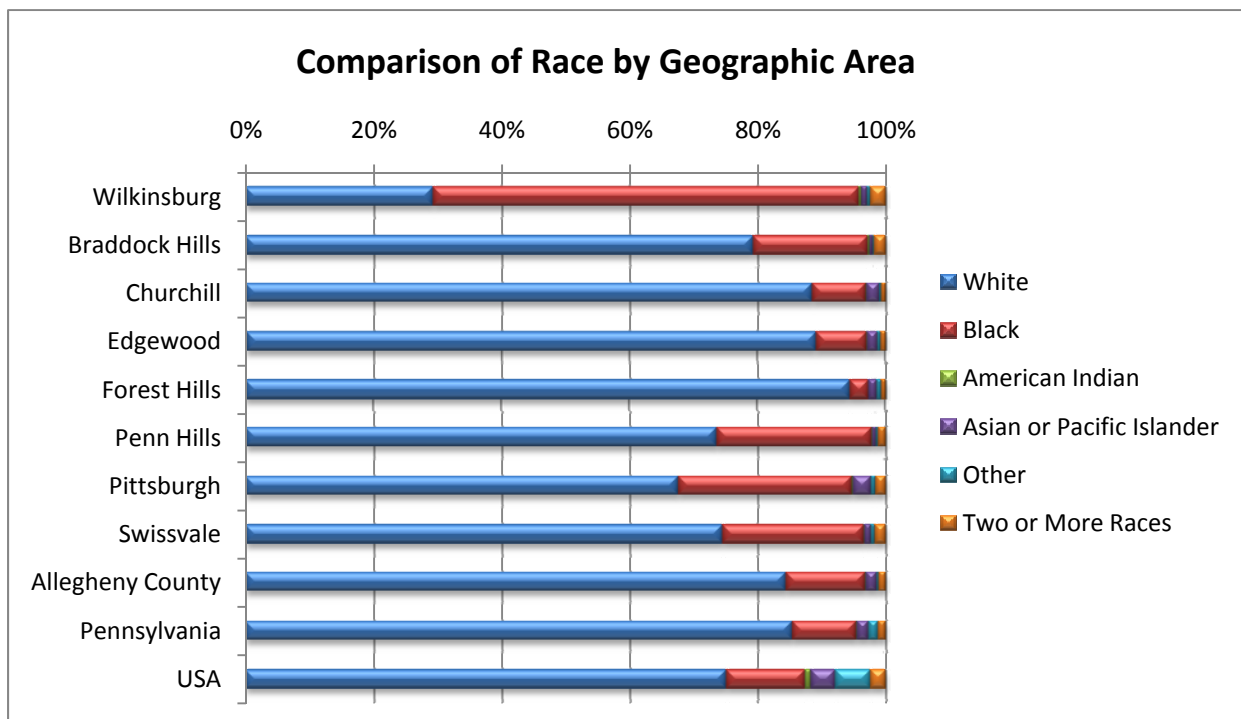
Table 9 and Figure 4 present a comparison of the racial makeup of the same geographic areas that are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 9 – COMPARISON OF RACE BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA

COMPARISON OF RACE BY GEOGRAPHIC AREAS							
	WHITE	BLACK	AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER	OTHER	TWO OR MORE RACES	TOTAL
Wilkinsburg	29.3%	66.5%	0.4%	0.9%	0.5%	2.4%	100%
Braddock Hills	79.4%	18.0%	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%	1.8%	100%
Churchill	88.5%	8.4%	0.1%	2.0%	0.3%	0.7%	100%
Edgewood	89.1%	7.9%	0.1%	1.6%	0.5%	0.8%	100%
Forest Hills	94.7%	3.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.7%	0.7%	100%
Penn Hills	73.6%	24.2%	0.1%	0.6%	0.3%	1.2%	100%
Pittsburgh	67.6%	27.1%	0.2%	2.8%	0.7%	1.6%	100%
Swissvale	74.5%	22.1%	0.1%	1.0%	0.6%	1.7%	100%
Allegheny County	84.3%	12.4%	0.1%	1.7%	0.3%	1.1%	100%
Pennsylvania	85.4%	10.0%	0.1%	1.8%	1.5%	1.2%	100%
U.S	75.1%	12.3%	0.9%	3.8%	5.5%	2.4%	100%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

FIGURE 4 – COMPARISON OF RACE BY GEOGRAPHIC AREAS



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

INCOME

The median annual household income in Wilkinsburg in 2000 was \$26,543, slightly less than the median income in the city of Pittsburgh. In contrast, the median household income in neighboring Churchill is over 2.5 times that of Wilkinsburg. Table 10 presents a comparison of median household incomes in Wilkinsburg to those of neighboring municipalities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States.

TABLE 10 – TRENDS IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

TRENDS IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
	2000	2007	2012	% CHANGE 2000 TO 2007	% CHANGE 2007 TO 2012
Wilkinsburg	26,543	34,127	40,357	28.6%	18.3%
Braddock Hills	18,546	24,215	29,634	30.6%	22.4%
Churchill	67,311	87,801	106,868	30.4%	21.7%
Edgewood	52,466	70,501	86,514	34.4%	22.7%
Forest Hills	44,920	58,981	70,518	31.3%	19.6%
Penn Hills	39,966	52,537	62,917	31.5%	19.8%
Pittsburgh	28,660	36,723	43,490	28.1%	18.4%
Swissvale	31,463	40,344	47,421	28.2%	17.5%
Allegheny County	38,317	50,158	59,839	30.9%	19.3%
Pennsylvania	40,108	51,375	60,635	28.1%	18.0%
U.S	42,164	53,154	62,503	26.1%	17.6%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

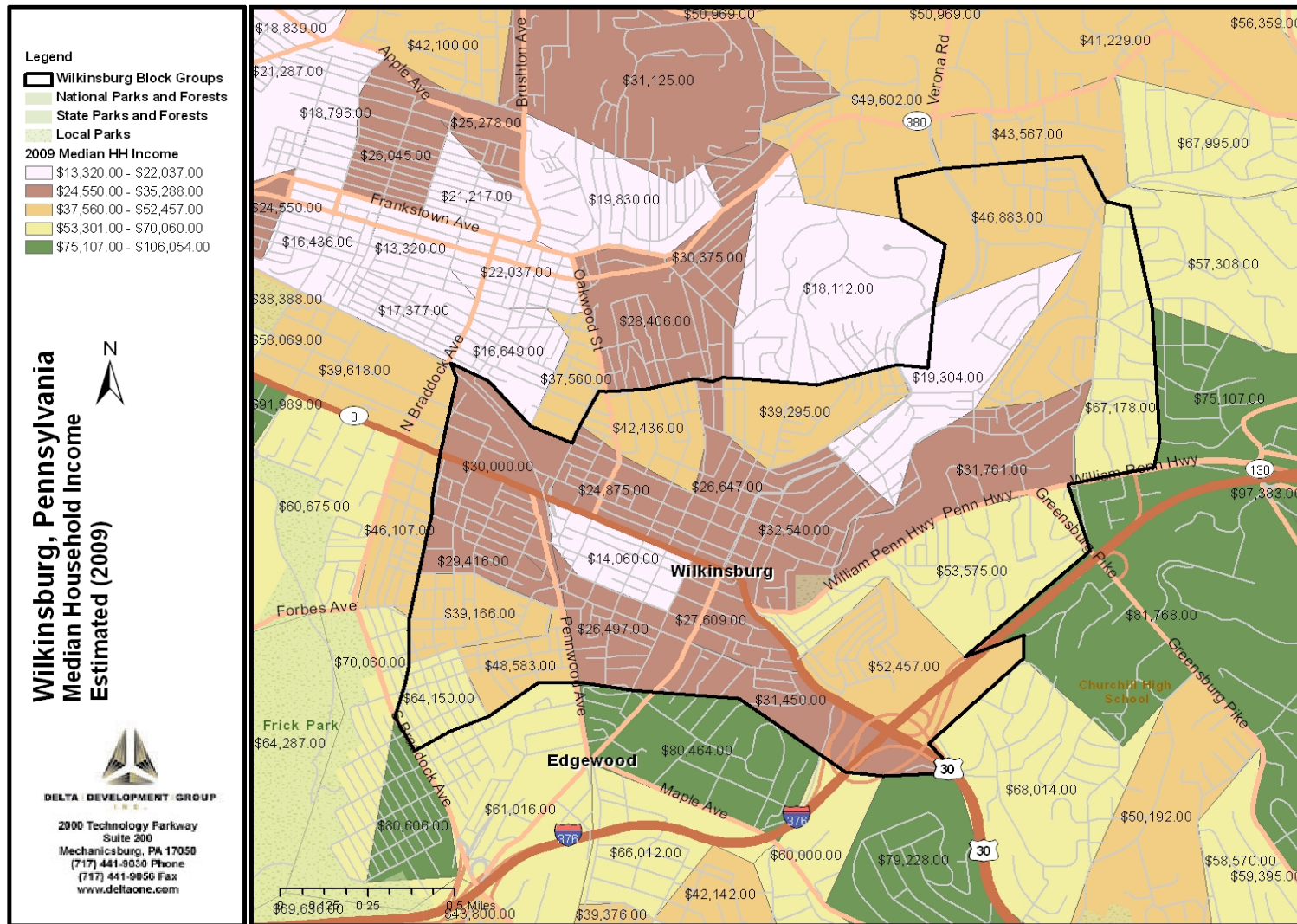
In addition to the level of household income, another key indicator of economic health is how income is growing in comparison to the rest of the country. As shown in Table 11 and



Figure 5, the income gap between Wilkinsburg and the United States is expected to widen by over 40% between 2000 and 2012. Similar trends are expected in the city of Pittsburgh, Braddock Hills, and Swissvale.

Map 1 depicts the geographic dispersion of median household income in the Borough by census blocks. Generally, median household incomes are higher in Wilkinsburg neighborhoods that abut the neighborhoods in the adjacent communities to the northeast and southeast of the Borough. It is interesting to note that as incomes are charted moving to the core of the community and along Penn Avenue, the median household incomes decrease, creating a donut effect where the lowest incomes are at the center of the community.

MAP 1 – 2009 ESTIMATED MEDIAN - HOUSEHOLD INCOME

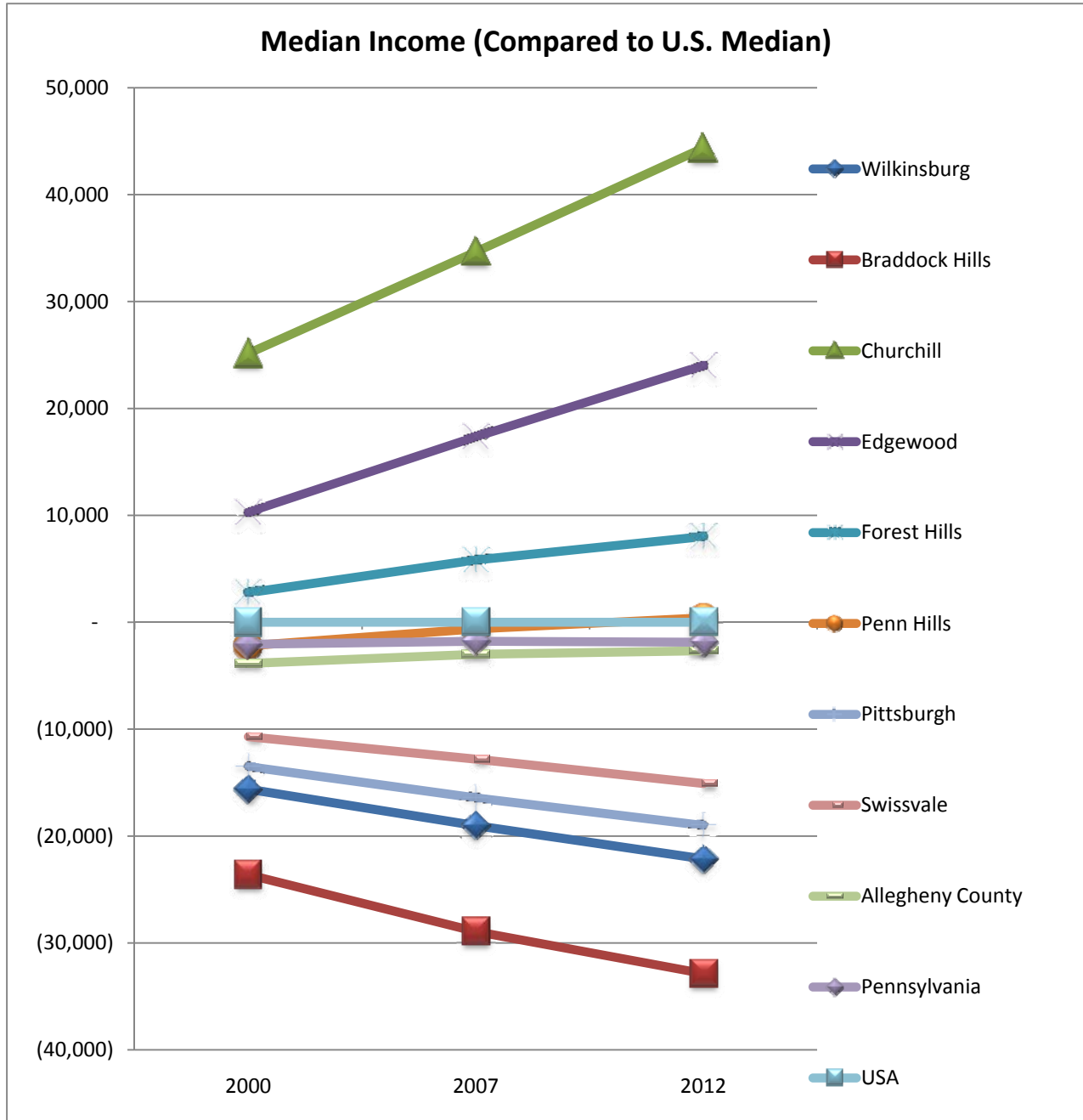


Source: Income Data – U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI

TABLE 11 – MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AS COMPARED TO U.S. MEDIAN

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AS COMPARED TO U.S. MEDIAN			
	2000	2007	2012
Wilkinsburg	(15,621)	(19,027)	(22,146)
Braddock Hills	(23,618)	(28,939)	(32,869)
Churchill	25,147	34,647	44,365
Edgewood	10,302	17,347	24,011
Forest Hills	2,756	5,827	8,015
Penn Hills	(2,198)	(617)	414
Pittsburgh	(13,504)	(16,431)	(19,013)
Swissvale	(10,701)	(12,810)	(15,082)
Allegheny County	(3,847)	(2,996)	(2,664)
Pennsylvania	(2,056)	(1,779)	(1,868)
U.S.	-	-	-
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)			

FIGURE 5 – MEDIAN INCOME

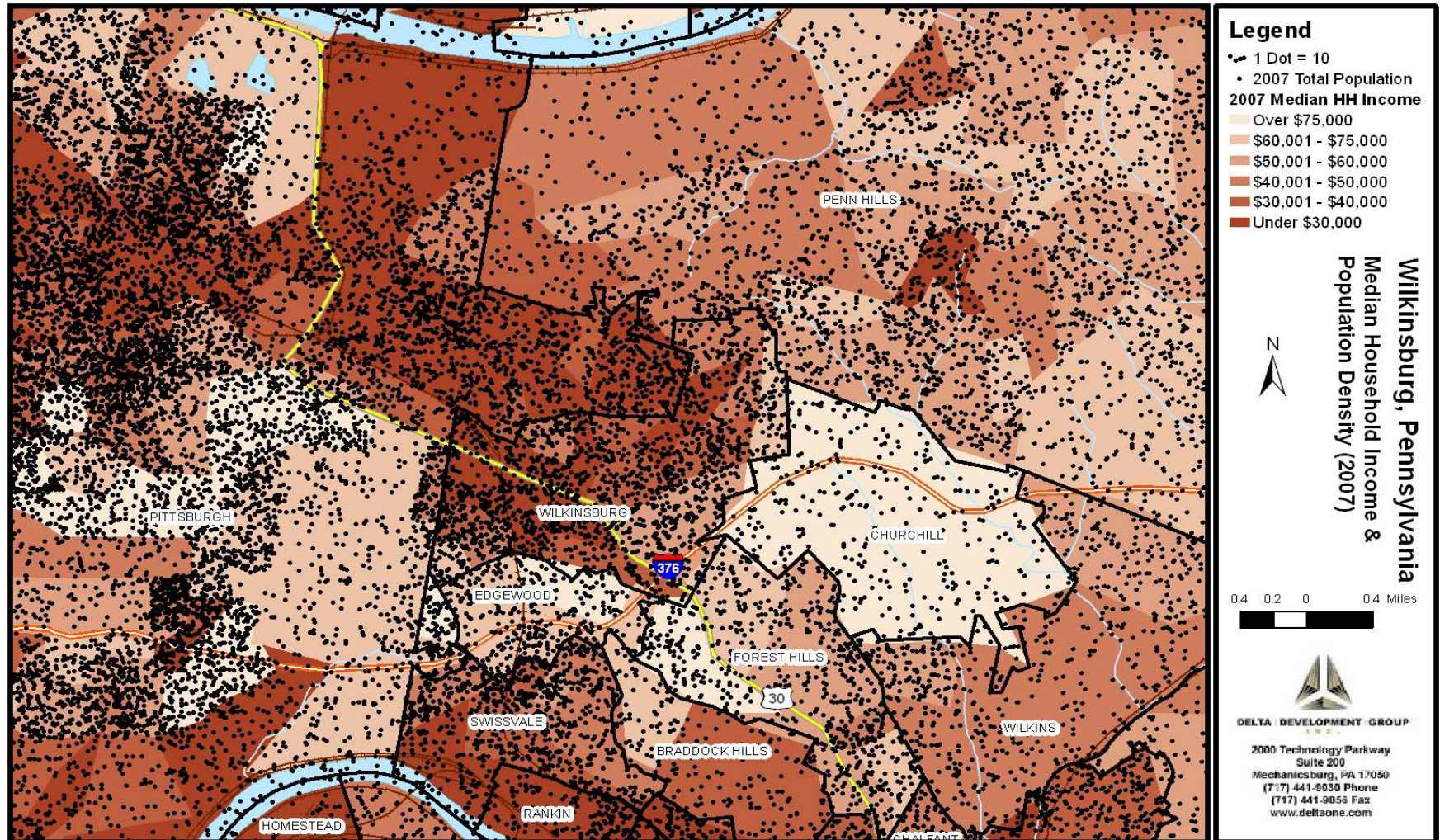


SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

Map 2 presents a comparison of median incomes by block group in Wilkinsburg and surrounding areas, contrasted to population density.



MAP 2 – MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND POPULATION DENSITY (2000)



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

EDUCATION

According to the 2000 Census, 31.5% of Wilkinsburg residents had at least a high school diploma, 29.8% had some college education, and 22.4% had received a bachelor's degree or higher. Another 16.3% of residents had less than a high school education. These statistics are consistent with the state average and slightly better than the national average. Among the neighboring municipalities, Wilkinsburg ranks seventh in the percentage of residents with at least a high school education, sixth in the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, and third in the percentage of residents with less than a high school education. Table 12 shows the Wilkinsburg education attainment compared to neighboring municipalities, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and the United States.

The Wilkinsburg School District provides public education for the youth of Wilkinsburg. The Allegheny County Intermediate Unit 3 provides additional resources and services to both public and private schools in Wilkinsburg. The Wilkinsburg School District includes five schools: three elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The elementary schools (which include students in kindergarten through sixth grade) are Kelly Elementary, Johnston Elementary, and Turner Elementary. Around 785 students are enrolled in these three schools. The middle school consists of seventh and eighth grades and has approximately 220 students enrolled. Wilkinsburg High School includes grades 9-12 and has about 430 students enrolled.

Established in the fall of 2003, the Wilkinsburg Academy was an alternative to a traditional school setting that provided an intense focus on each student's emotional and social wellness, as well as academic achievement. Initially, the Academy served students in grades 7-12, but it was expanded to include kindergarten through sixth grade. In 2009 there were about 90 students involved in this program. By 2010, the Academy had been eliminated due to lack of adequate funding.

The Wilkinsburg School District is one of the smaller districts in the area and has struggled financially for some time. In 2000, it was certified as an education empowerment district under the Education Empowerment Act, which required the district to complete a school improvement plan designed to increase academic performance and improve management and operations. Annual school improvement grants were awarded to assist with the implementation of the plan. By the 2004-2005 school year, the district had shown enough improvement to be removed from the program. Test scores in 2008 and 2009 indicated some improvement but still are lower than many of the schools in the region. In 2009 Wilkinsburg received \$2.2 million in stimulus funding to support basic education.

In addition to the public schools Wilkinsburg is served by a number of private schools, these schools include St. James School located at 721 Rebecca Avenue, Trinity Christian School located at 299 Ridge Avenue, Pittsburgh Urban Christian at 809 Center Avenue, and Sonshine Christian Center at 729 Wallace Avenue. These private schools provide alternative educational services to students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

TABLE 12 – EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – POPULATION AGE 25+ (2000)

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – POPULATION AGE 25+ (2000)

	WILKINSBURG	BRADDOCK HILLS	CHURCHILL	EDGEWOOD	FOREST HILLS	PENN HILLS	PITTSBURGH	SWISSVALE	ALLEGHENY COUNTY	PA	U.S.
Total Population Age 25+	13,212	1,506	2,822	2,575	5,152	33,695	218,815	6,897	891,171	8,266,284	182,211,639
No Schooling	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	1.4%
Nursery-4th Grade	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.8%
5th-6th Grade	0.7%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	1.1%	0.6%	0.8%	1.9%
7th-8th Grade	1.6%	4.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.8%	1.6%	2.8%	2.0%	2.4%	3.7%	3.5%
9th Grade	2.0%	1.0%	0.2%	0.7%	1.0%	1.3%	2.4%	1.8%	1.7%	2.5%	2.5%
10th Grade	3.3%	5.0%	0.5%	0.5%	1.8%	2.7%	4.1%	2.8%	2.8%	3.6%	3.0%
11th Grade	2.8%	3.1%	0.2%	0.9%	1.2%	2.9%	3.7%	1.6%	2.5%	3.2%	2.8%
12th Grade/No Diploma	5.0%	3.1%	0.8%	1.4%	2.6%	4.3%	4.0%	3.6%	3.0%	3.4%	3.7%
High School Grad	31.5%	43.3%	18.5%	15.8%	23.0%	35.8%	32.7%	35.1%	33.9%	38.1%	28.6%
Some College/<1 Yr	7.3%	4.5%	4.8%	3.9%	5.1%	7.7%	5.5%	4.2%	6.1%	5.7%	7.1%
Some College/1+ Yrs	13.3%	11.9%	10.8%	12.1%	10.6%	13.4%	10.7%	13.2%	10.9%	9.9%	14.0%
Associate’s Degree	9.2%	5.8%	7.9%	8.0%	6.9%	7.9%	6.1%	8.9%	7.1%	5.9%	6.3%
Bachelor’s Degree	13.7%	11.6%	29.3%	20.4%	26.2%	13.9%	13.7%	15.7%	17.3%	14.0%	15.5%
Master’s Degree	5.5%	4.1%	14.5%	18.0%	12.3%	5.1%	7.3%	6.4%	7.1%	5.4%	5.9%
Professional School Degree	2.0%	1.4%	7.3%	11.0%	4.6%	1.4%	2.9%	1.8%	2.6%	2.0%	2.0%
Doctorate Degree	1.2%	0.0%	4.7%	6.7%	2.8%	0.7%	2.3%	0.9%	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

SOURCE: U. S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)



HOUSEHOLDS

According to the census, a household is defined as all of the people who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated people who share living quarters. A family household is defined as “a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.” Households are further classified as “married-couple family” or “other family” which includes “male householder, no wife present,” female householder, no husband present,” and “nonfamily household.” One person in each household is designated as the householder, usually the person in whose name the home is owned or rented.

The definition for each of these household types is:

Married-couple family – This category includes a family in which the householder and his or her spouse are enumerated as members of the same household.

Male householder, no wife present. This category includes a family with a male maintaining a household with no wife of the householder present.

Female householder, no husband present – This category includes a family with a female maintaining a household with no husband of the householder present.

Nonfamily household – This category includes a householder living alone or with nonrelatives only.

Social characteristics related to households in Wilkinsburg have changed markedly over the past two decades, with the percentage of family households declining from 57.7% of total households in 1980 to 49.0% in 2000, which represents a 15.8% decline between 1980 and 1990, and a 12.4% decline between 1990 and 2000. Married-couple families also declined, but at a faster rate than family households. Married-couple families declined from 39.8% of total households in 1980 to 24.3% in 2000, representing a 26.9% decline between 1980 and 1990, and a 27.4% decline between 1990 and 2000.

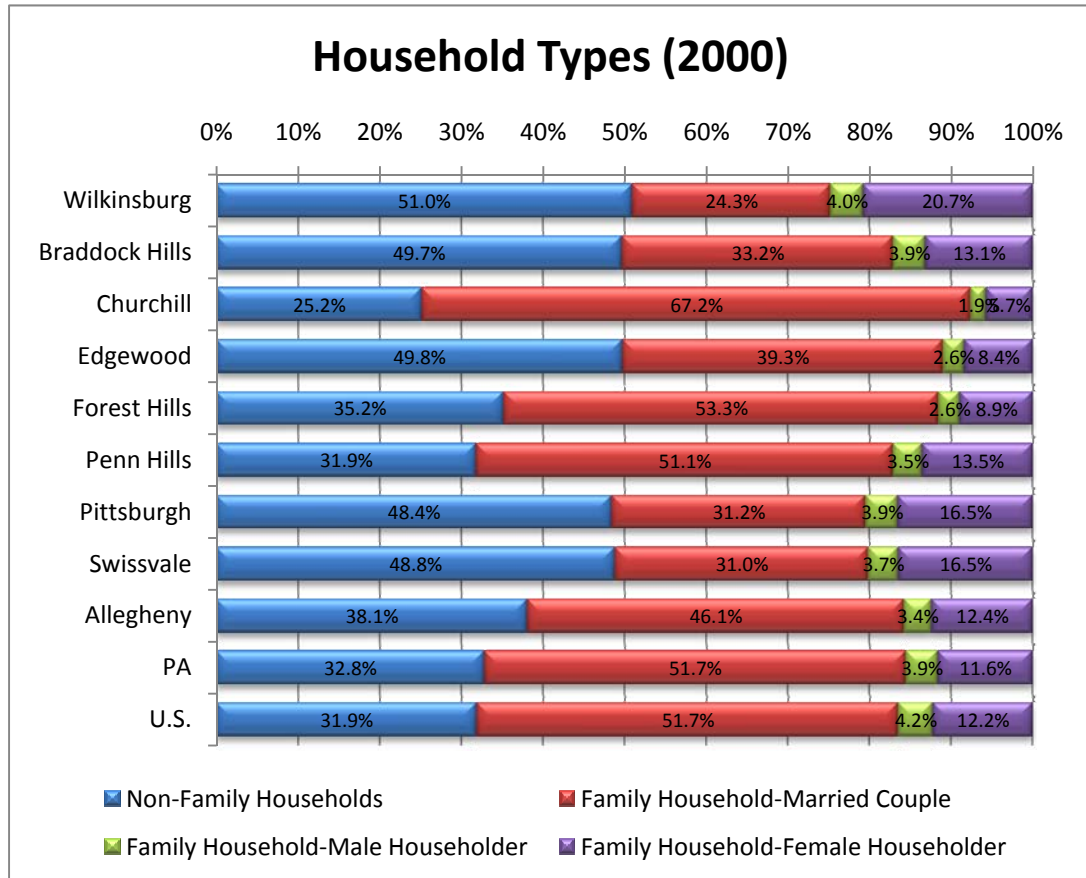
TABLE 13 – TRENDS IN HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS - WILKINSBURG

TRENDS IN HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS – WILKINSBURG			
	1980	1990	2000
Family Households	57.7%	52.0%	49.0%
Married Couples	39.8%	31.1%	24.3%
Male-Headed Households	2.4%	3.1%	4.0%
Female-Headed Households	15.6%	17.8%	20.7%
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU			

In 2000, female-headed family households represented 20.7% of total households, and male-headed family households represented 4.0% of total households. However, male-headed family households grew nearly three times faster than female-headed households between 1980 and 1990, and nearly 2.5 times faster between 1990 and 2000. Wilkinsburg has a lower percentage

of family households than neighboring municipalities, Allegheny County, and the United States, and the percentage of married-couple families in Wilkinsburg is less than half that in Pennsylvania and the U.S. It is likely that the high percentage of renter-occupied housing in Wilkinsburg leads to the significantly higher than average non-family households within the Borough. Table 13, Table 14, and Figure 6 show the trends and comparisons of household social characteristics.

FIGURE 6 – HOUSEHOLD TYPES



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

TABLE 14 – DETAILED COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS (2000)

DETAILED COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS (2000)											
	WILKINSBURG	BRADDOCK HILLS	CHURCHILL	EDGEWOOD	FOREST HILLS	PENN HILLS	PITTSBURGH	SWISSVALE	ALLEGHENY COUNTY	PA	U.S.
Total Family Households	49.0%	50.3%	74.8%	50.2%	64.8%	68.1%	51.6%	51.2%	61.9%	67.2%	68.1%
Married-Couple Family:	24.3%	33.2%	67.2%	39.3%	53.3%	51.1%	31.2%	31.0%	46.1%	51.7%	51.7%
With Own Children Under 18 Years	8.4%	11.1%	21.5%	14.0%	19.7%	18.4%	11.4%	11.1%	18.6%	21.8%	23.5%
Under 6 Years Only	2.4%	2.4%	5.7%	4.6%	5.0%	4.1%	2.9%	3.3%	4.4%	4.8%	5.6%
Under 6 Years and 6 to 17 Years	1.6%	1.9%	4.1%	2.4%	3.2%	3.6%	2.2%	2.0%	3.6%	4.4%	5.0%
6 to 17 Years Only	4.4%	6.9%	11.7%	7.0%	11.5%	10.7%	6.4%	5.8%	10.7%	12.7%	12.9%
No Own Children Under 18 Years	15.9%	22.2%	45.7%	25.2%	33.6%	32.7%	19.7%	19.9%	27.5%	29.8%	28.1%
Other Family:	24.7%	17.1%	7.6%	11.0%	11.5%	17.0%	20.4%	20.1%	15.8%	15.5%	16.4%
Male Householder, No Wife Present	4.0%	3.9%	1.9%	2.6%	2.6%	3.5%	3.9%	3.7%	3.4%	3.9%	4.2%
With Own Children Under 18 Years	1.9%	0.7%	0.5%	1.3%	0.9%	1.4%	1.5%	1.3%	1.4%	1.9%	2.1%
Under 6 Years Only	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%
Under 6 Years and 6 to 17 Years	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
6 to 17 Years Only	1.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%	1.1%	1.2%
No Own Children Under 18 Years	2.0%	3.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.7%	2.2%	2.4%	2.4%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%
Female Householder, No Husband Present:	20.7%	13.1%	5.7%	8.4%	8.9%	13.5%	16.5%	16.5%	12.4%	11.6%	12.2%
With Own Children Under 18 Years	12.3%	7.9%	1.7%	4.1%	3.4%	6.6%	9.0%	8.8%	6.4%	6.2%	7.2%
Under 6 Years Only	2.7%	2.2%	0.4%	0.9%	0.9%	1.4%	2.0%	2.0%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%
Under 6 Years and 6 to 17 Years	2.8%	1.7%	0.1%	0.6%	0.4%	1.0%	1.8%	1.5%	1.1%	1.0%	1.2%
6 to 17 Years Only	6.8%	4.1%	1.3%	2.6%	2.2%	4.2%	5.2%	5.3%	4.0%	4.0%	4.5%
No Own Children Under 18 Years	8.5%	5.2%	3.9%	4.2%	5.5%	7.0%	7.5%	7.6%	6.0%	5.4%	5.1%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

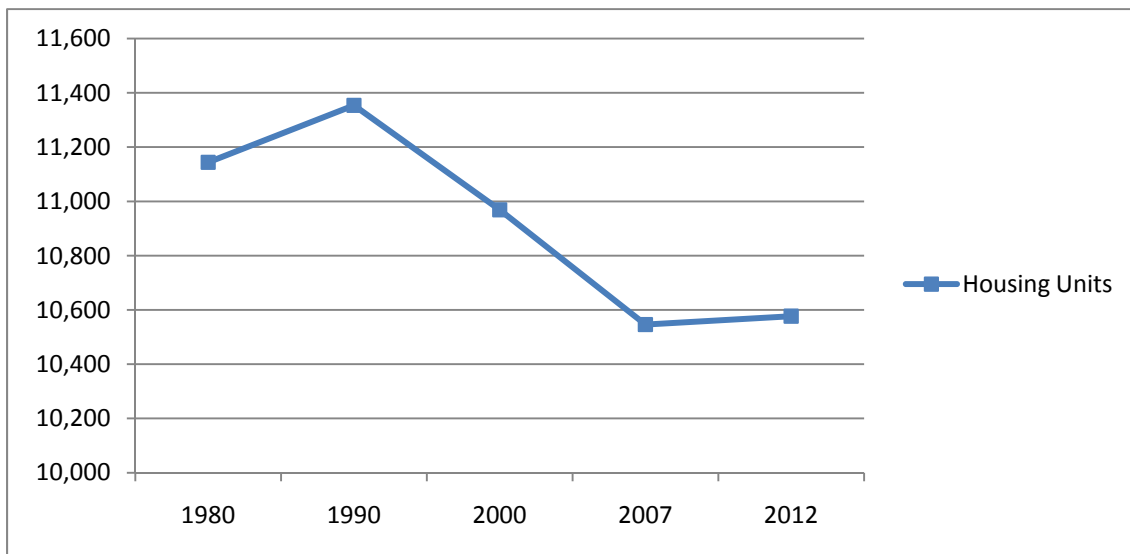


HOUSING PROFILE

Housing characteristics are perhaps one of the clearest indicators of a community’s overall health. Trends in characteristics such as home ownership and tenure can alert a community that its current housing stock may not be adequate to support the needs of a particular age or income group. Housing is also typically the single largest source of tax revenue for a community.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 10,696 housing units in Wilkinsburg in 2000, a decrease of 385 since 1990. Figure 7 shows the number of housing units from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Census. It also shows housing unit estimates for 2007 and 2012 from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). Overall, the graph indicates a downward trend in housing units; however, ESRI’s estimate for 2012 shows a slight increase. Table 15 shows the change in the number of housing units from 1980 to 2012. It shows a -3% change from 1990 to 2000, and a -4% change projected from 2000 to 2007. A .3% increase is expected from 2007 to 2012.

FIGURE 7 – HOUSING UNITS



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

TABLE 15 – WILKINSBURG HOUSING UNITS

WILKINSBURG HOUSING UNITS					
	1980	1990	2000	2007	2012
Housing Units	11,144	11,354	10,969	10,546	10,577
Percent Change		2%	-3%	-4%	0.3%

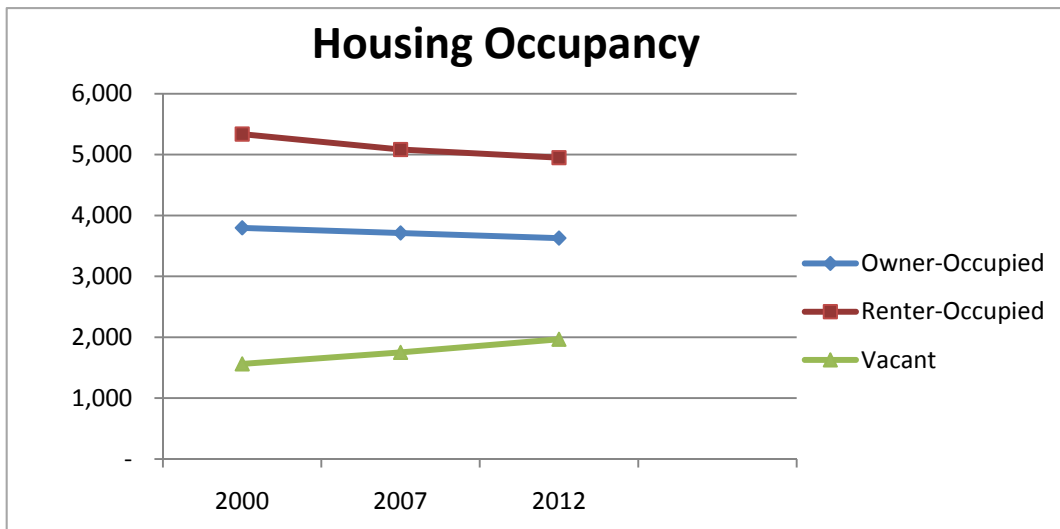
SOURCE: U.S CENSUS BUREAU

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2000, approximately 35.5% of Wilkinsburg’s homes were owner-occupied and 49.9% were renter-occupied.

Figure 8 shows that according to ESRI trending, renter-occupied housing is expected to decrease from 2000 to 2012. Owner-occupied housing will decrease slightly from 2000 to 2012. Vacant properties are expected to increase 28% in this time period, from 1,562 in 2000 to 1,967 in 2012.

FIGURE 8 – HOUSING OCCUPANCY



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ESRI)

Additional information is provided in Map 3, which was prepared in 2005 as part of a study that was undertaken by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) and the Community Technical Assistance Center (CTAC). This map was provided to the Borough and submitted for the plan for the purpose of identifying occupancies in residential properties adjacent to the central business district. The map shows fully occupied, partially occupied, and unoccupied buildings in this area at the time that the study was conducted. “Partially occupied” refers to buildings that have a floor occupied, but other floors are vacant. As demonstrated in Map 3, vacancies or unoccupied buildings are scattered throughout the Wilkinsburg business district and in the neighborhoods that are in close proximity to the central business district, lacking a distinct pattern. According to this study, at the time within which it was conducted, clusters of vacant properties existed on the east side of the busway near Hamnett Place and along Penn Avenue between Center and Coal Streets.

Although Map 3 does not provide a comprehensive review of all vacant and unoccupied properties in the Borough and is only a snapshot in time for the areas that were studied, it is useful for making some reasonable assumptions about the condition of the identified neighborhoods and the extent of the vacant housing problem for the Borough. Supporting a population that has declined by over 12,000 people in the past five decades, the Borough neighborhoods are left with properties that are no longer sustainable and for which there is no

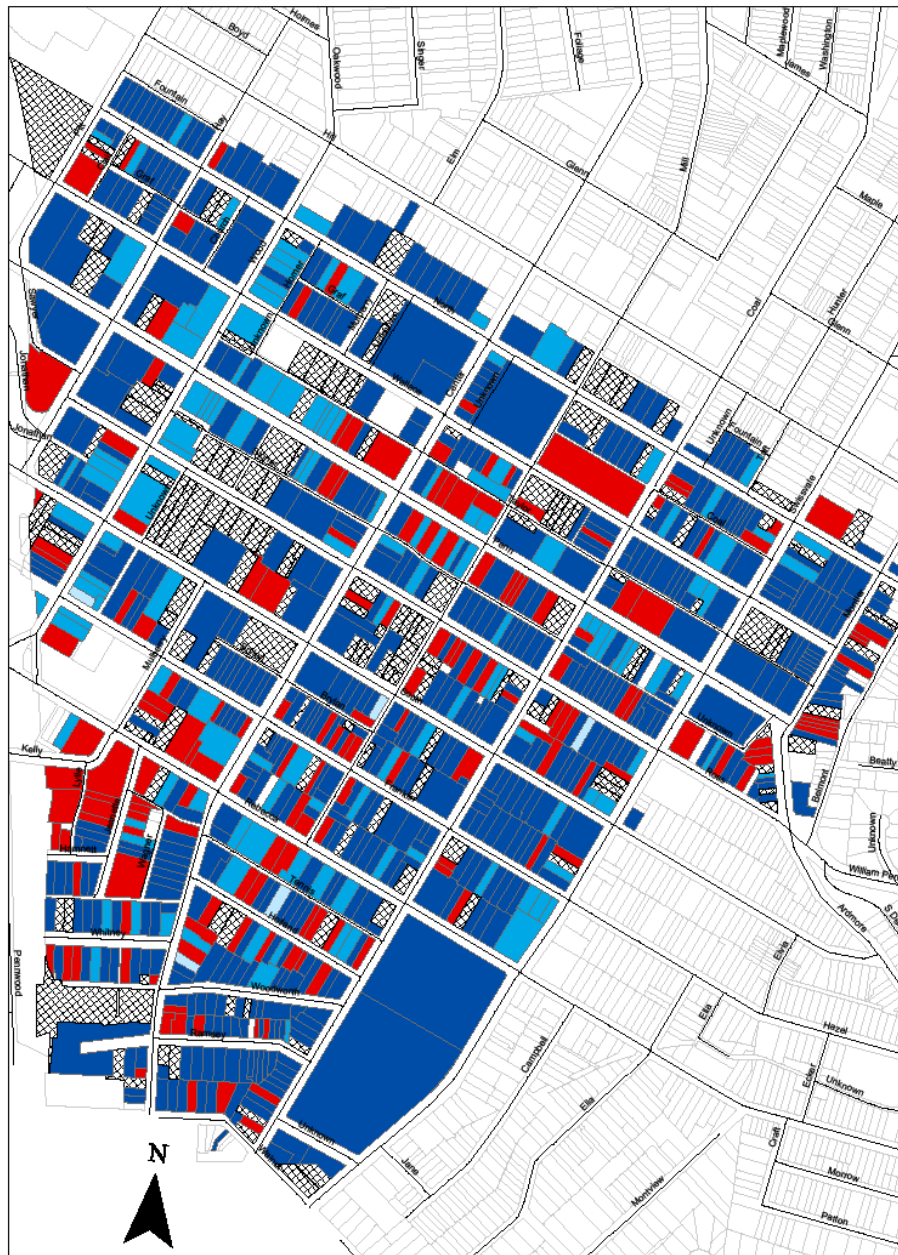




demand. A strategy for restoring the housing stock and neighborhoods to a viable state must be a major part of any redevelopment strategy.

MAP 3 – WILKINSBURG OCCUPANCY MAP

Wilkinsburg Building Occupancy



- Fully Occupied
- Partially Occupied
- Under Construction
- Unoccupied
- No Building Present

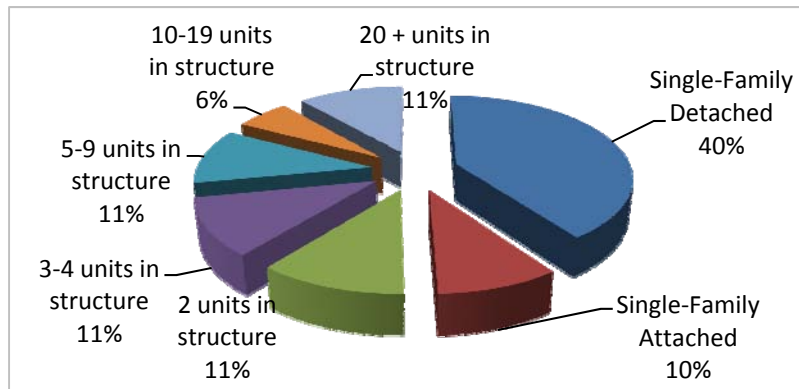
CTAC Survey July 2005
Shapefiles provided by Allegheny County



HOUSING TYPES

Single-family detached housing makes up the largest segment of housing types in Wilkinsburg. The majority of the remaining housing types are distributed almost equally. Structures of two units, three to four units, five to nine units, and 20+ units each represent 11% of the housing types. Single-family attached represents 10% of the housing types, and 10-19 units in a structure represents 6% of the housing types. As of the 2000 Census, no mobile housing was available in Wilkinsburg. Figure 9 shows the percentages of each housing type.

FIGURE 9 – HOUSING TYPES (2000)



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

HOME VALUE

The median value of a home in Wilkinsburg in 2000 was \$53,250 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. It is estimated that the median value of a home in Wilkinsburg in 2007 was \$78,741 and will be \$94,006 in 2012. Table 16 shows how these values compare to median home values in surrounding municipalities. The home values in Wilkinsburg were the lowest in the area in 2000 and are expected to remain the lowest in the future. Values related to the city of Pittsburgh are somewhat distorted as the median value takes into account the values in the entire City. Home values in the adjacent City neighborhoods are comparable to those in the adjacent Wilkinsburg neighborhoods.

TABLE 16 – MEDIAN HOME VALUES

MEDIAN HOME VALUES			
MUNICIPALITY	2000	2007	2012
Wilkinsburg	\$53,250	\$78,741	\$94,006
Braddock Hills	\$64,725	\$97,152	\$111,914
Churchill	\$126,901	\$178,559	\$239,644
Edgewood	\$105,307	\$154,569	\$196,949
Forest Hills	\$86,227	\$128,479	\$159,669
Penn Hills	\$69,297	\$104,710	\$123,821
Pittsburgh	\$60,713	\$91,558	\$105,981
Swissvale	\$55,210	\$80,447	\$94,954

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS INSTITUTE (ESRI)

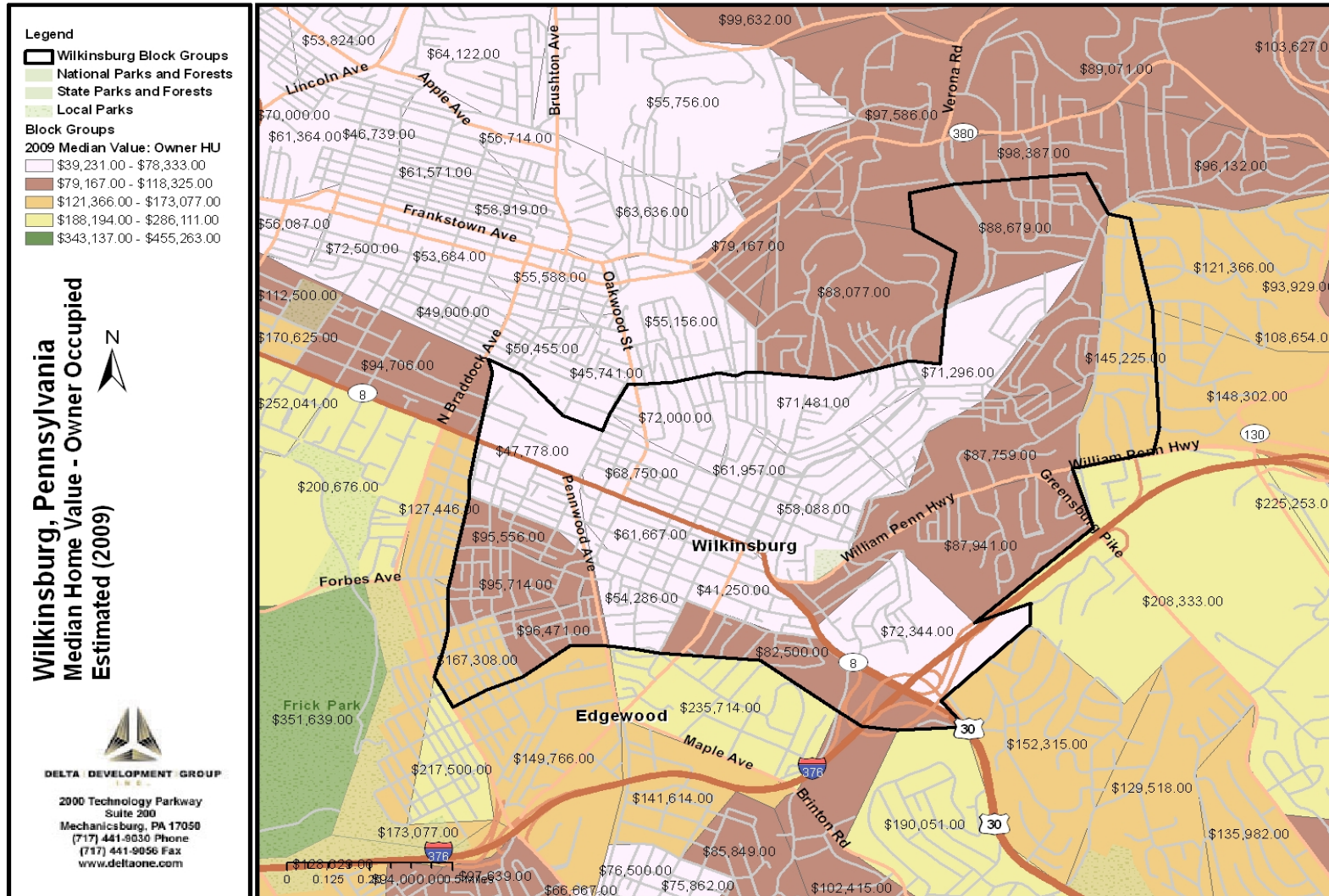




Map 4 graphically depicts the 2009 estimated median home values in Wilkinsburg and the adjacent neighborhoods by census block. The information presented is a snapshot of home values in the Borough and should not be viewed as a reflection of the actual market value of any particular home within an area. Because market values fluctuate based on a number of economic and geographic factors, it is likely that recent sales values will vary drastically. This information should be viewed in a planning context and should be considered for what it represents to neighborhood redevelopment efforts in the Borough. The median household values clearly demonstrate that the closer one moves to the core of the community, the lower the values, creating a donut effect. This hollowing out of home values is similar to the hollowing out of household income values discussed in earlier sections. This information is important in regard to strategies and efforts to revitalize neighborhoods. Efforts aimed at starting initiatives from the center, where values are lowest, will face significant pressures from adjacent neighborhoods and will need to address how property values will be maintained and protected in order for public and private investments to continue. Conversely, efforts focused adjacent to those with better home values can benefit from the existing higher home values and can use these stronger neighborhoods to leverage redevelopment initiatives. Efforts to maintain values will still be important, but existing neighborhood conditions will strengthen the chances of success.



MAP 4 – 2009 ESTIMATED MEDIAN HOME VALUES



SOURCE: HOME VALUE DATA – U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ESRI, BACKGROUND LAYERS – ESRI, 2009



AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

According to the 2000 Census, the median year a home was built in Wilkinsburg was 1947. This means half of the homes in Wilkinsburg are over 62 years old. Table 17 compares the age of housing in Wilkinsburg to the median age of housing in the surrounding municipalities. The homes in Pittsburgh, Edgewood, and Swissvale are of older housing stock but have higher values than homes in Wilkinsburg.

TABLE 17 – MEDIAN YEAR HOME BUILT

MEDIAN YEAR HOME BUILT		
MUNICIPALITY	MEDIAN YEAR	MEDIAN AGE
Wilkinsburg	1947	62
Braddock Hills	1957	52
Churchill	1956	53
Edgewood	1939	70
Forest Hills	1951	58
Penn Hills	1957	52
Pittsburgh	1940	69
Swissvale	1940	69

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS INSTITUTE (ESRI)

Table 18 shows the year homes were built based on 2000 Census data. Almost 85% of the homes in Wilkinsburg were built prior to 1969. Comparatively, this is not as high a percentage as other surrounding areas. In Edgewood, 93% of the homes were built prior to 1969. Pittsburgh, Churchill, and Forest Hills also had an equal or higher percentage of homes built prior to 1969 than Wilkinsburg.

Based on U.S. Census data from 2000, Wilkinsburg saw some new development between 1999 and 2000, whereas much of the surrounding area saw no new development in that time frame. Homes in Wilkinsburg built between the years of 1999-2000 represent 0.2% of housing stock. Wilkinsburg is mostly built out, and trends show that it is losing housing stock; the homes built in this time period replaced older homes rather than representing new growth. Only Pittsburgh had a higher percentage of new homes than Wilkinsburg between 1999 and 2000 (0.4%).



County Executive Onorato and Wilkinsburg Mayor John Thompson joined community members and representatives of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and Sarah Scaife Foundation to celebrate the the opening of Peebles Square.

While 0.2% is a very modest amount of redevelopment, representing around 21 units, it is a positive sign that Wilkinsburg has redevelopment initiatives underway trying to reverse negative trends in the area. This is an important first step particularly when most of the surrounding area has had no growth. Redevelopment efforts will require active public participation in the market in order to stimulate construction/reconstruction activities. Ideally, public investment in redevelopment initiatives ultimately drives private investors and the market to follow.

TABLE 18 – YEAR STRUCTURES BUILT

YEAR STRUCTURES BUILT					
MUNICIPALITY	1999-2000	1990-1998	1980-1989	1970-1979	1969 OR EARLIER
Wilkinsburg	0.2%	0.8%	5.3%	8.8%	84.9%
Braddock Hills	0.0%	0.9%	3.7%	24.7%	70.8%
Churchill	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	11.2%	86.0%
Edgewood	0.0%	1.3%	1.8%	3.8%	93.1%
Forest Hills	0.0%	2.7%	5.6%	6.7%	84.9%
Penn Hills	0.0%	1.9%	3.8%	12.4%	81.9%
Pittsburgh	0.4%	2.0%	3.6%	6.3%	87.7%
Swissvale	0.0%	0.9%	7.3%	7.8%	84.0%

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

HOUSING CONDITIONS

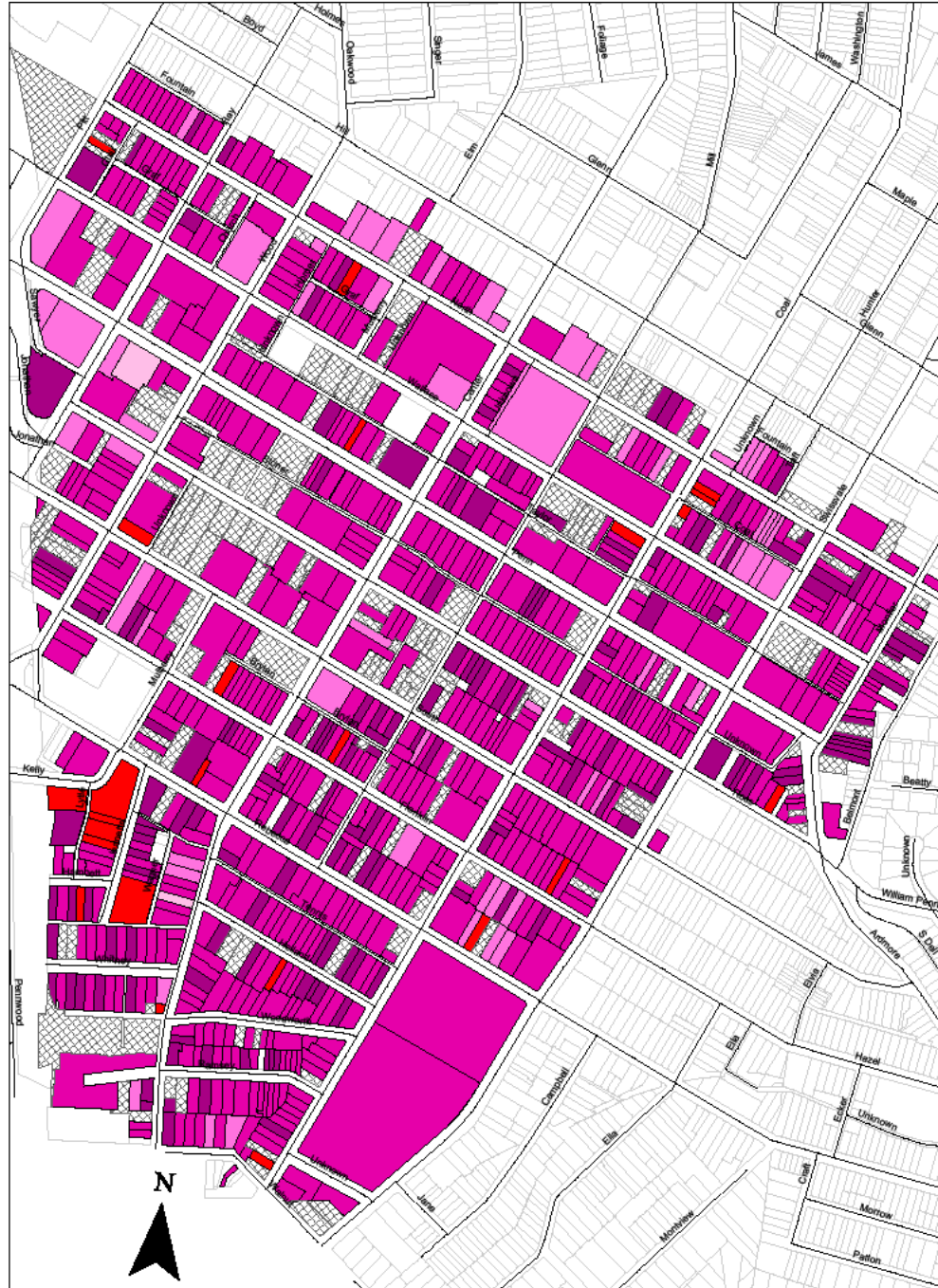
Based on a survey of buildings in the Wilkinsburg business district and the surrounding neighborhoods conducted in 2005 as part of a study undertaken by the PHLF and CTAC, building conditions were evaluated for select properties and rated from “dilapidated” to “excellent.” While housing conditions were not identified for the entire Borough as part of the comprehensive plan with the same detail as the work done by the PHLF, neighborhood windshield assessments were conducted and confirmed in the public outreach process during development of the plan. The assessment, discussed later in the report, which classified neighborhood housing conditions in all of the Borough’s neighborhoods, provides a broader picture of neighborhood health and its implications for policy development for the Borough. Map 5 shows the conditions that were reported and observed in the central business district area and the surrounding neighborhoods.





MAP 5 — WILKESBURG BUILDING CONDITION

Wilkesburg Building Condition



- Excellent
- Sound
- Substandard Minor
- Substandard Major
- Dilapidated
- No Building Present

CTAC Survey July 2005
Shapefiles provided by Allegheny County





Abandoned and Vacant Structures

In May 2008, the Borough Council requested that the Borough Engineer prepare an updated inventory of all abandoned and vacant structures in selected areas of Wilkinsburg Borough. In fact, not all properties in the Borough were included in this study. Evaluations of structures were done by curbside and “drive by” inspections of conditions. Based on this survey, structures were classified based on the following characteristics:



OWNERSHIP – Is the structure owned privately or by Wilkinsburg?

SECURITY – Is the structure secured against vandals and vagrants?

STRUCTURALLY SOUND – Is the structure in danger of collapsing?

DANGER TO ADJACENT PROPERTIES – If the structure were to fail, would it damage adjacent structures, causing harm to life or property?

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY – Does the police department report that the site has a history of criminal activity?

TAX STATUS – Is the property tax-delinquent?

As a result of that review, 668 properties were identified as exhibiting one or more of the characteristics above. Two lists were provided to the Borough Council:

1. The first list identified the properties from worst condition to best based on the characteristics outlined above.
2. The second list was an alphabetical listing so that properties could be easily located when referencing the study.

Map 6, showing the location of the study properties and color coded as to condition, was also included as part of the study. The Glenn Engineering report stated that “the map does not show a concentrated area of abandoned structures that would lend itself to the establishment of a redevelopment district. Rather the sites are spread over the entire borough, more so in the central area rather than the eastern and western areas, but not concentrated in one particular neighborhood.”



The report recommended that all number 1 properties be demolished as soon as possible and that funding for all number 2 and 3 properties be sought so that they might also be demolished as soon as possible. The vast majority of properties were listed as numbers 8, 9 and 10 and are in salvageable condition. The report further recommended that Code Enforcement target properties falling in the middle range of 4-7 (and 8-10 that are current in taxes) for securing them and maintaining them in a safe condition.



Table 19 shows the definition of each rating and the number of properties that were evaluated were determined to be in each.

TABLE 19 – HOUSING CONDITION PRIORITY RATINGS

HOUSING CONDITION PRIORITY RATINGS		
CONDITION RATING	CONDITION DEFINITION	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES
1	Structure is unsound, unsecured, in a state of collapse, a danger to the public in general, in need of immediate demolition.	26
2	Structure is unsound but not in danger of immediate collapse, may have partial collapse of a porch or severe sagging of a roof, may be unsecured.	24
3	Structure is severely deteriorated with structural problems, such as a leaking roof, that have weakened the frame, or has fire damage, a danger to adjacent property.	18
4	Structure has been neglected for an extended period of time, has significant structural deficiencies, is a danger to adjacent property, not feasible to rehabilitate.	28
5	Structure has some structural deficiencies, interior has water and/or vandalism damage, is a danger to adjacent property, not feasible to rehabilitate.	31
6	Structure is suffering from long-term neglect but is basically structurally sound, but with vandalism and water damage.	39
7	Structure is in need of significant work to upgrade to a livable condition. It may have theft of copper but is structurally sound and solid, no danger to adjacent property.	91
8	Property is salvageable but in need of major repairs and maintenance.	121
9	Property is neglected and in need of some simple repairs and maintenance.	90
10	Property is in need of maintenance and may be for sale.	200
Total		668
SOURCE: GLENN ENGINEERING ABANDONED STRUCTURE STUDY, 2008		

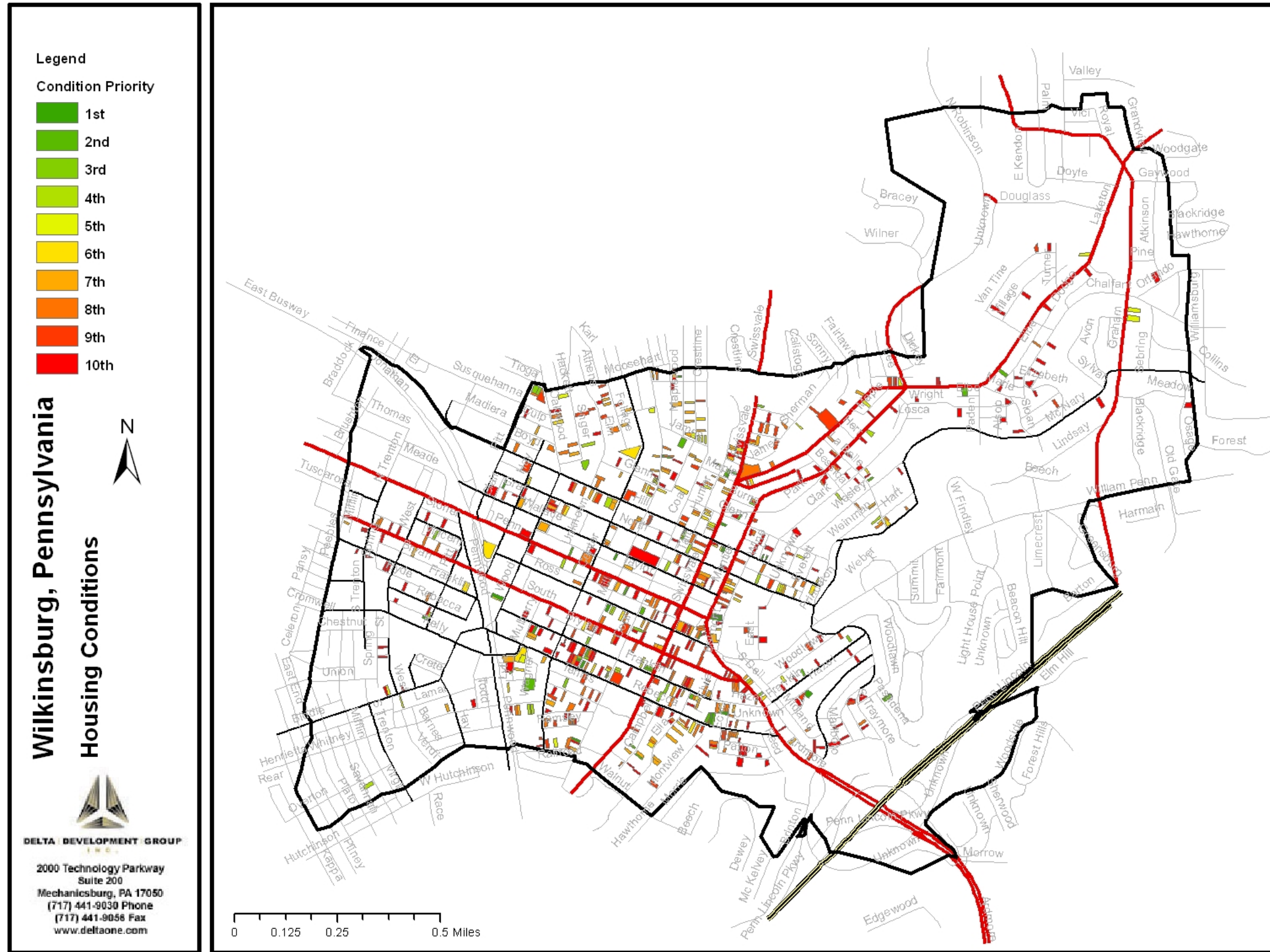
In order for redevelopment to occur, the Borough must develop a logical, targeted, and strategic approach to the issue of abandoned and vacant properties. The pervasiveness of the number of vacant and poor condition properties is a significant challenge to redevelopment and revitalization efforts. With over 600 properties identified as requiring attention, from demolition at one extreme to code enforcement and rehabilitation at the other, a scattershot approach to demolition, acquisition, and rehabilitation will have little impact on neighborhoods that are in decline or in transition. It will be necessary for the Borough to target areas where investments can be leveraged to achieve preservation and rehabilitation goals and where they are likely to trigger additional private investment. A focused strategy for neighborhood redevelopment activities that includes demolition, acquisition, site control, capital investment, code enforcement, and components is included in the Priority Strategies section of this report.



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MAP 6 — HOUSING CONDITIONS PRIORITY



SOURCE: GLENN ENGINEERING ABANDONED STRUCTURE STUDY, 2008



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CURRENT LAND USE

The use of land in a community affects many aspects of the daily lives of its residents and also reflects local demand factors. The mix of uses can affect the local tax base and the availability of goods and services, while the location of various uses can affect property values, where residents live, work, and play, and the accessibility of goods and services. Utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS)-based land use information obtained from Allegheny County, the following pages present an overview of existing use in Wilkinsburg as of 2007 (the date of the County GIS data).

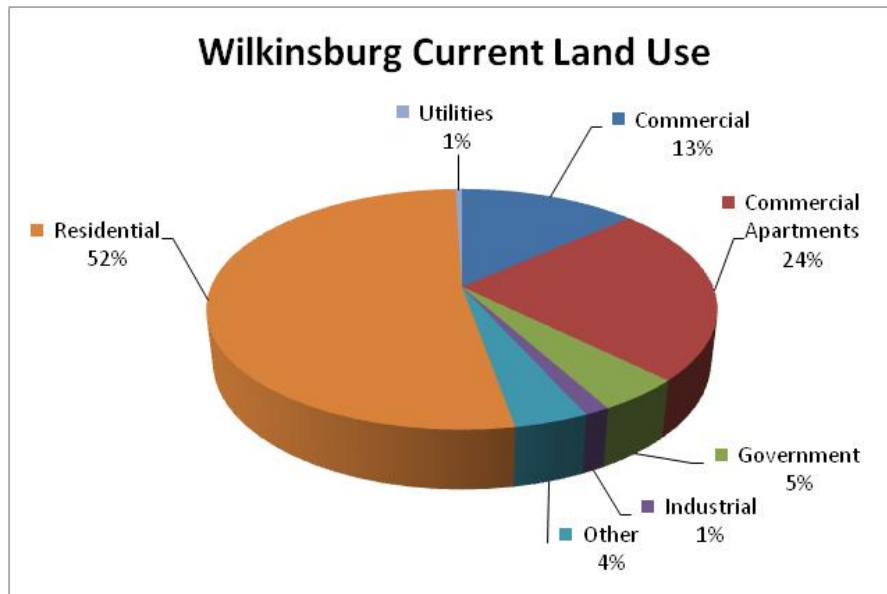
In order to effectively implement the crucial elements of the comprehensive plan, it is important to provide some focus and clarity regarding the current land uses and the proposed future land uses based on the goals and recommendations of the plan.

Current Land Use

Residential is by far the most prominent land use in Wilkinsburg. More than three-fourths of its 2.3 square miles is currently used for residential purposes, with 13% used for commercial purposes. Only 1% of land is used for industrial purposes.

Figure 10 shows the mix of uses in Wilkinsburg, and Map 7 shows the geographic location of various land uses.

Figure 10 – Wilkinsburg Current Land Use



SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, PARCEL, 2006

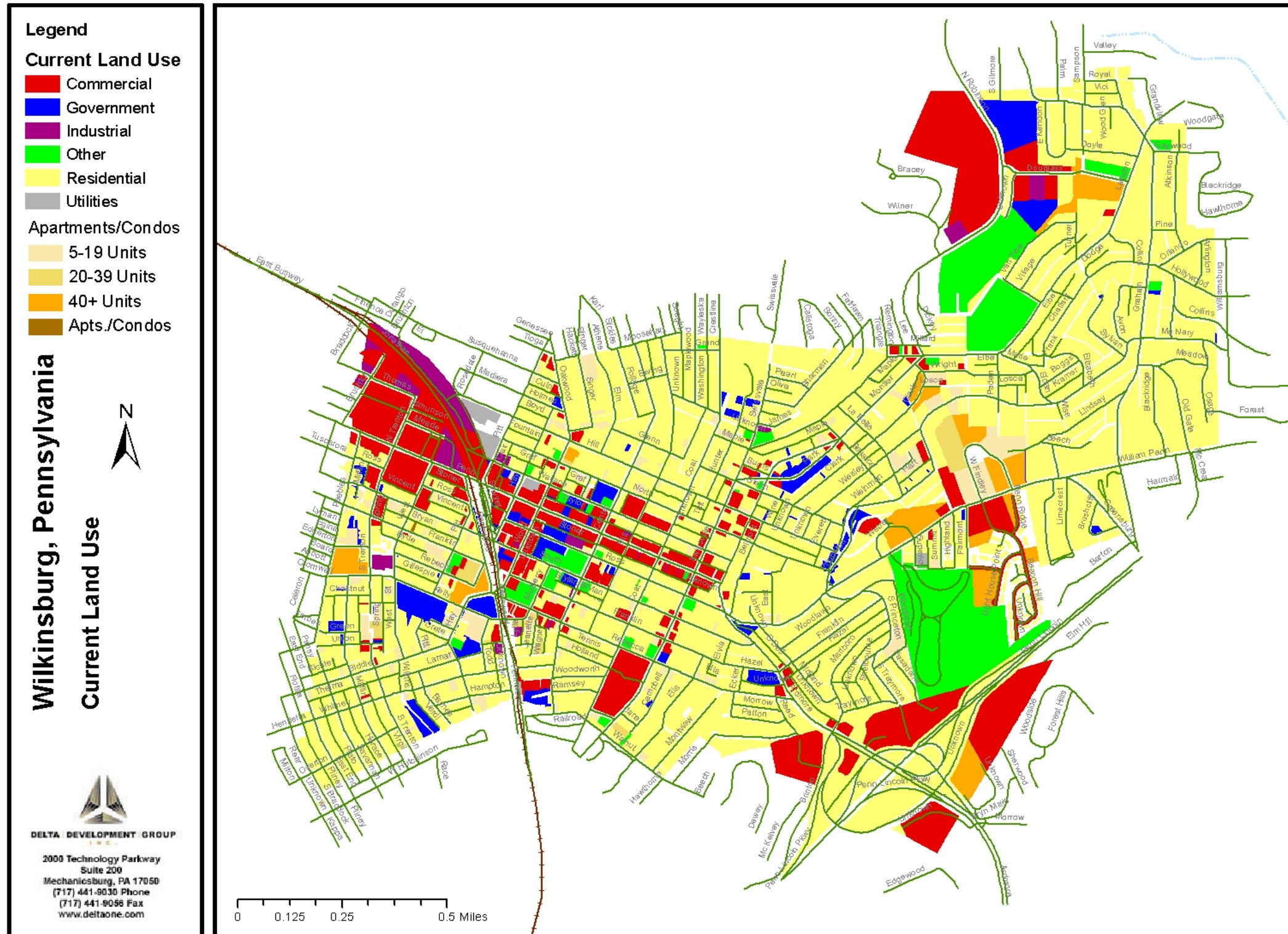




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MAP 7 — CURRENT LAND USES



SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, PARCELS, 2006, BACKGROUND LAYERS — ESRI, 2009



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Residential

Nearly 43% of Wilkinsburg’s residential uses are single-family homes, and nearly 27% are commercial apartment complexes containing more than 40 units. Vacant land makes up 11% of Wilkinsburg’s residential land uses. Table 20 presents the mix of Wilkinsburg’s residential land uses.

TABLE 20 – RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES	
RESIDENTIAL USE	% OF TOTAL LAND AREA
Apartments: 5-19 Units	4.0%
Apartments: 20-39 Units	0.7%
Apartments: 40+ Units	26.7%
Condemned/Boarded-Up	0.5%
Condominium	1.2%
Condominium Common Property	0.1%
Four-Family	1.0%
Res Aux Building (No House)	0.3%
Rowhouse	1.8%
Single-Family	42.8%
Three-Family	2.5%
Townhouse	0.3%
Two-Family	6.8%
Vacant Residential Land	11.3%
Total	100.0%

SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, PARCELS, 2006

Commercial

Over 18% of Wilkinsburg’s commercial land is reported as vacant, with 26% in ground floor office uses, 14% in ground floor retail uses, and 5% in medical uses. Table 21 presents an overview of current commercial land uses in Wilkinsburg.



TABLE 21 – COMMERCIAL LAND USES

COMMERCIAL LAND USES	
COMMERCIAL USES	% OF TOTAL LAND AREA
>10 Acres Vacant	10.6%
Auto Sales & Service	2.1%
Auto Service Station	1.1%
Bank	0.6%
Bowling Alleys/Recreation Facility	7.2%
Car Wash	0.5%
Charitable Exemption/Hospital/Homes	1.5%
Commercial Apartment Condos - 5-19 Units	0.1%
Commercial Aux Building	6.2%
Commercial Garage	3.1%
Commercial/Utility	0.9%
Convenience Store/Gas	0.3%
Day Care/Private School	0.3%
Drive-In Restaurant or Food Service	1.2%
Dry Cleaning Plants/Laundries	0.3%
DWG Used As Office	0.1%
Funeral Homes	0.6%
HUD Project #221	0.6%
Independent Living (Seniors)	1.2%
Lodge Hall/Amusement Park	0.2%
Medical Clinics/Offices	4.7%
Minor Fire Damage	0.2%
Neighborhood Shopping Center	0.1%
Nursing Home/Private	6.5%
Office - 1-2 Stories	10.4%
Office/Apartments Over	2.9%
Office/Warehouse	9.0%
Office-Elevator - 3+ Stories	1.5%
Office-Walkup - 3+ Stories	2.5%
Other	0.1%
Other Food Service	0.2%
Owned by Board Of Education	0.1%
Parking Garage/Lots	0.6%
Regional Shopping Center	6.4%
Restaurant, Cafe and/or Bar	0.4%
Retail/Apartment Over	3.8%
Retail/Office Over	0.4%
Retail/Storage Over	0.9%
Small Detached Retail (Under 10,000 s.f.)	2.6%
Vacant Commercial Land	7.7%
Warehouse	0.2%
Total	100.0%

SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, PARCELS, 2006

Industrial

Over half of the industrial land uses in Wilkinsburg are warehouse uses, with over 34% in light manufacturing uses. Nearly 7% of industrial land is reported as vacant. Table 22 presents an overview of the mix of industrial land uses in Wilkinsburg.

TABLE 22 – INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

INDUSTRIAL LAND USES	
DESCRIPTION	% OF TOTAL LAND AREA
Light Manufacturing	34.2%
Mini Warehouse	1.7%
Other	0.3%
Small Shop	0.6%
Vacant Industrial Land	6.9%
Warehouse	56.2%
Total	100.0%

SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, PARCELS, 2006

Other Uses

Consistent with Wilkinsburg’s image as a “City of Churches,” churches make up over half of the category identified as “other land uses” in Wilkinsburg. Nearly 26% are academic uses, and cemeteries make up slightly over 20% of this category. Table 23 presents an overview of “other land uses” in Wilkinsburg.

TABLE 23 – OTHER LAND USES

OTHER LAND USES	
OTHER LAND USES	% OF TOTAL LAND AREA
Cemetery/Monuments	20.4%
Charitable Exemption/Hospitals/Homes	0.8%
Churches, Public Worship	52.4%
Community Aux Building	0.3%
Office-Walkup - 3+ Stories	0.6%
Owned by College/University/Academy	25.6%
Total	100.0%

SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, PARCELS, 2006



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PUBLIC INPUT



Public Input

- Public Meetings
- Neighborhood Workshops
- Design Charrette

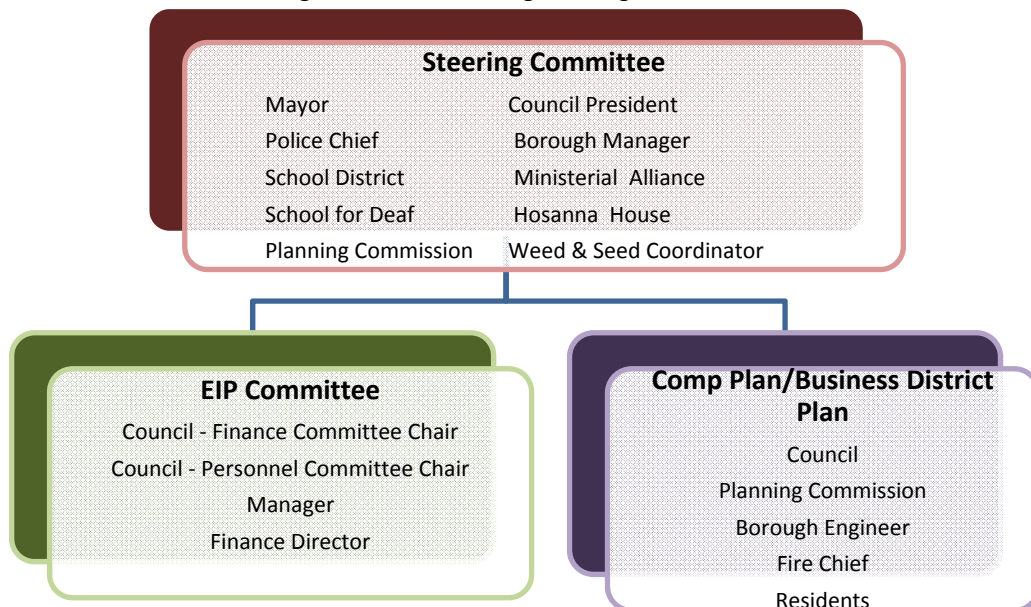
Public participation is a crucial element in developing a community’s comprehensive plan. However, it can be the greatest challenge in the planning process. Good citizen participation can bring out concerns and issues that are not always apparent to the consultant team or even the public officials. A good public involvement process gives representation to diverse interests in the community and helps the community to “buy in” and to begin to take ownership of the plan.

An additional benefit of the public input process is that good citizen participation, properly documented, gives significant support to the plan when it is officially adopted. Plans that reflect the vision of the community through citizen participation will generally be upheld if a challenge is brought against any element of the comprehensive plan. But most importantly, public input is the basis of sound public policy.

THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Borough Council appointed a Steering Committee for reviewing and providing the necessary direction for completing the three plan components. The Committee included a broad representation of the community, public officials, and subject matter experts. The Committee was designed to allow for flexibility and specialty of interests by designating a specific committee for the Comprehensive Plan and Business District Plan and a separate committee for working with the Early Intervention Plan (EIP). The umbrella committee, including representation shown in, Figure 11 below, was involved and updated on all three components of the plan on a regular basis. The Steering Committee structure for the plan is as follows:

Figure 11 – Wilkinsburg Steering Committee Structure





The Steering Committee met on a monthly basis, except during the month of July 2009, when they met weekly to assist with the development of goals and strategies for the various sections of the plan. In addition to the Steering Committee members, representatives from the DCED Governor's Center for Local Government Services attended some of the monthly meetings.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Under the MPC, the Planning Commission is instrumental in developing, presenting, and recommending the comprehensive plan to the governing body. There must be at least one Planning Commission public meeting scheduled for the purpose of reviewing the comprehensive plan. For this reason, beginning in April of 2009, the consultant team met monthly with the seven-member Wilkinsburg Planning Commission to update them regarding plan components and to provide them background research documents and work product as it was developed. Several of the Planning Commission members also attended and participated in the public outreach meetings.

The Planning Commission was instrumental in preparing the strategies and action items that are fully developed in the Priority Strategies section of this plan. The Planning Commission met throughout 2009 and through 2010 to provide opportunities for additional review and presentation of the plan components to their members, Council members, and the public.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

To ensure that Wilkinsburg residents had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Comprehensive Plan, a series of public meetings was held during April 2009 in neighborhoods throughout the Borough. The public was notified through a series of newspaper articles announcing the planning process, flyers distributed throughout the Borough, e-mail blasts from officials, and continuously updated information on the Borough's official Web site.

Over 130 residents participated in meetings in six Wilkinsburg neighborhoods as listed below. John Clark from John Clark Associates acted as the facilitator and public outreach coordinator for these meetings. All meetings were held at 6:30 p.m. and lasted for a minimum of two hours.

April 7	Wilkinsburg High School
April 8	Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
April 16	Turner Elementary School
April 17	Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church
April 21	Beacon Hill Community Center
April 22	Blackridge Civic Center



INTERACTIVE BOARDS

As participants arrived at each of the six neighborhood meetings, they were greeted by the consultant team and public officials and asked to visit a series of interactive boards to express their opinions by using a “dot” system to respond to questions about housing, the business district, transportation, parks, and municipal services. They were also asked to indicate on a map where they lived and to describe the 19 identified neighborhoods of Wilkinsburg as “strong,” “in transition,” or “in decline.” It was explained that the “in transition” neighborhoods were those neighborhoods that contained characteristics of both “strong” and “in decline” and could potentially move in either direction over time.

The results of this exercise were tallied and used as supplemental information for the business district study and the “Housing and Neighborhoods” section of this plan.



the Wilkinsburg Plan

Business District

Please place a dot on the top three improvements that you believe need to be made in the business district.

Blue = #1 Priority
Yellow = #2 Priority
Red = #3 Priority

Improved Lighting	
Improved Parking	
Improved Safety	
More Street Trees and Landscaping	
Façade Improvements	
More Parks and Open Space	
General Beautification	

Housing

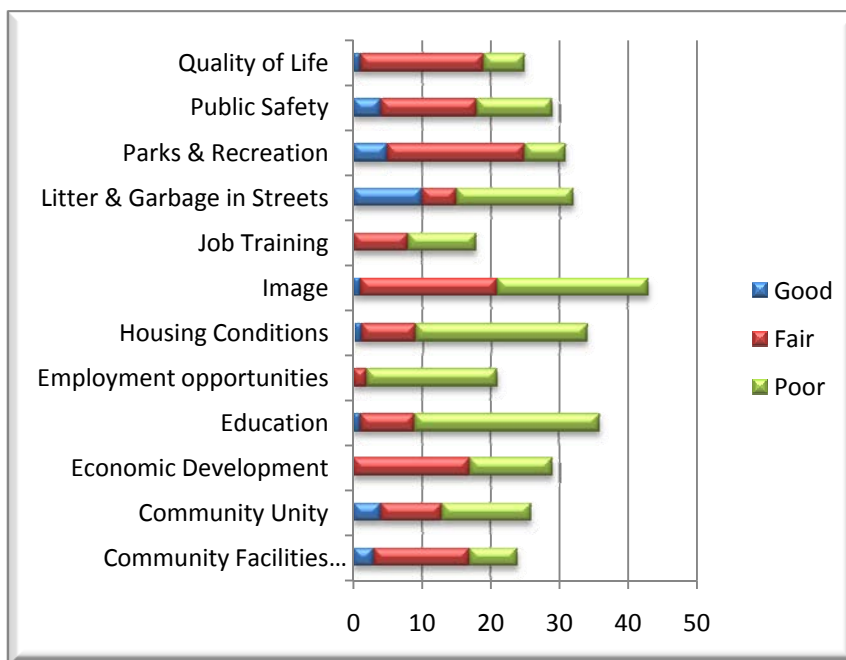
Many of the existing buildings in the business district have apartments on upper floors. If there is an opportunity to expand housing, what type of housing would be the most important?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
Market Rate			
Affordable			
Upscale			
Senior			

Redevelopment

Place a dot by the statement that most accurately reflects your opinion about redevelopment in the business district.

Maintain and renovate old or historic structures.	Balance renovation and new construction.	Emphasize demolition and new construction.
---------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------



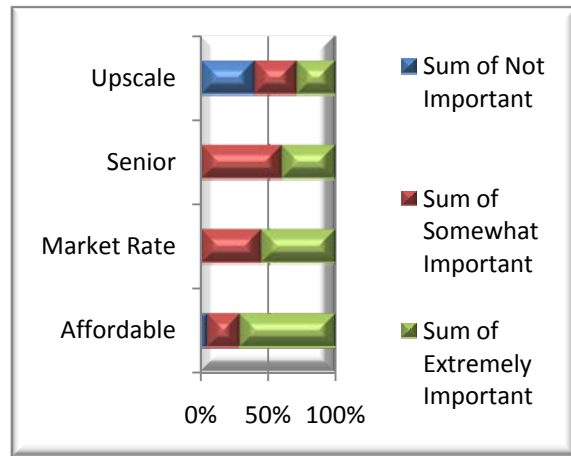
When residents were asked to identify the top issues for concern in the Borough, they overwhelmingly responded that the Borough’s negative image, housing conditions, and public education were the most pressing problems. Litter and garbage, public safety, and parks and recreation were also cited as areas of concern. On a different board, the residents identified image, education,



and economic development as the top priorities for public action.

When participants were asked about what type of housing the Borough should be supporting and promoting, residents were supportive of a mix of upscale, senior, market rate, and affordable, with a strong emphasis on affordable. On a separate board, participants indicated support for a mix of renovation of historically significant or architecturally attractive structures with new construction where indicated. Additional information regarding this portion of the public input process is included in the Business Revitalization Plan.

FIGURE 13 – PREFERRED HOUSING TYPES



STRUCTURED EXERCISE

The structured portion of each neighborhood meeting was conducted using a consistent format so that results from the meetings could be aggregated and summarized to represent a common voice of all residents who participated. The meetings began with a brief presentation that included an overview of the planning process to date, the objectives of the night’s input activities, and an overview of the next steps in the process. At the conclusion of the 15-minute presentation, participants were divided into small groups of up to 10 people, each assigned to discuss one of four topics:

- The image of Wilkinsburg**
- Access and linkages that facilitate movement of residents both within the Borough and to areas outside the Borough**
- Wilkinsburg's neighborhoods and housing stock**
- The Wilkinsburg business district**

Each small group was assigned one of the four topics listed above and was asked to discuss issues related to it, both positive and negative, and to identify potential solutions for negative issues and ways to leverage the opportunities created by positive ones. At the conclusion of these discussions, a representative from each of the small groups presented the group’s findings to the entire group, and additional comments and reactions were encouraged. After the group presentations, all participants were asked to identify potential barriers to implementing the solutions, and which individuals or groups in the community could best champion implementation efforts and undertake solutions to problems.





Table 24 through Table 27 provide summaries of the results of these meetings and include the top 10 responses from each of the six neighborhood meetings that were identified for each category. The summaries do not include any responses that represent the views of only one person. In addition, where more than one issue or concern was identified by the groups as one of the top 10 responses, more than 10 responses are listed. In

some instances, contradictory opinions are listed as they were expressed by the various participants. For example, the phrases “pedestrian friendly” and “not pedestrian friendly” on the next page reflect conflicting opinions that were expressed at the meetings at different times by more than one group. Likewise the issue of the East Busway was perceived as being both an asset (it brings commuters to the transit stop) and a problem (there are no good connections for pedestrian oriented access from the neighborhoods) for the community.

In addition, the issue of whether the Borough was “bicycle friendly” varied widely depending on the neighborhood and where the participants actually resided.



Overall, the issues identified, both positive and negative, in the neighborhood meetings were surprisingly consistent from neighborhood to neighborhood. There was also considerable agreement regarding identification of the barriers to implementation and the potential champions for addressing issues. There was general

agreement that safety concerns, property maintenance, and abandoned and vacant properties present challenges for the viability of the neighborhoods and for the business district and that the overall image of the Borough is negative for this reason. There was also a consensus that the Borough has great potential for redevelopment due to its superb location, good access, and strong and attractive housing stock. Solutions included better linkages to neighborhoods and to transit, enhanced police presence, and general cleanup of dilapidated properties, litter, and public spaces. Participants cited better relationships with the media



and with outside groups as methods for improving the Borough’s image. Table 24,

Table 25, Table 26, and Table 27 provide complete reviews of issues that were identified during the public input process categorized as issues, solutions, barriers, and champions.



TABLE 24 – WHAT ARE THE ISSUES FACING WILKINSBURG – BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE?

RANK	LINKAGES AND ACCESS	IMAGE	HOUSING	BUSINESS DISTRICT	OVERALL
1	Great accessibility	Negative perception	Dilapidated properties	Dilapidated properties	Dilapidated buildings
2	Public transit opportunities	Great accessibility	Vacant homes	Vacant buildings	Vacant properties
3	Not pedestrian-friendly	Good housing stock	Lack of code enforcement	Need better variety of businesses	Great accessibility
4	Poor traffic flow/congestion	Poor street conditions	Poor street conditions	Litter	Negative image
5	Busway is a negative	Low quality of schools	Absentee landlords	Problem with loitering	Public transit opportunities
6	Not easily accessible	Dilapidated properties	High taxes	Perceived as unsafe	Litter
7	Busway is an asset	Litter	Variety of housing options	Overall negative image	Perceived as unsafe
8	Pedestrian-friendly	Perceived as unsafe	Good housing stock	Good parking availability	Not pedestrian-friendly
9	Not bicycle friendly	Great historic buildings	Poor quality of schools	Poor lighting	Better variety of businesses
10	Poor sidewalk conditions	Public transit opportunities	Litter	Poor traffic flow/congestion	Poor traffic flow/congestion
11	Timing of traffic signals	Vacant properties	Perceived as unsafe	Need business recruitment	Poor street conditions
12		Poor lighting	Public transit opportunities		Great housing stock
13		Poor building conditions	Poor building conditions		Poor quality of schools
14		Good amenities	Presence of drug activity		
15			Inability to identify property owners of dilapidated property		
16			Need for demolition		
17			Need for renovations		

SOURCE: SUMMARIZED INPUT FROM SIX NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS, APRIL 2009



TABLE 25 – WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS OR OPPORTUNITIES FOR ISSUES THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED?

RANK	LINKAGES AND ACCESS	IMAGE	HOUSING	BUSINESS DISTRICT	OVERALL
1	Create more public transit connections/opportunities	Better marketing of assets	Increase code enforcement	Establish clean-up activities	Establish clean-up activities
2	Improve outdoor lighting	Establish clean-up activities	Provide information, assistance for homeowners	Police foot patrols	Increase code enforcement
3	Better marketing of assets	Create options for youth	Install focused demolition program	Engage in business retention, recruitment	Improve outdoor lighting
4	Improve communication/information to residents	Improve outdoor lighting	Identify available funding	Prepare code-compliant space	Create more public transit connections/opportunities
5	Open pedestrian tunnels	Improve media relations	Create tax incentives for potential rehabilitation	Adopt gun restrictions	Better marketing of assets
6	Install urban trails	Construct a community center complex	Encourage better mix of renters and owners	Attract/encourage a coffee shop	Police foot patrols
7	Improve traffic flow	Improve traffic flow	Establish cleanup activities	Increase code enforcement	Engage in business retention, recruitment
8	Repair railroad trestle	Lobby for a new post office	Encourage owner responsibility	Improve outdoor lighting	Lobby for a new post office
9	Develop Biking routes	Improve quality of schools	Support rehabilitation	Lobby for a new post office	Create more public transit connections/opportunities
10			Enforce curfew	Better marketing of assets	Provide information, assistance for homeowners
11			Better marketing of assets	Legalize liquor licenses	
12			Improve road conditions		
13			Lower taxes		
14			School district merger		

SOURCE: SUMMARIZED INPUT FROM SIX NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS, APRIL 2009





TABLE 26 – WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS THAT KEEP US FROM IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS OR ACTING ON OPPORTUNITIES?

RANK	LINKAGES AND ACCESS	IMAGE	HOUSING	BUSINESS DISTRICT	OVERALL
1	Lack of funding	Lack of funding	Lack of funding	Lack of funding	Lack of funding
2	Inefficient traffic flow	Lack of media strategy	Lack of code enforcement	Lack of code enforcement	Lack of information/ communication
3	No accountability	Poor attitudes	Inability to identify property owners of dilapidated property	Inability to identify property owners of dilapidated property	Lack of code enforcement
4	Lack of pedestrian connections to the busway	Community divisiveness	High taxes	Lack of information/ communication	Inability to identify property owners of dilapidated property
5	No coordination among municipalities	Negative perception	Lack of information/ communication	No incentives	Lack of media strategy
6	Uncoordinated and inconsistent jitney service	Lack of information/ communication	Lack of technical assistance for home owners	Inability to prioritize issues	High taxes
7	Lack of responsiveness by the Port Authority				Poor attitudes
8	Topography – steep slopes				Negative perception
9					No accountability
10					Lack of investors
11					Lack of consensus
12					Low income levels
13					Inefficient traffic flow
14					Community divisiveness

SOURCE: SUMMARIZED INPUT FROM SIX NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS, APRIL 2009





TABLE 27 – WHO ARE THE CHAMPIONS IN THE COMMUNITY WHO CAN IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS AND PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES?

RANK	LINKAGES AND ACCESS	IMAGE	HOUSING	BUSINESS DISTRICT	OVERALL
1	State and federal legislators	Residents	Borough Council/elected officials	WCDC	Borough Council/elected officials
2	Borough Council/elected officials	Borough Council/elected officials	School district	Borough Council/elected officials	Residents
3	Residents	Media	State and federal legislators	Residents	State and federal legislators
4	Port Authority	State and federal legislators	Residents	Businesses	WCDC
5		WCDC*	Businesses	Chamber of Commerce	Media
6		County officials	Block groups	Private investors	Businesses
7			Code enforcement department	Banks as funders	School district
8					Chamber of Commerce
9					Private investors
10					County officials

SOURCE: SUMMARIZED INPUT FROM NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PARTICIPANTS, APRIL 2009

*WCDC is the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation.



NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

As part of the public outreach process, during the neighborhood meetings, residents were asked to speak to the conditions of individual neighborhoods. In years past, some neighborhoods in Wilkinsburg have been informally identified and named; however, the only formal delineation in the past has been that of voting districts. A map of the voting districts is shown in Map 8.

MAP 8 – Voting Districts



Source: Wilkinsburgpa.gov

For purposes of *The Wilkinsburg Plan*, the Steering Committee identified and named 19 neighborhoods within the Borough. While neighborhood boundaries may be somewhat ambiguous, they provide a general delineation that can be useful in organizing for community action and in providing a social identity that promotes neighborhood interaction. These neighborhood boundaries and names were used in assessing

neighborhood conditions, identifying investment areas, and developing strategies for neighborhoods and housing. Map 9 shows the general boundaries of the 19 neighborhoods identified by the Steering Committee and reviewed by the Planning Commission.

As part of the public outreach process, participants in each of the six neighborhood meetings were asked to label a map indicating their perception of the condition of each of the 19 neighborhoods using three categories: good, in transition, or in decline. Neighborhoods that were identified as being in transition were those that had characteristics of both strength and decline and could progress in either direction. Map 10 depicts the results of this exercise.

It is interesting to note that the neighborhoods perceived to be in greatest decline are those in the heart of the Borough on either side of Penn Avenue, with decline to the north reaching from Penn Avenue to the Borough boundary. The areas noted to be in decline are also consistent with the areas noted in Map 6 with higher numbers of abandoned properties. These are also the areas that census figures indicate have the lowest household income and lowest median household value. It should also be noted that some of the neighborhoods outside the Borough just north of Hunter Park in the city of Pittsburgh are in relatively good condition and have experienced new development and general revitalization of the area



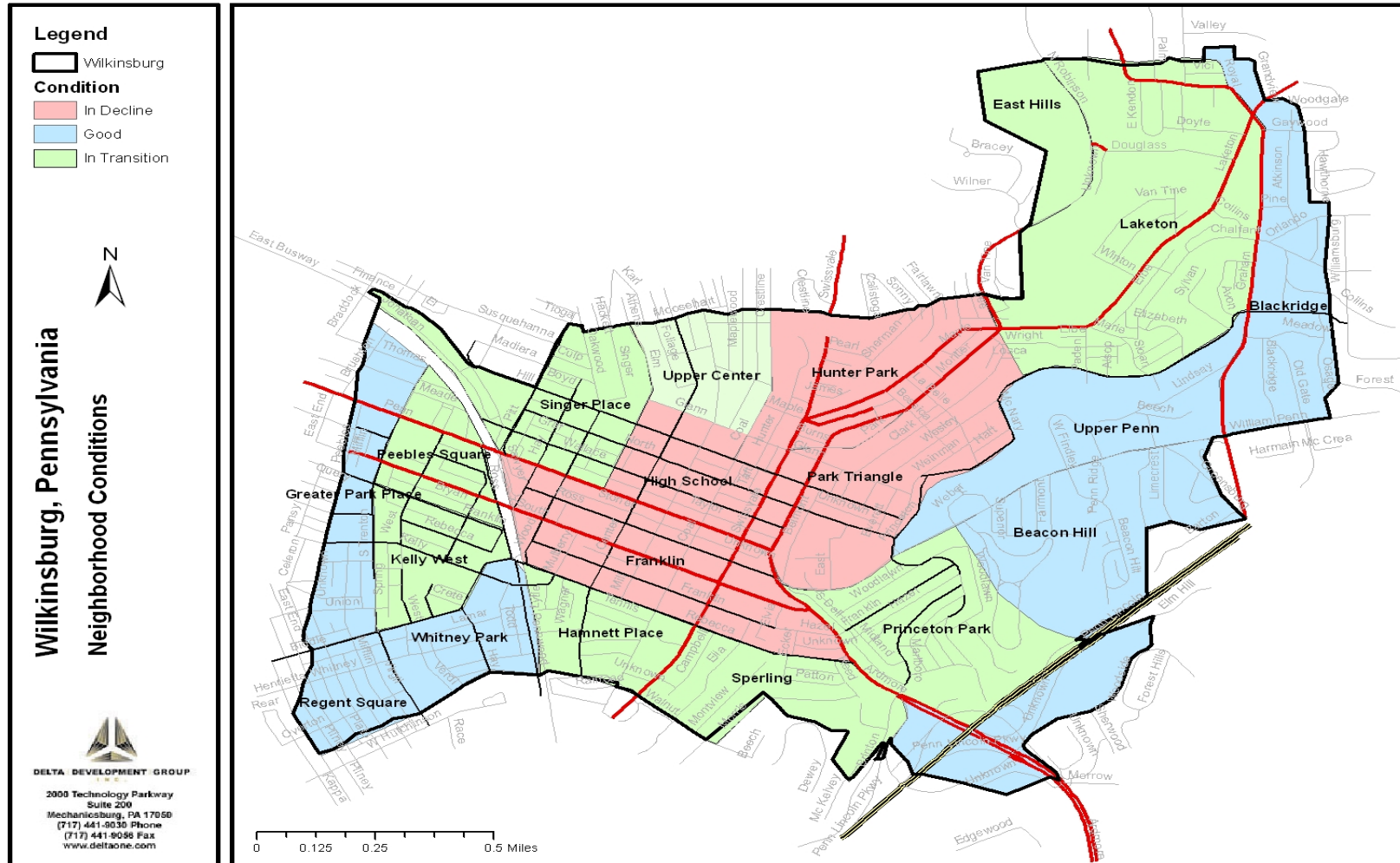
MAP 9 – NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGNATION MAP



SOURCE: DERIVED FROM STEERING COMMITTEE SESSIONS AND BOROUGH OFFICIALS



MAP 10–WILKINSBURG NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS



SOURCE: NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES – DELTA DEVELOPMENT GROUP, INC., BACKGROUND LAYERS – ESRI, 2009

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In addition to the neighborhood meetings, stakeholder interviews were conducted with a number of relevant persons or groups identified by the Steering Committee as important for providing additional information, perceptions, and recommendations for the planning process. As stakeholders who will be involved in a successful implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*, it was critical that these individuals and groups have input into its development.

For this reason, 10 interviews were conducted with individuals representing various groups either located in or serving the Borough of Wilkinsburg in some capacity. These interviews included representatives from the following:

- Hosanna House
- Nine Mile Run Watershed Association
- Glenn Engineering (the Borough Engineer)
- Wilkinsburg Historical Society
- Wilkinsburg Shade Tree Commission
- Wilkinsburg School Board President
- Wilkinsburg Public Works Department
- Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
- Director– LifeCare Hospital of Pittsburgh

In addition, the consultant team met with the Rotary Club in April 2009 and the Wilkinsburg Ministerial Alliance in June 2009. The Alliance includes the following churches in the Borough:

- Wilkinsburg Community Ministry
- Covenant Church of Pittsburgh
- South Avenue United Methodist Church
- St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
- Covenant Fellowship Reformed Presbyterian Church
- Wilkinsburg Church of the Nazarene
- Shen Tabernacle
- St. Mark AME

Information obtained through these interviews was used to document information presented in the “Background Research” section of the Comprehensive Plan, and to augment strategy development. Many issues and concerns reported by the stakeholders were consistent from person to person and group to group. They involved issues of safety, resource allocation, and capacity of the Borough to undertake major projects and programs. Many of the stakeholders were interested in moving the community toward a viable and vibrant future but were unsure about where the leadership would emerge and how resources would be identified to effect change. There appear to be a number of dedicated, interested individuals who would be willing to work with the Borough toward that end.

SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

Information obtained through the public meetings was used to help augment and guide the development of the “Background Research” section of the Comprehensive Plan and to generate the priority goals and strategies contained in the plan. Many of the issues identified by participants are not easily classified into the typical categories presented in a comprehensive plan. For purposes of *The Wilkinsburg Plan*, the generalized comments and impressions are collected and set forth in this section.

While it is important to plan for the land uses and physical infrastructure within a community, in many cases, it is equally important to plan for those considerations that go directly to the quality of life in the community. Many of the issues that were identified in the public outreach process could, in fact, present critical barriers to the implementation of the strategies that are designed to further the vision for the community. Some of the community life issues that were repeatedly identified by residents and business owners who participated in the public outreach process are

- Residents reported that, at times, they do not feel safe in their neighborhoods because of crime and the perception of crime and the presence of dilapidated buildings, litter, and vacant properties. Many have said that they do not always feel that it is safe to walk in the neighborhoods especially after dark. They described this feeling of being “uncomfortable” and “unsafe” as a barrier to pedestrian movement throughout the neighborhoods and the business district.
- Wilkinsburg residents reported that they sometimes do not feel safe in the business district because of crime and the perception of crime, the presence of dilapidated buildings, litter, vacant buildings, loitering, and poor lighting. These conditions were especially troublesome for residents during the evening hours.
- Residents expressed concern that the police presence in the Borough is not adequate and that police officers are not always accessible. Residents described a “disconnect” between the police officers and the people who reside in the community. Residents stated that it is generally perceived that police response is better in some neighborhoods within the Borough than in other neighborhoods.
- While crime and safety are real issues, residents felt that the Borough is often portrayed in a more negative light than necessary, and that positive things about the community are not promoted in the media.
- Furthermore, crime statistics are not always reported accurately through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system. In fact, there are many positive trends in the crime data that are not sufficiently analyzed and reported. The actual numbers of violent crimes in Wilkinsburg are lower now than they were in 2002, as opposed to some of the nearby communities such as Forest Hills, Swissvale, and Churchill. Many of the comparable and adjacent communities had much more substantial increases in crime per capita than Wilkinsburg. In fact, Churchill, Edgewood, Penn Hills, and Swissvale showed double- and triple-digit increases over the past six years. Wilkinsburg had about the same violent crime per capita as the city of Pittsburgh and less than Churchill, McKeesport, and



Swissvale. (For a complete review and discussion of this issue see Step IV – Police Department in the Early Intervention Program [EIP] report.)

- Residents repeatedly questioned the quality of the public school system and felt that it does not currently provide adequate educational opportunities for Wilkinsburg’s children. It is believed that the negative image of the school district (whether the issues are real or perceived) creates a barrier to attracting new residents and for engaging in economic development.
- There is a perception by residents that their taxes are higher than those in other Allegheny County communities and that the tax burden is excessive. In fact, the actual tax burden is lower for many residents based on Allegheny County assessment data.
- Residents cited instances of poor communication between the local government and the community. Residents reported that they don’t always know who to contact for service requests and they felt that Borough officials are often not responsive when contacted. They described a lack of accountability and responsiveness on the part of local officials.
- Wilkinsburg residents told a “tale of two cities.” Some Wilkinsburg neighborhoods (most near the Borough borders) are home to middle-to upper-class families with children in private schools, while other neighborhoods have very low home values and median incomes close to the poverty level. Many residents in the middle- to upper-class neighborhoods do not identify with the Wilkinsburg business district or community, and do not interact with other neighborhoods. There are both psychological and physical barriers that divide the “two cities.”
- Residents described many of their fellow residents as having poor attitudes, lacking pride in the community, and being apathetic about community involvement and service.
- Residents cited a lack of community cohesiveness and common focus, especially in relation to how their local government operates.

Of equal or greater significance are the opportunities that were identified and presented at the neighborhood meetings.

- First of all, over 130 residents participated in these meetings, and most indicated a desire to participate in the development and implementation of community solutions.
- In addition, it was suggested through the meetings that significant social capital exists in the Borough in the form of civic and religious groups, such as block clubs, churches, Hosanna House, the Chamber of Commerce, Boys & Girls Club, Baseball and Football Associations, and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC).

BUSINESS DISTRICT PUBLIC INPUT

In addition to neighborhood meetings, a weeklong design charrette was scheduled for the business district owners and stakeholders. A design charrette is an intense period of design activity during which the attendees work in sub-groups over multiple sessions in order to generate design solutions for a public planning problem. The sub-groups then present their work to the full group as a way to develop consensus about design solutions. The charrette process, when done successfully, can achieve community involvement, promote joint ownership

of solutions, and defuse confrontational attitudes between officials, business owners, and residents in a community.

The Wilkinsburg Plan charrette was held at Hosanna House during the week of May 15, 2009 and was facilitated by designers from Burt Hill and public facilitator John Clark, both from the consultant team. The following diagram shows the charrette activities and schedule.

DESIGN CHARRETTE SCHEDULE

		BUSINESS DISTRICT CHARRETTE				
		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
PUBLIC WORKSHOPS	Morning	CHARRETTE SET UP		OPEN HOUSE AND DESIGN TEAM WORK SESSION		
	Afternoon	STAKEHOLDER & COMMITTEE WORK SESSION	OPEN HOUSE AND DESIGN TEAM WORK SESSION	STAKEHOLDER & COMMITTEE WORK SESSION	OPEN HOUSE AND DESIGN TEAM WORK SESSION	OPEN HOUSE AND DESIGN TEAM WORK SESSION
	Evening	PUBLIC MEETING # 1: WORKSHOP		PUBLIC MEETING # 2: WORKSHOP		PUBLIC MEETING # 3: PLAN PRESENTATION

On the afternoons of Monday, May 15, and Wednesday, May 17, work sessions were held with business owners, stakeholders, elected officials, and Steering Committee members. The content of these afternoon sessions was repeated on the evenings of the same days at a public workshop. The intent of the afternoon sessions was to provide key stakeholders alternative times to participate in the day’s activities.

The charrette design team from Burt Hill remained on-site on Tuesday and Thursday in work sessions that incorporated the findings from the preceding day into the work products. Additionally, on Tuesday and Thursday, open houses were held. At the open house sessions, the public could view the work products displayed in the gallery and talk informally with the charrette design team. On Friday, the preliminary “consensus plan” was presented to the public for comments and feedback. A complete review of the outcomes is shown in the “Synthesize and Analyze” section of this report.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

As part of the charrette process, public input findings that were built on previous Wilkinsburg studies and plans were summarized and presented for comment. The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) exhibit summarizes these issues as confirmed during the charrette process.





STRENGTHS

- Historic buildings
- Walkable business district
- Penn Avenue connections to the busway, parkway, and Pittsburgh
- Centralized business core with surrounding residential neighborhoods
- On-street and off-street parking
- Varying commercial and residential opportunities throughout the district
- Supportive healthcare facilities
- Diversity of businesses and owners
- Open-air Farmers Market
- Committed residents and business owners
- Wood Street as a complement to Penn Avenue

WEAKNESSES & THREATS

- Minimal job training
- Negative publicity and media coverage
- Not a destination neighborhood
- Lack of code compliant space and code enforcement
- Vacant, abandoned, and blighted buildings
- Busway is a physical, social, and psychological barrier
- No awareness of existing businesses
- Surrounding neighborhoods do not identify Penn Ave as their main street
- Litter
- High taxes make the business district uncompetitive
- Competition from proposed Wal-Mart and Lowe's
- Existing parklet is "a dump"
- Crime and perception of crime
- Tax delinquency
- No movie theaters or local attractions
- Business turnover
- Traffic
- Lack of parks, open space, and street trees





Opportunities

- Penn Avenue area reinvigorated as a premier Main Street
- Replace “absent” local businesses
- Numerous grant opportunities
- Busway park and ride/future transit center
- Integrate public art into redevelopment
- East liberty, East side, and Children’s Hospital momentum
- Renovation of historic buildings
- Educational campus
- Promotion through publicity campaign
- Available storefronts for a richer mix of goods and services
- Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation
- Transformation to a major destination
- Greening through additional street trees, parks, and open space
- Vacant properties’ redevelopment potential
- Grow smart and sustainable
- Niche market development
- Develop positive aspects of “small town” and “urban center”

During the public participation process, residents were asked about the business district relative to what they currently use and buy in the business district and what they would potentially use or buy if improvements were made. Most respondents currently come to the business district to visit the Post Office, drug store, gas station, library, and convenience stores. The results of the survey indicate that respondents would patronize, if available, new or improved goods and services including a bakery, coffee shop, home improvement store, and grocery store. (At the time of this survey, the Save-A-Lot grocery store was in existence for a year or more. The response seems to indicate that an expanded or improved grocery store is desired.)

For a complete report regarding the outcomes and consensus plan for the business district see the Wilkinsburg Business District Plan.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Since all elements of the *Wilkinsburg Plan* are directly related to delivering government services to Wilkinsburg’s residents, understanding the Borough’s demographic characteristics and trends is an essential component of the planning process. Wilkinsburg’s declining population presents a number of challenges that should be addressed in the plan. The most obvious challenge is the number of houses in the Borough that were left vacant as the population declined. In addition, the business district, which in years past served a population of over 31,000, is also experiencing high vacancy rates as the retail market has declined along with the population. Exacerbating the problem is the widening income gap between households in Wilkinsburg and the average household in the United States. With property tax and earned income tax as the largest generators of revenue for the Borough, the decline in population and lower-than-average income has meant fiscal challenges for the Borough that threaten its ability to provide necessary services to its residents. These negative trends can, however, be slowed or reversed through well-planned housing and economic strategies.

Given the age, vacancy rates, and building conditions of the homes in Wilkinsburg, many are beyond repair and need to be demolished so that redevelopment can occur. Unfortunately, many of the homes that need to be demolished are private properties; therefore, the owners must demolish them. Many of the owners do not live in Wilkinsburg and cannot be contacted to discuss the possibility of selling the properties. This is an overwhelming obstacle to redevelopment and revitalization in Wilkinsburg.

Through sheriff sales that were undertaken because of delinquent taxes, the Borough of Wilkinsburg has inadvertently acquired a number of properties in neighborhoods throughout the Borough. Currently, the Borough owns eight properties that are vacant, four of which are scheduled for demolition in the summer of 2010.



CRESCENT BUILDING

A



PEEBLES SQUARE DEVELOPMENT

significant amount of revitalization and rehabilitation of housing stock has taken place in Hamnett Place and in the Peebles Square area. In Hamnett Place, the PHLF recently completed the renovation of four homes and has plans to renovate a number of other homes in the area. There were also three new homes built on McNary Boulevard in the past five years. In addition, the

PHLF was recently awarded funding to renovate the Crescent Building located on Kelly Avenue just south of Rebecca Street. The building will be reused as apartments.

In the Peebles Square neighborhood, five new homes have recently been built along Peebles Street a block south of Penn Avenue, with plans for additional new homes in the area.

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT FOCUS

The condition of housing in its neighborhoods is one of the most pressing, as well as one of the most challenging issues facing Wilkinsburg. A steady decline in population and in household income over the past few years has left many homes vacant and deteriorating. Vacant properties have led to a lower tax base, as well as increased blight and criminal activity in the Borough. If the population continues to decline, and if market conditions do not change, these issues will likely continue and could become worse with time. Reversing these trends will take time and will require strategically targeted public investment that will provide catalysts for increased private investment.

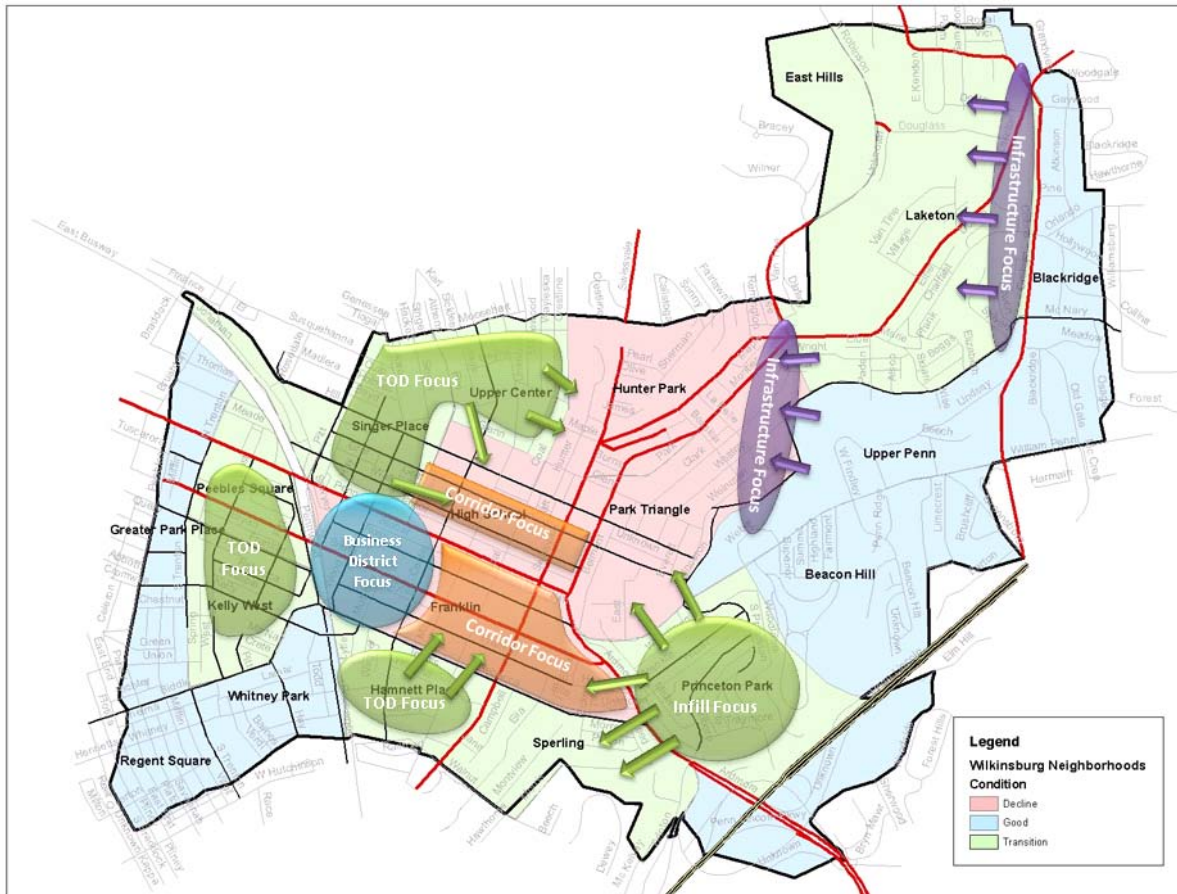
It would be an overwhelming, if not impossible, task for the Borough to work alone to attempt to address issues of blight and vacancies in every neighborhood in Wilkinsburg; therefore, it is critical that a few key areas be targeted for public investment. These key investment areas can then serve as catalysts for reinvestment that can spread to surrounding neighborhoods. In order to determine what specific areas should be targeted, the following questions were considered by the Borough, Planning Commission, and Steering Committee:

- 1. What assets within the Borough could be leveraged to attract residential development/redevelopment?**
- 2. Are there areas of current investment and activity that could be built upon to maximize revitalization opportunities?**
- 3. Are there areas within the Borough where there are clusters of vacant and/or tax-delinquent properties?**
- 4. Are there “gateway” areas within the Borough whose revitalization could improve the image of the Borough?**

As these questions were considered, a few neighborhoods emerged as potential targets for revitalization, each with its own distinct set of opportunities and challenges. Map 11 presents nine proposed focus areas for revitalization, along with the *primary* strategy for each.



MAP 11 – PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT FOCUS AREAS



While nine focus areas were identified for revitalization, they should not be viewed as nine isolated *projects*. Instead, one should think of each focus area as a hub of activity that will spur growth outward, toward the center of the Borough. In the above illustration, the circles, ovals and polygons represent one- to five-year strategies, and the arrows represent five- to ten-year strategies. As Map 11 shows, the areas within Wilkinsburg around its eastern and western borders are in relatively good condition. With the exception of the area around Hunter Park to the north, the rest of the areas around its borders are in transition, with areas in the center of the Borough in decline. By taking an approach that builds on assets and opportunities around the outside borders of the Borough, revitalization activity can spread beyond the focus areas from the outside in, and eventually reach all areas of the Borough. The goal of this approach is to build strong, sustainable neighborhoods that will support the housing, social, and economic needs of Wilkinsburg residents.

The neighborhood redevelopment strategies for each of the focus areas can be divided into three additional categories: (1) infill focus strategies; (2) corridor strategies, and (3) infrastructure strategies. In addition to these three categories we will also discuss Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) neighborhood strategies.



INFILL STRATEGY FOCUS AREAS

Infill development sites are best characterized as neglected public spaces and clusters of vacant or nearly empty buildings and land. Over time, these sites can obstruct community development plans and threaten neighborhood stability and growth. In order to address the infill development problem, it is necessary to leverage existing assets, rethink the use of older spaces, and address the practical concerns of specific sites and the neighborhoods around them. Infill development strategies should be specifically considered for the following neighborhood:

PRINCETON PARK – Unlike other neighborhoods, Princeton Park has clearly defined boundaries, with Ardmore Boulevard to the west, Penn Avenue to the north, and the Penn Lincoln Parkway (I-376) to the south. With no connectivity to the east, its eastern boundary is formed by a natural buffer between the neighborhood and the Woodlawn Cemetery. The neighborhood was perceived by residents who participated in the neighborhood meetings as “in transition.” The neighborhood is primarily single-family homes, with about half of the homes owner-occupied. The owner-occupied homes are more highly concentrated in the southern portion of the neighborhood. While the majority of the homes in this neighborhood appear to be structurally sound, there are several abandoned properties.

As strategies are developed for neighborhood and housing revitalization in the Borough, two market realities should be considered.

FIRST, at its peak, Wilkinsburg was home to over 31,000 people. The loss of population inherently meant an increase in vacant housing. With over 16% of its housing stock currently vacant and a continued overall decline in population in Allegheny County, Wilkinsburg is faced with the market reality that it may not be possible to redevelop all of its vacant and deteriorating housing stock. Therefore, as strategies are developed for targeted infill redevelopment, it is also important to consider strategies for strategically demolishing abandoned and/or deteriorating housing and converting the properties to productive space that includes green space and shovel-ready sites, as appropriate. This would allow for dealing with the immediate blight problems while providing flexibility to respond to possible future market opportunities.

This could be accomplished through land banking, a strategy for acquiring land today, stabilizing it, and holding it for future use. Just because property is being held for future use does not mean that it cannot be used productively while it is being held. Land-banked properties can be used for parks, open space, or community gardens. Even though the property may be owned by a public entity, community-based organizations can be engaged to assist with creative land use strategies designed to benefit neighborhoods. It should be noted that between 1990 and 2000, over 6,000 households moved into homes within Wilkinsburg, and over 17,000 households moved into homes within a five-minute drive time of the Borough. So, with the right mix of housing opportunities and supporting attractiveness factors, a market could potentially be *created* for housing in Wilkinsburg, especially since residential and supporting uses are the focus of a TOD strategy for the business district.



SECOND, it is important to ensure that an adequate percentage of the Borough's housing stock is structurally sound and affordable to its residents; however, it is also important to provide a mix of price-points that provide housing options for middle- to upper-income households as well. As suggested in a comparison of Map 2 and Map 5, not surprisingly, housing conditions and household income go hand-in-hand. There is currently little housing available, if any, in the central portion of the Borough for middle- to upper-income households. Redevelopment strategies should include, where possible, options for market rate housing in addition to affordable housing, as well as proactive code compliance efforts to improve occupied housing stock.

THIRD, the Borough officials will have to work with the private sector brokers, realtors, and lenders about opportunities for investment in Borough neighborhoods. Currently, many private brokers and realtors steer potential buyers away from Wilkinsburg neighborhoods and are a barrier to the resale of quality, affordable housing stock. Furthermore, there are significant hurdles in the private sector lending establishments related to the funding and financial programs available to potential buyers for properties in the Wilkinsburg neighborhoods. An open dialogue that includes information and education about the opportunities in Wilkinsburg must be undertaken with relevant private sector housing professionals.

CORRIDOR FOCUS AREAS

Several areas adjacent to the business district were identified as corridor focus areas because they are key to and supportive of the business district activity. These neighborhoods demonstrate a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional use and provide transition areas between the focused business activity and the concentrated residential areas.

The Steering Committee identified the redevelopment of these areas as critical to creating the aesthetic appeal and attractiveness factors that would encourage a more robust community and economic environment. For purposes of common terminology and state funding, these areas are commonly known as the Elm Street neighborhoods. The DCED Elm Street Program was created to strengthen the older historic neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to the small urban centers. It is important to address the Elm Street neighborhoods, because business district main streets that are surrounded by distressed neighborhoods continue to struggle despite hard work on the part of downtown advocates. The following neighborhoods fall into the corridor category and should be targeted for improvements as noted.

FRANKLIN AND HIGH SCHOOL – Much of the Franklin and High School neighborhoods is considered in decline, with a number of abandoned structures along the arterial and collector streets that provide east/west connectivity through the Borough, running parallel to Penn Avenue. Collector streets in the High School neighborhood include Wallace, North, and Hill Avenues. Collector streets in the Franklin neighborhood include Ross, Franklin, and Rebecca Avenues. South Avenue is an arterial street that runs parallel between Ross and Franklin Avenues. While there are a number of vacant residential properties along these streets, especially to the east between Swissvale Avenue and Ardmore Boulevard, uses





transition to the west from residential to a mix of uses that also includes commercial and institutional. Similarly, in the High School neighborhood, there are a number of institutional uses on the north side of Wallace Avenue in the central portion of the neighborhood, with surface parking on the south side of the street across from the institutional uses.

As collector and arterial roadways, these streets are frequently used as pass-through streets for commuters who want to avoid congestion on Penn Avenue, and they therefore highly influence the image of the Borough that is portrayed to commuters. Strategic public investment along these streets could provide an attractive gateway to Wilkinsburg neighborhoods.

INFRASTRUCTURE FOCUS AREAS

Neighborhoods in the northeast portion of Wilkinsburg consist primarily of low-density, single-family dwellings, with five of the Borough's eight arterial roadways located in this area. In 2008, there was a proposed development of a new shopping center partially located in the East Hills neighborhood possibly anchored by Wal-Mart and Lowe's. Unfortunately, the economic climate was not supportive of this development and, in 2009, the proposed development was abandoned. However, this site remains one of the most significant and promising sites for future retail development in the Borough.

Two neighborhoods were identified in this portion of the Borough as focus areas for infrastructure improvements.

PARK TRIANGLE AND LAKETON – Much like the corridor strategies described above, infrastructure strategies in these areas should be focused on improving the structure, functionality, and appearance of the roadways. Residents who participated in the neighborhood meetings cited the condition of streets in these areas as primary concerns. Many of the streets in these neighborhoods are brick, and their uneven surfaces sometimes create impediments to vehicular circulation. Near-term strategies should include fixing local streets to improve appearance and circulation, building curbs and sidewalks, and performing other streetscape enhancements that will add to the attractiveness of the area.

Focusing investment in these areas will improve Wilkinsburg's image and enhance its attractiveness as a place to live.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

One of Wilkinsburg's greatest assets is the East Busway, which currently has regular stops at three stations in the Borough: one at the Wilkinsburg Station, one at Hay Street, and one at Hamnett Station. The Port Authority of Allegheny County (the Port Authority) has made significant investment in park-and-ride facilities at two of the stations, with 730 spaces available at the Wilkinsburg Station, located near Wallace Avenue and Pitt Street, and 128 spaces available at Hamnett Station, near Center and Ramsey Streets. While parking availability may provide increased ridership for public transit, Wilkinsburg has not taken advantage of the opportunities presented by this asset for transit-oriented neighborhood development that is focused on pedestrians rather than on park-and-ride. As sustainability becomes more central to



land use planning, providing options for growth areas around transit stations is becoming central to sustainable planning. The typical focus area around transit stops is an approximate quarter-mile radius around the stop. Typical components of TOD areas include high-density residential uses with a mix of commercial, entertainment, civic, and cultural uses that provide for the convenience of the pedestrian-oriented resident.

With increased residential density as one of the distinguishing characteristics of TOD areas, a key strategy for TOD focus areas should be the assembling of a number of contiguous parcels that could make the area more attractive for private investment. Private developers are rarely interested in developing small, individual parcels. For development to be profitable, they need the ability to take advantage of economies of scale associated with larger tracts of land, to have local zoning regulations that are friendly to infill and high density development, and to have streamlined approval processes that minimize the time frame for necessary approvals.

A common strategy to encourage development density with a mix of uses to support TOD is the inclusion of Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) overlay districts in TOD focus areas. The regulatory nature of these overlay districts is typically form-based to allow for a diverse mix of uses and densities.

In addition to the business district, three neighborhoods in Wilkinsburg have been identified as focus areas with their primary strategies centered around TOD.

HAMNETT PLACE – As Wilkinsburg neighborhoods were evaluated for their attractiveness for revitalization focus, one of the first assets that emerged was the current and planned revitalization activity in Hamnett Place. The Hamnett Place neighborhood is one of Wilkinsburg’s most historic areas, and as previously noted, PHLF has invested financial resources to restore several historic homes, with plans for the restoration of several other homes and structures in the neighborhood. To make this neighborhood even more attractive for future investment, this revitalization is taking place within walking distance of Hamnett Station, one of the three stops in Wilkinsburg along the East Busway. Since TOD is one of the priority strategies identified in the Business District Revitalization Plan, this area would be a prime target for strategic investment. Revitalization in this neighborhood could be a catalyst for additional private investment and spread to the north and east to the Franklin neighborhood. Strategies for Hamnett Place could include the development of a local historic district to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood, as well as infill and open-space strategies. Infill options should be considered that provide for increased density, especially in areas nearest Hamnett Station, with consideration for consistency with the current neighborhood scale and context.

SINGER PLACE AND UPPER CENTER – As with Hamnett Place, the Singer Place and Upper Center neighborhoods are within walking distance of one of the three East Busway stations in Wilkinsburg, the Wilkinsburg Station. As previously observed, in the past, the transit focus at the Wilkinsburg Station has been more on the park-and-ride aspect of transit, and the station consequently is not very pedestrian-friendly. The TOD strategy in the Business District Revitalization Plan emphasizes pedestrian access in this area, which

could make it an attractive location for housing and/or apartments to attract commuters to live in Wilkinsburg. From the Wilkinsburg Station, commuters can be in downtown Pittsburgh within about 10 minutes. Singer Place and Upper Center have a number of large, older, single-family houses that contribute to the historic character of the neighborhoods. As with Hamnett Place, infill options should be considered that provide for increased density, especially in areas nearest the Wilkinsburg Station, with consideration for consistency with the current neighborhood scale and context. Vacant properties near the transit station could provide the basis for assembling a number of contiguous properties that could be attractive to a private developer.

PEEBLES SQUARE AND KELLY WEST – The Peebles Square and Kelly West neighborhoods offer the opportunity for TOD on the west side of the busway. These neighborhoods were not perceived to be in a state of decline by residents who participated in the neighborhood meetings, but were perceived to be in transition; however, recent private investment has resulted in marked improvement in the northern portion of the Peebles Square neighborhood. If the currently closed pedestrian tunnel at the train station is opened for use, the Peebles Square and Kelly West neighborhoods could also be an attractive residential option for commuters due to their proximity to the Hay Street Station. As with TOD focus areas to the east of the busway, vacant properties near the transit station could provide the basis for assembling a number of contiguous properties that could be attractive to a private developer. Strategies for these neighborhoods should include infill with a focus on increasing density in areas nearest the transit station, as well as homeownership and open-space strategies.

If strategically planned and promoted, a TOD in Wilkinsburg could be very attractive to commuters and to “urban pioneers,” and could create the demand for more dense residential options in the TOD district. Dense residential, in turn, creates the basis for a vibrant business district. The Borough will need to develop a more specific strategy through a TOD/Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) study; therefore, the Comprehensive Plan should be flexible to incorporate those strategies as they are recommended.

The development and implementation of a TOD strategy should be first priority for both neighborhood development and for business district development, and is recommended as one of the priority strategies to be addressed in the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*. DCED’s TRID program provides funding for conducting studies and developing plans for TOD; however, availability of funds could be limited by state budgetary constraints. The Borough should begin discussions with DCED to determine availability of planning funds. In addition to a TOD/TRID study, the Borough needs to find the resources to update its zoning code to allow for TOD development within the TOD focus areas identified on the proposed Neighborhood Redevelopment Focus Area Map (Map 11).

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN — RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The neighborhoods and housing strategy is one of the most important strategies in the Comprehensive Plan and will require methodical, deliberate action and public and private

investment. While focus areas identified in this section of the Comprehensive Plan should be priority for public investment and focus, this action strategy is not inherently limited to those neighborhoods. Neighborhood groups throughout the Borough can use components of the strategy for revitalization. While the implementation of many of the components in this strategy can happen immediately, full implementation can take years to complete. However, if care is taken to ensure that progress is visible to both residents and potential investors, the time frame for full implementation can be shortened. Following are some key thoughts for consideration.

ACQUISITION, MARKETING, AND USES – The acquisition and use of vacant, deteriorating, and tax-delinquent properties is perhaps one of the most challenging strategies of this Comprehensive Plan; however, it is critical to neighborhood revitalization. A study conducted by interns from the University of Pittsburgh during the summer of 2009 identifies key properties in the Borough that are vacant and tax-delinquent, with details of property values and tax liability. This study can be used as a resource in developing a vacant lot strategy. In addition, an application has been submitted for funding through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to support demolition of specific vacant properties throughout the Borough. Vacant lot strategies should include consideration of the following options:

- Determination of whether the property should be put into productive use immediately, or land-banked for future use.
- A side-lot strategy that would allow adjacent property owners to easily and affordably acquire vacant properties.
- A land bank program to hold and maintain vacant properties for future use. The newly reconstituted Redevelopment Authority of Wilkinsburg could potentially undertake this strategy.
- A community gardens strategy could serve several purposes. Vacant properties can be “adopted” by neighborhoods, schools, and/or civic groups, eliminating blight, while providing healthy foods for residents, environmental sustainability, and social interactions among residents. The August/September 2009 issue of *Planning*, the magazine of the American Planning Association, is a special issue devoted to “The Food Factor” and contains profiles of best practices in creative green uses of vacant properties.
- Vacant properties can be used as common areas for surrounding properties, or can even serve as an option for off-street parking in certain circumstances.
- Partnering with Allegheny County and the Wilkinsburg School District is critical in positioning vacant properties for private acquisition.
- Engage groups such as the PHLF and local developers to identify key properties for historic preservation, and for clusters of vacant properties that could be targeted for higher-density development in the TOD focus areas.
- Work with local/regional banks to develop innovative financing and incentive programs to encourage home ownership, maintenance, and renovation.

STREETSCAPE AND INFRASTRUCTURE – For neighborhoods included in the corridor and infrastructure focus areas, the key components of revitalization will primarily require public investment; however, public investment will in turn encourage private investment by property owners in the areas surrounding the public investment. Corridor strategies should include design and implementation processes for streetscape enhancements such as lighting, sidewalks, curbs, street trees (and other vegetative covering as appropriate), signage, and traffic-calming elements. Design should consider the context of surrounding neighborhoods. Streetscape enhancements should focus on visual appearance and pedestrian/bike options. Conversely, areas designated for infrastructure focus should be more focused on major improvements to roadways and traffic flow.

FIGHTING CRIME - In communities with high instances of criminal activity and limited financial resources for police protection, crime fighting is sometimes effectively approached through community involvement. Watch groups can be organized by business owners in the business district, as well as in neighborhoods. The Borough has effectively used Neighborhood Block Clubs to encourage groups to carry out neighborhood watch activities. Creating opportunities for regular communication between community residents and business owners and the police officers who patrol their streets can have a positive effect on crime prevention. The Borough should also continue to provide resources for neighborhood watch programs through the Wilkinsburg Weed and Seed Program. A top priority in community involvement in Wilkinsburg should be the crime prevention hotline that allows residents to anonymously report crimes or suspicious activity in their neighborhoods.

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS – Allegheny County and groups such as Action Housing, Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development (PPND), and PHLF should be asked to provide advisory services, as well as assist with funding strategies and rehabilitation as appropriate.

The neighborhood and housing action strategies in the Comprehensive Plan provide the underpinning for all other components of the plan. The entire purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to plan for the provision of services to the people who live in Wilkinsburg's neighborhoods and homes. The condition of neighborhoods and the availability and condition of neighborhood housing stock can influence the demographic makeup of the community, the demand for goods and services, as well as the enhancement of tax revenues. As public investment is made in neighborhoods, private property owners will likely begin to take more pride in their properties, which can lead to private investment. In addition, as neighborhood residents take pride in their homes and properties, they will likely also become more aware of surrounding conditions and will initiate grass-roots efforts to keep their neighborhoods clean. While the results may not be seen immediately, by approaching this strategy one block at a time, one neighborhood at a time, the initiative will hopefully spread to surrounding areas and eventually encompass the entire Borough.

HOUSING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The breadth and depth of issues regarding housing and neighborhoods in the Borough of Wilkinsburg can make the development of specific goals, objectives and strategies a daunting task. Questions of where and how to start can lead to a scattered approach that leaves Borough officials wrestling with where to begin on numerous important initiatives. In order to guard against an overwhelming set of priorities, the Steering Committee was taken through goal-setting sessions to develop the primary goals for each of the Comprehensive Plan elements. From these primary goals, the committee established a broad array of objectives relevant to each goal. The objectives were then combined into a primary set of objectives and a specific set of strategies. Each subsequent plan element section follows this process to identify important strategies for the element. The goals, objectives, and strategies are later considered in conjunction with the Early Intervention Plan and the Business District Revitalization Plan and combined into a priority set of recommendations for all three plans. These overall community priorities are contained in a later section of this plan.

Once major goals were identified for each plan element, members were asked to identify the “Critical Success Factors” that would be necessary to achieve each goal. Members were asked to verbalize the critical success factors for each goal in the form of a “We must have...” or a “We must be...” statement. The statement is considered an imperative in order for this goal to be achieved. By verbalizing the elements necessary to achieve the goal, members were able to understand and identify the most important objectives necessary in achieving them. Each of the “We must have...” Or “We must be...” statements should be considered an objective in achieving the goal. Finally, each goal and its objectives were combined into a few overarching objectives and strategies necessary in order to achieve them. The primary objectives and strategies were kept to a few of the most important in order to prioritize and focus on a manageable set of recommendations coming out of the planning process. However, as the community begins the process of implementation, proposed policies, actions and strategies should always be weighed against the overarching goals and objectives (the “have” and “be” statements) for the relevant plan sections.

The priority Housing goals and objectives are as follows:

Housing

Goal 1: Wilkinsburg’s neighborhoods will be safe and attractive for family living, with walkable streets and safe public spaces.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- adequate police presence in neighborhoods to ensure safety
- resident involvement in neighborhood safety
- an aggressive waste-management program that adequately meets the needs of local residents
- litter control ordinances in place to protect neighborhoods from littering
- residents actively engaged in litter control
- an environment where residents are encouraged to report crimes
- adequately trained police officers who respect residents and ensure safety
- paid staff to assist in litter control and ordinances in place to protect neighborhoods from litter

We must be...

- impartial in implementing safety initiatives
- aggressive and determined to make our community safe and attractive
- actively involved in gaining resident and business participation

Housing

Goal 2: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will leverage existing initiatives, investments, and opportunities to target specific areas for housing and neighborhood redevelopment.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objective):

We must have...

- identified targeted areas for redevelopment and for new construction
- a TOD strategy
- a marketing strategy to increase awareness of Wilkinsburg’s initiatives to attract new residents
- the ability to land-bank contiguous properties for future development
- an outreach program to the private sector housing and real estate professions to provide information and education

We must be...

- strategic in targeting areas for redevelopment
- focused on a specific geographic area for TOD/Transit investments



Housing

Goal 3 : The Borough of Wilkinsburg will improve the attractiveness and livability of its neighborhoods to attract new residents and improve quality of life for residents.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- safe neighborhoods
- litter-free streets and lots
- well-maintained homes and lawns
- responsible homeowners
- regular proactive code inspections
- a sense of pride in the community and pride in ownership
- a zoning code that allows for affordable revitalization of homes
- standards for maintenance
- sufficient staff for code enforcement
- responsible landlords

We must be...

- focused on neighborhood education and community building
- increasing the number of Block Clubs
- focused on landlord/tenant relations and responsibilities

Housing

Goal 4: Wilkinsburg will eliminate blight and vacancies to turn land into productive space, including green space, by encouraging a productive reuse focus.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- a prioritized demolition list
- identified funding for demolition of prioritized properties
- identified reuse options for vacant lots, to include green uses
- sufficient staff for regular zoning/building inspections
- litter-free lots
- a section on the Borough Web site that lists and visually identifies vacant lots, including lots with abandoned properties, Borough property, and (for a fee) other properties listed for sale in Wilkinsburg

We must be...

- focused on demolition and redevelopment
- enforcing the zoning/building codes
- marketing the VPRP and tax abatement programs to residents, surrounding communities, and universities





Housing

Goal 5 : The Borough of Wilkinsburg will use TOD to attract new residents and provide convenient new housing options for current residents.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- links between transit stops and neighborhoods and business district
- a TOD strategy
- targeted investment around busway
- support services to focus on or leverage transit stops (e.g., commuter services)
- a financial investment strategy to invest resources around transit stops
- safe and sustainable transit facilities
- land use regulations that support and incentivize TOD
- safe, well-lit, convenient pedestrian linkages to transit facilities

We must be...

- proactively engaged with Allegheny Port Authority
- walkable
- focused on a specific geographic area for TOD/Transit investments
- the primary transit station along the East Busway
- focused on transit stops as a tool for neighborhood development, not just as park-and-ride facilities
- advocates for public transportation investment in the community
- focused on increasing resident utilization of transit
- focused on improving transit stops throughout the Borough, to include shelters, litter control, and beautification efforts

Housing

Goal 6: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will preserve historically significant housing, if possible, and provide housing with an inclusive mix of types for all income levels.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- a common understanding of what constitutes designation as a historic structure
- an understanding of specific building conditions and the viability of preservation
- an aggressive strategy for ensuring that viable historic structures are restored and/or maintained, and for the demolition of structures that can't be repaired
- appropriately designated areas with design standards that preserve historical context
- a variety of housing types that appeal to Wilkinsburg's diverse residents
- housing that is accessible for people with disabilities

We must be...

- strategic and realistic in designating areas and/or specific buildings for preservation
- inclusive and have a diversity of housing types throughout the neighborhoods not just housing diversity throughout the Borough



Priority Objectives and Strategies

In order to meet these overall goals and objectives the following priority objectives and strategies rise to the top of the housing and neighborhoods element:

Develop and implement a TOD strategy for areas around Wilkinsburg stations along the East Busway	
Implementation Strategy	
1.	Work with the WCDC to prepare and submit an application to DCED to conduct a Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) study for the focus areas identified for TOD in the neighborhoods and housing focus area plan
2.	Work with the Planning Commission to update land use codes to regulate and incentivize TOD in designated focus areas, and to update zoning, subdivision and land development, and building codes as needed to encourage renovation and infill
3.	Work with Port Authority to provide convenient and well-lit pedestrian walkways through parking lots and to the existing transit station from surrounding neighborhoods
4.	Redesign and construct pedestrian links between the Wilkinsburg Station and neighborhoods to the east to provide real access and connections to transit facilities.
5.	Meet with the Port Authority to explore the opening of the train station as an additional stop
6.	Explore ways to leverage the access to the busway to facilitate TOD in the Singer Place and Hamnett Place neighborhoods
7.	Develop a site inventory of available properties around the transit station and recruit developers/users for available properties around the transit stations
8.	Explore the feasibility of designating space in the business district for convenient parking to attract transit users to the business district
9.	Conduct a parking evaluation to focus/reduce/evaluate the number of public parking spaces dedicated to transit stop (Susquehanna to Wallace), and to consider the possibility of establishing fees for parking in this area

Develop a strategy for neighborhood revitalization in priority focus areas within the Borough	
Implementation Strategy	
1.	Create a subcommittee from the Implementation Committee members commissioned with the responsibility of implementing the housing focus strategy
2.	The subcommittee should work with the Borough to prioritize neighborhood focus areas
3.	Design and implement a program to acquire key vacant, deteriorated, and/or tax-delinquent properties for demolition, redevelopment, creative uses, or land banking, with first focus in priority areas
4.	Identify (or create) and utilize an organizational entity to focus on the acquisition and development of vacant properties





**Develop a strategy for neighborhood revitalization in priority focus areas within the Borough
Implementation Strategy**

5. Develop and implement a land banking program to hold acquired properties for future use, with first focus in priority areas
6. Work with Allegheny County and the Wilkinsburg School District to clear titles on vacant, deteriorated, and/or tax-delinquent properties to make them more attractive for private acquisition, with first focus in priority areas
7. Work with the Planning Commission to develop historic preservation guidelines for awareness and education purposes in historically significant neighborhoods.
8. Develop a corridor strategy for streetscape enhancements in areas designated for corridor focus in the “Housing and Neighborhoods” section of the Comprehensive Plan, with first focus in priority areas
9. Develop a funding strategy to support streetscape enhancements
10. Conduct a study of the two neighborhood areas identified for infrastructure improvements to determine and prioritize needs, and develop plans for implementation
11. Develop a funding strategy to support infrastructure improvements
12. Develop a strategy for marketing available properties to private developers and to potential homeowners
13. Work with the WCDC to develop and maintain a real estate database of retail, commercial, and residential space by location, condition, ownership, jobs, units, and occupancy
14. Identify and market incentives and resources to encourage homeownership, home maintenance, and home repairs and provide classes to teach proper home maintenance and ownership skills
15. Update the zoning ordinance to provide incentives for developers to include a mix of affordable housing, accessible housing, and market rate housing in new development
16. Develop and publish a list of available resources for homeowners including available funding/loans for home repair

**Involve the public in community efforts to fight crime
Implementation Strategy**

1. Develop an anonymous crime tip hotline
2. Implement regularly scheduled meetings with neighborhood groups and beat cops or neighborhood patrol officers
3. Work through the Weed and Seed program and neighborhood Block Club programs to build support for appropriate neighborhood involvement relative to crime watch, clean ups, and surveillance of parks..
4. Partner with neighboring communities, including the city of Pittsburgh, to provide crime-free education programs
5. Inform the public through various types of media regarding opportunities for participation in public policing



COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Well-maintained and affordable facilities and efficient services are essential to any community. If facilities and/or services lack capacity or fall into disrepair, they will hamper economic development and can cause health or safety hazards in the community. Community facilities and services are one of the most visible ways tax dollars are spent. The appearance of facilities and delivery of services is important to preserve the public's trust and faith in their government.

The *Wilkinsburg Plan* is a unique effort in that it combines several planning studies into one. The Comprehensive Plan, Business District Plan and Early Intervention Plan are all separate but intertwined studies and documents. The priority recommendations of these three studies come together in the Comprehensive Plan's priority recommendations section. Typical community facilities and services analysis (e.g. police, fire, public works, codes enforcement) done as part of a comprehensive plan will review these areas, but not with as much depth as was possible with the more intensive effort of the EIP. For this reason, the analysis of community services (e.g., police, fire, public works, codes enforcement) which is typically found in this section of a comprehensive plan, is located in the Early Intervention Plan instead, with a summary of the findings located in a later section of the Comprehensive Plan.

This "Community Facilities and Services" section of the plan therefore addresses only Wilkinsburg's community facilities, including its parks and recreation, sewer, water, utilities, schools, stormwater management, municipal buildings, and physical plant. Wilkinsburg is not necessarily responsible for the maintenance of all facilities, but the quality of these facilities affects the lives of its residents and the perception of the overall condition of Wilkinsburg.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Access to parks and recreational space can enhance an area's quality of life. Parks benefit individuals by providing an area for recreation and exercise, benefit communities by establishing an understood location for events and activities, and benefit the economy by providing amenities that attract businesses and the young professional workforce. Parks offer something for all age groups; their presence can also be a cohesive force. They offer a multitude of opportunities to engage in active and passive recreation, such as the arts, music, cultural, and historic events. Analysis of recent population growth and community input can be used to plan and develop more parks and recreational areas if needed. However, the need for these facilities and the extent to which they can be provided depend largely on the size, density, and nature of development within the area; the composition and spatial distribution of the residential population; and the financial resources and ability to support needed facilities.





In 2001, Wilkinsburg completed a Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan (the 2001 Plan). This 2001 Plan provided Wilkinsburg with an analysis of its parks and recreation system and made strategic recommendations to improve it. The 2001 Plan identified 16 classifications of parks and recreational facilities.



Table 28 provides a description and the criteria for each of these classifications

Table 28 – Recreational Facilities Classifications

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES CLASSIFICATIONS			
CLASSIFICATION	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	LOCATION CRITERIA	SITE CRITERIA
Mini-park	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs	Less than 1/4 mile in distance in residential setting	Between 2,500 sq. ft. and 1 acre in size
Neighborhood Park	The neighborhood Park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on the informal and active and passive recreation.	1/4 to 1/2 mile distance and uninterrupted by nonresidential roads and other physical barriers	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.
School Park	Depending on the circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex, and special use.	Determined by location of school district property	Variable – depends on function
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 30 to 50 acres.
Large Urban Park	Large urban parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.
Natural Resource Area	Land set aside for the preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual/aesthetics/buffering	Resource availability and opportunity	Variable
Greenways	Effectively tie park systems together to form a continuous park environment	Resource availability and opportunity	Variable
Sports Complex	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic facilities to larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community	Strategically located community-wide facility	Determined by project demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal
Special Use	Used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs	Variable – dependent on specific use	Variable

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES CLASSIFICATIONS (CONTINUED)			
CLASSIFICATION	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	LOCATION CRITERIA	SITE CRITERIA
Private Park/Recreational Facility	Parks and recreational facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system	Variable – dependent on specific use	Variable
Park Trail	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with the natural environment.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose, hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters. Type II: Multipurpose, hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians and bicyclists/in-line skaters. Type III: Nature trails for pedestrians. May be hard- or soft-surfaced.	Variable
Connector Trail	Multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.	Type I: Separate/single-purpose, hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters located in independent right-of-way. Type II: Separate/single-purpose, hard-surfaced trails for pedestrians or bicyclists/in-line skaters. Typically located within road right-of-way.	Variable
On-Street Bikeway	Paved segments of roadways that serve as a means to safely separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic	Bike Route: Designated portion of the roadway for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Bike Lane: Shared portion of the roadway that provides separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists, such as paved shoulders.	Variable
All-Terrain Bike Trail	Off-road trail for all-terrain (mountain) bikes	Single-purpose use trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas	Variable
Cross-Country Ski Trail	Trail developed for traditional and skate-style cross-country skiing	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas	Variable
Equestrian Trail	Trail developed for horseback riding	Loop trails usually located in larger parks and natural resource areas. Sometimes developed as multipurpose with hiking and all-terrain biking where conflicts can be controlled.	Variable
SOURCE: WILKINSBURG COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION, PARK, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN (2001)			

The 2001 Plan lists 14 parks and recreational areas scattered throughout Wilkinsburg, as listed on Table 29. Whitney Recreation Area and Hunter Recreation Area are the two community parks, and there are eight neighborhood parks and four special-use facilities.

Hunter Recreation Area is the largest park, offering the public a newly renovated baseball field, basketball court, playground, and open space. The renovations were created using a \$300,000 grant from Pennsylvania’s Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

The other community park, Whitney Recreation Area, offers a baseball field, basketball court, and playground. Open space is available at five of the 14 parks listed, including Hay Recreation Area, which is completely dedicated to open space.

TABLE 29 – RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES		
PARK NAME	CLASSIFICATION	ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE
Whitney Recreation Area	Community Park	Baseball Field Basketball Court Playground
Hunter Recreation Area	Community Park	Baseball Field Basketball Court Playground Open Space
Franklin Recreation Area	Neighborhood Park	Playground Tennis Court
Holmes Recreation Area	Neighborhood Park	Playground
Ferguson Recreation Area	Neighborhood Park	Playground Tennis Court
Park Avenue Recreation Area	Neighborhood Park	Basketball Court Playground
Green Recreation Area	Neighborhood Park	Basketball Court Playground
Turner School Playground	Neighborhood Park	Baseball Field Playground Tennis Court Open Space
Mifflin Way Recreation Area	Neighborhood Park	Playground
Johnston School	Neighborhood Park	Basketball Court Playground
Graham Field	Special Use Facility	Football Field
Hay Recreation Area	Special Use Facility	Open Space
Joe Healy Linear Park	Neighborhood Park	Open Space
SOURCE: WILKINSBURG COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION, PARK, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN (2001)		

The two community parks are located in different areas of Wilkinsburg. Hunter Recreation Area is located along the north-central border of Wilkinsburg and the city of Pittsburgh. Whitney Recreation Area is located in the southwest portion of Wilkinsburg and borders the Borough of Edgewood. Map 12 illustrates the location of the parks and recreational facilities in Wilkinsburg.



The Borough has devoted significant attention and resources to the park system. During the last ten years the Borough completed major renovations at Hunter Park with new regulation sized softball and baseball fields and batting cages, a walking trail, playground equipment, lighted basketball courts, a pavilion, and a water attraction. In addition, new playground equipment



and basketball courts were added at Park Place while Holmes Park was completely renovated and a pavilion was added. The Joe Healy linear park was added along the busway from Hay Street to the Edgewood Borough boundary as part of the Port Authority Busway Extension. Other parks such as Whitney and Ferguson received partial renovations. Wilkesburg has a Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee of seven residents that provides recommendations, support and advice regarding the Borough's park system. Five members of that committee were appointed by the Borough Council

and two by the school district. The members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee are working with the Borough to secure more grants for Wilkesburg's many parks and parklets. The Advisory Committee is also trying to develop programs and activities for each park to encourage utilization of the many park assets.

Over the years, some of the Wilkesburg parks have fallen into disrepair. Because parks are typically not considered a required amenity, they are often the first to experience funding cuts during times of financial distress. However, in an urban community like Wilkesburg, community parks are often the only safe place for children, adolescents, and even adults to experience leisure activities and exercise. Providing safe, well-maintained recreation areas is particularly important in an urban environment and should be considered a valuable asset. Of the 14 different parks located throughout the Borough; there are various levels of maintenance. In some of the parks, basketball courts and tennis courts are in poor condition, with weeds and trees growing through the surface. Many of the posted rules at the parks are on deteriorating signs, and the parks are not always maintained on a regular basis.

... the Borough should consider applying for funds through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to undertake a parks plan that will address the preservation, maintenance and operation of the parks and recreation programming.

Having 14 parks is an asset in any community; however, without the proper maintenance, they can quickly become liabilities and damage the image and attractiveness of a community. Careful consideration should be given to creative ways of preserving, maintaining, and patrolling open space and parks. The Borough has not completed a master plan for parks, recreation, and open space since 2001 and this should be done in the near future with a renewed emphasis and focus



on pedestrian linkages, urban trails, community forestry, and the preservation of green areas and open space. Since it is fast approaching 10 years since the Borough had an updated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan prepared for the Borough, the Borough should consider applying for funds through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to undertake a parks plan that will address the preservation, maintenance and operation of the parks and recreation programming for the future.

SEWER

Wilkinsburg's sewer system was designed and constructed when the Borough was founded over 100 years ago, in the late 1800s. Like most pipes installed at that time, the pipes are terra cotta. Replacements and repairs have been made with concrete, brick, and plastic.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Wilkinsburg separated stormwater from sanitary sewer lines. However, in the late 1990s, the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN), the regional sewer treatment authority for Allegheny County, was issued a directive from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and entered into a consent order through the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to separate stormwater from sanitary sewer discharges. While most of the systems were separate, Wilkinsburg was required to conduct dye tests of all properties in the Borough and to inspect the main lines using TV cameras.

According to Glenn Engineering, the Borough Engineer, the main sewer lines for which Wilkinsburg is responsible are in good condition. The system is old, but it has been maintained and functions very well. The biggest problem with the sewer system is infiltration of stormwater from the lateral lines, for which homeowners are responsible. The stormwater infiltration overloads the system and causes backups of sanitary water into streams and storm sewers. Flow monitoring downstream and upstream can detect sewer overflows and areas where capacity is exceeded. The Borough should continue to use tools such as smoke, dye, and TV inspections to reduce infiltration into the sanitary sewer system.

With considerable deficiencies in Wilkinsburg's private lateral sewer system, the Borough should consider strategies that ensure the proper maintenance and repair of private lateral sewer lines. Codes should be in place clearly defining the system requirements, with the ability for the Borough to impose fines for noncompliance.

While repair and maintenance of private sewer lines is the homeowner's responsibility, a lateral sewer program could include the availability of small grants to homeowners to assist with repairs.

WATER

Water in Wilkinsburg is provided by the Wilkinsburg-Penn Joint Water Authority (WPJWA), which was created in 1945. The water pipes in Wilkinsburg are made of cast iron and ductile iron. As with most communities in the Pittsburgh area, the quantity of water is not a significant concern, as proximity to the region's three rivers provides an ample supply. WPJWA continues to provide for the daily operations and maintenance of the system, and there are no major concerns or issues at this time. However, there are some concerns being raised by



environmentalists relative to the proximity and impact of Marcellus Shale drilling activities and the possible effect on water sources in the region. For a complete review of the issues concerning the impact of the Marcellus Shale drilling on drinking water, please refer to Page 114 in the Minerals section of the Plan document.

STORMWATER

Wilkinsburg is within the Thompson Run/Turtle Creek Basin. The land area of Thompson Run is mainly devoted to intensive industrial, commercial, and residential uses. Wilkinsburg’s extensive stormwater system is separate from the sanitary sewer system and has been since the 1930s. Wilkinsburg has five outfalls; however, all storm sewers are piped underground so the outfalls are not visible.

Wilkinsburg is part of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Program. Its MS4 permit was renewed in 2009. Wilkinsburg did not have any major deficiencies since the issuance of its current permit.

In order to obtain the new permit, Wilkinsburg had to retest the flows using a dye test to ensure the storm sewers are only discharged at the outfalls. The Borough also recently adopted a new stormwater ordinance.



Pollution is a major concern for the stormwater systems in Allegheny County municipalities. Coal has been mined extensively, leading to acid mine drainage. The Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan identified Thompson Run as a stream that has experienced acid mine drainage. ALCOSAN and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) joined forces to create the 3 Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Program (3RWWDP), a nonprofit organization funded by federal grants and local matching funds, which strives to assist communities through education, financial grants, and outreach efforts.

Since its inception, 3RWWDP has awarded \$6.8 million for 33 innovative sewer-related projects throughout Allegheny County. 3RWWDP seeks to help municipalities find long-term, cost-effective, sustainable solutions to the region’s stormwater problems.

... there are some concerns being raised by environmentalists relative to the proximity and impact of Marcellus Shale drilling activities and the possible effect on water sources in the region.

3RWWDP has begun funding Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) demonstration projects, focusing on lot-level or Low-Impact Development (LID) projects. LID is a highly effective strategy for controlling urban stormwater runoff. Two primary goals of LID design are to reduce runoff volume through infiltration, retention, and evaporation, and to find beneficial uses for stormwater rather than exporting it as a waste product down storm sewers. The result is less surface water runoff and less pollution routed to local streams and rivers. BMPs can be organized into three main categories: runoff volume control that is infiltration-oriented, runoff volume



control that is non-infiltration-oriented, and runoff quality control that is non-infiltration-oriented. For the southwestern Pennsylvania area volume control is the primary consideration with infiltration being a limiting factor. Therefore, 3RWW demonstration projects focus on runoff volume control that is non-infiltration oriented.



Roofs are one of the most important sources of concentrated runoff from developed sites. Managing rooftop runoff has particular value in urbanized settings where spaces for other

BMPs are limited. The 3RWWDP has done green roof demonstration projects for stormwater management to demonstrate alternative ways that the runoff can be managed in urban settings.

In addition to funding construction of green roof projects, 3RWWDP is funding development of monitoring protocols and programs that will provide uniform standards to evaluate the performance of these projects. Projects at both Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh are underway to follow the projects' progress.

NINE MILE RUN WATERSHED

The Nine Mile Run Watershed Association was formed in 2001 and provides advocacy for the protection of the watershed, as well as support for community-based programs that enhance its quality, such as tree plantings, educational workshops, and other events. It's offices are located in the Borough of Wilkinsburg.

The Nine Mile Run Watershed runs through Pittsburgh's eastern suburbs, passing through Wilkinsburg, Edgewood, Swissvale, and Squirrel Hill. In the early 1900s, most of Nine Mile Run was moved into underground pipes to allow for development. One-third of the stream, however, was left aboveground and currently runs through Frick Park and out into the Monongahela River.

About 27% of the Nine Mile Run watershed is covered with impermeable surfaces that greatly enhance water runoff into Nine Mile Run. The runoff from both impermeable surfaces and a poor sewer system picks up debris and trash which ultimately pollute the stream and river. With Wilkinsburg located at the headwater of the watershed, its litter and lateral sewer issues contribute to the pollution problems.

A \$7.7 million restoration effort was completed in 2006 by the Army Corp of Engineers and the city of Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning, as water runoff has caused major problems for transportation as well. The restoration effort included stream channel reconfiguration, wetland reconstruction, native wildlife habitat enhancement, and native tree, shrub, and wildflower plantings. However, more work must be done to reduce the amount of water runoff.

Citizens of Wilkinsburg and the surrounding communities, through the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, have created a grass-roots organization for public involvement. This organization of local citizens finds cost-effective, citizen-based solutions that complement the municipal work being done concerning water management and restoration of the run. Several initiatives are currently underway to help reduce rainwater runoff into the stream.

One major initiative is the use and promotion of rain barrels to collect stormwater and direct it toward permeable surfaces. These 133-gallon barrels are placed on the side of houses and attached to the gutter on the roof. The barrels can be purchased at a reduced cost from the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, which conducts assessments and makes installations on properties throughout Allegheny County. Recently, 500 people throughout Wilkinsburg and other communities had rain barrels installed at their homes.

Another initiative of the watershed association is the Regent Square Gateway Project, which, according to the association's Web site, aims to bring together "community members, municipal officials, nonprofits, and businesses to create an entrance to Frick Park that cleans stormwater and educates people about the Nine Mile Run watershed and stormwater problems in the region." The plan combines stormwater management with landscape development to create an appealing and effective solution to the pollution problem. The plan includes landscaping around the run to create a buffer that captures stormwater and debris, using impervious surface pavement and rehabilitating topsoil, and engineering infiltration basins to collect surface water. The organization is currently searching for funding for this initiative. The Nine Mile Run Watershed Association also holds various events and award ceremonies to raise money and awareness along with promoting the rain barrel initiative.

With Wilkinsburg located at the headwaters of the Nine Mile Run Watershed, circumstances in the Borough have a significant impact on environmental conditions downstream. Borough officials should consider the watershed in developing plans and policies. The vision of a litter-free community, as described in previous sections of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*, will play a role in minimizing the Borough's impact, as will some of the environmentally friendly strategies associated with the business district portion of the plan. As new zoning and subdivision ordinances are considered, Borough officials should seek input from the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association to ensure that its policies provide for maximum environmental sustainability.

SCHOOLS

The Wilkinsburg High School building was constructed in 1910 and is located on Wallace Avenue near the center of Wilkinsburg to conveniently serve all residents. The first annex to the building was constructed in 1929, and the



cafeteria and gymnasium were built in 1969. In 1985, grades 7 through 9 were transferred to the high school building due to declining enrollment. Wilkesburg's main building is now over 100 years old and has not been updated to meet modern standards. The four-story building has no elevator for its 600 students and 100 staff members.

There are also three elementary school buildings: Johnston Elementary School on Franklin Avenue, Kelly Elementary School on Kelly Avenue, and Turner Elementary School on Laketon Road. The elementary school buildings are in fair to good condition. The Wilkesburg School District has no plans at this time for significant capital expenditures for school buildings; however, officials are evaluating the possibility of adding an elevator at the high school to make the building more accessible. The School District levies property tax, income tax, and real estate transfer tax to support the operating and capital budget.

Throughout the public input process, residents voiced concern about the quality of education in Wilkesburg, its effect on the image of the Borough, and its impact on the attractiveness of Wilkesburg for new residents. Based on demographic data for Wilkesburg from ESRI, it is estimated that around 2,925 school-age children resided in the Borough in 2008; however,

The challenges associated with the Wilkesburg School District affect all Borough residents in one way or another, whether it is through taxes, the quality of education, or the attractiveness of the Borough for new residents with school age children.

during that school year, only around 1,440 were enrolled in public schools – around 49% of the total school-age population. While it is difficult to calculate exact percentages since age ranges vary significantly by grade level, it is estimated that about 48% of elementary-age students who live in Wilkesburg are enrolled in the Wilkesburg School District, 53% of middle school students, and 51% of high school students. With many families in Wilkesburg sending their children to private schools, the school district's ability to improve test scores is diminished. While Wilkesburg Borough officials have no jurisdiction over the school district, they *can* serve to facilitate discussion among stakeholders for topics of mutual concern and impact on the Borough residents' quality of life.

The challenges associated with the Wilkesburg School District affect all Borough residents in one way or another, whether it is through taxes, the quality of education, or the attractiveness of the Borough for new residents with school age children. The Borough should continually engage in dialogue with the School District in order to advance goals and strategies of mutual interest. One of the most important components of this strategy is the engagement of a professional facilitator. A professional facilitator who is trained in consensus building can bring the key stakeholders together and assist in the process of agreeing to courses of action that are acceptable to all parties, and, more importantly, solutions that are in the best interest of the Borough as a whole. The Local Government Academy (LGA) provides a professional consensus building and facilitation service for communities in their service area that is funded by foundations who have an interest in promoting "good government" solutions. The LGA should be contacted to discuss the option of working with the Borough and the School District on issues of mutual concern in order to advance the goal of access to quality education for all school age children who reside in the Borough.

ELECTRICITY, GAS, AND BROADBAND

Wilkinsburg does not provide these services, but it is worth mentioning that they are available. Electricity is provided by Duquesne Light. Gas is provided by Dominion Peoples. Broadband is available throughout Wilkinsburg, and broadband providers include Comcast, Verizon FIOS, Verizon DSL, and Choice One DSL. No challenges or deficiencies with these services were noted during the public outreach process or in Advisory Committee and Planning Commission meetings.

SOLID WASTE RECYCLING

Commercial waste is collected by contract through local refuse companies. Residential trash is collected by contract with the city of Pittsburgh through an innovative municipal services cooperative plan that is the first of its kind for Wilkinsburg and Pittsburgh.

Residential curbside recycling continues to be collected by Wilkinsburg Public Works Department. Residents may recycle items such as glass, aluminum, plastics, cardboard, magazines, and newspapers. Also, to further encourage recycling, Wilkinsburg provides containers at three collection points for easy drop-off of materials. The Borough should consider contracting recycling services to the city of Pittsburgh along with waste services as a way to free public works employees for other Borough maintenance tasks. This approach may provide a more efficient and cost-effective way in which to deploy this service in the community.

HEALTHCARE

While the Borough is served by many fine healthcare facilities in the region, it no longer has a full service acute care and emergency room facility within the Borough boundaries. Columbia Hospital, founded in 1908 was located in Wilkinsburg for decades and was a full service hospital with emergency room services. When the parkway east was built in the 1960s, Columbia Hospital became one of the busiest emergency service centers in the Pittsburgh area. Columbia Hospital joined with the Pittsburgh Hospital to become the Forbes Regional Health System in 1975. With the relocation of Forbes Regional Hospital to Monroeville in the late 90s Wilkinsburg was left with no full service hospital within its borders.

While there is no acute care hospital in Wilkinsburg, its proximity to the City of Pittsburgh allows residents to easily access the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) hospital system and Allegheny General Hospital. There is also a long-term acute care (LTAC) hospital located on Penn Avenue within the Borough which is the largest employer in the Borough. Lifecare Hospitals of Pittsburgh is a 155-bed facility for patients with critical injuries or illnesses who require care for an extended period of time. In addition, Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC has a branch location in Wilkinsburg at 716 Penn Avenue. The prestigious UPMC Children's Hospital recently relocated to Penn Avenue in the Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, just a few miles from Wilkinsburg's borders.

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

One of the great social outcomes of an initiative such as the *Wilkinsburg Plan* is the opportunity at the conclusion of the process to bring the community together to focus on common goals. Throughout the public input process, it was stressed to public participants that this plan is THEIR plan, and its successful implementation will require local residents and community-based organizations *working together* toward achieving common goals that will improve the quality of life in the Borough. It was evident from the neighborhood meetings and the business district charrette that there is a core group of residents who are ready and willing to be involved – they just need to be pointed in a direction and given a task. Existing community-based organizations could provide the structure for organizing and deploying volunteers. This approach will allow Borough Council and staff to focus on other priorities, while maintaining close contact and communication with the volunteer groups.

A database of nonprofit groups in the area has been started and could be used as the foundation for this task, and could be built upon as needed. While groups within the Borough will likely form the core of this effort, the strategy should not be limited by Borough boundaries. There may be groups outside the Borough that would be equally willing to be involved in implementation.

Collaborative efforts among nonprofit organizations can also leverage other opportunities:

- Both the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) have centers for faith-based and neighborhood partnership initiatives with grant funding available, although some of the funding is administered through state-level agencies. The extent to which local nonprofits can organize and develop very specific strategies can enhance their chances for receiving funding through competitive grant sources. The Foundation Center (<http://www.foundationcenter.org/>) is an excellent resource for identifying sources for funding grass-roots initiatives.
- While perhaps indirectly related to the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*, collaborative partnerships among nonprofits also provide opportunities for shared services and procurement that can provide both cost and operational efficiencies.

In communities with high instances of criminal activity and limited financial resources for police protection, crime fighting is sometimes effectively approached through community involvement. Watch groups can be organized by business owners in the business district, as well as in neighborhoods. A copy of the *Neighborhood Watch Manual* published by the National Sheriff's Association can be obtained at http://www.usaonwatch.org/assets/publications/0_NW_Manual_0909.pdf

In addition, creating opportunities for regular communication between community residents and business owners and the police officers who patrol their streets can have a positive effect in crime prevention. A neighborhood watch program could be implemented through the Wilkinsburg Weed and Seed Program. A top priority in community involvement in Wilkinsburg is

to provide a crime prevention hotline that will allow residents to anonymously report crimes or suspicious activity.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES - GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

As with the previous section and in subsequent sections and in order to guard against an overwhelming set of priorities, the Steering Committee was guided through goal-setting sessions to develop the primary goals of the Comprehensive Plan elements. From these primary goals, the committee established a broad array of objectives relevant to each goal. The objectives were then combined into a primary set of objectives and specific set of strategies. As with the previous section, the “Community Facilities and Services” section follows this process to identify important strategies for the element

Once major goals were identified for each plan element, members were asked to identify the “Critical Success Factors” that would be necessary to achieve each goal. Members were asked to verbalize the critical success factors for each goal in the form of a “We must have...” or a “We Must Be...” statement. The statement is considered an imperative in order for this goal to be achieved. By verbalizing the elements necessary to achieve the goal, members were able to understand and identify the most important objectives necessary in achieving them. Each of the “We Must Have...” Or “We Must Be...” statements should be considered an objective in achieving the goal. Finally, each goal and its objectives were combined into a few overarching objectives and strategies necessary in order to achieve them. The primary objectives and strategies were kept to a few of the most important in order to prioritize and focus on a manageable set of recommendations coming out of the planning process. However, as the community begins the process of implementation, proposed policies, actions and strategies should always be weighed against the overarching goals and objectives (the “have” and “be” statements) for the relevant plan sections.

The priority Community Facilities and Services goals and objectives are as follows:

Community Facilities and Services	
Goal 1: Wilkinsburg residents will take pride in their community and work together to make it a safe, inclusive, and attractive place to live.	
The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):	
We must have...	We must be...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an understanding of Wilkinsburg’s current civic capacity • community-based organizations engaged in activities that promote safety, unity, and community attractiveness • a community cohesiveness which fosters civic engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific and realistic in communicating our vision of desired outcomes • ambassadors for Wilkinsburg • perceived as being fair and equitable in the Borough’s delivery of public service to all neighborhoods





Community Facilities and Services

Goal 2: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will provide safe, well-maintained, active and passive, user-friendly green space within an urban environment.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- accessible green space to adequately serve the recreational needs of Wilkinsburg residents of all ages
- recreational opportunities specifically designed for children
- active recreation options consistent with the needs of Wilkinsburg residents
- an aggressive program for park repair, maintenance, and cleanup
- measures in place to ensure resident safety in parks and green space areas
- an updated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan for the future

We must be...

- creative in planning for green space uses
- realistic in determining the amount of green space the Borough can adequately maintain
- strategic in targeting current green space for reuse should it become necessary

Community Facilities and Services

Goal 3: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will have gathering places for local residents and will provide community activities that transcend and shatter social barriers.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- businesses that encourage social interaction among residents (coffee shops, etc.)
- centrally located public space(s) designed to accommodate community-wide activities
- regularly scheduled community activities
- coordinated summer activities throughout the parks system

We must be...

- informed regarding community interest in various types of activities





Community Facilities and Services

Goal 4: The children of Wilkinsburg will have convenient access to high-quality, affordable education.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- an open mind to discuss opportunities related to providing quality public education for children in Wilkinsburg
- increased dialogue between the Borough and the School Districts to support the School Boards efforts to improve and expand our schools and reduce school district real estate taxes
- support system to recruit and retain Junior council members

We must be...

- willing to collaborate
- supportive and willing to participate in school events including athletic games
- advocates for our children
- knowledgeable about achievements
- ambassadors for Wilkinsburg schools and their students

Community Facilities and Services

Goal 5: Accountability for Borough services will be clearly assigned, and responsible individual(s) will respond to public concerns and requests in a timely manner.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- a database of Borough services, information, and contact information for responsible individual(s)
- staff members who are adequately trained to deliver services assigned
- an efficient process for fielding and tracking public concerns as well as requests for service outcomes

We must be...

- dedicated to “customer” satisfaction
- respectful of the public
- perceived as equitable in our delivery of Borough services

Community Facilities and Services

Goal 6: Wilkinsburg residents will have easily accessible, comprehensive information regarding existing services, both public and nonprofit, with contact information for responsible, available individuals or groups.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- key information available to the public in paper-based and Web-based formats
- resident participation

We must be...

- timely in updating information





Priority Objectives and Strategies

In order to meet these overall goals and objectives, the following priority objectives and strategies rise to the top of the Community Facilities and Services planning element:

Create and implement a process to ensure that residents have access to clean and safe natural resources, recreation, and open spaces

Implementation Strategy

1. Work with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to include and preserve the Borough’s natural and open spaces in its strategies
2. Empower the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to lead implementation efforts related to parks and open space
3. Develop a plan and provide staffing for regular maintenance of parks and green space
4. Develop policies for use of parks and green space and plans for enforcing them
5. Apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to update the 2001 Plan to be consistent with the development strategies and targeted investment identified in the Comprehensive Plan
6. Determine the amount of parks and/or green space needed to support Borough population, and if necessary, identify targets for reuse
7. Work with the Economic Development Committee of Council to identify creative, environmentally friendly uses for passive parks and green space connected to redevelopment initiatives
8. Explore partnerships and/or multi-municipal approaches to provide parks and recreation programs, services, and maintenance
9. Provide new, consistent, context-sensitive park identification signage
10. Create a “friends of the park” organization focused on funding for the parks – can either be a new organization or partnership with existing nonprofit
11. Develop a communications network between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and the neighborhoods where parks are located to better understand needs of the neighborhood

Facilitate discussion among stakeholders regarding solutions to school issues and challenges

Implementation Strategy

1. Identify key stakeholders for participation in discussions
2. Engage a professional facilitator through the Local Government Academy to assist in shaping and facilitating discussions and reaching consensus on mutual issues of concern
3. Set meeting date(s)
4. Invite participants
5. Develop follow-up strategy to advance agreed-upon actions





Implement strategies that will initiate cleanup of Wilkinsburg, and encourage community pride to maintain a clean appearance.

Implementation Strategy

1. Hold an annual public, large-scale cleanup within the business district
2. Clearly communicate litter control ordinances and penalties through media and signage
3. Maintain cleanliness in the business district through regular street sweeping, litter removal, and sidewalk cleaning
4. Evaluate number and location of existing litter receptacles and determine their adequacy for collecting litter in the business district
5. Provide receptacles in the business district for recycling
6. Review frequency and reliability of current waste pick-up schedules for both the business district, parks, and for neighborhoods and make changes if necessary to ensure timely pick-up
7. Review resident requirements for waste pick-up and make changes as needed to regulate when and how waste is placed at curbside for pick-up
8. Continue regular community-wide neighborhood cleanup events
9. Organize a volunteer committee or resident groups for regular cleanup of parks and green space
10. Conduct large-scale clean up of Linear Park through the Borough along the busway, and develop a volunteer program to maintain
11. Assign paid Borough staff as financial resources permit to maintain litter-free lots





Create and implement a process to ensure that residents have easily accessible, comprehensive information regarding community services and events

Implementation Strategy

1. Work with the WCDC to develop a media strategy to regularly communicate Borough news and events, that includes both local and regional media as appropriate
2. Provide press releases each week after Borough Council meetings to communicate meeting summary and promote agenda for upcoming meetings
3. Determine key information related to Borough services that should be readily accessible to the public, to Borough employees, and to key points of public contact
4. Develop list of local community service organizations, services they provide, and contact information
5. Develop comprehensive list of Borough services and information, and identify or assign individual(s) responsible for each, along with their contact information
6. Develop list of most frequent information requested by callers to Borough offices, the owner of the information, and contact information for the appropriate person
7. Compile all relevant public information (as listed above) and develop a user-friendly database for efficient, timely responses to questions regarding community services
8. Determine process for tracking public requests for services or information and related follow-up
9. Create a "311" number for Wilkinsburg, or partner with nearby communities who already have one in place
10. Create an e-mail list and keep members apprised of good news, Web site postings, and volunteer opportunities
11. Create and distribute a publication containing Borough services and contact information, answers to frequently asked questions, and community services and contact information, both in printed form and on Web site



Create and implement a process to ensure that Borough staff members have appropriate knowledge, training, and guidance to effectively deliver assigned services to residents

Implementation Strategy

1. Provide training for all Borough staff to ensure that staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their duties
2. Develop communication policies for staff communications and interactions with public, including time frame for returning calls, time frame for addressing requests for service or information, and follow-up
3. Provide training for Borough staff in communication process
4. Develop a process for accepting requests for services or information that includes first points of contact via phone, mail, Internet, or e-mail; process for distribution to responsible individual(s); process for tracking request; and process for follow-up as appropriate

Implement innovative strategies that ensure the sustainability of the community for both the present and future generations

Implementation Strategy

1. Engage Sustainable Pittsburgh to perform a Sustainability Assessment for the municipality and implement its recommendations
2. Incentivize development and renovation to meet LEED standards for building and neighborhood development
3. Identify and promote programs for development with water- and energy-efficient fixtures, recycled materials, and energy production
4. Renovate the business district streetscape as a model of urban sustainability with best practices for materials reuse, energy efficiency, stormwater management, and vegetative cover
5. Integrate bioswales, rain gardens, and pervious pavement into municipal parking lots as grants are available and development occurs over time
6. Create a highly visible demonstration project to encourage reuse of vacant lots with urban agriculture, plant nurseries, or rain gardens. Harvest rainwater for plant irrigation.
7. Promote biodiverse, native, and drought-tolerant vegetative cover through street trees, green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens, and additional open space
8. Continue to support and expand the farmers’ market and enhance it with locally grown food
9. Actively engage in partnerships for sustainable activities/methods for protection of environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, Urban Lab, Sustainable Pittsburgh, Institute for Ecological Excellence)
10. Review existing ordinances and make necessary changes to ensure protection of environmentally sensitive areas
11. Establish ordinance regulations to protect Nine Mile Run Watershed and implement stormwater best management practices throughout the Borough
12. Engage Allegheny County or other appropriate groups in assisting with monitoring environmental compliance
13. Work with the building and zoning department to promote best management practices for vacant lot management following demolition of structures, to put lots to appropriate reuse
14. Organize citizens advisory committee on shade trees, maintenance, planting and replacement both in the business district and in neighborhoods
15. Establish a sustainable tree replacement and maintenance program for street trees, building on work that has already been done



Organize and empower local volunteers and civic groups to assist with the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*, and with the delivery of ongoing volunteer services

Implementation Strategy

1. Research best practice communities to find successful models of nonprofit collaborative groups
2. Identify ways that individual volunteers and nonprofit groups can assist in the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*
3. Develop a database of local and regional community-based organizations that serve (or could serve) the Borough in promoting safety, unity, and community attractiveness
4. Develop a message statement that clearly communicates the implementation needs, with specific ways that volunteers can get involved
5. Meet with community-based organizations to find ways to engage their participation in recruiting and managing volunteers to meet specific implementation needs
6. Schedule quarterly meetings/lunches with nonprofits to understand what each is doing to make sure services aren't duplicated – gather info from groups and get the info out
7. Develop a collaborative strategy for community-based service that aligns with strategies in the *Wilkinsburg Plan*
8. Submit applications for funding to foundations and federal faith-based funding initiatives
9. Conduct ongoing annual leadership training designed for nonprofit groups

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

This section of the Comprehensive Plan will document the natural and historic resources within and around Wilkinsburg. Wilkinsburg has important natural and historic assets that must be considered in looking toward its future. The challenge is to balance the built environment and natural environment when advancing redevelopment initiatives. As with many older communities that were primarily built years ago, disturbance of the natural environment tends to be less of an issue. Historical assets and specific, narrowly focused natural environment issues tend to dominate policy concerns.

The Borough of Wilkinsburg covers 2.3 square miles of land, 97% of which is designated urban land. Due to its size and development density, Wilkinsburg does not have some of the environmental constraints many other municipalities must contend with, such as wetlands and floodplains. It does, however, have steep slopes that make the area vulnerable to erosion. During the public input sessions, residents acknowledged that the steep slopes are impedances to foot traffic and street connectivity. The steep grades make walking in the Borough difficult, particularly for persons with physical disabilities and the elderly. This limits contact among residents in different parts of the Borough.





HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The historic resources of an area provide a glimpse of the past and create the character and charm that attract new residents, businesses, and tourists. Historic resources can be buildings, structures, objects, sites, or archaeological artifacts that, based on their age, add historic, archaeological, architectural, social, or cultural significance to that community.

In the late 1700s, the area that would later become the Borough of Wilkinsburg was settled by European settlers named Sutia Stewart Rippey and Samuel Allen Rippey. After a time spent as a village and a part of the city of Pittsburgh, residents decided to create a formal local government for the area. The Borough of Wilkinsburg was incorporated on October 5, 1887. A large concentration of old churches adds to the historic nature of Wilkinsburg.

Map 12 illustrates the location of 427 historic properties within Wilkinsburg surveyed by the CTAC as part of a joint study with PHLF in 2005. These properties are located within and around the business district and the adjacent areas to the north and south. Of the 427 properties, 93 are designated commercial, two are government, two are industrial, two are utilities, 14 are other, consisting mostly of churches, and 314 are residential.

It should be noted that the 427 properties reviewed by CTAC are not exhaustive of all possible historic structures in the Borough. Other properties with historic significance exist throughout the Borough but may not have been included in the CTAC study, which focused only on properties in the central business district.

The western section of Wilkinsburg is the more historic portion of the Borough. Wilkinsburg has many historic properties, many of which are located in the business district. The historic nature of Wilkinsburg gives the area a distinct character; however, historic buildings demand maintenance and often require costly repairs to ensure their stability and historic integrity. Many of the historic buildings in the Borough have fallen into disrepair. Reinvestment in many of these buildings could be so costly that there would be little to no return on investment for many years. Strategies and standards should be considered to evaluate, identify, and prioritize structures for preservation, and to evaluate ways to leverage these resources as catalysts for revitalization.

MAP 12 – NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES



SOURCE: PHLF AND CTAC STUDY, 2005

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Wetlands

Wetlands are essential to the regulation of river flow by filtering pollutants and fertilizers, providing spawning zones for certain fish species, and providing habitat for plants, insects, amphibians, and birds. Wetlands slow and retain surface water, providing water storage and shoreline stabilization. There are no significant concerns regarding wetlands in the Borough, as the Borough is mostly developed and has long been urbanized. The Borough should look for opportunities to create and maintain green space as natural absorption areas into the future. However, this is not a high priority, and the reduction of housing stock will naturally lead to additional open space and natural drainage opportunities.

Floodplains

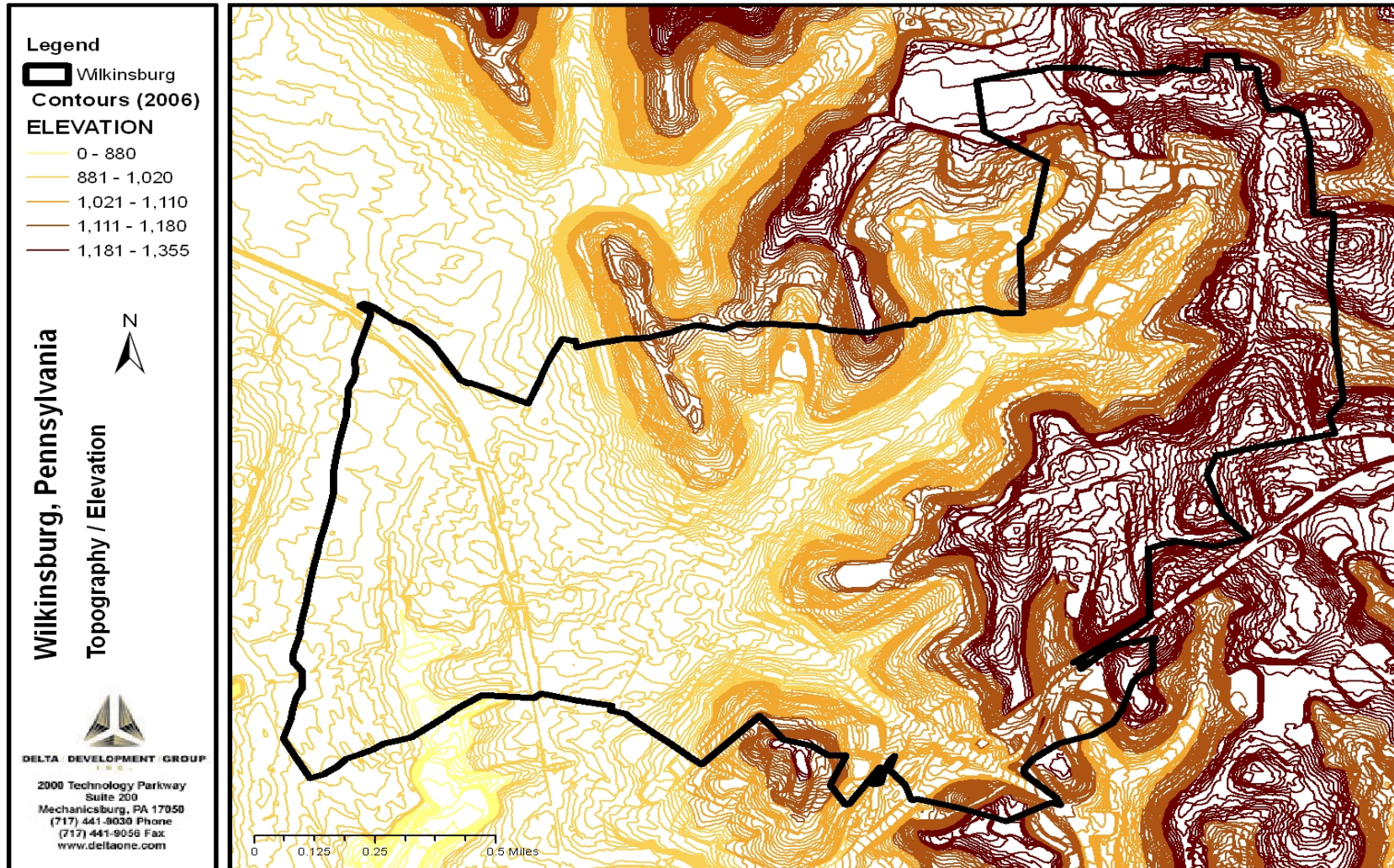
Floodplains also play an important role in the ecosystem. The natural floodplain is an important part of the water system. It affects storm runoff, water quality, vegetative diversity, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic qualities of bodies of water. Historically, development of communities has occurred in or near floodplains, making them highly susceptible to flooding. No part of Wilkinsburg rests within the 100-year floodplain, nor are there any significant flooding issues within the Borough that need to be addressed.

Steep Slopes

One of the most prominent features of Wilkinsburg is the steep slopes of the terrain. Development on steep slopes is risky, very challenging, expensive, and complex. It also raises concerns about watershed conservation and the possibility of landslides.

Elevations are lowest and the terrain slopes gradually throughout the western portion of Wilkinsburg. This correlates with the area of Wilkinsburg with the highest building density, as the business district is located in the western portion of Wilkinsburg. The eastern portion of Wilkinsburg has much higher elevations and steep sloping terrain. Therefore, it is not as densely developed, with scattered residential structures throughout. Protection of steep slopes is not a significant issue in the Borough, as all new development initiatives are focused in areas that have previously been developed. There is little or no threat to disturbance of the existing steep slopes in the Borough since there is an abundance of development/redevelopment opportunities within existing neighborhoods. It is not anticipated that the Borough will attempt to develop areas with steep slopes, and the Borough should maintain this policy direction. Map 13 illustrates the terrain of Wilkinsburg.

MAP 13 – WILKINSBURG TOPOGRAPHY / ELEVATION



SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, CONTOURS, 2006 MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES – ESRI, 200

MINERALS

The subsurface condition in Wilkesburg and throughout most of Allegheny County is made up of sandstone, red and grey shale, conglomerate, clay, coal, and limestone. Bituminous coal, or soft coal, is found throughout this region. Many communities throughout western Pennsylvania have experienced coal mine subsidence issues due to the extensive mining in the region. Wilkesburg has not experienced any recent significant issue with regard to subsidence and does not anticipate this to be a major concern in the near future. The same is true of most subsurface issues in Wilkesburg, with the exception of the recent phenomenon of Marcellus Shale gas drilling. The Borough does not expect any significant issues with regard to subsurface conditions except Marcellus Shale. The issues and impacts surrounding Marcellus Shale are important for the community and warrant discussion in the Comprehensive Plan.

MARCELLUS SHALE

Recently, the Marcellus Shale, which runs through much of Pennsylvania, has been explored for natural gas extraction. Also referred to as the Marcellus Formation, this is a Middle Devonian-age black, low density, carbonaceous (organic rich) shale that occurs in the subsurface beneath much of Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York. Small areas of Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia are also underlain by the Marcellus Shale. Geologists from the State University of New York at Fredonia estimate that the Marcellus Shale might contain more than 500 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The Borough's location on the Marcellus Shale deposit represents a potentially valuable natural resource. With an aggressive national focus on exploring alternative energy sources, the Marcellus Shale deposit represents significant natural gas resources. Until recently, the drilling process for Marcellus Shale was considered too expensive to be profitable; however, increased costs of oil have now made natural gas a competitive alternative. Marcellus Shale is not unique to Wilkesburg, and drilling companies are currently exploring drilling opportunities throughout Pennsylvania. Marcellus Shale gas exploration may, over the next few years, offer Wilkesburg and its residents a number of opportunities for economic development, depending upon the market. While the Marcellus Shale deposit may present economic opportunities, Borough officials should take care to proactively review current ordinances and make changes as needed to provide flexibility to take advantage of opportunities presented, while ensuring safety, quality of life, and environmental sustainability in the Borough.

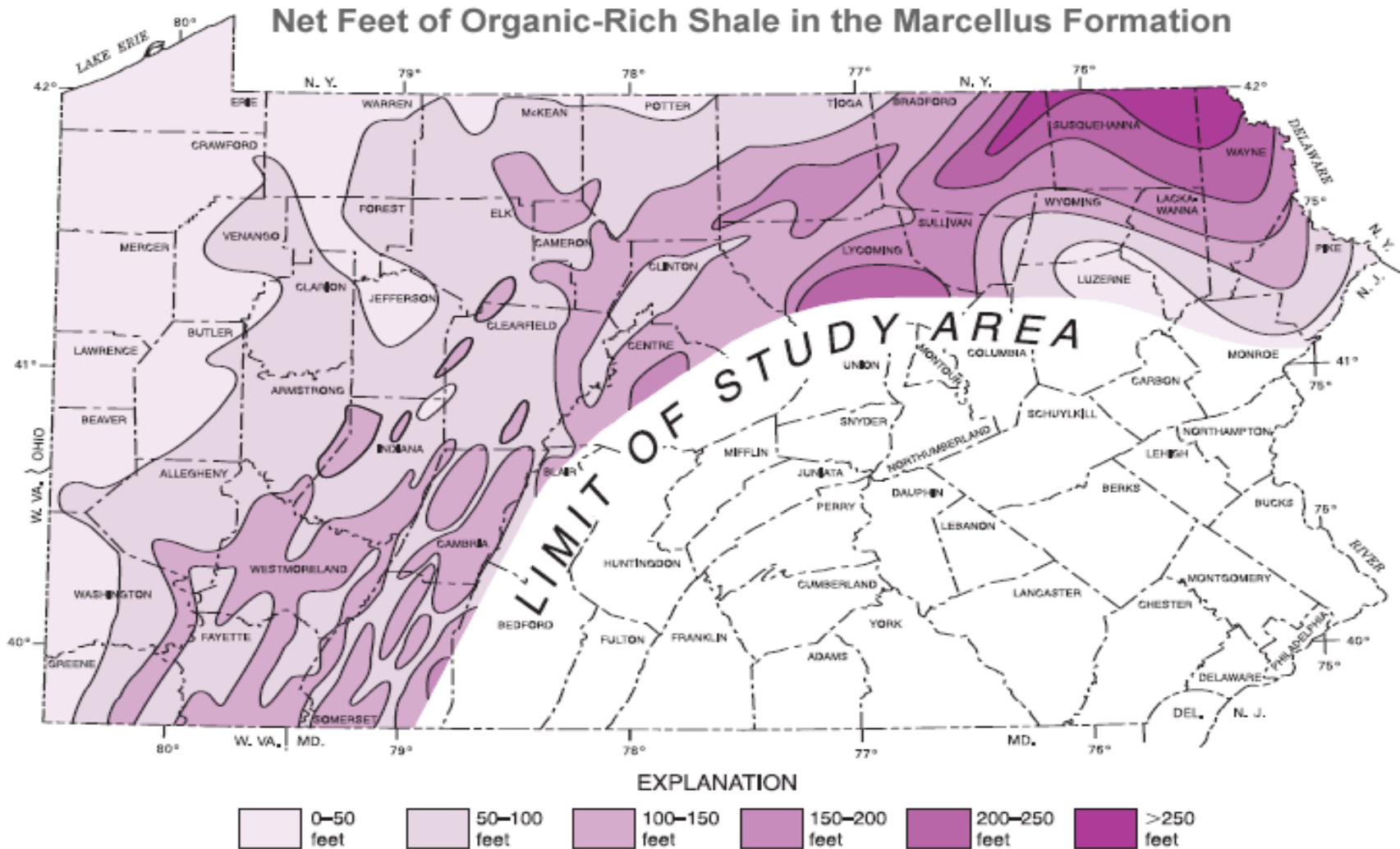
Overall, mineral extraction has not been an area of major concern for the Borough, as the community has long been developed. However, recent events with regard to Marcellus Shale gas deposits raise important considerations for most communities across western Pennsylvania. The Borough has had some recent limited activity/interest regarding Marcellus shale development in the Borough. From a land use perspective, the Borough must be proactive in its regulation of mineral extraction activities. In the past, municipal regulation of mineral extraction activities was a bit of a gray area, with private interests claiming that municipal regulation was preempted by the State Oil and Gas Act. The recent Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in *Huntley vs. the Borough of Oakmont* (February 2009) makes clear a municipality's ability to regulate gas drilling activities. In the *Huntley* case, the court ruled that municipalities

can regulate the location of gas drilling activities through their zoning regulations. The Borough should determine the appropriate locations for gas drilling activities and amend its zoning ordinance accordingly.

In addition to the land use implications for municipalities, there are also financial considerations. In February of 2009 Governor Ed Rendell opened the door to a severance tax proposal which would require drilling companies to pay a severance tax to do business in Pennsylvania. The proposed tax would raise \$1.8 billion over the next five years. Some proposals include a portion of the revenue from the new severance tax going to local governments to deal with the impacts of drilling. However, it is still unclear if local governments will be considered if a severance tax is adopted in the Commonwealth. Local governments must be prepared to deal with the ramifications of drilling such as deteriorated road conditions, water issues (to include treatment and disposal, erosion, and stormwater control), and ground water control. School districts and the county and municipal governments which own land leased for natural gas extraction may receive significant revenues from leasing and royalties. If revenue from a severance tax does trickle down to local government, it will provide a great opportunity for local jurisdictions to improve infrastructure, invest in economic development, and create parks or other investments to be enjoyed by current and future generations. Communities must be proactive in the dialogue regarding the severance tax funding and insist that a portion of the revenue be directed to the local level to ensure local government interests are protected. The impacts of drilling operations and gas extraction will be felt locally, and communities should have a corresponding revenue stream dedicated to dealing with these impacts.

The Borough should continue to research and monitor activities and be prepared to take policy action when and if necessary. Map 14 illustrates the location of the Marcellus Shale Formation in Pennsylvania.

MAP 14 — MARCELLUS SHALE



Source: Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

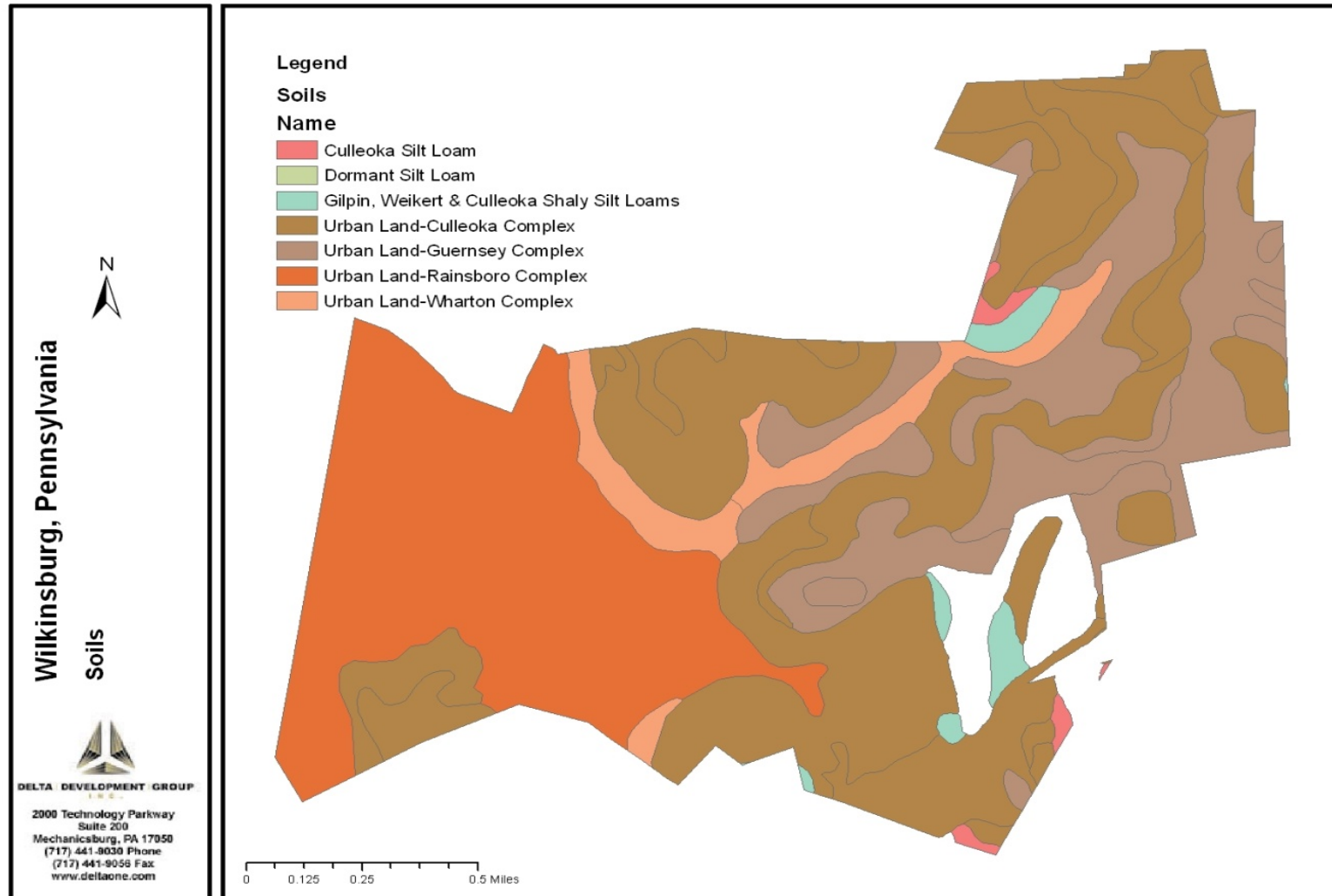


SOILS

Wilkinsburg is largely built out and consists of a significant amount of residential development. Approximately 5% of Wilkinsburg remains undeveloped. These undeveloped areas are scattered throughout Wilkinsburg and are mostly along steep sloping terrain. Due to this extensive residential development and lack of agricultural land, the soil classifications for Wilkinsburg do not play a significant role in land use and economic decision making. Approximately 97% of the 73,280 acres of the soil in Wilkinsburg is classified as “urban land.” However, there are areas within Wilkinsburg that make up the remaining 3% that have been identified as “farmland of statewide significance” by the Penn State University Cooperative Extension. These soil areas, whose surface texture is predominantly Silt Loam, are located in the eastern portion of the Borough.

Silt Loam soils contain more clay and silt than those derived from sandstone. The soils are usually well drained. Many of these soils also contain substantial amounts of rock fragments. The root zone available water-holding capacity of many soils in this region is moderate due to their limited depth. Map 15 displays the location of these Silt Loam soils of statewide significance: Culleoka Silt Loam, Dormant Silt Loam, and Gilpin, Weikert, and Culleoka Shaly Silt Loams.

MAP 15 — WILKINSBURG SOILS



SOURCE: ALLEGHENY COUNTY DIVISION OF COMPUTER SERVICES GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS GROUP, SOILS, 2000, MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES – ESRI, 2009

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

As indicated in previous sections, to guard against an overwhelming set of priorities, the Steering Committee was guided through goal-setting sessions to develop the primary goals for Comprehensive Plan elements. From these primary goals, the committee established a broad array of objectives relevant to each goal. The objectives were then combined into a primary set of objectives and specific set of strategies. As with previous sections, the “Natural and Historic Resources” section follows this process to identify important strategies for the element.

Once major goals were identified for each plan element, members were asked to identify the “Critical Success Factors” that would be necessary to achieve each goal. Members were asked to verbalize the critical success factors for each goal in the form of a “We must have...” or a “We Must Be...” statement. The statement is considered an imperative in order for this goal to be achieved. By verbalizing the elements necessary to achieve the goal, members were able to understand and identify the most important objectives necessary in achieving them. Each of the “We Must Have...” Or “We Must Be...” statements should be considered an objective in achieving the goal. Finally, each goal and its objectives were combined into a few overarching objectives and strategies necessary in order to achieve them. The primary objectives and strategies were kept to a few of the most important in order to prioritize and focus on a manageable set of recommendations coming out of the planning process. However, as the community begins the process of implementation, proposed policies, actions and strategies should always be weighed against the overarching goals and objectives (the “have” and “be” statements) for the relevant plan sections.

The priority Natural and Historic Resources goals and objectives are as follows:

Natural and Historic Resources	
Goal 1: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will preserve natural environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., steep slopes, slide-prone areas, and Nine Mile Run Watershed).	
The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):	
<p>We must have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ordinances in place to ensure protection of environmentally sensitive areas a monitoring process in place to ensure compliance 	<p>We must be...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> informed regarding the importance of protecting these areas and methods of protection



Natural and Historic Resources

Goal 2 : The Borough of Wilkinsburg will preserve and maintain historic structures in a way that leverages our redevelopment opportunities.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal:

We must have...

- a common understanding of what constitutes designation as a historic structure
- an understanding of specific building conditions and the viability of preservation
- an aggressive strategy for ensuring that viable historic structures are restored and/or maintained, and for the demolition of structures that can't be repaired
- appropriately designated areas with design standards that preserve historical context

We must be...

- strategic and realistic in designating areas and/or specific buildings for preservation

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

In order to meet these overall goals and objectives, the following priority objectives and strategies rise to the top of the Natural and Historic Resources planning element:

Create and implement a process to ensure the preservation of historic resources within the Borough

Implementation Strategy

1. Develop criteria and process for designation of buildings/properties as historic
2. Conduct detailed inventory of currently designated and potential historic structures and/or properties, along with an evaluation of cost to restore/repair
3. Based on criteria, assess, reassess, and identify structures/properties for designation as historic
4. Identify and prioritize structures for rehabilitation or demolition
5. Identify specific historic areas and develop design guidelines to maintain historic character
6. Engage local groups such as PHLF to assist in rehabilitation
7. Leverage historic resources to tell the “Wilkinsburg story” and to attract visitors and new residents to the Borough



TRANSPORTATION

Accessibility is one of Wilkinsburg’s greatest strengths. Major roadways, railroads, and bus routes pass through the Borough, creating a potential market of commuters and pass-through drivers.

ROADWAYS

Wilkinsburg currently has four functional classifications for its street system: expressway, arterial, collector, and local. The following list defines the four roadways and names the corresponding roadways within Wilkinsburg that are included in each category.

EXPRESSWAY – Provides for expeditious movement of large volumes of through traffic between areas and across the Borough; not intended to provide land-access services.

ARTERIAL – Provides for through-traffic movement between areas and direct access to abutting properties

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Ardmore Boulevard | Laketon Road |
| Penn Avenue | Graham Boulevard |
| South Avenue | Montier Street |
| Swissvale Avenue | Robinson Boulevard |

COLLECTOR – Provides for traffic movement between arterial and local streets, and direct access to abutting properties.

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Biddle Street | South Trenton Avenue |
| Rebecca Avenue | Franklin Avenue |
| Hay Street | Pitt Street |
| Wood Street | Ross Avenue |
| Kelly Street | Center Street |
| West Street | Pennwood Avenue |
| Hill Avenue | Princeton Boulevard |
| South Braddock Avenue | North Avenue |
| Marlboro Avenue | McNary Boulevard |
| Wallace Avenue | |



LOCAL – Provides for local traffic movement with trip origin and destination in the immediate vicinity, and direct access to abutting properties.

Penn Avenue (State Route 8) in Wilkinsburg has been identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) through the Congested Corridor Improvement Program (CCIP) for proposed future development and enhancements.

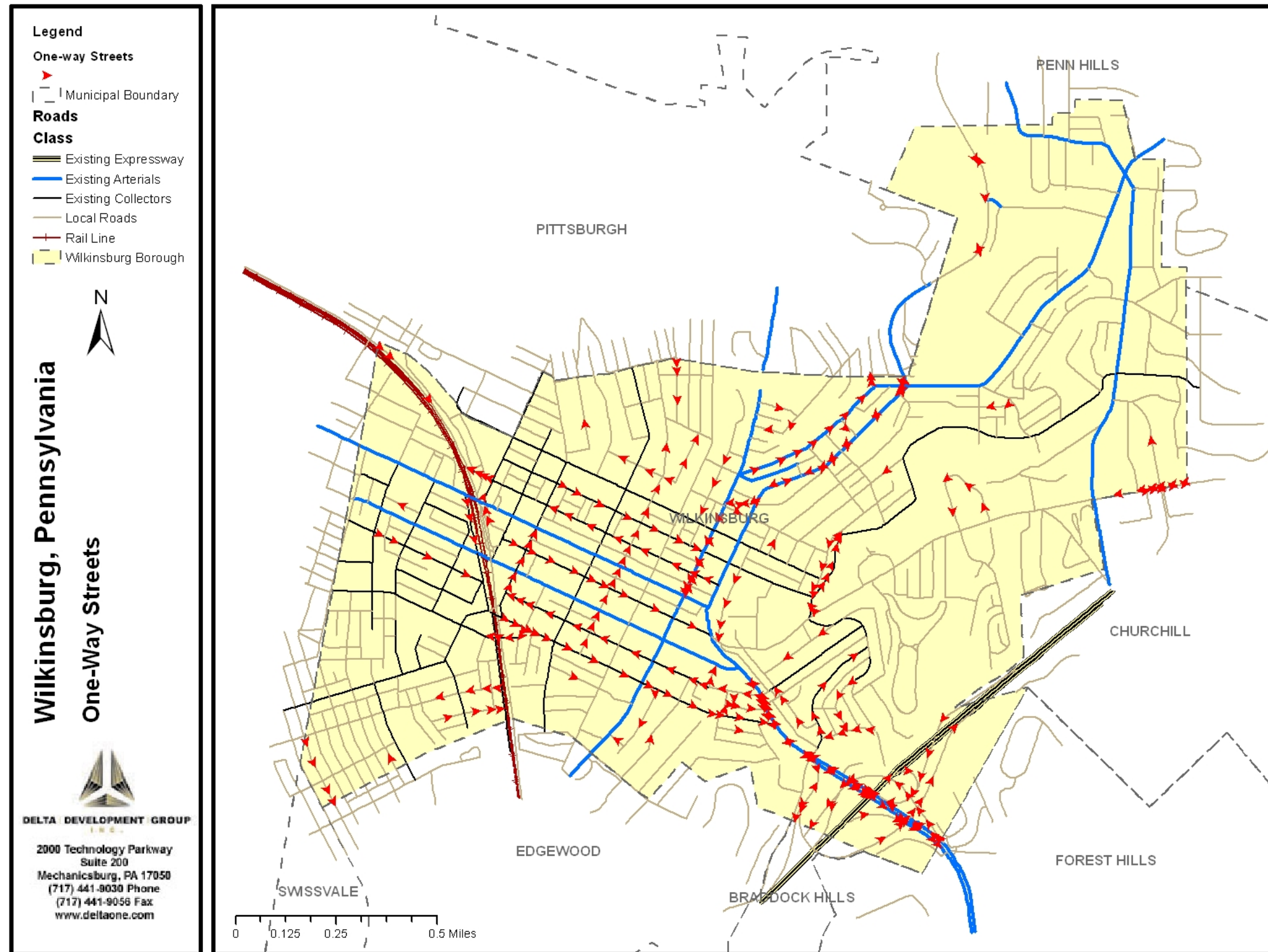


Penn Avenue (State Route 8) is the major thoroughfare in Wilkinsburg. PennDOT has classified it as an Urban Other Principal Arterial for the portions that traverse Wilkinsburg.

Speed limits along the Penn Avenue corridor vary from 25 miles per hour (mph) to 35 mph, with central portions of the corridor, between Rebecca Avenue and Trenton Avenue near Ardmore Avenue, having a posted speed limit of 25 mph, and either end of the corridor posting speed limits of 35 mph.

As the main thoroughfare through Wilkinsburg, the Penn Avenue corridor is the most heavily trafficked in the Borough, as documented by traffic counts that were conducted in the CCIP study for the intersections included along the corridor. As shown in Map 16, portions of eight of the 18 collector streets in the Borough are limited to one-way traffic, as are many of the local streets.

Map 16 – One-Way Streets in Wilkesburg



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TRAFFIC SIGNALS

The Penn Avenue corridor has 12 signalized intersections, currently with no functional interconnection system between them. Though some have been interconnected in the past, the system is no longer functional, causing congestion and inefficient movement of vehicles, despite the corridor having enough capacity to support the daily traffic. Table 30 from the CCIP study shows the signalized intersections along the Penn Avenue corridor.

TABLE 30 – INTERSECTION OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

INTERSECTION OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS			
INTERSECTION	MUNICIPALITY	EXISTING SYSTEMS AND CYCLE LENGTHS	PHASING
Marlboro Avenue	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 121 seconds Mid: 121 seconds PM: 121 seconds	Penn Avenue: protected only lefts Marlboro: permitted lefts
Rebecca Avenue	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 120 seconds Mid: 80 seconds PM: 90 seconds	Two-phases
Franklin Avenue	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 120 seconds Mid: 80 seconds PM: 90 seconds	S.R. 8 NB: protected only lefts S.R. 8 SB: permitted lefts WB: single phase WB
Penn Avenue	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 120 seconds Mid: 80 seconds PM: 90 seconds	S.R. 8 SB: protected only lefts Lefts prohibited all other directions
Swissvale Avenue	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 110 seconds Mid: 110 seconds PM: 110 seconds	Two-phases
Coal Street	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 120 seconds Mid: 90 seconds PM: 120 seconds	Two-phases
Center Street	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 120 seconds Mid: 90 seconds PM: 120 seconds	Two-phases
Wood Street	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 84 seconds Mid: 84 seconds PM: 84 seconds	Two-phases
Hay Street	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 120 seconds Mid: 90 seconds PM: 120 seconds	Two-phases
West Street	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 90 seconds Mid: 90 seconds PM: 90 seconds	Two-phases
Trenton Avenue	Wilkesburg Borough	AM: 120 seconds Mid: 90 seconds PM: 120 seconds	Two-phases
Braddock Avenue	city of Pittsburgh	AM: 80 seconds Mid: 78 seconds PM: 80 seconds	SR 8: permitted lefts Braddock EB: protected/permitted lefts Braddock WB: permitted lefts

SOURCE: PENNDOT CCIP STUDY, 2006



In May 2006, the Borough, through its Borough Engineer, Glenn Engineering, conducted a signal analysis study and as a result submitted a request to PennDOT District 11-0 for the elimination of nine traffic signals from intersections throughout the Borough. The PennDOT District Engineer agreed with the Borough's recommendations, stating that the ten intersections did not meet traffic warrants for signalization. The intersections identified in the report are as follows:

- South Avenue and Trenton Avenue
- South Avenue and Center Street
- Ross Avenue and Center Street
- Ross Avenue and Coal Street
- South Avenue and Coal Street
- Franklin Avenue and Coal Street
- Rebecca Avenue and Coal Street
- Franklin Avenue and Center Street
- Rebecca Avenue and Center Street
- Kelly Avenue and West Street



These signals were removed by the Borough following a procedure recommended by PennDOT.

Street Condition Inventory

In March 2008, Wilkinsburg, through its Borough Engineer, Glenn Engineering, undertook a study that evaluated the conditions of the streets and included the following tasks:

- Measure and examine all locally owned streets in Wilkinsburg Borough (no alleys)
- Determine the area of pavement for each street or portion of street (square yards)
- Develop a traffic volume rating based on knowledge of Wilkinsburg
- Develop a pavement condition rating based on field examination using rating criteria
- Combine traffic volume and condition ratings to establish a total rating for each street
- Recommend treatments for the eventual resurfacing or repair of each street
- Estimate the cost (in 2008 dollars) of recommended treatment or repairs for each street
- Determine the eligibility of each street for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds
- Tabulate results and establish a recommended budget for paving and repairs over a 25-year period (the estimated life of an asphalt street) to give Wilkinsburg a guide for budgeting purposes for maintaining all streets in good condition

The study by the Borough Engineer recommended asphalt resurfacing for all but two streets. Laketon Road from Paden to Graham and Graham Boulevard from Laketon to the Borough line are existing brick streets that are heavily traveled. Both exhibit irregularities in their brick

surfaces. It was recommended that these streets remain brick and that repairs be made to the individual locations within the streets where the bricks have exhibited sinking and destabilization. The Borough Engineer recommended that the roads remain brick, because brick repair is less expensive than asphalt resurfacing and will last at least three times longer than asphalt. On both Laketon and Graham, the bricks themselves are in good condition, with only a few of them exhibiting fractures or breakage. However, in the summer of 2010 portions of both Lakeon Road and Graham Boulevard were resurfaced as part of the Borough’s summer road resurfacing program.

The street inventory study determined that proper repairs would cost a total of \$13,439,201 in 2008 dollars. The total cost of resurfacing and repair costs divided over the 25-year life of a street was divided into two categories:

CDBG-ELIGIBLE STREETS – \$340,217 PER YEAR

NON-CDBG-ELIGIBLE – \$196,551 PER YEAR

Wilkinsburg is unable to allocate the entire amount recommended on an annual basis, but reserves \$250,000 for paving every two years. Because the study prioritized the paving projects, the Borough can work its way through the list using its paving budget every two years.

The paving schedule excludes alleys. Many of the alleys are in disrepair and require additional maintenance and upgrades. The Borough addresses the maintenance and repair of the alleys on an as-needed “pay as you go” basis.

BRIDGES

Wilkinsburg is home to seven of the 25,000 Pennsylvania bridges that are located on State Route roadways, with one additional, locally owned bridge also located within Wilkinsburg’s municipal boundaries. PennDOT conducts annual safety inspections of Pennsylvania’s bridges in an effort to evaluate and score the structural and functional abilities of each bridge. Table 31 below lists the eight bridges in Wilkinsburg with their corresponding Sufficiency Rating, as well as the Federal Highway Administration’s Condition Rating.



TABLE 31 – PENNDOT SAFETY INSPECTION RESULTS OF WILKINSBURG BRIDGES

PENNDOT SAFETY INSPECTION RESULTS OF WILKINSBURG BRIDGES									
LOCATION/STRUCTURE NAME	FEATURE CARRIED	FEATURE INTERSECTION	STRUCTURE TYPE	YEAR BUILT	CONDITION RATING				SUFFICIENCY RATING
					DECK	SUPER STRUCTURE	SUB STRUCTURE	CULVERT	
State Route Bridges									
Parkway East O/Ardmore Boulevard	Penn Lincoln Parkway	Ardmore Boulevard	Steel, arch deck - open	1951	7	5	5	N	82
Wilkinsburg Interchange	Penn Lincoln Parkway	SR8012-Ramp A	Concrete (in place), rigid frame	1950	5	6	6	N	93
Over Ramp G, Wilkinsburg	Penn Lincoln Parkway	LR 763-Ramp G	Steel, I beams	1950	5	5	5	N	73
Ramp D EB over Ardmore Boulevard	Ramp D Road	Ardmore Boulevard	Steel, arch deck - open	1952	6	6	5	N	80
Wilkinsburg Interchange	Ramp D Road	LR 763-Ramp A	Concrete (in place), rigid frame	1952	5	6	6	N	98
Wilkinsburg Interchange	Ramp A Road	LR 763-Ramp F	Concrete (in place), rigid frame	1952	6	6	6	N	95
Ramp A O/Ardmore at Channel 4	Ramp A Road	LR 120-Ardmore Boulevard-TR.8	Steel, arch deck - open	1952	6	6	5	N	80
Local Bridges									
PAT608 Penn Avenue Bridge	East Busway route	Penn Avenue Wilkinsburg	Concrete (in place), slab (solid)	1904	N	6	7	N	41
SOURCE: PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - REPORT DATE 9/30/2008									

According to PennDOT, “the Sufficiency Rating is a calculated score indicating a bridge’s ability to meet the traffic demands and safety needs for the route it carries. Sufficiency Ratings range from 100 (entirely sufficient) to 0 (entirely insufficient or deficient). The Sufficiency Rating is considered by the federal government when a state requests federal bridge dollars to improve the condition of the bridge. Bridges with low Sufficiency Ratings are eligible for more funds.” Table 32 below shows the scale used in the Sufficiency Rating score (table is reproduced from a PennDOT Frequently Asked Questions [FAQ]).

TABLE 32 – SUFFICIENCY RATING

SUFFICIENCY RATING	FEDERAL FUNDING
80 – 100	Not available
50 – 79	Eligible for costs to rehabilitate or refurbish bridge
0 – 49	Eligible for costs to replace bridge
SOURCE: PENNDOT BRIDGE SAFETY INSPECTION – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	

Six of Wilkinsburg’s seven State Route bridges fall in the 80-100 category, with high Sufficiency Ratings. The Over Ramp G bridge listed in Table 31 has a sufficiency rating of 73 and will be eligible for funding to assist in repairs to the bridge. The Penn Avenue Bridge, which carries the Borough’s most utilized transit bus system, the East Busway route, has a sufficiency rating of 41, meaning that the bridge is eligible for federal funding to aid in its replacement.

As stated in PennDOT’s FAQ, “The Condition Rating numbers indicate the general structural condition, or health, of the bridge components. Each component (deck, superstructure, and substructure) is assigned a condition rating. The rating number is based on a scale of nine to zero [best to worst] and was established by the National Bridge Inspection Standards that are followed by all states.”

PennDOT further states, “A condition rating of 5-9 means that the bridge is performing as designed with minor signs of deterioration.” All of Wilkinsburg’s eight bridges identified scores in this range and are therefore classified as structurally sound, indicating that routine maintenance actions can stop further deterioration.

TUNNELS

Wilkinsburg is home to three pedestrian tunnels, all of which were originally built in 1914 as part of a railroad station redevelopment project. The project aimed to eliminate at-grade railroad crossings of the Pennsylvania Railroad mainline, now the Norfolk Southern Railroad, which ran through the Borough throughout the early 20th century. Tracks throughout the Borough were raised 13 feet for at-grade crossings, effectively reducing train and car accidents. As a result, a pedestrian tunnel was constructed under the railroad to enhance pedestrian mobility. The entire project, including the construction of two new train stations and the construction of new tracks, cost \$3 million in 1914 dollars to complete.

Of these three tunnels, only one is currently still in use. The Whitney Tunnel is an 82-foot-long, 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high pedestrian tunnel at Pennwood Avenue, connecting the east and



west sections of Whitney Avenue and providing for pedestrian access from the transit stop to the adjacent neighborhoods. It was closed until 2004, when it was rehabilitated and reopened for pedestrian use connecting the neighborhoods on the east side of the busway to the transit stop at that location. As the tracks run close to the center of Wilkinsburg and near the business district, the Whitney Tunnel is a major thoroughfare connecting the east and west neighborhoods to the transit stop. The tunnel is constructed of concrete slab and has a ceramic tile surface that exhibits a colorful mural.

The former Wilkinsburg Station Tunnel is currently closed to pedestrian use. It once led from Ross Avenue at the Wilkinsburg train station to Pennwood Avenue on the west side of the railroad tracks and acted as both a pass-through for everyday pedestrian use and for people traveling to and from the train station. Also constructed of concrete slab, the majority of the tunnel is still intact. The Pennwood Avenue side entrance is sealed with brick and is further barricaded with a fence.

The third tunnel, the Franklin Tunnel, links the corner of Franklin Avenue, Pennwood Avenue, and Hay Street to Franklin Avenue on the west side. It is currently sealed with brick and is not open for use. On the eastern side of the track along Franklin Avenue, the former eastern tunnel entrance opens into a small park and pavilion. The Franklin Tunnel entrance, along with the building walls surrounding the park, are decorated with bright and colorful wall paintings and murals.



These tunnels are historically significant to Wilkinsburg and its citizens. In 1916, when the tracks were completely raised and the at-grade crossings were eliminated, the town threw a three-day celebration with a four-mile-long parade. This celebration, according to *Information Magazine's* issue of July 18, 1916, was "the most remarkable three-day celebration ever recorded in American History." Local businesses closed and 75,000 people attended. These tunnels served as the primary means of pedestrian mobility for accessing the tracks and for moving from the eastern to western neighborhoods and business district from 1916 until their closing.

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Wilkinsburg enjoys extensive access to public transit. The Port Authority of Allegheny County operates several bus routes through Wilkinsburg, most of which provide service along the Penn Avenue corridor. Wilkinsburg is served by the Martin Luther King, Jr., East Busway Transit System (East Busway), a 9.1-mile bus rapid-transit guideway linking downtown Pittsburgh and

Oakland and the city of Pittsburgh's East End neighborhoods, as well as many of Allegheny County's eastern suburbs. All nine stations are served by the East Busway, which provides frequent service to downtown Pittsburgh seven days a week, linking with many local bus routes and providing convenient transfers to the Port Authority light rail transit system. In total, 34 bus routes operate on the East Busway, including 31 express routes that circulate within many communities and then provide a nonstop, traffic-free commute into downtown Pittsburgh via the East Busway. Of the 34 East Busway routes, 24 of them run through Wilkinsburg, offering express and all-stop services for easy access to downtown Pittsburgh. Map 17 shows the stations of the East Busway route throughout Wilkinsburg, as well as vehicular traffic counts along major corridors in the Borough.

The East Busway is particularly important to the residents of Wilkinsburg because, according to



the 2000 Census, 29% of households own no vehicles and 49% of all households only own one vehicle. Residents rely heavily on the bus to provide transportation to work, shopping, dining, and medical facilities.

Ridership on the East Busway system is estimated at approximately 30,000 travelers per day, which serves to ease traffic congestion in the region's

major corridors. The East Busway offers park-and-ride lots at 17 stations for added convenience for its travelers. The expansive East Busway route is easily accessible and provides convenient access along the major transportation corridors throughout the region, utilizing stations that are landscaped, clean, well-lit, and safe.

The East Busway originally opened in February 1983, serving downtown Pittsburgh, East End, and the eastern suburbs of Allegheny County. By 1990 the busway was in need of rehabilitation and a \$1 million project was undertaken to enhance passenger shelters at the East Liberty and Wilkinsburg Stations. A new stairway was built at the Wilkinsburg station to discourage riders from crossing the busway to reach the outbound platform. Additional repairs were made at the Pittsburgh end, as well as additional parking added at the East Liberty Division bus garage. Shortly after the completion of the rehabilitation, a study was conducted to address extending the busway as far eastward as Swissvale/Rankin or even McKeesport. Numerous options were explored concerning the eastward expansion. Ultimately, the study recommended a Wilkinsburg to Swissvale option that would add three new stations as well as three new park-and-ride lots, adding a total of 850 spaces. The residents of Edgewood were greatly opposed to the new East Busway plan, which they felt would bring additional noise and traffic to the area.



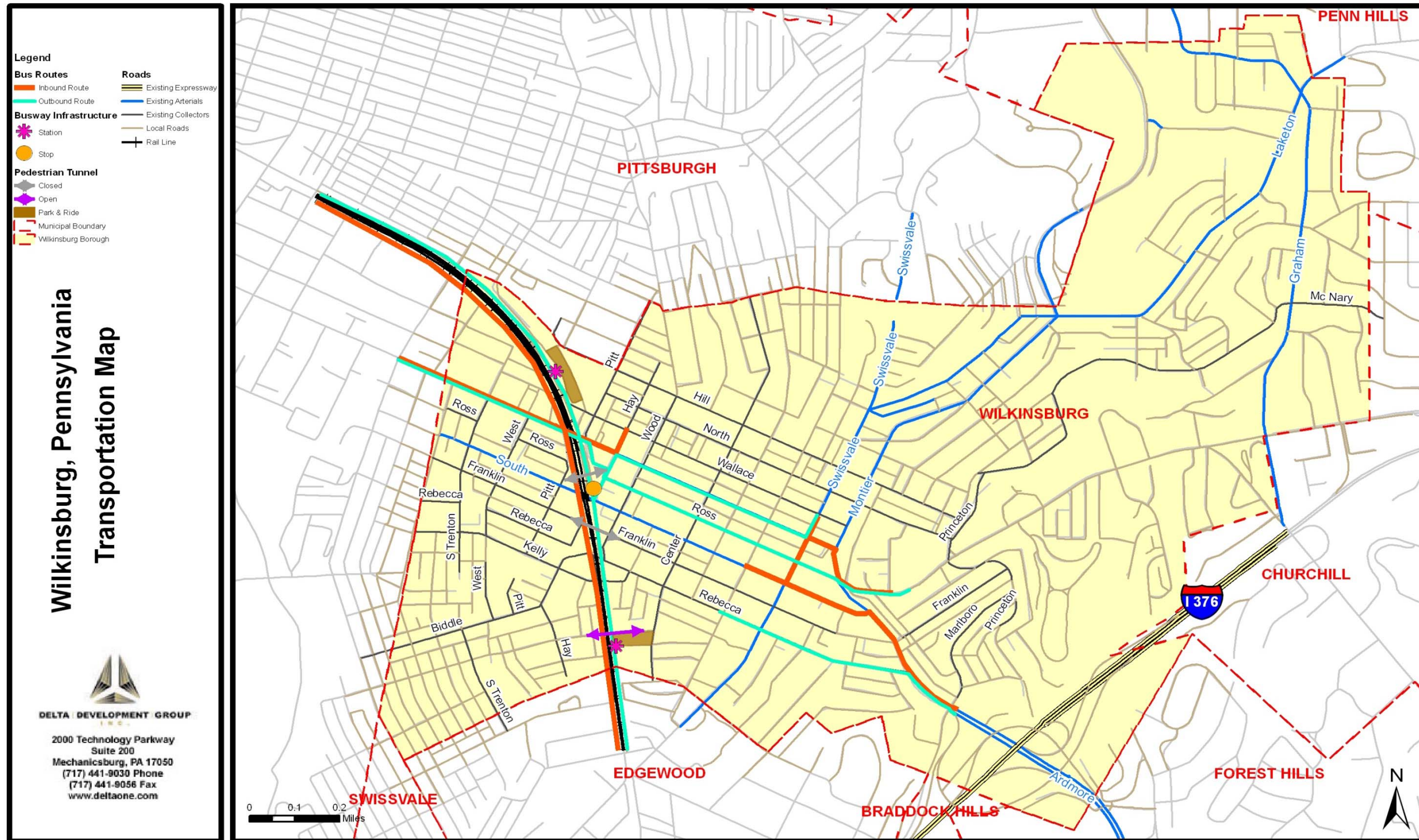
In 1996 the Port Authority was given permission to commence with the final design for the extension. A plan was eventually developed to appease all parties involved, which included putting portions of the busway in a tunnel underground and creating a bike path with a park beside it in addition to creating park lands above the tunnel. This plan, however, increased the cost of the extension to a much higher amount, placing greater scrutiny on the fundamental purpose of the extension. Debate concerning the extension of the busway continued into 1998.

In October of 1998 the Port Authority's Board of Directors' engineering and construction committee approved purchase of three Swissvale properties, commencing the work on the Wilkinsburg to Swissvale option. In February of 1999 the Port Authority announced that the Wilkinsburg Station would be moved one-quarter mile closer to the city of Pittsburgh line. Also approved was the \$5 million linear park along the extension from Wilkinsburg to Swissvale. Edgewood was once again the holdout on the park project.

By June of 2001, Swissvale, Rankin, and Wilkinsburg had all signed off on the Port Authority East Busway extension, which included the linear park. Edgewood continued to be opposed, citing the need for light rail transit rather than the busway extension. By June of 2003 all of the debate concerning the busway had ended, and the \$68.8 million project opened to bus traffic. The Joe Healy linear park also opened that day and contains benches, trees, landscaping, bike racks, decorative railings and lighting, gazebos, and a children's play area. Wilkinsburg is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the portion of the linear park that is located within its boundaries.



MAP 17 — BUS ROUTES AND TRAFFIC COUNTS



SOURCE: TRAFFIC COUNTS — PENNDOT INTERNET TRAFFIC MONITORING SYSTEM (ITMS), 2009 BUS ROUTES



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BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

The CCIP study also evaluated the pedestrian traffic along the Penn Avenue corridor. The mix of commercial and residential saturation in the area creates much pedestrian and bicycle traffic in Wilkinsburg. Currently, there is no dedicated bicycle route near the corridor. Traffic signals along the corridor are equipped with pedestrian signal heads. The posted speed limits along the corridor also take into consideration the heavy foot traffic. The CCIP study evaluated the pedestrian activity of the corridor, calculating pedestrian volumes during three-hour count periods in the morning and evening, and two-hour count periods during midday. Table 33 summarizes the counts found in the CCIP study.

TABLE 33 – PEAK PERIOD PEDESTRIAN SUMMARY

PEAK PERIOD PEDESTRIAN SUMMARY			
INTERSECTION	PEAK PERIOD		
	AM	MID	PM
Marlboro Street	25	3	20
Rebecca Avenue	30	2	31
Franklin Avenue	64	16	72
Penn Avenue	56	18	59
Swissvale Avenue	Data unavailable		
Coal Street	92	63	205
Center Street	62	125	307
Wood Street	185	326	669
Hay Street	Data unavailable		
West Street	86	109	183
Trenton Avenue	38	61	78
Braddock Avenue	64	28	112
SOURCE: PENNDOT CCIP STUDY, 2006			

The expansive transit system offered by the Port Authority also promotes increased pedestrian traffic through the easily accessible and convenient East Busway routes.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Wilkinsburg residents have access to rail travel via an Amtrak station in downtown Pittsburgh. The Amtrak station is located adjacent to the Penn Station of the East Busway, allowing for easy bus-train connections. Amtrak runs two intercity train routes: the Pennsylvania Route, which provides daily service between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, onward to Philadelphia and New York City; and the Capitol Limited, which provides daily service linking Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) Web site notes, “The Eastern Corridor Transit Study (ECTS), completed in December 2003 in partnership with the Port Authority of Allegheny



County, identified public transportation needs and opportunities within a study area bordered by the Golden Triangle on the west, the eastern suburbs and Westmoreland County on the east, the Allegheny River on the north, and the Monongahela River on the south. Opportunities to improve public transportation were based on the need to utilize existing resources, support economic development and provide reasonable probability for moving forward to future phases of development. The ECTS recommended six alternatives in five corridors for advancement to the next level of study.” Listed below are the alternatives in the study that aim to include Wilkinsburg in these public transportation initiatives.

The ECTS determined that the Spine Line Light Rail alternative would consist of a light rail service from Steel Plaza in downtown Pittsburgh to Oakland, with the option of a branch to Wilkinsburg. This service would be provided with electric light rail vehicles that would frequent the stations every 5 minutes during peak hours, and every 7 ½ minutes during off-peak hours. Estimated ridership for this service projects daily boardings of 39,400 commuters traveling from Wilkinsburg to downtown Pittsburgh. Travel time from Wilkinsburg to downtown Pittsburgh would be approximately 23 minutes. Table 34 below shows the potential travel time saved by riders using the Spine Line Light Rail.

TABLE 34 – TRAVEL TIME REDUCTION – EASTERN NEIGHBORHOODS

TRAVEL TIME REDUCTION (TIME SAVED BY RIDING THE NEW SERVICE VERSUS EXISTING OPTIONS)			
TO DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH FROM:	MINUTES	PERCENT	VERSUS
Homestead	0	0%	53F/H
	-4	-20%	Driving
Wilkinsburg	17	43%	61A
	-4	-21%	Driving
Oakland	3-4	20-25%	61A
	2	14%	Driving
TO OAKLAND FROM:			
Homestead	10	45%	61C
	5	29%	Driving
Wilkinsburg	9	45%	61A
	7	39%	Driving
SOURCE: EASTERN CORRIDOR TRANSIT STUDY (ECTS), 2003			
<i>Bus routes 53F, 53H, 61A, and 61C are operated by the Port Authority of Allegheny County. Negative time savings denotes that riding the new service would be slower than existing options shown.</i>			

The ECTS also references that the Norfolk Southern Commuter Rail proposes a rail line extending from the Amtrak station in downtown Pittsburgh to Greensburg in Westmoreland County. The 31-mile alignment would extend from Pittsburgh to Wilkinsburg, Swissvale, Braddock, East Pittsburgh, Wilmerding, and Trafford in Allegheny County, and Irwin, Jeanette, and Greensburg in Westmoreland County. Projected ridership for this alternative expects daily boardings of 4,400 travelers. The service would be provided daily, with trains frequenting every 60 minutes during peak hours and every 90 minutes during off-peak hours. Expected travel time from Greensburg to downtown Pittsburgh is approximately 64 minutes. Table 35 below shows the potential travel time saved by riding the new service versus existing options.

TABLE 35 – TRAVEL TIME REDUCTION - GREENSBURG

TRAVEL TIME REDUCTION (TIME SAVED BY RIDING THE NEW SERVICE VERSUS EXISTING OPTIONS)			
TO DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH FROM:	MINUTES	PERCENT	VERSUS
Greensburg	16	20%	1F
	0	0%	Driving
<i>Bus route 1F is operated by the Westmoreland County Transit Authority.</i>			
SOURCE: EASTERN CORRIDOR TRANSIT STUDY (ECTS), 2003			

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Pittsburgh International Airport

Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) is located approximately 25 miles from Wilkinsburg. With four runways, five terminals, and 100 gates, the airport covers over 10,000 acres of land and is served by 13 air carriers that accommodated approximately 10 million travelers in 2006. While such dominant carriers as US Airways have scaled back hub operations at PIT in recent years, several low-cost carriers, such as Southwest, have entered the market and help to make PIT more competitive in terms of lower fares. The following carriers serve PIT:

- Air Canada
- AirTran Airways
- American Airlines
- Continental
- Delta Airlines
- Jet Blue
- Midwest Airlines
- Myrtle Beach Direct
- Southwest Airlines
- United Airlines
- US Airways

PIT also provides air cargo services, processing an estimated 200 million pounds of freight each year. The carriers that serve PIT’s air cargo service include the following:

- DHL
- FedEx
- UPS
- Airborne Express

Allegheny County Airport

The Allegheny County Airport is a business service airport with 160 fixed-base aircraft and approximately 139,000 annual operations. Located in West Mifflin Township, the Allegheny County Airport is the fifth-busiest airport in the state and the largest general aviation airport in western Pennsylvania.



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Borough of Wilkinsburg’s location is clearly one of its greatest strengths. Penn Avenue is a primary corridor providing access to the city of Pittsburgh from the eastern suburbs. Over 26,000 vehicles travel through Wilkinsburg on Penn Avenue each day. The East Busway provides high-speed access for Wilkinsburg residents to jobs and services in the city of Pittsburgh. The busway commute from Wilkinsburg to Penn Station is about 10 minutes. In addition, over 800 commuters utilize park-and-ride services in Wilkinsburg for commutes to Pittsburgh. As suggested in the “Market Assessment,” these transportation assets provide a significant opportunity for Wilkinsburg’s business district to capture commuter spending with the appropriate business mix and shopping environment. These assets make Wilkinsburg a prime opportunity for a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) strategy to leverage redevelopment activities.

While the East Busway has been effectively utilized for park-and-ride commuters to Pittsburgh, it would appear that the primary focus for transit investment has been vehicular access to the busway, not the neighborhoods of Wilkinsburg.

With safe and convenient pedestrian access to the busway, Wilkinsburg neighborhoods could provide housing options within the Borough in areas adjacent to the busway stops that, with the right amenities, could potentially compete for workers in the city of Pittsburgh who are interested in living in the suburbs and commuting to the city to work. New housing and new residents in the Borough could reduce blight, increase the local tax base, and provide foot traffic to support business district revitalization. In addition, if implemented, the two alternatives for commuter rail service in Wilkinsburg identified in ECTS would further enhance the opportunity for TOD in Wilkinsburg.

While the East Busway has been effectively utilized for park-and-ride commuters to Pittsburgh, it would appear that the primary focus for transit investment has been vehicular access to the busway, not the neighborhoods of Wilkinsburg.

Pedestrian access would be a key component in TOD. During the public input process, this issue came up repeatedly. In addition, nearly 30% of current residents do not own vehicles and depend on the walkability of the Borough and public transit to access goods and services. Current signals along Penn Avenue are equipped with pedestrian signal heads, and speed limits take pedestrians into consideration; however, there are currently no dedicated bike routes in the Borough. Sidewalk conditions were also cited by residents as a current barrier to walkability. Plans that include a focus on transportation modes that include pedestrians and bikes could contribute to the success of TOD.

While the East Busway provides the convenience of frequent transit options to destinations in the city of Pittsburgh and other destinations in the eastern suburbs, residents who participated



in the public input sessions pointed out that the frequency of buses along the fixed route transit system within the Borough is not as convenient. In addition, taxi service is not available within the Borough.

One of the top issues regarding local transportation that surfaced during the public input process was the traffic flow and congestion along Penn Avenue. Research of previous studies revealed that the Penn Avenue corridor currently has 12 signalized intersections with no functional interconnection, which contributes to this congestion. In addition, traffic signals have been observed at intersections on local streets where traffic seemed to be needlessly stopped, which increases vehicle idling and contributes to increased energy consumption and air pollution. In addition, many of these signals are located at curbside and are not clearly visible to motorists who are not familiar with the area and may be looking for overhead signals consistent with signalization at other intersections within the Borough. Replacing and/or upgrading signals throughout the Borough could assist in mitigating traffic congestion and contribute to environmental sustainability in Wilkinsburg.

Another issue that surfaced during the public input process was the significant number of one-way streets in Wilkinsburg. Portions of at least eight of Wilkinsburg's collector streets are limited to one-way traffic, as are numerous local streets – primarily located in the central portion of the Borough. A recent traffic study conducted in Wilkinsburg noted that local residents use alleys to bypass one-way streets, which places more traffic volume on these roadways than they are built to handle. Residents also suggested that one-way streets create an interruption to street grids designed to connect neighborhoods, thus increasing social division within the community – another issue that surfaced frequently during the public input process. Evaluating the effectiveness of one-way streets and potential alternatives could increase the ease of movement of residents between neighborhoods and help to mitigate the problem of social division.

Residents also expressed concern about the condition of the East Busway bridge over Penn Avenue. Research revealed that this bridge was constructed in 1904, and although it is considered structurally sound, and its deterioration could be stopped with routine maintenance, its sufficiency rating makes it eligible for federal funding to assist with replacement. It was also noted during the public input sessions that the presence of the elevated busway creates a social divide between Borough neighborhoods, in part because the pedestrian underpass at the East Busway Bridge on Penn Avenue is in extensive disrepair lacking safe sidewalks and appropriate lighting. The condition of the underpass, along with the closing of three pedestrian tunnels under the busway, contributes to limited pedestrian access between neighborhoods that are physically separated by the busway.

The Borough has allocated \$250,000 every two years to cover paving, repair, and maintenance of roadways; however, the estimated cost of these improvements is \$196,551 per year. Delayed improvements will mean increased deterioration of roadways. This shortfall should be considered in the Borough's financial strategies.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

As with the previous sections, the Steering Committee was guided through goal-setting sessions to develop the primary goals for Comprehensive Plan elements. From these primary goals the committee established a broad array of objectives relevant to each goal. The objectives were then combined into a primary set of objectives and a specific set of strategies. The “Transportation” section then follows this process to identify important strategies for the element.

Once major goals were identified for each plan element, members were asked to identify the “Critical Success Factors” that would be necessary to achieve each goal. Members were asked to verbalize the critical success factors for each goal in the form of a “We must have...” or a “We Must Be...” statement. The statement is considered an imperative in order for this goal to be achieved. By verbalizing the elements necessary to achieve the goal, members were able to understand and identify the most important objectives necessary in achieving them. Each of the “We Must Have...” Or “We Must Be...” statements should be considered an objective in achieving the goal. Finally, each goal and its objectives were combined into a few overarching objectives and strategies necessary in order to achieve them. The primary objectives and strategies were kept to a few of the most important in order to prioritize and focus on a manageable set of recommendations coming out of the planning process. However, as the community begins the process of implementation, proposed policies, actions and strategies should always be weighed against the overarching goals and objectives (the “have” and “be” statements) for the relevant plan sections.

Based on these planning implications, goals were identified associated with the movement of people and goods within the Borough of Wilkinsburg. These five goals and their critical success factors served as the basis for strategies. The transportation goals and their associate objectives include the following:



Transportation

Goal 1: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will use public transportation assets to leverage redevelopment opportunities.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- links between transit stops and neighborhoods and business district
- a TOD strategy
- targeted investment around busway
- support services to focus on or leverage transit stops (e.g., commuter services)
- a financial investment strategy to invest resources around transit stops
- safe and sustainable transit facilities
- land use regulations that support and incentivize TOD
- safe, well-lit, convenient pedestrian linkages to transit facilities

We must be...

- proactively engaged with Allegheny Port Authority
- walkable
- focused on a specific geographic area for TOD/Transit investments
- the primary transit station along the East Busway
- focused on transit stops as a tool for neighborhood development, not only as park-and-ride facilities
- advocates for public transportation investment in the community
- focused on increasing resident utilization of transit

Transportation

Goal 2: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will capitalize on Penn Avenue as a major commuter corridor into the city of Pittsburgh.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- time-based, coordinated traffic signal system, including pedestrian signals
- well-designated, accessible public parking to service business district
- services and products that commuters want and need
- niche destination businesses
- convenience establishments that appeal to commuter traffic

We must be...

- attractive and convenient to commuter traffic
- perceived as a safe place to stop and shop
- pedestrian- and vehicle-friendly





Transportation

Goal 3: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will have a safe, efficient, and sustainable traffic circulation system that takes advantage of current technologies.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- a traffic control system where all devices and signage meet state warrants
- a grid street system that facilitates logical flow to and from neighborhoods and business district

We must be...

- proactive at changing ineffective transportation patterns
- committed to available modern technology
- committed to removal of unnecessary traffic control devices
- committed to understanding the transportation system as a network that goes beyond individual neighborhood needs

Transportation

Goal 4: Wilkinsburg neighborhoods will be both interconnected and linked to the region, by multimodal forms of transportation.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- alternative modes of transportation
- facilities that encourage multimodal travel
- an informed community with regard to the benefits of multimodal transportation
- a designated group working on multimodal transportation initiatives

We must be...

- accessible to alternative modes of travel
- attractive to users of alternative transportation modes

Transportation

Goal 5: The Borough of Wilkinsburg will proactively address challenges related to the physical, psychological, and social division of the Borough created by the elevated busway.

The following critical success factors must be in place to meet this goal (Objectives):

We must have...

- an inviting entrance into Wilkinsburg along Penn Avenue when entering from the city of Pittsburgh
- safe and inviting linkages between neighborhoods on both sides of the busway

We must be...

- committed to linkages from strong neighborhoods as a catalyst for redevelopment
- committed to investments intended to eliminate the physical, social, and psychological division the busway creates



Priority Objectives and Strategies

In order to meet these overall goals and objectives, the following priority objective and strategies rise to the top of the transportation planning element:

Develop a strategy to address the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the Borough Implementation Strategy	
1.	Make cosmetic short-term upgrades to the Penn Avenue busway underpass to improve its appearance and make it more attractive
2.	Include a representative from the Port Authority on the Implementation Committee
3.	Submit funding application to widen and replace the Penn Avenue busway crossing to open up this gateway to Wilkinsburg and capitalize on redevelopment initiatives
4.	Schedule regular meetings with key Port Authority personnel to shape and prioritize delivery of public transit in Wilkinsburg
5.	Explore ways to legitimize and organize a formal taxi service and/or shuttle system to service local resident needs, respecting the importance of the services to residents
6.	Reopen the closed pedestrian connections under the busway at Ross Avenue near the Train Station and at Franklin Avenue
7.	Investigate potential of moving overhead wires to alleys
8.	Conduct a traffic control device inventory and ensure all devices are duly adopted and recorded as required by Borough Code
9.	Request PennDOT conduct a warrant study for all traffic signals in the Borough to determine if signals are still required and eliminate unnecessary devices as appropriate
10.	Replace street and traffic signal bulbs and luminaries with LED technology to reduce energy consumption
11.	Upgrade traffic signals to implement a coordinated and interconnected timing system to improve the flow of traffic during peak periods
12.	Develop a pedestrian and bike trail plan that creates a local trail system to link parks, employment centers, transit facilities, and adjacent municipalities
13.	Conduct a parking study and develop a holistic parking strategy for employees, commuters, and shoppers including off- and on-street locations, number of parking spaces, and cost structure
14.	Conduct a traffic circulation study to evaluate street utilization (including one-way) – the study should evaluate commuter routes, ways to channel traffic to desired routes, signage, as well as neighborhood circulation and pedestrian safety
15.	Introduce public art as a way to make the connections under the busway more inviting
16.	Develop a financial investment strategy for infrastructure upgrades to the East Busway transit stop, focusing on improving pedestrian linkages
17.	Develop the TOD strategy (see “Housing and Neighborhoods” section of plan)



FUTURE LAND USE

Land use in Wilkinsburg is currently regulated by the zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDO). The current Wilkinsburg land use ordinances have some elements of land use regulations appropriate for older urban communities, such as a Mixed Use District (MUD) and a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay district, but the regulations are for the most part a Euclidean-based zoning approach to regulating land use. Many communities built after the 1950s, when zoning became more popular, lack the traditional community character of a community such as Wilkinsburg. Unfortunately, like many communities, the Borough adopted suburban-style (Euclidean) zoning for a period of its history. Euclidean zoning (named after an early court case in the Village of Euclid, Ohio) is a form of zoning that traditionally segregates land uses into specific geographic districts. Euclidean zoning typically focuses on the separation of uses seen to be incompatible. Wilkinsburg, built as a compact urban community, has the form of many traditional communities including tight knit, dense neighborhoods that include a mix of uses with close proximity to one another. It is not uncommon to have high density residential uses on the same block as single-family and non-residential uses.

The challenge with a Euclidian-based zoning approach to land use in Wilkinsburg is that it does not reflect the fabric of the existing community. Oftentimes this approach produces results and uses that are inconsistent in design and form with the existing community. While it does not appear that there have been significant land use conflicts, it is speculated that this is more a result of very little redevelopment activities over the years, not the result of regulations. As redevelopment initiatives begin to take shape and move forward, these conflicts will become more apparent and the need for regulations that reflect the existing and anticipated land use patterns of the community will become more acute.

Land use impacts and the need for future land use change are different in different areas throughout the community. The following sections review residential and non-residential future land use considerations for the Borough of Wilkinsburg. Depending on the existing predominant use of residential or non-residential, important considerations must be given to how uses interact and depend on each other. The following sections of this element evaluate each of these predominant land use types.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

With the decline in population, the sheer number of units that currently exist in the Borough is no longer necessary to serve the current population base.

Wilkinsburg's residential areas have been built out for decades, and with a declining population, the conflict or challenges in residential uses has not been significant. The predominant issue surrounding residential areas in the Borough has been vacant or/and deteriorating housing. The need to address this condition is dealt with in other sections of the plan, and therefore, this section focuses on other residential land use considerations in the Borough. Issues of greening residential neighborhoods and removal of vacant and dilapidated structures are addressed in the

“Housing and Neighborhoods” section of the plan, but the greening of neighborhoods through the acquisition and demolition of vacant structures is an important land use policy consideration moving forward. With the decline in population, the sheer number of units that currently exist in the Borough is no longer necessary to serve the current population base. Greening strategies can be an important tool to strengthen neighborhoods. Strategic removal of structures that might otherwise potentially lead to further decline can help strengthen and bolster neighborhoods in transition. Care must be taken to not indiscriminately remove structures and to ensure that a clear plan for neighborhoods is established, preserving any important historic assets worth saving and focusing on existing occupied structures. As discussed in the “Housing and Neighborhoods” section of the plan, with limited financial resources to acquire and demolish structures, the Borough must prioritize and target areas for investment. Starting in strong but transitioning neighborhoods should be the focus of these efforts.

Conflicts between residential and non-residential uses in residential districts are not seen as a major issue in the Borough and the amount and diversity of housing types (single-family, multi-family, apartments) likewise did not surface as a concern in the community. There is significant diversity and mix of available housing types and Borough residents have always lived in mixed use neighborhoods and as such do not perceive issues between land use types. However, during the public input process many concerns were raised regarding the amount of renter-occupied and subsidized housing in the Borough, and while some of these issues are addressed in other areas of the plan, there are important land use considerations that must also be addressed.



One significant residential land use concern raised by the committee and during the public input process related to renter-occupied housing was the concern over the conversion of single-family homes into multiple units for rental purposes. Traditional mixed use neighborhoods typically allow for different housing types and options to coexist, so that a typical residential district would allow for single-family units mixed with apartments or row houses in the same neighborhood. This traditional mix of housing in neighborhoods should not be confused with the practice of profiteering by buying older, deteriorating homes and converting them into rental properties.

Wilkinsburg neighborhoods have sufficient mixes built into them without the need to further convert single-family houses into multiple units. The challenges surrounding the conversion of single-family homes far outweigh any benefits. Conversions of single-family homes can impact the amount and quality of historic structures, create increased service demands, decrease property values and desirability because of absentee landlord issues, and generate a more transient neighborhood population. The practice of converting single-family homes should be evaluated in more detail by the Planning Commission, with the intention of limiting conversions except in the rarest of circumstances. The Borough zoning code should be amended accordingly.

NON-RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Some of the results of the Euclidian approach can be seen along Penn Avenue in the Borough, where uses allowed in development in the 1970s and 1980s do not reflect the traditional development patterns of the community. An additional concern is that only a single commercial district (C-1) has been permitted in its zoning ordinance. The single commercial district creates conflicts in achieving commercial development objectives between distinctly different commercial areas of the Borough. As required by Pennsylvania law, the Borough must be all-inclusive and provide for every legitimate commercial use; however, the Borough is not required to do this in a single district that accommodates all potential commercial development in the community. Allowing commercial uses such as service stations and automobile sales in the central business district is not consistent with the desired outcome for this area. The commercial development objectives of the central business district are distinctly different from the commercial development objectives in the commercially zoned land near the parkway and along North Robinson in the vicinity of the proposed development site at the old East Hills Shopping Center. The Borough should create a separate commercial zoning designation that will accommodate commercially zoned land near the parkway and along North Robinson to allow for more highway commercial uses such as the car dealerships, service stations, and larger retail/shopping establishments, and further refine a commercial district that is focused on the central business district. The patterns of development being pursued by market forces and supported by the Borough in these areas warrant these changes and will help further eliminate potential conflicts in the form of the development.

Also impacting commercial land use in the Borough is the current vacancy and lack of commercial market opportunities. The Business District Revitalization Plan evaluated this issue in detail and recommended that the Wilkinsburg main street business district must be right-sized. There is not enough commercial use to fill the vacant building space in the Borough. There is a companion issue addressed in the business district plan that deals with the availability of code-compliant space which is addressed elsewhere in this plan. As such we are focused on the impacts of this issue on land use policies in this section of the plan. The right-sizing of the Borough's main street presents two policy considerations which must be addressed:



As such we are focused on the impacts of this issue on land use policies in this section of the plan. The right-sizing of the Borough's main street presents two policy considerations which must be addressed:

- What is the focus area of the business district?
- How do you treat the remainder of the original business district?

The Business District Revitalization Plan addresses the first of these two questions, and the recommendations can be found in the business district plan or in the summary section of the Comprehensive Plan. This new, right-sized focus area of the business district should also be the

area of focus of the new “Central Business District” zoning changes discussed above and identified on the future land use map. The second of these two questions is addressed in this land use planning element.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a progressive and emerging planning tool designed to increase connectedness, interaction, and mobility within a community while preserving the surrounding land and open spaces. TNDs are developed with a compatible combination of both residential and commercial development, where residences, shops, offices, public buildings, and parks are established in relatively close proximity to each other. Distinctly different from high-density housing, TND regulations create a sense of place and community while eliminating many negative aspects often associated with high-density developments. The Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) enables municipalities to incorporate this tool into their ordinances in order to provide an option for development. While TODs are similar in many ways to TNDs, the TOD encourages higher densities around transit and encourages pedestrian mobility as opposed to vehicular mobility by strategically placing amenities and services within walking distance of residential space and transit stations.

The Borough has included a Mixed-Use District and a Transit-Oriented Development overlay district in its zoning ordinance in recent years, beginning to reverse the Euclidean-type regulations in the community. However, with a renewed focus on sustainability, many communities have added TND and/or TOD overlays as tools and supplements to their zoning regulations. The Borough should continue to revise its development regulations, including

zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations, to be more flexible and reflective of the traditional growth of the community.

At a minimum, the core business district and the area around the three transit stations should be considered for TND/TOD expansion.

To maximize the opportunities presented by Wilkinsburg’s transit asset, the East Busway and its three local transit stops, the Borough should consider implementing TND/TOD overlays in more of the community that is currently under the TOD overlay. At a minimum, the core business district and the area around the three transit stations should be considered for TND/TOD expansion. As

presented in the “Priority Strategies” section, an area within a one-quarter-mile radius from each transit station should be considered for this type of zoning.

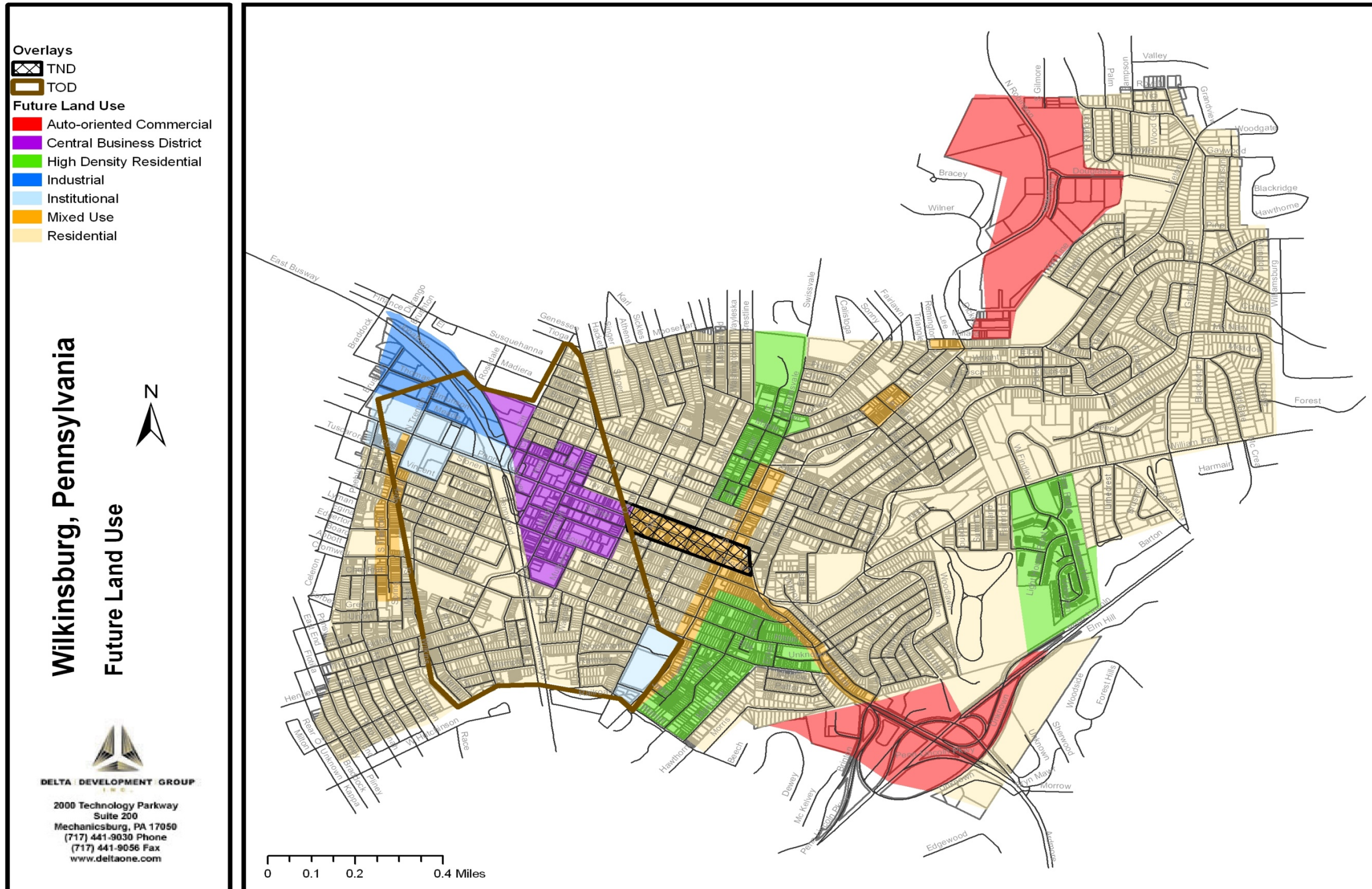
The remaining areas along Penn Avenue from Center east to Ardmore Boulevard should also be considered for TND uses. As the business district is right-sized, uses along Penn Avenue east from Center Street should transition from ground floor commercial to a mix of ground floor uses including residential. These areas that all used to be the part of the original “main street” of Wilkinsburg are no longer supported by the market as traditional main street businesses. The current effect of the oversized business district and the excess of square footage is more intermittent vacancy, leading to the appearance of an unhealthy main street environment. By encouraging main street business into a more compact area along Penn Avenue, a healthier, stronger business district will emerge, with uses having more interaction with one another and

supporting a stronger market. The remaining portion of Penn should be allowed to transition into uses more supportive of the main business district, including a mix of many different uses. As indicated in the Business District Revitalization Plan, the area east of Center will be more of an “Urban Pioneer” focus with flexible uses and the removal of deteriorating structures to make pad-ready development sites for supportive uses such as office, flex space, and residential.

Primary Future Land Use Plan Recommendations (Identified on Map 18)

- Discontinue the practice of allowing conversion of single-family dwellings into multiple units in all zoning districts
- Create a Central Business District (CBD) zoning classification to eliminate conflicts among current commercial area objectives
- Create a commercial classification around the parkway and along North Robinson in the vicinity of the proposed East Hills Shopping Center to support more auto-oriented commercial
- Increase TOD overlay district areas as identified on Map 18 – Future Land Use
- Create a TND overlay district east of Center Avenue, allowing for the transition of this area into a mixed use district supportive of the Central Business District
- Review permitted uses, conditional uses, and special exceptions to eliminate conflicts and contradictions.

MAP 18 – FUTURE LAND USE



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CONCURRENT PLANNING PROCESSES



Synthesize & Analyze

- Compile Findings
- Success Factors
- Priority Needs & Opportunities

A comprehensive plan should be developed as a direct result of the synthesis and analysis of the data collection process integrating the goal-setting stages of the plan. It is, therefore, important to review the goals that are derived from the other components of the Wilkinsburg planning process: 1) the Business District Revitalization Plan, which is a focused and strategic plan for the viability of the Penn Avenue and Wood Street business district; and 2) the Early Intervention Plan (EIP), which is a complete review of the Borough’s financial resources and organizational capacity to deliver critical public services for the community. The goals that were identified as part of these parallel planning exercises must support and complement the overall community objectives in the Comprehensive Plan so that a true synthesis occurs. It is necessary to develop such a synthesis of vision and resources, action and capacity in order to create the possibility of successful implementation and positive outcomes.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan summarizes the primary outcomes of these parallel planning processes. The full plans for the Business District Revitalization Plan and Early Intervention Plan can be viewed for a more in-depth understanding and analysis of the recommendations contained in these efforts.

At the completion of all of the planning studies, the community weighed the recommendations of each planning study. The section following this review of the other planning processes, the “Priority Strategy” section of the plan, represents the merging of the three planning processes into a comprehensive set of strategies and recommendations for the Borough of Wilkinsburg.

BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION PLAN

As part of the integrated plan process, the *Wilkinsburg Plan* includes a focused, strategic plan for the business district based on market analysis, public input, and targeted design elements. This Comprehensive Plan document includes a summary of the full business district plan.

VISION

The Borough, with the consultant team, conducted a week-long public input process that was intensely focused on a future vision and design for the business district. As part of the charrette process, participants developed the following vision statement for the business district:

The Wilkinsburg Business District is an old-style, main street commercial center, historic and walkable, that is prosperous, attractive, safe, and green, with convenient access and parking. Renovated buildings and new construction provide a mix of uses for

- the community – with goods, services, and housing
- commuters and workers – with convenience-style commercial opportunities



PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public participation was the hallmark of the planning process. Public outreach meetings, interviews, press releases, Web site postings, e-mail blasts, and direct mailings were designed to reach all sectors and interest groups. The participation effort culminated in a week-long design charrette that involved residents, business and property owners, elected officials, and stakeholders in workshops, open houses, and individualized interaction about desires and aspirations for the business district.



THE BUSINESS DISTRICT MARKET

A market assessment found that there is market potential in the Wilkinsburg area for additional retail, office, and restaurant uses. However, existing commercial centers and a possible future development at the old East Hills shopping center site will provide significant competition. (Since the time when the business district charette was conducted, the project stalled and it is unlikely that the project will be completed as proposed.)The business district has well over two million square feet of space, with about 900,000 total square feet on the ground floor, of which about 150,000 square feet are vacant. While buildings west of the busway are fully occupied, parts of the eastern portion of the business district approach a 50% vacancy rate. To make this vacant space more attractive, Wilkinsburg must position itself to mitigate negative factors and compete for its share of neighborhood retail, convenience retail, niche retail, food and entertainment, and office development.

CONSENSUS PLAN

After a process that included research, public input, analysis, program and cost alternatives, and public participation in a design charrette, a consensus plan was developed for the business district. Key elements of the consensus plan are as follows:

- The focus area should be around Penn and Wood near the Municipal Building and the train station.
- The train station should be renovated as a new busway station with both public and private commercial space.



- The pedestrian underpass near the former train station that is currently closed should be reopened, and the vehicular underpass on Penn Avenue should be replaced with a widened entry, including public art.
- TOD should be pursued around the focus area to take advantage of state programs and local foundation support.
- The Penn and Wood streetscapes should be improved with new traffic signals, restored historic lighting, overhead wire improvements, amenities at intersections, entry features, and public art.
- Historically or architecturally important buildings, particularly those in the focus area, should be renovated or stabilized.
- Clusters of blighted, vacant, and tax-delinquent buildings, with emphasis on those outside of the focus area, should be demolished, the land put into temporary reuse, and the lot made shovel-ready for new development.
- To complement the physical improvements, limited liquor licenses for specialized businesses, architectural design standards, upgraded zoning and land development ordinances, and a traffic study to improve vehicular circulation should also be pursued.

KEY ACTION ITEMS

There a number of action items, capital requirements, and policy decisions that must be developed by the Wilkinsburg community in order to realize the market potential of the business district and its positive impact for the Borough. The highest priority items that were identified during the design process are:

- Item 1: Initiate a major cleanup and maintenance effort followed by regular street sweeping, litter removal, and sidewalk cleaning.**
- Item 2: Renovate, stabilize, or demolish blighted buildings: hold property owners accountable for paying taxes and complying with building and maintenance codes.**
- Item 3: Initiate the Main Street Program and hire a Main Street Manager and Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) Executive Director.**
- Item 4: Promote a major, visible project on Penn Avenue, such as renovation of the Penn Lincoln Hotel.**
- Item 5: Engage in a marketing and media relations effort to rebrand the Wilkinsburg business district as a safe area, “the next big thing,” and a desirable place to own a business and shop.**

The action items identified for the business district during the charette closely coincided with the goals and critical success factors that were identified in the six neighborhood meetings conducted as part of the public input and involvement process.

Map 19 provides a graphic presentation of the Consensus Plan for the business district.

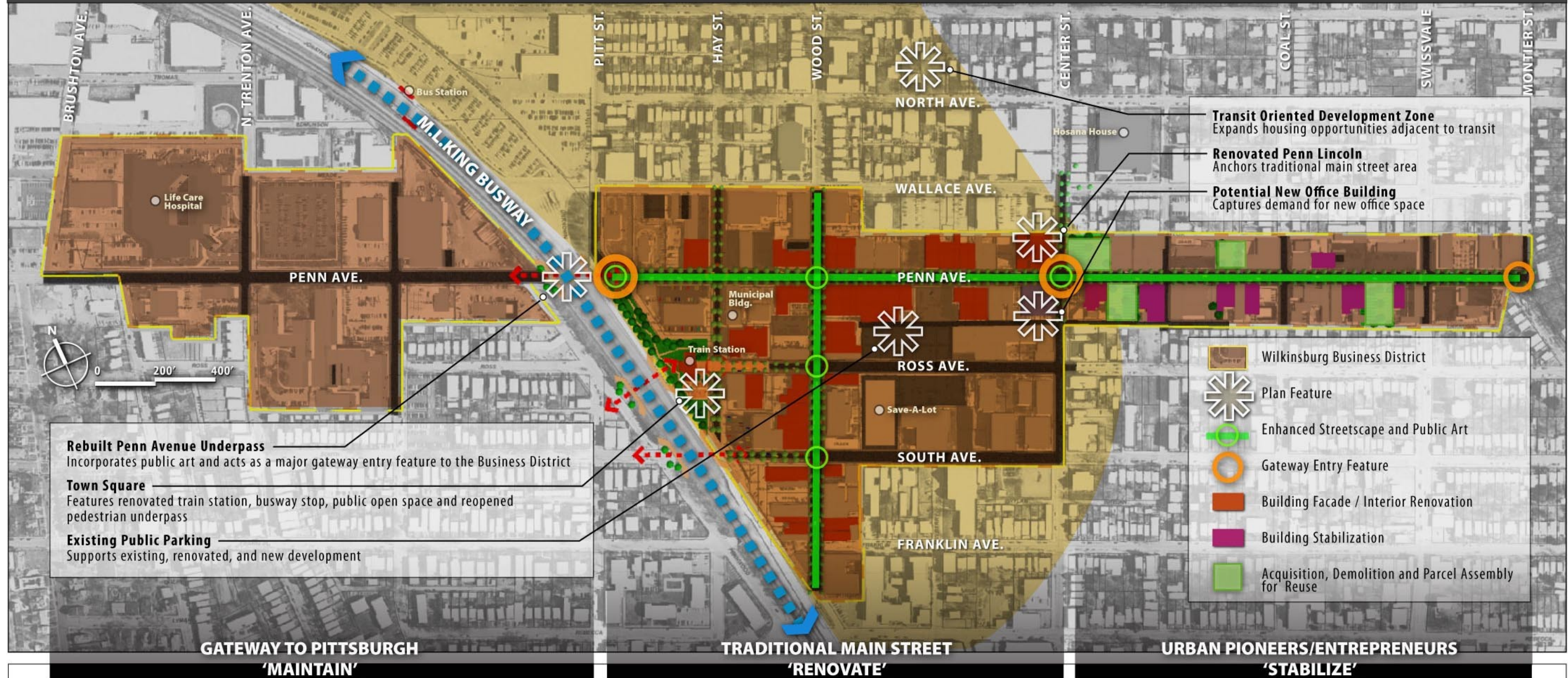




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Wilkinsburg Business District Revitalization Plan



DELTA DEVELOPMENT GROUP

BURT, HILL



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Priority Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The following represent the priority goals, objectives, and strategies of the Business District Revitalization Plan.

GOAL 1: AESTHETICS		
THE WILKINSBURG BUSINESS DISTRICT WILL BE A TRADITIONAL, HISTORIC, ATTRACTIVE, AND WALKABLE MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL CENTER.		
THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS FACTORS MUST BE IN PLACE TO MEET THIS GOAL:		
<p>We must have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a focus area for revitalization around Penn Avenue, Wood Street, and the busway • storefronts that are appealing and engage pedestrians • renovated historic buildings • new buildings of compatible heights, setback, and materials • stabilized vacant buildings • an attractive streetscape with pedestrian amenities • direct pedestrian connections between the business district, the busway, and the neighborhoods • increased and improved public open space for gatherings and events • public art and public spaces that add to the character of the community • entry features welcoming visitors to the business district • signage that is attractive, informative, and coordinated 	<p>We must be...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attractive and convenient for residents, workers, commuters, and shoppers • responsible to property owners who maintain their property value • pedestrian, bike, automobile, and transit friendly • rid of blighted properties 	
RESPONSIBILITY		
TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...		
Action 1A	Prioritize improvements and target reinvestments and redevelopment consistent with the Business District Revitalization Plan	Borough & WCDC
Action 1B	Aggressively enforce the building code and property maintenance code within the business district	Borough
Action 1C	Facilitate façade improvements through grant applications, coordination, and support	WCDC
Action 1D	Maintain an inventory and create a database of visual, architectural, and aesthetic significance of buildings	WCDC & PHLF
Action 1E	Implement architectural design guidelines developed by the WCDC through distribution and support	WCDC
Action 1F	Upgrade zoning, subdivision and land development, and signage ordinances to achieve desirable building heights, setbacks, and uses	Borough
Action 1G	Pursue funding for streetscape design and cost estimating and develop and implement a capital improvements program	Borough
Action 1H	Clean, maintain, and expand decorative historic streetlights and remove duplicative high-level lights	Borough
Action 1I	Design and implement a program to acquire key vacant, deteriorated, and/or tax-delinquent properties for redevelopment	Borough in partnership with appropriate authority, etc.
Action 1J	Design and implement a program to stabilize vacant significant buildings	Borough in partnership with appropriate authority, etc.
Action 1K	Provide short-term cosmetic upgrades and longer-term replacement and widening to the Penn Avenue busway/rail underpass	Borough, owner, PennDOT, etc.
Action 1L	Develop features at major entries to the business district at Penn and the busway, Penn and Swissvale, on Wood Street, and at other major portals	WCDC, Borough





Action 1M	Institute a public art program focused on streetscape elements such as the busway/rail underpass, streets, and open space improvements	Public Art Board, Borough Council
Action 1N	Pursue reinstatement of a bus stop at the train station	Borough & Port Authority of Allegheny County
Action 1O	Renovate and reuse the train station for public and private use associated with the busway; create a public open space around the train station	Allegheny County, Borough
Action 1P	Open pedestrian underpasses at the train station and Franklin Avenue	Borough
Action 1Q	Support the renovation of the Penn Lincoln	PHLF
Action 1R	Investigate potential of moving overhead wires to alleys	Borough
Action 1S	Investigate existence, opportunities presented by existing technology infrastructure	Borough





GOAL 2: ECONOMIC VITALITY

THE WILKINSBURG BUSINESS DISTRICT WILL BE PROSPEROUS AND ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE.

THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS FACTORS MUST BE IN PLACE TO MEET THIS GOAL:

We must have...

- a range of businesses that provide goods, services, and restaurants that target all markets: residents, workers, commuters, and specialty
- code-compliant space available for retail, office, and residential use
- businesses that are locally owned and that reinvest in the community
- businesses that create jobs for local residents and add to the tax base.
- ongoing communications with existing businesses to facilitate retention and growth
- clean, maintained, litter-free streets, sidewalks, parks, and public spaces

We must be...

- supportive of existing businesses and attractive to new businesses
- shoppers, customers, and clients of businesses and services in the District
- affordable

RESPONSIBILITY

TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...

TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...		
Action 2A	Establish a Main Street program and hire a manager to market, target and recruit key businesses, and schedule activities and events	WCDC
Action 2B	Maintain a real estate database of retail, commercial, and residential space by location, condition, ownership, jobs, units, and occupancy to facilitate marketing and redevelopment efforts	WCDC
Action 2C	Work with building owners to make space code-compliant to respond to specific market demand	Borough & WCDC
Action 2D	Build on the success of the farmers' market by engaging other businesses, expanding relationships with local urban agriculture, and increasing market capture of commuters	WCDC & business owners
Action 2E	Maintain a comprehensive list of groups and projects in the business district	WCDC & Chamber of Commerce
Action 2F	Market redevelopment opportunities and provide incentives for developers and investors to reclaim existing space	WCDC
Action 2G	Have an active business retention/expansion program and communicate regularly with the Chamber of Commerce, major businesses, and property owners	WCDC & Chamber of Commerce
Action 2H	Pursue the opportunity to provide liquor licenses for a limited number of specialized commercial establishments	Borough & State
Action 2I	Get involved with the Workforce Investment Board, Career Link, and partner with the School District and other educational providers to create new jobs in the business district and train residents for them	Borough & WCDC
Action 2J	Work with private lenders to create incentives for locally owned businesses	WCDC
Action 2K	Work to clear titles to make properties more attractive for private redevelopment	Borough, School District, & Allegheny County
Action 2L	Target a cluster of tax-delinquent, vacant, blighted properties that are not historically significant to aggregate into a shovel-ready redevelopment parcel	Planning Commission, WCDC
Action 2M	Pursue development of a new spec office building	WCDC & appropriate authority
Action 2N	Coordinate with the efforts of community-based and non-profit organizations and facilities to expand and connect with activities in the business district	WCDC
Action 2O	Work to bring urban pioneers, artists, entrepreneurs, and urban gardeners into the eastern areas of the District	WCDC
Action 2P	Identify niche markets and reach out to related businesses, organizations, and institutions to identify and pursue opportunities	WCDC





GOAL 3: MARKETING

THE WILKINSBURG BUSINESS DISTRICT WILL BE FRIENDLY AND SAFE, AND WILL ATTRACT RESIDENTS, WORKERS, COMMUTERS, AND SHOPPERS FROM A REGIONAL MARKET.

THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS FACTORS MUST BE IN PLACE TO MEET THIS GOAL:

We must have...

- a clearly defined image
- a marketing and communications strategy
- positive media coverage
- an attractive business district
- regular, aggressive cleanup activities
- low crime rates

We must be...

- convenient, accessible and inviting
- regionally known for our market niche
- proud promoters of our business district
- engaged in promoting a sense of safety
- perceived as safe by outsiders
- fun and energized

RESPONSIBILITY

TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...

Action 3A	Complete a branding effort and marketing program	WCDC & Chamber of Commerce
Action 3B	Appoint a media officer and promote positive media attention through high-visibility activities, press releases, articles, public service announcements, etc	Borough & WCDC
Action 3C	Create an e-mail list and keep members apprised of good news, Web site postings, and volunteer opportunities	WCDC & Chamber of Commerce
Action 3D	Begin an urban pioneer blog to reach potential residents and business start-ups regionally and nationally	Invested Urban Pioneer
Action 3E	Improve the physical appearance of the business district through code enforcement, streetscape improvements, renovation, and redevelopment	All interested owners, residents, etc.
Action 3F	Hold an annual public, large-scale cleanup within the business district; maintain cleanliness through regular street sweeping, litter removal, and sidewalk cleaning	WCDC
Action 3G	Target a critical mass and mix of businesses, programs, and hours of operation that bring day life and nightlife to the business district	WCDC
Action 3H	Provide adequate law enforcement and increase business owner awareness of crime prevention opportunities; consider creation of a business district crime watch	Borough & business owners
Action 3I	Hold business owners accountable for clean up through aggressive enforcement of code ordinances	Borough & business owners





GOAL 4: SUSTAINABILITY

THE WILKINSBURG BUSINESS DISTRICT WILL BE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AND PROMOTE GREEN DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES.

THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS FACTORS MUST BE IN PLACE TO MEET THIS GOAL:

We must have...

- redevelopment, infill development, and reuse of existing buildings and facilities
- dense development around the transit station in a TOD
- a mix of land uses including residential, retail, commercial, institutional, and light industrial
- convenient and attractive pedestrian, bike, and transit facilities
- sustainable building and site development practices
- more open space, street trees, and landscaping

We must be...

- a sustainable community led by sustainable municipal practices
- a walkable and bike-friendly community
- water and energy efficient

RESPONSIBILITY

TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...

Action 4A	Adopt a “fix it first” policy promoting renovation and redevelopment	Borough & business owners
Action 4B	Upgrade zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances to allow and encourage high density and a rich mix of land uses	Borough
Action 4C	Pursue a TOD near the Wilkinsburg busway station	Borough & WCDC
Action 4D	Incentivize development and renovation to meet LEED standards for building and neighborhood development	Borough
Action 4E	Engage the Port Authority as an active partner in the maintenance, upgrade, and improvements to transit facilities in the TOD	Borough & Port Authority
Action 4F	Identify and promote programs for development with water- and energy-efficient fixtures, recycled materials, and energy production	Borough
Action 4G	Renovate the business district streetscape as a model of urban sustainability with best practices for materials reuse, energy efficiency, stormwater management, and vegetative cover	Borough & WCDC
Action 4H	Integrate bioswales, rain gardens, and pervious pavement into municipal parking lots as grants are available and development occurs over time	Borough & WCDC
Action 4I	Create a highly visible demonstration project to encourage reuse of vacant lots with urban agriculture, plant nurseries, or rain gardens. Harvest rainwater for plant irrigation.	Borough & WCDC
Action 4J	Promote biodiverse, native, and drought-tolerant vegetative cover through street trees, green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens, and additional open space	Shade Tree Commission
Action 4K	Engage Sustainable Pittsburgh to perform a Sustainability Assessment for the municipality and implement its recommendations	Borough
Action 4L	Provide trash receptacles for recycling	Borough
Action 4M	Replace street and traffic signal bulbs and luminaries with LED technology to reduce energy consumption	Borough
Action 4N	Continue to support and expand the farmers’ market and enhance it with locally grown food	Borough





GOAL 5: ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

VEHICULAR, PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION TO AND AROUND THE WILKINSBURG BUSINESS DISTRICT WILL BE EFFICIENT, AND PARKING WILL BE ADEQUATE.

THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS FACTORS MUST BE IN PLACE TO MEET THIS GOAL:

We must have...

- attractive, convenient, and safe pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation systems, including connections through the busway
- good signage for business district circulation and parking
- convenient pedestrian access to the busway
- bicycle routes and racks
- a logical and efficient road network
- sufficient parking dispersed throughout the business district
- overflow parking for commuters accessing the busway

We must be...

- pedestrian, vehicle, and bicycle friendly
- convenient for commuters to stop and shop

RESPONSIBILITY

TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...

		RESPONSIBILITY
Action 5A	Consider the comfort, ease and safety of pedestrian circulation to be of equal importance to vehicular circulation	Borough
Action 5B	Develop a pedestrian and bike trail plan that creates a local trail system to link parks, employment centers, transit facilities, and adjacent municipalities	Borough
Action 5C	Provide convenient and well-lighted pedestrian walkways through parking lots and to the transit station	Borough
Action 5D	Provide a pedestrian link between the Wilkinsburg Station to neighborhoods to the east	Borough & Port Authority
Action 5E	Meet with the Port Authority to explore the opening of the train station as an additional stop	Borough & Port Authority
Action 5F	Open pedestrian underpasses at the train station and Franklin Avenue	Borough & State
Action 5G	Commission a traffic study to examine vehicular circulation, signalization, and pedestrian-safety improvements	Borough
Action 5H	Improve ease of cars entering, circulating, and leaving municipal parking lots	Borough
Action 5I	Develop a holistic parking strategy for employees, commuters, and shoppers including off- and on-street locations, number of parking spaces, and cost structure	Borough
Action 5J	Establish a TRID/TOD implementation committee to focus on transit issues in the Borough	Borough
Action 5K	Conduct a TRID study to determine the feasibility and location of a TOD and potential for commuter overflow parking	Borough





GOAL 6: BUSINESS DISTRICT HOUSING

THE WILKINSBURG BUSINESS DISTRICT WILL HAVE ABUNDANT, ATTRACTIVE, CODE-COMPLIANT HOUSING.

THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS FACTORS MUST BE IN PLACE TO MEET THIS GOAL:

We must have...

- a range of housing sizes and prices for different markets: affordable, market rate, upscale, and senior
- convenient and adequate amenities, goods, services and jobs to support residents
- TOD including medium to high-density housing
- housing on upper floors of commercial buildings

We must be...

- an alternative to suburban and higher-priced housing options

RESPONSIBILITY

TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...

Action 6A	Make housing a key component of any TOD	Borough
Action 6B	Update the zoning code to allow for mixed residential use and density	Borough
Action 6C	Apply for the Elm Street program	Borough & WCDC
Action 6D	Work with Action Housing, Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development (PPND), and Allegheny County on housing funding and improvement programs	Borough





GOAL 7: PROCESS

WILKINSBURG WILL HAVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT THE BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION PLAN.

THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS FACTORS MUST BE IN PLACE TO MEET THIS GOAL:

We must have...

- a plan with clear priorities
- a process and structure for efficient decision making
- partners and close relationships with funding agencies
- staff dedicated to the business district

We must be...

- rigorous in implementing, updating, and being consistent with the Business District Revitalization Plan

RESPONSIBILITY

TO ACHIEVE THESE SUCCESS FACTORS, WE WILL...

Action 7A	Adopt the Business District Revitalization Plan, identify group responsible for implementation, and have a yearly review to review successes, identify priorities, and reconsider ineffective strategies	Borough & WCDC
Action 7B	Hire an Executive Director for the WCDC and a Main Street Manager; provide a single point of contact for business district activities	Borough & WCDC
Action 7C	Identify roles, responsibilities, interaction, and process for groups involved in business district revitalization efforts, including elected officials, staff, Planning Commission, WCDC, and the redevelopment authority and have a development process that is predictable, fair, and cost-effective	Borough, Chamber of Commerce, WCDC, & appropriate authorities
Action 7D	Meet regularly with the State, County, Port Authority, and foundations to review status and opportunities for grants and programs	Borough & WCDC
Action 7E	Continue to partner with universities to advance studies, pilot programs, and demonstration projects	Borough & WCDC
Action 7F	Develop a capital improvements program for streetscape improvements, building stabilization, property acquisition, and demolition	Borough & WCDC
Action 7G	Research, coordinate, and apply for various government and private grants.	Borough & WCDC



EARLY INTERVENTION PLAN (EIP)

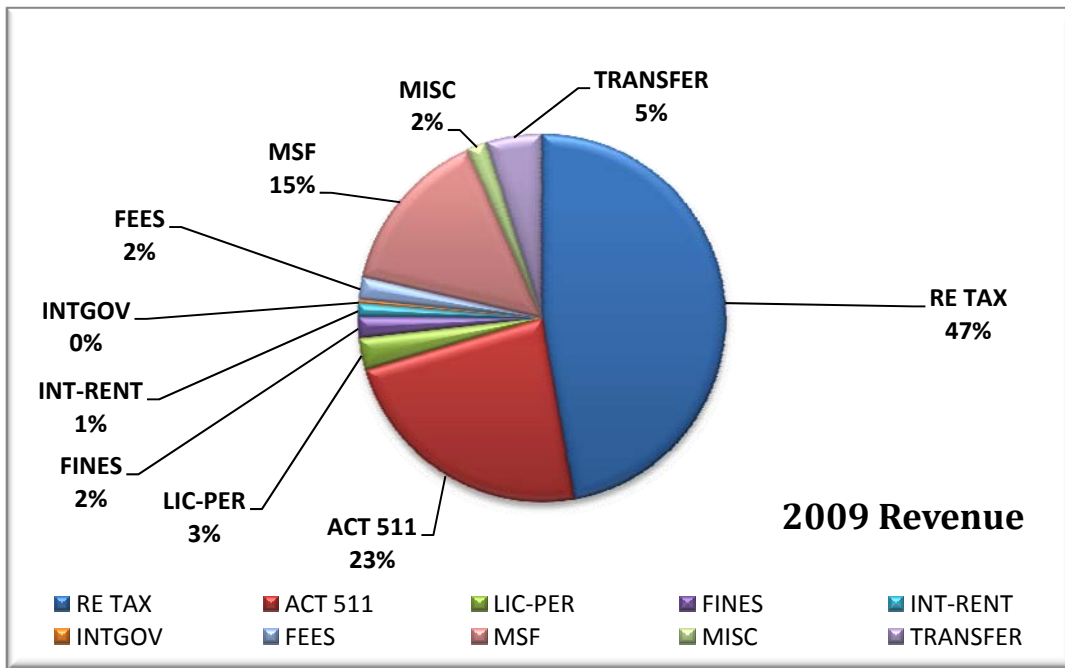
As part of the integrated planning process, the Borough also included, in its request for proposals (RFP), a requirement for an analysis of its financial condition and management practices to be completed as part of the *Wilkinsburg Plan* initiative. The EIP guidelines as well as the RFP developed by the Borough identified the following scope of services.

- Step I: Financial Condition Assessment
- Step II: Financial Trend Analysis
- Step III: Emergency Plan for Current Fiscal Year
- Step IV: Management Audit/Review
- Step V: Multiyear Plan Adoption
- Step VI: Five-Year Plan Implementation

The following is a summary of the findings, observations, and recommendations that resulted from the EIP process.

STEP 1 – FINANCIAL CONDITION ASSESSMENT**Base Revenue Information**

The Borough's general operating fund revenue for 2008 was approximately \$9 million, when adjusting for nonrecurring grant revenue and proceeds from notes and bonds. About 70% of the Borough's revenue base is supported by tax revenue, and of that 70%, approximately 67% of the tax revenue is directly related to Real Estate Tax collection. The assessed value of real estate has been almost flat over the past seven years. The total assessed value for the Borough was \$363 million in 2001, and had increased only to \$364 million in 2008. A mill of tax brought in approximately \$270,000 in 2007 and approximately \$263,000 in 2008.



RECOMMENDATIONS – REVENUE

The following recommendations are made for revenue collection and enhancement.

- Maintain accurate and complete records regarding assessed values, millage rates, delinquent taxes, dollars per mill, and rates of collection.
- Make conservative estimates of projected revenue.
- Do not avoid tax increases when necessary.
- Continue to explore the redevelopment of key areas.
- Continue aggressive activities as they relate to collection of delinquent taxes.
- Continue to work on and publicize the tax base expansion program.
- Revisit the annual tenant registration application and fee program.
- Provide updated information about taxpayers’ addresses, contact information, sales of properties, and permit holders to the Borough tax collectors.
- Regularly monitor and review the collection received from third party agencies.
- Adjust fees for services based on comparisons of fees charged by other communities for services.
- Ensure that the fee charged for every service or item covers the cost of providing that service or item.
- Analyze municipal service fees (MSF) on an annual basis to determine whether the fee charged to the property owner covers the cost of providing the service.
- Aggressively pursue water shutoffs to maximize the collection of sewer fees.
- Undertake aggressive investment of excess funds.
- Fines and forfeits have exhibited a steady downward trend. The police management should review and analyze this issue.





The Borough's revenue stream does not naturally increase without adjustments to tax levies on property. This is always a difficult and politically unpopular decision but is often a necessity when assessments are flat and other revenue sources are not keeping pace with expenses. The goal for revenue generation for the Borough should be a diversification of revenue sources with more emphasis on deriving income from fees and charges for services. It is also absolutely critical that the Borough continue aggressive collection of outstanding delinquent taxes and fees.

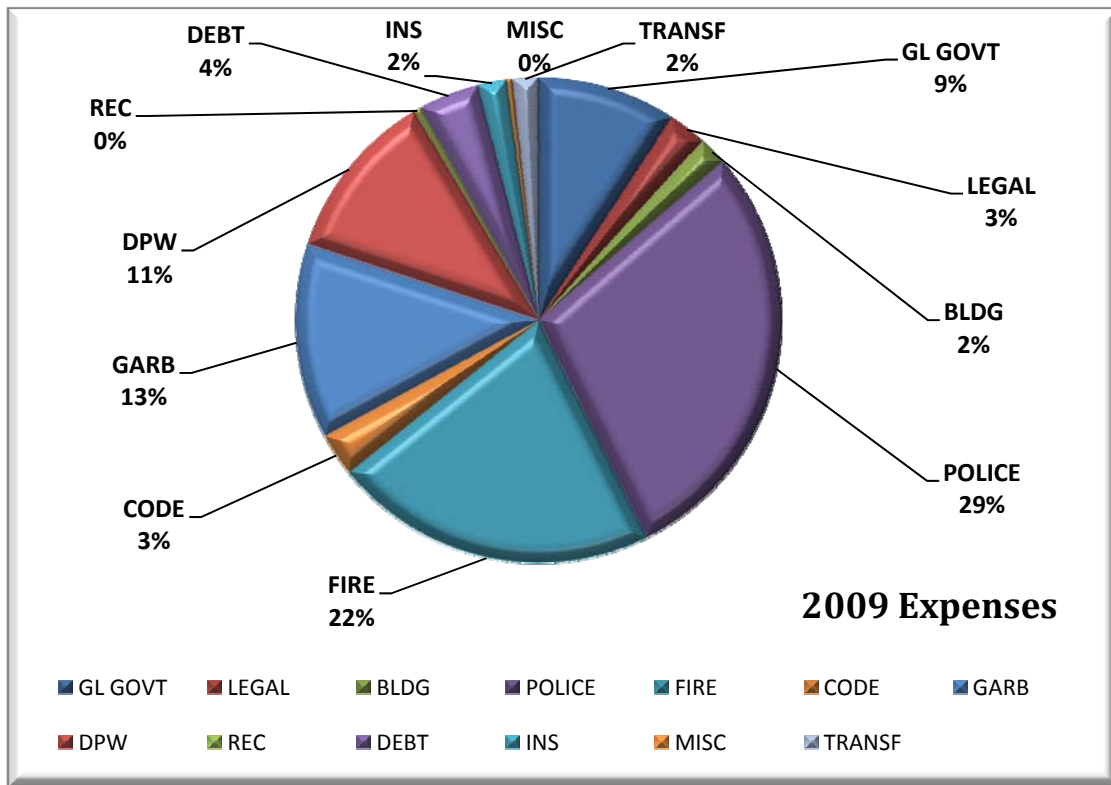
The Borough's revenue stream does not naturally increase without adjustments to tax levies on property. This is always a difficult and politically unpopular decision but is often a necessity when assessments are flat and other revenue sources are not keeping pace with expenses.



Base Expense Information

The Borough’s general operating budget is approximately \$10.3 million and includes expenditures for public safety, general government, health and welfare, public works, debt service, pensions, and recreation. Overall expenses for the Borough have increased less than 1% per year over the past seven years. This is an astonishingly low level of increase considering that many expenses such as healthcare and energy costs had double-digit increases in the past several years. This cost containment of expenses is lower than most local governments over the same time period.

FIGURE 14 2009 EXPENSES BY USE



Public safety expenses make up 51% of the entire Borough annual budget, with the police department at 29% and the fire department at 22%. Expenses for the police department, at \$2.6 million in 2008, are similar to other urban communities. Based on projections from current collective bargaining agreements, increases in public safety are projected to be 3.5% per year over the next five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS – EXPENSES

The following recommendations are made for expense cost containment and enhancement:

- The Borough should carefully examine all aspects of the police operation in order to achieve expenditure reductions, especially in the areas of overtime and health benefits.
- The Borough should pursue the merging of the Wilkinsburg Fire Department with the Pittsburgh Fire Bureau.





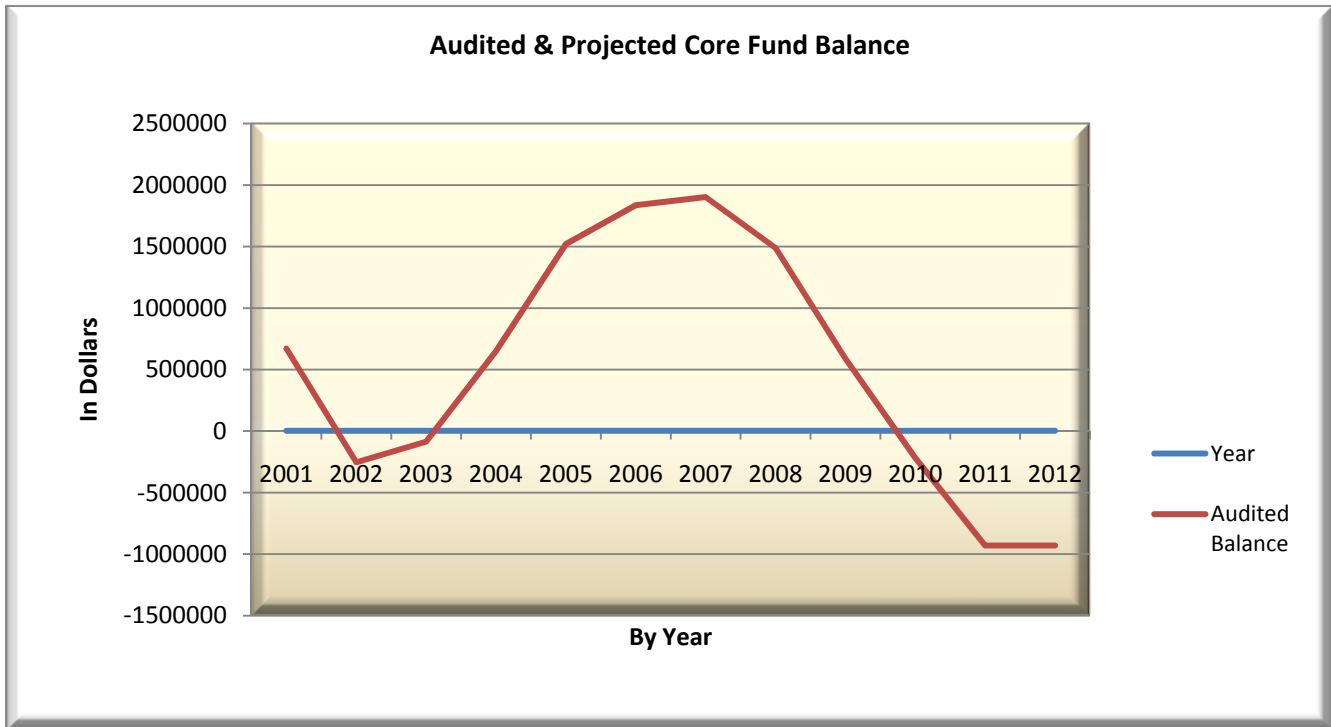
- For every new hire, the appropriate department head should provide justification for the position by identifying the level of service; demand; cost of the hire, including benefits and legacy costs; and alternatives to hiring additional personnel.
- The police chief and fire chief should be required to explore and execute mutual aid agreements for the police and fire departments, so that extraordinary emergencies can be addressed on a regional basis through a cooperative approach.
- Department of Public Works (DPW) streets, parks, and recycling employees should be cross-trained so that they can be transferred to the area that is most in need of attention and where resources should be most heavily deployed.
- A determination should be made as to what expenses can be attributed and charged to funds other than the general operating fund.
- A moderate level of borrowing should be established for improvements to streets, sewers, and facilities so that capital project expenses are well planned and properly funded.
- Part-time summer employees should be employed for low-level laborer activities to supplement the regular workforce.
- The Borough should continue to utilize cooperative purchasing and state contracts for supplies and purchases in order to contain costs.
- The cost of providing services to residents far outpaces the ability of the Borough to generate revenue. The Borough must consider more regional approaches in order to contain costs. The completion of the fire department merger with the city of Pittsburgh is absolutely critical for maintaining a quality service while decreasing costs. This will free up additional resources that can be targeted for other community purposes. The Borough should also consider having the City of Pittsburgh take over the recycling activities in the Borough along with minor services such as animal control. The Borough should also reallocate expenses to the sewer and library funds in order to distribute costs across a broader payer base.

STEP 2 – FINANCIAL TREND ANALYSIS

Based on our review of the Borough's existing financial conditions and trend analysis, it is the consultant team's opinion that there is no imminent financial crisis and therefore no immediate need to amend or modify the budget, undertake operational and/or personnel staff reductions, or engage in short-term borrowing for unfunded debt borrowing. However, our detailed analysis of core operating revenue and core operating expenditures revealed that, without remedial intervention and in the absence of any action by Borough officials, the Borough will experience substantial shortfalls resulting in structural core deficits as high as \$807,000 in 2010 and creating cumulative deficits as high as \$2 million by 2012. Simply stated, the Borough does not currently generate enough revenue to support its operational expenses and has been using cash reserves to support this imbalance since about 2007.



FIGURE 15 AUDITED & PROJECTED CORE FUND BALANCE



This practice has resulted in a depletion of cash reserves and the routine of repeatedly outspending the general fund revenue that is available. It will be important for the Borough Council to review and discuss the following options and strategies to determine which course of action to take to avert the projected shortfalls for fiscal year 2010.

STEP 3 – INTERIM SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

The Borough's gap between the revenue generated and the cost of delivering municipal services cannot be filled by any one action or decision but must be addressed over time by adopting a posture of fiscal discipline and open dialogue with the public and the other communities and policy makers in the region.

Some short-term revenue enhancement recommendations are outlined below.

Revenue Enhancements – Strategies

- Monitor and analyze the delinquent collections by third-party collectors to ensure that all possible avenues are being pursued for current and delinquent tax collections. The delinquent tax collector should be required to meet and discuss the methods and progress of their collection efforts on at least a quarterly basis.
- Maintain accurate and complete records regarding assessed values, millage rates, revenue generated per mill, and rates of collection. Use this information during the budget process to make informed decisions about the estimated projections for real estate tax collection.



- Continue to utilize the tax base expansion program as an incentive to return abandoned and vacant properties to the tax rolls as taxable property.
- Maintain a current list of the tax-exempt properties in the Borough in order to work with owners to pursue some equitable payment to the Borough for the many local government services provided in the form of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS). Capturing even 15% of the potential tax-exempt revenue would result in over \$100,000 annually for the Borough. Furthermore, the Borough should routinely review the list of tax exempt property in order to return property that is vacant or no longer being used for tax exempt purposes to the tax roles.
- Pursue an aggressive code enforcement program. Code enforcement helps to preserve the value of older housing stock and increase the value and availability of commercial real estate. This will eventually be reflected in the assessed value and the real estate tax collection.
- Utilize American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funds when possible to undertake additional improvements in the neighborhoods related to the improvement of housing stock, demolition of blighted property, and acquisition of suitable lots for development.
- Use the rental registration program as a way to keep the list for earned income tax current and complete.
- Use the list of water and sewer users from the Wilkinsburg Penn Joint Water Authority (WPJWA) to cross-index the residents who live in the Borough.
- Monitor and track the deposits of tax revenue from Berkheimer at least on a quarterly basis to ensure that there are logical, consistent deposits.
- Include an inventory of businesses in the Borough's property management module that interfaces with the PRISM system.
- Have Berkheimer conduct regular audits of business tax revenue randomly (about six per year) to assure greater compliance with the business tax law.
- Complete a comprehensive analysis of the MSF fee on a regular basis.
- Consider an increase to occupancy permits to \$100 for residential and \$250 for commercial inspections. The current fee does not cover the cost of the employee's inspection time.
- Increase the fee for parking permits to at least \$20 per month.
- Increase the fee for dye tests to at least \$50.
- Establish a fee of at least \$750 for an amusement device permit and set up a good collection program.
- Revisit and readjust

Cost Containment – Strategies

The Borough has done a good job of containing costs over the past eight years, primarily by using a strategy of staff reductions in the police

... the Borough should routinely review the list of tax exempt property in order to return property that is vacant or no longer being used for tax exempt purposes to the tax roles.

department and the public works department, which has kept the annual increase in Borough expenses to about 1% per year over the past eight years. As a result, the police department expenses (about \$3 million in 2009) have increased at a rate of about 3% per year, and the DPW expenses have remained flat since 2001, at about \$1.1 million for operations. Meanwhile, the fire department expenses have escalated at about 5% per year and will reach \$2.2 million in 2009. Public safety expenses make up about 51% of the overall general operating expenses in the Borough. Cost containment must therefore focus primarily in the area of public safety.

STEP 4 – MANAGEMENT AUDIT STRATEGIES

Management and Finance

In Wilkinsburg, there has been a history of transition, instability, and constant restructuring at the management level. This constant change and upheaval has had a detrimental effect on the ability to move the organization forward and to administer programs and provide services in a consistent and effective way. For this reason, the following recommendations are made:

- The Borough should consider a Home Rule Study Commission process in order to consider a government structure that is more adaptable to a highly technical, highly complex local government environment.
- No changes should be made in the management team unless absolutely necessary. This will provide the stability, consistency, and institutional knowledge that is necessary for a complex organization to succeed. Fire carefully – but hire even more carefully to ensure that the best available candidates are installed in management positions.
- There should be transparency and open discussion with the community on a regular basis regarding the challenges that face the Borough organization, so that any increases to fees, permits, and taxes are not surprising or unexpected.
- Management should engage in regular discussions with employees and bargaining units about the fiscal constraints that the Borough faces.
- The Borough should have better, more comprehensive and timely financial reporting that results in better information for decision-making purposes.
- The finance department should set up a routine procedure that will require a complete analysis of cost prior to any new hire in any department.
- The electronic purchasing system should be simplified and streamlined.
- Monthly financial reporting should include a cash flow analysis that identifies what the actual availability of cash is estimated to be by month and at year end.

Police Department

The dense, urban population in Wilkinsburg presents challenges for its police department. Under the control of the mayor, the chief of police directs the day-to-day operation of the 23-member Wilkinsburg Police Department. The police department is comprised of the chief of police, one lieutenant, three detectives, five sergeants, and 13 patrol officers, two of whom are K-9 officers. In addition to the 22 sworn officers, there are two clerical support personnel, one

parking enforcement officer, and 12 school crossing guards. It is significant to note that in 2004, there were 30 sworn police officers in the department.

Public safety is one of the most important considerations for a community's sense of well-being. Research indicates that the lack of a sense of safety and security is one of the greatest deterrents to community development. Based on background research, public input, and analysis of the business district and the Borough operations, public safety rises to the highest priority in all three components of the plan. Many of the following action items are drawn from the EIP operational review of the police department and the recommendations contained therein.

- The Police Chief should be required to obtain and retain certification through the required MPOETC Act 120 process.
- The Borough should work with the Police Chief and an accreditation advisor to move the department towards an official accreditation with the PA Chiefs of Police Association. This process would require the department to meet certain threshold standards for staffing, operations, training, facilities, technology, processes and policies.
- The Special Operations Unit (SOU) should continue only on an as-needed basis for specific cases in order to free up sufficient manpower to allow for more routine patrols in the neighborhoods and business district.
- The Borough should eliminate the requirement that an officer remain on duty at the station 24/7 for access by the walk-in public in order to free up sufficient manpower to allow for more routine patrols in the neighborhoods and business district..
- The police department should be re-deployed in order to address concerns about higher visibility in the neighborhoods and business district.
- Healthcare and overtime continue to be areas of concern for cost containment. Health insurance for the police department is expected to increase to over \$500,000 in 2009. Overtime more than doubled from \$130,000 in 2007 to about \$292,000 in 2008. Strategies to contain the cost for these expensive items should be implemented.
- A summary of the recommendations is presented with additional discussion and explanation in the EIP, Step IV – Management Audit of the Police Department.

Beyond the strategies outlined in the EIP, several others emerged, many of which are related to the deployment of police officers. Police presence and visibility can be a significant deterrent to crime. While hiring additional police officers may not be possible within the current financial constraints, some of these additional strategies could potentially be implemented utilizing the existing staff.

A cost-effective and efficient way to develop new strategies to increase public safety is to implement modern techniques that are learned from the experiences of other communities and from organizations that focus on crime prevention. Washington D.C.'s police department has recently implemented some innovative programs to assist in crime prevention that consist of evaluating real-time statistics to determine when and where to deploy resources. According to

Police Chief Cathy Lanier in a recent interview with *Parade*, 3% of D.C.'s addresses account for 50% of violent crimes. One of the strategies for Wilkinsburg should involve identifying trouble spots to mitigate crime. In order to review information regarding Chief Lanier's approach in Washington, D.C. the full *Parade* article can be viewed at

<http://www.parade.com/news/2009/08/02-new-ways-to-stop-crime.html?index=2> .

In addition to the action items that are related to the effective utilization of current staffing and resources, the police department could implement a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) program to provide education and advisory services regarding physical design principles for preventing crime. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts. Research into criminal behavior shows that the decision to offend or not to offend is more influenced by cues to the perceived risk of being caught than by cues of reward or ease of entry. Consistent with this research, CPTED-based strategies emphasize enhancing the perceived risk of detection and apprehension. Some examples of CPTED include the following:

- Natural Surveillance
 - Placing windows overlooking sidewalks and parking lots
 - Using passing vehicular traffic as a surveillance asset
 - Ensuring potential problem areas are well lit
- Natural Access Control
 - Using a single identifiable point of entry
 - Incorporating maze designs in public restrooms
 - Using low, thorny bushes under ground-level windows
- Natural Territorial Reinforcement
 - Maintaining premises and landscaping so that they communicate occupied space
 - Providing trees in residential areas to improve attractiveness
 - Placing seating and refreshments in common areas to attract more users to the areas
 - Scheduling activities in common areas to attract more people and increase the perception that the area is controlled

These principles should be considered as strategies for renovations in the business district, and in neighborhoods as well. There are two resource documents that can supplement the information relative to CPTED in this section. One is a 126-page overview of the theory supporting the programs, *Creating Defensible Space*, published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, and the other is a sample program from Virginia Beach, Virginia that can be accessed at the following website:

<http://www.vbgov.com/vgn.aspx?vnextoid=4bb2340df304c010VgnVCM1000006310640aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=98ed2e33cf91b010VgnVCM100000870b640aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

Another valuable resource for information is the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. This organization can be found online at www.popcenter.org. A number of research articles and guideline are available on the Web site including but not limited to articles related to the general effectiveness of CPTED, using street lighting in neighborhoods to decrease crime, and crime prevention in urban parks.

Fire Department

The Wilkinsburg Fire Department provides service seven days a week, 24 hours a day, from two fire stations – a central station located at 605 Ross Avenue in the southeastern portion of the Borough, and a substation located at 1230 Park Avenue in the demographic center. The department’s current staffing consists of 25 full-time and three part-time members who deliver fire suppression and vehicle rescue services. The department responds to approximately 900 calls per year. The fire chief and sub-firefighters are exempt employees.

In addition to emergency response, the department also delivers non-emergency services in the form of fire prevention inspections and a limited fire safety education program. Numerous other fire safety-related programs such as a kitchen fire suppression system installation, a smoke detector program, school visits, Risk Watch, the public safety academy, and juvenile fire-setters programs are in place but are not consistently managed or delivered. The fire department does not have a mission statement. Emergency medical services are delivered by a private ambulance service.

The EIP management audit proposes a merger of the Wilkinsburg Fire Department with the City of Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire which serves two important purposes:

1. It improves the quality, consistency, and depth of available fire response services.
2. It frees up financial resources that can be directed for other community purposes.

For this reason, the Borough should continue to schedule meetings to discuss the possibility of merging fire services with the city of Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire Services.

Over the past several years, there have been at least three discussions regarding consolidation of Wilkinsburg fire services with those of the city of Pittsburgh. A consolidation of fire services would allow the Borough to (1) meet the NFPA 1710 standard-of-coverage goal of deploying an initial full-alarm assignment with a minimum of 15 firefighters within an eight-minute response time to 90% of fire incidents; and (2) realize a budget savings in excess of \$600,000 annually.

The primary goal of any plan of consolidation or merger should revolve around and focus upon public safety considerations, with a secondary consideration being economics.

Unfortunately, over the last 30 years, emergency services in Pennsylvania have been tasked with greater demands to address additional knowledge and skill sets required (i.e., hazardous materials, terrorism, technical rescue) as well as respond to an increasing number of calls. Although the number of serious fires has decreased nationwide, the number of required responses and related demands on service providers has increased. The aging population and housing stock will continue to place an increasing demand on emergency services as well. Additionally, in recent years, Pennsylvania has had the unfortunate experience of being at the top of the list in the number of emergency responders killed in the line of duty.

The bottom line is that the emergency services in many communities are being tasked to provide greater levels of service with very limited resources and decreasing financial assistance. The need exists to develop a cost-effective method for emergency services delivery throughout the Commonwealth.

The reality is that each community is left to answer the following questions:

- “What do we need to protect the community?”
- “How much will it cost?”
- “What are our funding sources?”
- “How do we deliver these services?”

In February of 2008, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth enacted House Bill No. 1133 amending the Act of February 1, 1966 (1965 P.L. 1656, No. 581) entitled “An act concerning boroughs, and revising, amending and consolidating the law relating to boroughs,” providing for specific powers of boroughs relating to emergency services. The 2008 bill added a clause that “the borough shall be responsible for ensuring that fire and emergency medical services are provided within the borough by the means and to the extent determined by the borough, including the appropriate financial and administrative assistance for these services. The borough shall consult with fire and emergency medical service providers to discuss the emergency services needs of the borough. The borough shall require any emergency services organization receiving borough funds to provide to the borough an annual itemized listing of all expenditures of these funds before the borough may consider budgeting additional funding to the organization.” Similar amendments were also made for first- and second-class townships, placing the responsibility for providing fire protection on the local governing body.

The joining of fire and rescue organizations is a means by which an increasing number of municipalities are responding to a variety of issues. These issues include fiscal constraints, increasing workload, new and increasing demands for service, and the need to become more cost efficient and productive.

The proposal by the city of Pittsburgh to provide fire protection includes several important considerations:

1. All current Wilkinsburg Fire Department staff would be employed by the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire .
2. The Wilkinsburg station located at 605 Ross Avenue would be staffed 24 hours a day by a single ladder and engine company.
3. The station located at 1230 Park Avenue would be closed, resulting in an estimated delay of approximately two minutes to certain sections of the Borough.
4. Automatic aid would be provided by Pittsburgh's number 17 engine and truck, located at 7601 Hamilton Avenue, in the Homewood section. Travel time from the Homewood station to the Wilkinsburg station is estimated at three minutes.
5. The fire department would provide first responder services to assist EMS at all medical calls in the Borough.
6. The Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire does not conduct fire safety education programs or building inspections. Both of these programs could be delivered by adding a full-time fire inspector/public education specialist to the building inspections office.
7. Extrication and rescue services would need to be provided by Pittsburgh EMS.

It is recommended that a draft charter agreement would establish a consolidated Fire Commission that would include representation from both local governments. The commission would be responsible for the operation, management, and administration of the consolidated fire department. This is consistent with the governance approach that has been adopted by the majority of consolidated public safety agencies in Pennsylvania.

A major issue in the consolidation of fire departments is funding. There are a number of formulas for funding consolidated fire and rescue services. Both Wilkinsburg and the City of Pittsburgh fire departments are funded through tax revenues. The following options are provided for consideration. Ultimately, funding of the consolidated fire department must be negotiated between and agreed upon by the municipalities based on the following factors.

1. **Assessed Property Valuation:** Pittsburgh's assessed property valuation is \$13,325,234,000, and Wilkinsburg Borough's assessed property valuation is \$368,707,270, for a total assessed property valuation of \$13,693,941,270. Wilkinsburg's assessed property valuation is approximately 2.7% of the overall assessed property valuation of the two municipalities.
2. **True Property Value:** Pittsburgh's true property value is \$21,084,308,000 according to its 2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Wilkinsburg's true property value is \$427,222,200. The total property valuation for both municipalities is \$21,511,530,200.
3. **Cost Per Capita:** The calculation for the cost per capita is defined as the actual direct funding from the municipality to the fire company.
4. **Resources:** personnel, apparatus, and station locations necessary to staff a single engine are outlined in the EIP.

Overall, there is very little opportunity to trim the fire department budget without a merger or contract with the City of Pittsburgh. Non-personnel costs are not excessive and are actually comparatively low. The fire department continues to operate with outdated apparatus and equipment that is in need of replacement. Recommendations include the following:

- A merger between the city of Pittsburgh and Wilkinsburg Fire Departments could result in a savings of \$800,000 to \$1 million per year by 2013.

Public Works and Parks

Wilkinsburg Borough spends less for its Department of Public Works (DPW) than most other communities of its size and demographics. Recommendations include the following:

- The structure of the department should be changed so that there is a Director and only one foreman or supervisor.
- A plan should be developed for each park, showing the equipment to be replaced and providing a funding matrix.
- The Borough should hire additional qualified and responsible summer employees to assist the DPW with street and sewer maintenance, to cut the grass and maintain the parks, and to undertake routine maintenance of facilities on a regular basis.

- The Borough should consider directing capital funds to infrastructure, facilities, and the parks to provide local matching funds for projects.
- The Borough should have personnel in the parks during the summer months to help provide programming as well as provide a presence to deter vandalism.
- Employees should be cross trained so that the department is multi-functional.

Pensions

Historical trend information through 2007 indicates that the Borough's pension plans (police, fire, and non-uniform) were adequately funded through December 31, 2006. However, the Borough is in the process of completing actuarial information for the period ending December 31, 2008, and expects that, because of the investment history over the past two years, the Borough may be subject to additional contributions into the pension funds. In the past, the Borough's state aid allocation covered the state-required Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) to the pension funds. With poor investment history in 2007 and 2008, the Borough may be required to make contributions from the general fund in the future.

- It is recommended that the Borough closely monitor the pension investment activity and make adjustments as necessary to preserve assets and protect the Borough from any additional expense from the general fund to the pension funds. A review of pension investment managers should be conducted at least every five years.

Intergovernmental Initiatives

The Borough should attempt to encourage and pursue intergovernmental solutions with its surrounding communities. The Borough has many opportunities for this because it shares borders with the city of Pittsburgh, Churchill Borough, Forest Hills Borough, Braddock Hills Borough, Penn Hills, and Edgewood Borough. The best method for effecting such cooperating, merging, or sharing of services is for the council, manager, and department directors to participate in any and all regional discussion opportunities available to them. Therefore, recommendations include active participation in the following organizations at a minimum:

- Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments
- Western Pennsylvania Municipal Managers
- Western Pennsylvania Police Chiefs
- Allegheny League of Municipalities
- Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
- Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities

Entering into discussions with these groups and others will provide invaluable opportunities for working on regional solutions and engaging in regional dialogue about issues that impact the Borough.

PRIORITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The Comprehensive Plan strategies should be developed as a direct result of the synthesis and analysis of the data collection process integrating the goal-setting stages of the plan. It is important to include strategies derived from the other components of the Wilkinsburg planning process: 1) the Business District Revitalization Plan, which is a focused and strategic plan for the viability of the Penn Avenue and Wood Street business district; and 2) the Early Intervention Plan (EIP), which is a complete review of the Borough's financial resources and organizational capacity to deliver critical public services for the community. The goals that were identified as part of these parallel planning exercises must support and complement the overall community objectives in the Comprehensive Plan so that a true synthesis occurs. It is necessary to develop such a synthesis of vision and resources, action and capacity in order to create the possibility of successful implementation and positive outcomes.

Strategy

- Action Items
- Responsibility
- Timeline
- Implementation Tools

The most important component of a comprehensive plan is its strategy for implementation. Without a strategy for implementation, the plan is destined to fall short of actually being realized. The ideal strategy is one that represents the vision of the community, challenges the community to stretch beyond its limits, and is organized in a way that makes it achievable. The Wilkinsburg strategy meets each of these criteria. The strategy components are based on the vision of community residents, as expressed through a series of neighborhood meetings, and on solid research data. Many of the components present challenges that will require leadership to stretch beyond its limits and to work as a team toward a common goal. But most importantly, the strategy is strategically focused on a *few critical action items* that are certainly achievable through unity, responsibility, and accountability.

This implementation strategy is unique, because it has combined the action strategies from all three components of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*, — the Comprehensive Plan, the Business District Revitalization Plan, and the Early Intervention Plan, into a single, cohesive strategy. Throughout the implementation strategy, the interdependence of various action strategies is evident, as strategies build on, complement, or are influenced by the results of other strategies.

As each component of the Comprehensive Plan was reviewed and assessed, based on public input, a series of goals in the form of vision statements was developed for each that presented a vivid picture of where the Borough wants to be in that area within the next ten years. To develop an action plan for taking these goals from vision to reality, a series of four steps was undertaken.

1. **CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR** – During the first step, with input from the Project Steering Committee, the critical success factors were identified that would need to be put in place to successfully achieve these goals. As indicated in the specific element sections of the comprehensive plan, a critical success factor is defined as something the Borough would need *to have* or *to be* in order to achieve the goal, and without it, achieving the goal would be impossible. The goals and their critical success factors can be found in each section of Comprehensive Plan elements.

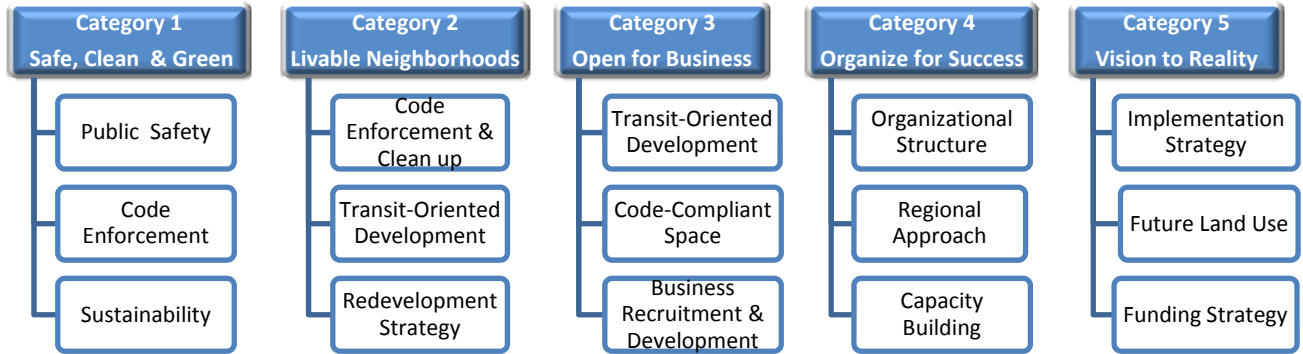
2. **ACTION STEP** – The second step in the process involved the identification of key action steps that would need to be taken to accomplish each critical success. These action steps served as the core components of the implementation strategy.
3. **SYNTHESIZING AND ORGANIZING** – Because many of the planning components are interdependent, many of the goals/vision statements, critical success factors, and action steps for each planning component were repetitive when considered in the aggregate. Step three of the process involved organizing actions into strategic implementation categories to facilitate implementation and combining those that were repetitive into a single, comprehensive action item. An overview of these categories can be found in Figure 16.
4. **PRIORITIZING** – At the conclusion of the above process, the overall strategy consisted of over 200 action items. To ensure that the final plan is not overwhelming and is achievable, these action items were prioritized into the most important actions.

As indicated in Step 3 above, for presentation purposes, planning components were categorized into five major categories directly derived from the public involvement process. The categories that evolved, based on residents and stakeholder input, are as follows:



Each of the major categories represents an envisioned future characteristic of Wilkinsburg. These five categories and their respective sub-categories are presented in Figure 16.

FIGURE 16 – STRATEGY CATEGORIES FOR THE WILKINSBURG PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



For each of the five categories shown in Figure 16, certain strategies were identified during the planning process as being high-priority. Figure 17 summarizes each category with the high-priority strategies identified under each of the respective categories. The following sections provide the specifics on actions with regard to these highest priority recommendations.

FIGURE 17 – HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGIES DERIVED FROM PLANNING PROCESS

High Priority Strategies



These high-priority strategies are discussed in detail in the sections below.

CATEGORY 1 – SAFE, CLEAN, AND GREEN HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Safe, Clean, and Green
Community Policing ♦ Code Enforcement

The goals that were previously identified through the public process and in meetings with the Steering Committee that are related to the Safe, Clean, and Green category are as follows:

- Goal 1: Wilkinsburg’s neighborhoods will be safe and attractive for family living, with walkable streets and safe public spaces.**
- Goal 2: Wilkinsburg will eliminate blight and vacancies to turn land into productive space, including green space, by encouraging infill development.**
- Goal 3: Wilkinsburg will have an active, engaged, and professional police presence that provides a sense of comfort and safety for its residents, and businesses.**
- Goal 4: Wilkinsburg will regularly commit resources to support code enforcement and model code enforcement practices.**
- Goal 5: Wilkinsburg will regularly commit resources to quality of life and sustainability.**

The implementation strategies that were identified as the highest priority for meeting the goals related to “Safe, Clean, and Green” are as follows:

SAFE

MAKE CHANGES TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT THAT FOCUS ON COMMUNITY POLICING AND MEETING MODERN STANDARDS FOR POLICE OPERATIONS.

- STEP 1** – The police chief should be required to be Act 120 certified.
- STEP 2** – The chief and all supervisors should attend the Command Institute for Police Executives, Pollex and Advanced Pollex. This will provide a broad overview of modern police standards and procedures.
- STEP 3** – The Special Operations Unit (SOU) should be used only for special assignments. Officers currently in the SOU should be re-deployed to patrol activities in the neighborhoods and business district.
- STEP 4** - The chief and supervisors should deploy officers so that community policing principles are met and there is higher visibility in the neighborhoods and business district.
- STEP 5** - The chief should carefully choose and train a police officer to act as the department's public information officer (PIO) who will be the sole point of contact with the media.
- STEP 6** - The Borough should hire full-time and part-time police patrol personnel in accordance with the patrolling needs guidelines calculated by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) formula included in the EIP.
- STEP 7** - The Wilkinsburg Police Department Manual of Standard Operating Procedures and Policies should be updated to include an emphasis on community policing.



STEP 8 - The police department should initiate the process of seeking accreditation with the help of an accreditation advisor through the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association. This process will require the department to fully meet the standards for modern police operations.

CLEAN

MAKE CHANGES TO THE CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT TO ADDRESS BLIGHT, DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS, AND LITTER.

Many of the recommendations that are made related to a code enforcement strategy are derived from the EIP operational review of the department. In an older community, the building and codes department is the most important local government operation for enhancing the business district, stabilizing the neighborhoods, and preserving the housing stock. During the six neighborhood meetings, the residents voiced their opinions loud and clear about issues related to the cleanup of the neighborhoods and business district. For this reason, the Borough should consider making a commitment of resources to the building, zoning, and code enforcement operation. In order to demonstrate this commitment, the Borough should assign or appoint a full-time department director, dedicated to the building, zoning, and code functions, to provide the leadership necessary to properly supervise personnel, maximize resources, and fully commit to the Borough's development and redevelopment goals. In the past, this department only received about 1.5% of the overall resources available in the Wilkinsburg budget. The Borough should make a commitment to raise this to at least 3% of the budget (from \$176,000 to \$350,000) over the next three years.

Some of the recommendations from the EIP are shown as action items in the building and codes department as follows:

STEP 9 - The Borough should recruit and employ a Director of Building and Codes who is knowledgeable about: 1) planning, zoning and the MPC; 2) building codes, property maintenance codes, and the Uniform Construction Code (UCC); 3) code enforcement of local ordinances under the Wilkinsburg Code. Furthermore, regular and comprehensive training should be scheduled and required for all employees.

STEP 10 - The Borough should revise and update the occupancy permit program for residential and commercial properties. The Borough should take a much firmer stance in identifying violations and having them corrected prior to the transfer of property from seller to buyer. The steps in the recommended process are as follows:

1. When the Borough receives a request for a lien letter, the request is forwarded to the zoning officer and the building official in the codes department.
2. The building and codes office notifies the owner, buyer, or closing agent that the no-lien letter also triggers the request for an occupancy permit and that the occupancy permit must be issued prior to the release of the no-lien letter. The requesting party can then go to the Borough's Web site and download the application for an occupancy permit.

3. The occupancy permit application form, at a minimum, needs to have the following information: property address, lot and block number, zoning district in which the subject property is located, current use of the property, and proposed use of the property. With this information, the zoning officer should be able to conduct a search to see if there are any problems with the current or proposed use of the property.
4. The application should be accompanied by a check for the occupancy permit. The \$25 fee currently charged for this permit should be changed to reflect the cost of issuance, including research, reviews, and inspections of the property. A fee of \$75 or \$100 is more consistent with the fee charged by other municipalities.
5. The certified building inspector and a member of the fire department certified in the fire prevention code conduct the inspection of the property. All building codes, fire codes, property maintenance codes, and local codes are noted by the inspectors on a checklist. A letter is sent to the owner (seller), buyer, and/or closing agent for the property outlining all the violations that must be corrected prior to the sale of the property. The letter lists each deficiency and shows the corresponding code section for the violation. For example, the letter may say "PM202.3 - Handrails required for stairs with four or more risers."
6. Once the owner corrects the violations, he contacts the inspector. The Inspector verifies that the violations have been sufficiently addressed. Once all violations are addressed, the occupancy permit is issued and the no-lien letter is released.

Legally, the fact that an occupancy permit has not been issued cannot hold up the closing on the sale of a property. But practically, the lending institution and the new owner have an interest in making sure that an occupancy permit is issued. And the Borough is not required to issue the occupancy permit or the no-lien letters until their conditions are met.

STEP 11 - The Borough should develop and provide turnkey packets for residents and contractors. The Borough should develop and provide the public with a checklist of items required for zoning permits, special exceptions, and for subdivision and land development applications. Packets can be prepared in advance with all of the associated items necessary for the permit requester to begin the process. The prepared packets should outline the necessary approvals and timelines needed for various steps of the process. This is an enormous benefit to residents, business owners, and potential developers. In the six neighborhood public involvement meetings and the business district charrette, residents and business owners reported that they had difficulty getting the information they needed in a timely manner and that they were not aware of Borough regulations. Much of the routine information and permit applications should be available on the Borough's Web site so residents can save time and resources by downloading and completing applications in advance of an inspection or permit request.



STEP 12 - It may be necessary to utilize a third-party contractor to undertake some of the activities in this department. Occupancy permits, review of commercial permits, and routine plan review can easily be done by a contracted vendor. This would free up the full-time employees for an intense focus on property maintenance items in the neighborhoods and business district. This option should be carefully evaluated by management as an option for providing quality services while increasing the capacity of the department to bring more focus to the cleanup of the Borough neighborhoods and business district.

Wilkinsburg’s building and codes personnel are knowledgeable and hard working. However, the lack of a full-time department director has caused the employees to lose focus, direction, and ultimately productivity. A department director with the appropriate background and experience should be appointed to this important position. The director should provide leadership, direction, and administrative guidance to the work routines, assignments, and processes that are critical to the planning and code functions in this department. Ordinances and codes should be updated and brought

While Borough staff should be assigned regular cleanup tasks, especially in the business district and in public areas, implementation of an ongoing clean up focus will rely heavily on public involvement.

into compliance with current statutory requirements, and a record-keeping system must be installed that will allow the department to track activity and provide reports to management and the governing body. The Borough should consider investing resources to bring the building and codes operation up to modern standards that will help to preserve the Borough’s business district area and neighborhoods for the future.

Additional recommendations are contained in the EIP, “Building and Codes Section.”

STEP 13 - Borough Council should appoint a subcommittee and/or task force to organize and lead a widespread clean up initiative.

The Borough should coordinate all of the clean up and code enforcement activities with the Weed and Seed Program coordinators and with the neighborhood Block Clubs in order to maximize the support and volunteer help necessary to undertake clean up activities.

While Borough staff should be assigned regular cleanup tasks, especially in the business district and in public areas, implementation of an ongoing clean up focus will rely heavily on public involvement. The key to implementation of this strategy is organization. The neighborhood Block Clubs should be supported by Borough Council members in order to organize and promote this initiative. Positive media coverage about routine clean up events will provide community support and cohesiveness around the clean up focus.. As residents begin to see results, they will begin to take more pride in the community and will be more likely to participate in events in the future. Events such as this are also a way to promote interaction among residents from different neighborhoods within the Borough as they join together in a common effort.





GREEN

Implementation of green and sustainable action strategies will require a collaborative effort among Borough officials, local and regional organizations, and citizen groups. To be effective, these strategies must be incorporated in the early stages of planning for business district and neighborhood revitalization; therefore, it is very important that a greening focus and sustainable outcomes be identified early in order to begin communication with other planning groups. This communication can be initiated through the Implementation Committee. While some specific greening and sustainability strategies have been suggested in the strategies throughout this plan, it is anticipated that a more specific strategy will result from the sustainability assessment that was conducted by Sustainable Pittsburgh. Therefore, this action strategy should be revisited and updated accordingly after the completion of that assessment.

STEP 14 – Borough Council should assign a person or group to be responsible for oversight and implementation of the sustainability plan being developed by Sustainable Pittsburgh.



CATEGORY 2 - LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Livable Neighborhoods
TOD Strategy ♦ Redevelopment Strategy

The goals that were previously identified that are related to housing and neighborhoods for the Livable Neighborhoods category are as follows:

- Goal 6: Wilkinsburg will use TOD to attract new residents and provide new convenient housing options.
- Goal 7: Wilkinsburg will have gathering places for local residents and will provide community activities that transcend and shatter social barriers.
- Goal 8: Wilkinsburg residents will take pride in their community and work together to make it a safe, inclusive, and attractive place to live.
- Goal 9: Wilkinsburg will improve the attractiveness and livability of its neighborhoods to attract new residents and improve the quality of life for current residents.

The implementation strategies for housing and neighborhoods that were identified as of the highest priority in order to meet the Livable Neighborhoods goals are as follows:

TOD STRATEGY (see also Business District TOD Strategy)

The development and implementation of a TOD strategy should be first priority for both neighborhood development and for business district development, and is recommended as one of the top five strategies to be addressed in the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*. DCED’s TRID program provides funding for conducting studies and developing plans for TOD; however, availability of funds could be limited by state budgetary constraints. An application for funding under this program should be developed and submitted immediately to ensure timely implementation of this task. Housing should be a key component of the strategy. If strategically planned and promoted, a TOD in Wilkinsburg could be very attractive to commuters and to urban pioneers, and could create the demand for more dense residential options in the TOD district. Dense residential, in turn, creates the basis for a vibrant business district. While specific action items are included in this strategy, it is anticipated that a more specific strategy will result from a TRID study; therefore, this action strategy should be flexible to incorporate those strategies as they are recommended.

Additional action items related to the neighborhood TOD strategy include the following:

STEP 1 - An application for funding under the TRID Program through DCED’s Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP) grant program should be developed and submitted immediately to ensure timely implementation of this task.

STEP 2 – Borough Council should task the Implementation Committee with the responsibility for developing and advancing the strategy which must focus on high-density, pedestrian-oriented housing opportunities as a key component of the TOD strategy.



REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The neighborhoods and housing strategy is one of the most important strategies in the Comprehensive Plan, and will require methodical, deliberate action and both public and private investment. Focus areas identified in the “Housing and Neighborhoods” section of the Comprehensive Plan should be priority for public investment and focus. While the implementation of many of the components in this strategy can happen immediately, full implementation can take years to complete. However, if care is taken to ensure that progress is visible to both residents and potential investors, the time frame for full implementation can be shortened.

STEP 3 – Task oversight subcommittee with responsibility of developing the priority neighborhood redevelopment strategy (See Vision to Reality Strategies). Committee should consider the following priorities in developing the strategy:

- An infill strategy or a side-lot strategy must be pursued. The marketing of the availability of lots adjacent to viable properties should be promoted. Incentives for making the lots more attractive to potential buyers should be explored by the economic development committee of Council in conjunction with other strategic partners.
- A strong focus on property maintenance and better code enforcement must be required in this area. This emphasis is critical in order to reverse the downward transition of this neighborhood and make it more attractive for potential homeowners.
- Homeownership should also be a key strategy, with a focus on incentives.
- A master plan for priority investment areas should be undertaken to identify opportunities for open space, parks, and conservation areas to increase the attractiveness of the neighborhood and to create, preserve, and protect open space.
- Public investment efforts could include curbs, sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps at intersections, streetlights, street trees, and raised intersections that can serve as both decorative and traffic-calming elements. CDBG funds can be targeted to ADA sidewalk improvements, and alternative energy programs can be tapped to install or replace decorative lighting.
- Demolition funds should be used strategically to allow for open space, courtyards, urban gardens, public art, and other green amenities that are designed for sustainability.
- Infrastructure investments should be made to support and preserve strong and healthy neighborhoods. Improvements to arterial streets should be focused on beautification and efficient traffic flow, while improvements to collector and local streets should focus on beautification and traffic calming. As with the collector roads in the corridor focus areas, the arterial roads in these focus areas are highly travelled by pass-through traffic.

CATEGORY 3 – OPEN FOR BUSINESS – HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Open for Business
TOD Strategy ♦ Code Compliant Space ♦ Code Enforcement

A clear community vision for the Wilkinsburg business district, the basis for the Borough’s new business district consensus plan, has emerged from a planning process that engaged residents, business and property owners, officials, and stakeholders. Its strength comes from the fact that the vision embodies the values and aspirations of the community. As the guiding principle of the business district, the vision should guide decisions, set priorities, and spur actions of both the public and private sectors, as the Borough works toward revitalization, growth, and economic stability. The goals related to the revitalization of the business district that evolved from the background research, neighborhood meetings, market assessment, and the visioning exercises during the business district charrette are as follows:

- Goal 10: The Wilkinsburg business district will be a traditional, historic, attractive, and walkable main street commercial center.**
- Goal 11: The Wilkinsburg business district will be prosperous and economically sustainable.**
- Goal 12: The Wilkinsburg business district will be friendly, safe, and will attract residents, workers, commuters, and shoppers from a regional market.**
- Goal 13: The Wilkinsburg business district will be environmentally sustainable and promote green development practices.**
- Goal 14: Vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation to and around the Wilkinsburg business district will be efficient, and parking will be adequate.**
- Goal 15: The Wilkinsburg business district will have abundant, attractive, code-compliant buildings.**
- Goal 16: Wilkinsburg will have the administrative structure and human and financial resources to implement the Business District Revitalization Plan.**

Because implementation of the business district consensus plan will take time, and elements of the plan will occur in small steps, the Consensus Plan is likely to adjust to changing conditions, markets, and attitudes. The vision will remain the constant touchstone for all future development actions of the Borough.

Many action items are identified in the business district plan, but several key items emerged as being the most immediate for success. The high-priority implementation strategies related to these business district goals include the following:

TOD STRATEGY (SEE ALSO NEIGHBORHOOD TOD STRATEGY)

The development and implementation of a TOD strategy should be first priority for both neighborhood development and for business district development, and is recommended as one of the top five strategies to be addressed in the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*.

DCED’s TRID program provides funding for conducting studies and developing plans for TOD;



however, availability of funds could be limited by state budgetary constraints. An application for funding under this program should be developed and submitted immediately to ensure timely implementation of this task. Housing should be a key component of the strategy. If strategically planned and promoted, a TOD in Wilkesburg could be very attractive to commuters and to urban pioneers, and could create the demand for more dense residential options in the TOD district. Dense residential, in turn, creates the basis for a vibrant business district. While specific action items are included in this strategy, it is anticipated that a more specific strategy will result from a TRID study; therefore, this action strategy should be flexible to incorporate those strategies as they are recommended.

Strategies for the TOD focus areas in the business district should include the following action items:

STEP 1 – Revise the zoning ordinance to include the TND overlay and the historic preservation design standards consistent with TOD.

STEP 2 – Prepare compliant physical space that will be attractive to potential business district tenants that could support TOD. Allegheny County economic development programs could be used to fund this activity.

STEP 3 – Adopt a right-sizing strategy for locating existing Wilkesburg retail, restaurant, and professional services in this area to provide for focused daytime and nighttime activity. Land use tools should be used to accomplish the gradual change in focus in order to maximize the investment of resources.

STEP 4 – Pursue marketing and recruitment strategy for attracting new businesses to the business district. This should be a top priority for the WCDC.

STEP 4 – Adopt architectural design standards for business district amenities. Lighting and design standards along Wood and Hay Streets that are consistent with those along Penn Avenue within the business district focus area will help to define the core business district. Eliminating vacant storefronts and defining the core business district with brighter lighting can help to create a feeling of safety for pedestrians.

STEP 5 – Develop and adopt a green strategy for the business district. The green strategy should include cutting-edge components that will contribute to the Borough’s sustainability, as well as to its attractiveness.

CODE ENFORCEMENT AND CLEANUP STRATEGY



Traditional Main Street Zone
Facade Improvements

STEP 1 – CODE REVIEW AND UPDATE – A thorough review of current Borough codes should be conducted to ensure that regulations are consistent with the Borough’s needs and that policies are in place to support the priorities of the Comprehensive Plan. Examples of these factors include the following:

- Permitting
- Litter
- Loitering
- Property/building maintenance
- Signage
- Sustainability
- Environmental protection (e.g., preparing for dealing with potential Marcellus Shale activity)
- Quality of life offenses, such as noise, nuisance dogs, etc.

STEP 2 – ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW AND UPDATE – The Borough’s subdivision and land development ordinances should be updated to facilitate and encourage priority components of the Comprehensive Plan, such as TOD, historic preservation, a rich mix of land uses, and vacant property strategies. Zoning ordinances should accommodate desirable building heights, setbacks, density, inclusionary housing, and historic preservation. An excellent resource that can be used as a guide in updating ordinances is a publication from the American Planning Association’s (APA) Planning Advisory Services, *Smart Codes*, by Mary A. Morris (ISBN P556). APA promotes the publication as providing model ordinances that can be adapted by local governments to implement special planning policies for multimodal transportation, infill development, affordable housing, and regulations intended to achieve a variety of objectives, including encouraging mixed uses, preserving open space and environmentally sensitive areas, providing a choice of housing types and transportation modes, and making the development review process more predictable.

STEP 3 – CODE INSPECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT – The task of inspecting properties and enforcing codes and regulations can be overwhelming, and in situations where property owners are absent and/or unresponsive, it can seem impossible. Priority areas for aggressive inspection and enforcement should be consistent with neighborhood and business district priorities. Potential approaches for consideration include the following:

- Adding a Director and additional code enforcement staff (dependent upon financial resources)
- Utilizing Borough staff from other departments to assist in reporting code violations to code enforcement officers
- Contracting occupancy inspections, commercial permitting reviews, and plan reviews to an outside entity
- Volunteer programs where neighborhood groups and/or merchant groups organize to assist in conducting “windshield” observations of neighborhood conditions and reporting violations to code enforcement officers



This strategy supports priority strategies of the Comprehensive Plan by providing the regulatory authority to guide land uses and help to shape the future of the Borough. Appropriately designed policies can streamline permitting, or incentivize preferred development, making Wilkinsburg an attractive option for new development. An aggressive program for code enforcement can go hand-in-hand with business district and neighborhood strategies to create an immediate difference in strategic areas that will show visible results to the community.



CATEGORY 4 – ORGANIZE FOR SUCCESS – HIGH-PRIORITY STRATEGIES

Organize for Success
Home Rule Charter Study Commission ♦ Merger Fire Services

In order to undertake any of the priority strategies, it is necessary for the Borough to have the capacity and resources to allow for investment projects and programs that move the Borough toward successful outcomes. The high-priority goals that were identified that are related to the organization and structure of the local government and community organizations include the following:

- Goal 17: Wilkinsburg will establish a Home Rule Charter Study Commission to recommend an organizational structure that can support the highly technical, highly complex local government environment.
- Goal 18: Wilkinsburg will have a solid and self-sustaining revenue base.
- Goal 19: Wilkinsburg will have a cost containment strategy for its operations.
- Goal 20: Wilkinsburg will have a long-term plan for financing capital projects.
- Goal 21: Wilkinsburg will have leadership in place that can promote projects and advance a strong vision of success for the organization.
- Goal 22: Wilkinsburg will deliver quality municipal services from a regional perspective if practicable and economically feasible.
- Goal 23: Wilkinsburg will have a government organizational structure that is right-sized to provide the highest quality of services for the lowest possible cost.

The high-priority strategies that have been identified for the implementation of plan goals are outlined below:

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The fundamental structure of the current local government and its key leadership roles under the Borough Code are not consistent with a modern local government operation and modern organizational processes. The current structure does not provide for the flexibility to respond to a rapidly changing environment, the availability of a diverse revenue generation strategy, and the reliance on professional staff that is necessary in a highly technical, highly complex, 21st century organization.

Several barriers to effective use of resources and manpower exist in the current structure and operation under the Borough Code. These are:

- 1. The exceptionally large number of Council members (9) and the election of members by ward.** Although the Borough Code authorizes the establishment of a Borough Council as the governing body with anywhere from three to twelve council members, the most common number of council members, by far, across the Commonwealth, is seven, and most are elected at large rather than by ward or district.



- 2. The separation of control of the police operation from the general operation of the organization.** Under the Pennsylvania Borough Code, the police department is under the control and direction of the mayor, who has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the police chief and police force. According to the Code, this includes direction of “time, place, and manner” in which the officers are required to carry out their duties. However, the Council, under the Code, retains the authority to create or dissolve the police department; to establish the staffing levels; to appoint, promote, or dismiss officers; and to provide the funding, through the annual budget, for operations. Since the police department is the most expensive and most visible of all Borough operations, this division of authority under the Borough Code sets up an inevitable conflict between the councils and the mayors in boroughs for the control and direction of police operations.
- 3. The rigid structure of the revenue collection system.** There are strict limitations on taxing thresholds in the Borough Code that leave little choice but for elected officials to raise real estate tax levies in order to increase revenue. It is possible to design a more flexible and equitable tax structure that better addresses a community’s needs under a Home Rule Charter.

For these reasons, the Borough should consider the election of a nine-member Home Rule Charter Study Commission to review the current structure of the government and to consider a structure that is more flexible and more responsive to the community values and objectives. The current system for electing nine Council members by ward, an elected tax collector, and a mayor who controls the police operation may be outdated and should be reviewed by a citizen committee. A Home Rule Charter can set up a sustainable structure for providing basic service delivery to residents in a cost-efficient manner and also provide flexibility in the tax structure and revenue stream. The following action items are related to this strategy:

STEP 1 – The Home Rule Charter Study Commission should be included on the ballot for the next local government election in the form of a question to the voters of Wilkinsburg as stated below:

“Shall a government study commission of (seven, nine, or eleven) members be elected to study the existing form of government of the Borough, to consider the advisability of the adoption of a Home Rule Charter, and, if advisable, to draft and to recommend a Home Rule Charter for the Borough?”

STEP 2 – If supported by the voters of Wilkinsburg, the Home Rule Charter Study Commission would have 18 months to study the issue and propose a charter for consideration by the voters at the next local election. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor’s Center for Local Government Services provides technical assistance to work with the Home Rule Charter Study Commission during this process.

STEP 3 – The Charter that is developed by the Home Rule Charter Study Commission is submitted as a ballot question in a local election cycle.



STEP 4 – If approved by the voters, the Charter becomes effective for the next local government election cycle.

REGIONAL APPROACH - FIRE SERVICES

STEP 1 – Appoint team to conduct negotiations. The team should include the Borough Manager, a labor attorney knowledgeable about all aspects of public labor law, and a fire consultant who is knowledgeable about all aspects of fire service.

STEP 2 – Continue regular meetings set up on an aggressive schedule so that negotiations don't lag with inactivity and indecision. Address issues of scheduling, coverage, locations, resources, and information exchange.

STEP 3 – Develop plan for sharing of equipment, funding formula, and the equitable distribution of costs. Execute agreement with the City.

STEP 4 – Engage in “effect bargaining” with the IAFF local to ensure that the transition activities and costs are known. Execute agreement with the IAFF local.

STEP 5 – Apply to the DCED Shared Municipal Services Program (SMSP) for financial support of transition costs associated with the merger.

STEP 6 – Implement actual merger with the city of Pittsburgh.

The Borough should pursue this initiative at the earliest possible opportunity in order to improve the quality of fire service for Borough residents and to realize a tremendous annual savings that will free up resources for other public services for the community.



CATEGORY 5 – VISION TO REALITY – HIGH PRIORITY STRATEGIES**Vision to Reality
Implementation Manager ♦ Implementation Committee**

The true value of the planning process is the actual ability to take the plan components from a vision of the possibilities to the actualization of the plan goals. The consultant team and the Steering Committee worked together to determine the best methods for taking the visioning process, which included public input, background research, and subject matter expertise, to an action plan for implementation. Ideally, the integration of all of the plan components will culminate in the *Wilkinsburg Plan*.

Based on a review of the organizational capacity and resources that are available for implementation, the team came to a conclusion that it is necessary to further identify implementation tools in order to achieve a successful implementation. The key implementation action items that are necessary for a successful implementation strategy are as follows:

Action Item 1: Appoint an implementation manager

Action Item 2: Appoint an implementation steering committee

Action Item 3: Establish implementation priorities

Action Item 4: Use future land use and neighborhood priority plan to support implementation

This section is a discussion of the tools identified as necessary to create the capacity and identify the financial and human capital necessary for success.

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY THE IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

It will be critical to the implementation of the plan, for the Council to have an Implementation Committee with significant authority and resources to undertake the implementation of the action items. An option would be to identify individuals in the government, business, and community at large who are willing to serve in this capacity for the long term. However, in Wilkinsburg, a group already exists that meets the requirements necessary for the successful implementation of the plan. This group is the Oversight Committee that was convened six years ago through the efforts of Governor Rendell, the sitting Secretary of Banking, Allegheny County Economic Development, and the DCED. The Committee meets regularly, is chaired by the Mayor of Wilkinsburg, and has, as its members, representatives from the local government, the state representative and senator's offices, the U.S. congressman's office, the county agencies, the DCED, the banking industry, local business representatives, and stakeholders such as Nine Mile Run, local medical facilities, and the universities. The Oversight Committee has survived several elections and changes in local government officials because the members are appointed by position.

One option is that the Oversight Committee (with some slight adjustments and additions) would

be the group to undertake the various action items identified in the plan because its members have the history, capacity, resources, and diversity necessary to affect a successful implementation process. An implementation committee is often used in community development initiatives and typically forms as a result of a call to action within the community to address current or future threats and/or opportunities. In Wilkinsburg’s case, the call is to facilitate the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan*. The primary focus of the Implementation Committee would be to include the appropriate entities and community leaders at a “table of co-equals” to develop consensus in addressing implementation tasks, and then to identify and mobilize the necessary resources to address the tasks. The advantages of this type of group include the following:

INCLUSIVENESS – With broad representation, the inclusive nature of this type of committee facilitates implementation in a non-threatening environment.

ORGANIC – The informal structure of the committee allows for changes in membership in response to implementation needs.

CONSENSUS-ORIENTED – The interdependent roles of committee participants ensures that implementation is based on consensus and avoids unilateral actions.

BROAD-BASED SUPPORT – The size of the committee demonstrates broad-based support for the plan and is a positive influence in seeking funding and support from outside sources.

INITIATIVE-FOCUSED – The committee’s mission and purpose is centered around priority initiatives in the Comprehensive Plan, strategically focused on specific actions, and therefore results-oriented.

An Implementation Committee such as this is focused on building a broad-based coalition of civic, social, and economic/community development organizations to tackle a set of specific challenges that transcend any one organization’s sole area of expertise. To this end, an approach is often employed, whereby committee members with specific skill sets are charged with organizing subcommittees or task forces as needed that may be made up of volunteer subject matter experts with the expertise and experience necessary to carry out specific actions associated with the implementation strategy. Careful consideration should be given to adding members to the Implementation Committee who possess the leadership and resource capacity to help implement the goals and objectives of the group. Group membership should encompass a broad stakeholder community that is competency-based in appropriate areas of community and economic development. Specific action items are as follows:

Implementation Strategy	Time Frame
1. Develop mission statement for the Committee.	Month 1
2. Identify additional Committee members as needed for implementation	Month 1
3. Conduct organizational launching meeting for Implementation Committee	Month 2
4. Work with Implementation Manager to identify priority action strategies to be implemented during the first year of implementation.	Month 3
5. Organize subcommittees around priority tasks for implementation	Month 4
6. Build capacity through additional volunteer recruitment	Ongoing
7. Conduct annual identification of key action strategies to be implemented in the upcoming year.	Ongoing



STEP 2 – HIRE AN IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER FOR THE WILKINSBURG PLAN.

Implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan* will require significant effort and implementation experience and will need to be the primary focus of a single individual or firm – especially during the early stages of implementation. With workloads that are already overwhelming, adding this responsibility to the workload of current Borough staff would decrease the probability of successful implementation. Working and reporting to the Borough Council and Borough Manager, an experienced Implementation Manager will have a thorough understanding of the implementation processes and resources, and can guide the effort to ensure that key action strategies are accomplished as scheduled.

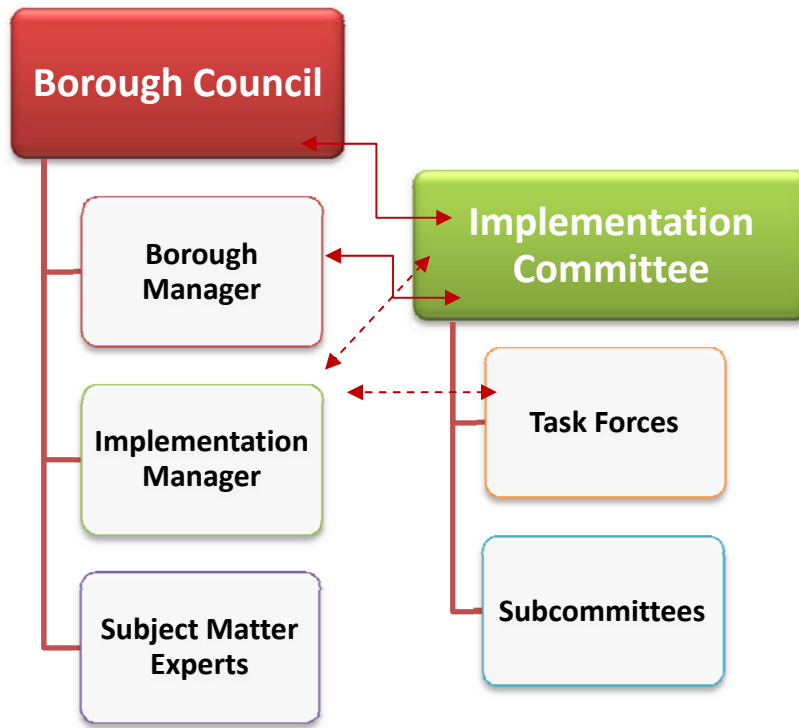
A grant application should be submitted to DCED through its Early Intervention Program (EIP) as an implementation action item from the *Wilkinsburg Plan* that would support the appointment of an implementation manager. A detailed action plan is described below.

Implementation Strategy	Time Frame
1. Submit application to DCED through the EIP Program for funding to hire implementation manager.	Month 1
2. Select individual or firm best suited to manage the implementation of the Wilkinsburg Plan	Month 1
3. Develop work statement to describe the expectations of the implementation manager.	Month 1
4. Sign contract with implementation manager.	Month 3

Figure 18 demonstrates the communication, resource, and authority flow from the local government to the Implementation Manager and Implementation Committee.



FIGURE 18 – IMPLEMENTATION GROUP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



STEP 3 - ESTABLISH IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Based on the team assessment of the overall plan goals, the top six priority strategies with related action items that should be undertaken immediately by the Implementation Committee are as follows:

1. Safe, Clean, & Green Strategies
 - Improvements to Police Operations
 - Improvements to Building and Codes
2. Livable Neighborhood Strategies
 - Implement TOD Strategy
 - Implement Redevelopment Strategy
3. Open for Business Strategies
 - Implement TOD Strategy
 - Prepare Code-Compliant Space
 - Code Reviews and Enforcement
4. Organize for Success Strategies
 - Home Rule Charter Study Commission
 - Merger of Fire Service

Utilizing this approach to implementation allows Borough Council to maximize the civic capacity of the community, and empowers local residents to implement a plan that represents their vision for the future. Maximizing civic capacity will allow the Borough to undertake critical tasks that it otherwise would not have the resources to accomplish.

STEP 4 - FUNDING THE PLAN

The majority of initiatives presented throughout the implementation strategy carry a price tag, and funding is one of the top challenges to implementation. The ideal funding scenario would be for the private sector to take the lead and provide all of the funding for implementation. However, realistically, public funding will need to be utilized to offset private-sector costs and create a development environment that is attractive to private-sector developers. Many of the initiatives in this implementation strategy would be eligible for public-sector funding. In addition, funding for projects can also come from other sources such as corporate donations and sponsorships, community and private foundations, and individual donations, and can come in the form of donations of cash and/or materials and services. Most importantly, however, is encouraging investment from the private sector. In reality, the majority of funding for the implementation of the *Wilkinsburg Plan* will ultimately come from private sources, so it will be important to involve potential private partners as early as possible in plan implementation.

One of the most important things to remember when developing a public funding strategy is that funding agencies are looking for projects that are well planned and shovel-ready. It is important to complete the due diligence necessary to develop a detailed plan for each project initiative *before* approaching a funding agency (unless the funding being requested is for developing the detailed plan). Care should also be taken to target funding sources that will provide the greatest return for the time invested.

In today's economy, the landscape of public funding availability is constantly changing, and programs are changing just as quickly. State programs that have been in place for years have been either cut or drastically decreased in the pending state budget. For this reason, funding sources should be monitored on a continual basis to ensure that opportunities are maximized.

Prepare a Detailed Funding Strategy.	
Implementation Strategy	
1.	Develop detailed plans for implementing various revitalization strategies – shovel ready projects are more attractive to funding agencies
2.	Develop detailed budgets for each plan
3.	Engage potential private partners early in planning processes
4.	Evaluate various plans and determine if any can be combined to increase attractiveness for funding
5.	For each plan (or combined plans) identify the sources of funding and/or financing available for each, and determine the amount of additional funding required to complete the project
6.	Align projects/plans with potential funding sources based on project eligibility, and develop and implement a strategy for securing the additional funding
7.	Work with state legislators to secure a funding authorization for appropriate revitalization project in the next Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (Capital Budget) Bill
8.	As plans are completed and funding strategies developed, meet with state funding agencies such as DCED, DCNR, DEP, and PennDOT to discuss funding opportunities
9.	Prioritize federal funding priorities, develop project message statement for each priority project, and submit request forms for federal earmarks to federal legislators
10.	Evaluate federal competitive grant opportunities and submit applications for eligible projects as appropriate
11.	Evaluate opportunities to submit applications to foundations as well for public funding
12.	Work with the WCDC to organize a capital campaign for funding specific elements of the <i>Wilkinsburg Plan</i> that targets corporate donations



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PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS WITH REGIONAL IMPACT

As part of the planning process, planned developments in the surrounding area were evaluated to determine their regional significance. One planned development that was identified early in the planning process that would have had significant impact on the region, specifically in Wilkinsburg and Penn Hills, was the development of a regional shopping center, part of which would have been located in Wilkinsburg's East Hills neighborhood. The center was initially expected to house a 110,000-square-foot Wal-Mart store, a 100,000-square-foot Lowe's store, and several outparcels that could potentially include up to 25,000 square feet of additional retail and/or restaurant establishments. The project has since stalled due to the economic climate and difficulty in putting together financing for the project. As a result, it is unlikely that the project will be completed as proposed. However, this site has the most promise for a development of significant regional impact. The impact of this potential development was considered in the future land use and community development strategies contained in the *Wilkinsburg Plan*.

COMPATIBILITY OF THE WILKINSBURG PLAN

The Borough of Wilkinsburg shares borders with seven municipalities: Braddock Hills Borough, Churchill Borough, Edgewood Borough, Forest Hills Borough, Swissvale Borough, the Municipality of Penn Hills, and the City of Pittsburgh. Land uses along contiguous borders are currently compatible in all cases. Future land uses and development strategies proposed in the *Wilkinsburg Plan* remain compatible with land uses in the adjoining municipalities.

The longest border is shared with the City of Pittsburgh which forms the Borough's north and west boundaries. The majority of existing and planned uses in both the City and the Borough are medium density residential. A small industrial/warehouse district straddles the northwest corner of the boundaries and is planned as such in both the City and the Borough.

The Wilkinsburg's southwest border is shared with the Boroughs of Churchill and Forest Hills. This area, in both Wilkinsburg and its neighbors, is characterized by low to medium density residential development and a small area of commercial property along Ardmore Boulevard.

The Municipality of Penn Hills borders Wilkinsburg Borough on its north eastern boundary. In this area, both Penn Hills and the Borough are characterized primarily by low and medium density residential uses. Additionally, this area encompasses a large site that is zoned for commercial/light industrial uses and is often referred to as "Eastgate." This commercial site presents the most promising opportunity for future retail commercial development for the respective communities.

The Borough's southern boundary is shared with Edgewood Borough. Low and medium density residential uses are the primary land uses in both Boroughs with a small area of high density and institutional use near the boundary's eastern edge. This area supports prime housing stock and quality residential living in both communities.

Finally, the Wilkinsburg Borough has a "touch" point with the Borough of Swissvale on its south west boundary. In both boroughs the area is developed with low to medium density residential

uses. The Borough also has a slight intersection with the Borough of Braddock Hill at the I-376 cloverleaf and ramp system where land uses are related to this major highway interchange.

The Plan was submitted to each of the municipalities and the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. None of the municipalities or the County had any objections to the proposed plans contained herein.

CONSISTENCY WITH ALLEGHENY PLACES

In terms of consistency with the Allegheny County Plan, the Wilkesburg Plan is substantially consistent with the Allegheny Places Plan. There are a number of specific consistencies between the Wilkesburg Plan and Allegheny Places:

- Transit-oriented development is included in the future land use plans of both. In Allegheny Places, TOD is one of eight different types of ‘places’ in the plan. It calls for the promotion of TOD at major transit stations and along major transit corridors including the East Busway. The Wilkesburg Plan calls for the establishment of a TOD overlay surrounding the Busway station to encourage the development of dense, mixed land uses that avail the benefits of the station.
- Sustainable development and energy conservation are key component of both plans. Sustainable development in the form of Traditional Neighborhood Development that utilizes form-based zoning to promote mixed use development is called for in the future land use map in the Penn Avenue corridor area to promote revitalization and investment. Additionally, sustainability is one of the primary goals of the Wilkesburg Plan and includes a listing of strategies to support its implementation including infill development, green building standards, efficient and multimodal transportation, natural stormwater management, local food, recycling and conservation. Allegheny Places calls for the use of grants, loans, tax credits and real estate tax abatement to facilitate sustainable development patterns throughout the County.
- Both plans seek to promote and protect historic and cultural resources. Wilkesburg is home to a number of historic properties, many of which are located in the Borough’s Main Street. The Wilkesburg Plan identifies strategies and standards to evaluate, identify and prioritize these structures for preservation and use them to leverage revitalization of the community’s downtown. Allegheny Places identifies both the Wilkesburg Main Street and the Penn Station building as top priorities for historic preservation. Both the Wilkesburg Plan and Allegheny Places seek to utilize these and other cultural resources as tools to support economic development.
- The Wilkesburg Plan and Allegheny Places give substantial attention to social concerns and diversity. Inclusion is an over-riding theme of the Wilkesburg Plan as it seeks to move to the implementation stage. Residents, business owners and other stakeholders will be actively engaged in the process of community revitalization. Diversity is viewed a strength to be built upon and utilized. Allegheny Places highlights these concerns in each of the plan elements.



- The extraordinary attention to community services and community facilities including multimunicipal solutions is evident in both plans. The more intensive analysis afforded by the inclusion of the Early Intervention Plan in the Wilkinsburg Plan allowed it to address community services at a level of detail not typical of a comprehensive plan. The Plan also includes an in depth analysis of community facilities including parks, recreation facilities, public infrastructure, schools and solid waste management systems. It calls for the consideration of solutions involving partnerships with other municipalities and the counties to enhance and support these services and facilities.

CONCLUSION

The *Wilkinsburg Plan* represents the combined efforts of many stakeholders who exhibited passionate interest in its successful implementation. While this page represents the conclusion of a planning process, it also signifies the beginning of a journey – an exciting opportunity that the residents of Wilkinsburg are embarking upon together. The journey’s final destination is ultimately up to you, the people of Wilkinsburg. On behalf of all those who worked diligently to make this plan a reality, we leave you with these words from Thomas A. Edison: “...The object of all work is production or accomplishment, and to either of these ends, there must be forethought, system, planning, intelligence, and honest purpose, as well as perspiration.” The forethought, system, and planning is completed, and now the perspiration begins.

