



# **Downtown Penndel**

## **A Blueprint for the Future**



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Bucks County Planning Commission  
*On behalf of:*  
Penndel Borough Revitalization Task Force

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The purpose of this document is to provide Penndel Borough and its residents with a “blueprint” for achieving revitalization success in the borough’s commercial core area. The report articulates the community’s priorities, as defined by municipal officials, business and local stakeholders, and residents. The blueprint begins by presenting some of the “why’s” and “what’s” of Penndel’s current condition before outlining an approach with specific strategies that suit Penndel. As an added layer of detail, areas of opportunity are then identified to target in conjunction with those strategies. As a part of the strategies outlined in this blueprint, revisions to the Borough’s existing Transit Oriented Development Overlay District ordinance are recommended along with a list of potential funding sources and other resources, are also presented as a part of this revitalization blueprint.

Through implementation of the various strategies and taking advantage of the borough’s strengths, a new generation of entrepreneurs and placemakers can transform Penndel’s downtown into a vibrant and thriving commercial center.

# BACKGROUND

## A Vision of the Penndel Downtown

The future Penndel Borough will be a sustainable economic community with a vibrant, walkable downtown that offers an authentic and memorable experience for people of all ages. The borough seeks to attract residents, visitors, and workers to create a diverse and welcoming community with traditional small-town character. It will be a unique and distinct place to live, work, and shop — a destination for retail, dining, entertainment, the arts, and community events.

A Revitalization Task Force, comprised of borough officials, residents, and business owners was formed and in conjunction with community members to identify and eliminate impediments and regulatory barriers, spurring the development of underutilized sites into a mix of uses. The town's convenience, with access to major highways and adjacent to SEPTA's Langhorne train station, makes it an ideal location, and competitive to other markets in the region.

## The Economics of the Downtown

Penndel's downtown is a traditional business district with Business Route 1 and Bellevue Avenue acting as its two primary commercial corridors. According to ESRI's Business Summary of North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes, there are 178 businesses and 1,113 employees within the borough. The highest percentage of those businesses are in the "Retail Trade" sector with 34 businesses comprising 19.1 percent of the Borough's total employment. Of those 34 businesses, the largest subset are "Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers," which account for 11 businesses and comprise 6.2

percent of the borough's total employment.

On its surface, the borough's business composition would suggest that there are considerable retail opportunities present within the Penndel market; however, in recent years, national retail trends have fundamentally changed how consumers shop. As a result, retail sectors such as "Books," "Periodical," and "Music Stores" are now mostly served by online shopping services or "big box" retail stores. For that reason, the borough's economic development efforts may not be well served by targeting these specific sectors, but rather by promoting retail uses that fit into the vision for the business area. Specifically, those industry groups that fit into the borough's vision may represent potential retail opportunities by creating potential niche markets comprised of noncompetitive and complementary businesses in areas such as home furnishing supply, restaurants, etc. Following this approach, Penndel's future retail development will complement the larger retail marketplace.

## Strengths & Weaknesses

Generally, the downtown core of Penndel Borough has the foundation of a traditional small town Main Street. The blocks are relatively small and lined with buildings that were constructed up to or near the sidewalk, creating a compact, small scale environment.

Unfortunately, vehicular traffic dominates the downtown core area with traffic backups and odd-shaped blocks. Business Route 1 effectively segregates the residential neighborhoods to its south, from the commercial areas and the train station.



# Asset Mapping & Challenge Tracking



- ① Base of local businesses in one place
- ② Close proximity to SEPTA's Langhorne Station - no more than 10 minutes away from anywhere in the borough.
- ③ Strong residential support
- ④ Five arterial routes converge on the commercial core area. Thousands of vehicles pass through daily.
- ⑤ Existing network of sidewalks along most downtown streets

- \* Many developments are car-oriented and struggle to contribute to a "Main Street" atmosphere
- \* Buildings lack visual interaction with the street outside their walls (i.e. lacking windows, traditional storefronts)
- \* Difficult to navigate as a pedestrian
- \* Lack of 'destination' places to attract outsiders to stay, rather than drive through
- \* Unattractive architecture
- \* No defined public space or public amenities

# THE APPROACH

## The Main Street Approach

Understanding the methods and best practices of downtown revitalization planning is critical to the revitalization process. Pennadel cannot afford the waste of resources that may come with projects that have unclear goals or do little to address underlying structural issues. The Main Street Approach of the National Trust for Historic Place's Main Street Center is a downtown revitalization model that has been successfully used in downtowns across the United States. Main Street America describes the approach as follows:

### 1. Identify the Community Vision for Success

The Main Street Approach begins with creating a vision for success on Main Street that is rooted in a solid understanding of the market realities of the district, and is informed by broad community engagement. Main Street promotes a community-driven process that brings diverse stakeholders from all sectors together, inviting them to be proactive participants in the revitalization process. This essential step provides a foundation for outlining the community's own identity, expectations, and ideals while confirming real and perceived perceptions, needs and opportunities. It also ensures that the vision is a true reflection of the diversity of the community.

### 2. Create Community Transformation Strategies

A vision of success alone is not enough. Communities must work together to identify key Community Transformation Strategies that will provide a clear sense of priorities and direction for the revitalization efforts. Typically, communities

will find two to three Community Transformation Strategies are needed to help reach a community vision. These strategies will focus on both long- and short-term actions that will move a community closer to achieving its goals.

Work on these strategies would align with the four key areas Main Streets have been using as a guiding framework for over 35 years: Economic Vitality, Promotion, Design, and Organization, known collectively as the Main Street Four Points.



*Main Street's Four Points to achieving Community Transformation Strategies.  
Graphic from MainStreet.org.*

### 3. Impact and Measurement

To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects—both shorter and longer-term activities that add up to meaningful change. Activities aligned with shorter-term strategies focus on highly visible changes that are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding, helping to secure buy-in from community members



and rallying volunteers. Placemaking strategies – those actions which focus on what can be achieved “lighter, quicker, and cheaper” are particularly effective and important in energizing the community and demonstrating short-term progress.

While shorter-term, highly visible activities are critical to Main Street’s success, communities must also sustain focus on implementation of longer-term projects and activities that are the building blocks for substantial change over time. Identifying milestones for these longer-term projects can be important in creating a sense of forward momentum and reinforcing to the community the need for sustained focus on revitalization efforts.

Coinciding with implementation is an equally important focus on measuring progress and results. Healthy Main Streets are built on a commitment to measure outcomes. We live in a time where public resources are scarce, and competition for private resources is fierce. Main Streets must be able to demonstrate

the wise use of resources, which translates to real change on the ground: new jobs added to a Main Street, new businesses open, buildings redeveloped, and numerous other metrics of success. The National Main Street Center, together with our network of over 45 Main Street Coordinating Partners, works to make measuring results on Main Street easier and accurate.

The Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) serves as the official State Coordinating Program for Main Street, while the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) provides funding and management of Main Street in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> The Pennsylvania Downtown Center provides outreach, technical assistance, and educational services in order to assist communities in revitalizing their central business districts and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

<sup>1</sup> Main Street designation by the DCED (and access to funding under the program) requires the hiring of full-time main street manager for a period of five years.



Scenes from Oregon City, OR - a 2018 recipient of the Great American Main Street Award. Left: residents fill downtown at 7th First City Celebration and Oregon Trail Brew Fest. Right: aerial view of the First City Celebration. Images from MainStreet.org.

# Applying the Approach to Penndel

## 1. Identify the Community Vision for Success

The community visioning process for Penndel Borough was conducted using a two-pronged approach:

First, a “Penndel Borough Open House Meeting” was held on June 26, 2017 to discuss key issues affecting the downtown and to help understand residents’ concerns and desires for the future. The meeting brought out over 50 residents, borough officials, and business owners. Attendees were asked to give their preferences by placing stickers on display board attributes they thought were most suitable for Penndel’s downtown. Attendees were also asked to fill out a brief survey to gather the opinions and comments of residents and interested parties on the future of Penndel’s downtown.

Second, a business survey was conducted to better understand the business climate in the borough and in an effort to identify areas in which the business community would like to see improvements.

In the end, three categories of information, based on responses both from the open house meeting and the business survey questionnaire, form the basis of the community’s vision for the downtown. Full responses to each are included as Appendices C and D, respectively.

### *Residents’ Vision of the Downtown & Preferred Community Character*

The survey results from the open house indicated that the overall vision for Penndel’s downtown was split nearly evenly three ways between “mixed-use walkable community” (27 percent), “want to create a retail destination by expanding retail, entertainment, and restaurant uses to attract patrons from outside the Borough” (27 percent), and “want to maintain a small

town character (status quo) by limiting retail uses to serve only the local area” (24 percent).

Relatedly, from display board responses at the open house, the top three “preferred community character” options of Penndel’s downtown included “convenience (ease of getting around by both walking and driving”, “having a traditional small-town feel,” “more local businesses (3<sup>rd</sup> place tie),” and “create more pocket parks/open space” (3<sup>rd</sup> place tie).

### *Public Improvements and Activities*

“Beautify streets,” “enhance pedestrian circulation,” “special events,” “calm traffic,” and “provide more convenient off-street parking” were top responses to the question “Please select the five most important things Penndel Borough could do to help generate economic development and revitalize the downtown.”

When asked to provide their preferred downtown improvements on attributes shown on a display board, top responses included “Streetscape,” “Mix of businesses,” and “Trees and landscape.”

### *Business and Economic Development*

The survey distributed at the open house meeting indicated that the business types residents would consider patronizing in the downtown included “Restaurants” (23 percent), “Bakery/Coffee Shop” (19 percent), “Brewpub/Wine Bar” (14 percent), and “Theater/Gallery/Museum” (13%).

Top responses to the opportunities shown on an open house display board “Business and Development” included “Food Market,” “Restaurants,” “Retail Stores,” and “Mixed-Use.”

The results of the business survey questionnaire indicated that there was a fairly equal mix of uses represented in the borough including office, eating establishments, industrial, and miscellaneous uses such as a post office, dog grooming, and a gym.



The results also highlighted that slightly over half of the businesses surveyed own (57 percent) their business and just over 60 percent have been in operation for over 20 years. Borough residents comprise 35 percent of the customer base to the local businesses and 25 percent are from out of town.

As it relates attitudes towards the business climate as a whole, sixty two percent of the survey respondents described the business climate within the borough as 'fair' and the predominance of businesses would spend money for streetscape beautification and improving traffic control



*Bucks County Planning Commission introduces community visioning process to Penn-del Borough residents at open house, June 2017.*

measures. In ranking the biggest challenges facing businesses in the borough, traffic and an aging infrastructure were the top two. Seventy six percent would support paying the same taxes for the current level of services provided by the borough and 81 percent are not willing to pay a small tax for marketing.

Finally, in order to operate a successful business, the top items

notated by business survey respondents are to provide more off-street parking, improve building facades, enhance pedestrian circulation, beautify streets, and simplify regulatory process.

## 2. Create Community Transformation Strategies

The results of this meeting combined with the opportunities and build-out and vision revealed several possible directions and strategies. These strategies are organized into the Main Street program's Four Points.



*Penn-del Borough residents discuss priorities and vision for success at open house, June 2017*

### Economic Vitality

#### → Strategy: Fight Blight

A common issue in many struggling areas is the negative perceptions created by urban blight. Urban blight is the general condition of buildings and infrastructure falling into disrepair. This can include vacant buildings and lots, poorly maintained

signs, substandard housing, or anything that contributes to the perception of disinvestment and a failing business environment.

Strategies aimed at reducing blight are included in the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania's publication, *From Blight to Bright: A Comprehensive Toolkit for Pennsylvania*. The manual provides tools to address blight through data-driven, progressive code enforcement and provides methods of addressing long-term vacant properties that pose a threat to the health and safety of communities when code enforcement has been ineffective. Each tool has a description, the problem it is intended to solve, the actions needed for implementation, and suggestions for how to most effectively use and finance the tool.

→ **Strategy:** Understand the Economics of 21st Century Retail

It is important to note that the retail economy is undergoing a transformation similar in scale to the automotive-driven change of the early 20th Century. Retail spending is down, preferences are changing, and online sales increase yearly. In addition, the number of chain stores is declining through closings and consolidations.

Strategies aimed at attracting desirable national stores are likely doomed to fail, as Penndel is not currently economically attractive in terms of local and regional markets. However, there remains tremendous opportunity to work with and develop local businesses to form a marketable stable of stores that offer a different way of engaging the customer. This can include offering evening hours, developing attractive and engaging store design, providing outdoor seating, providing unique or hard to find products, and offering more personal customer service. A unique base of retail stores that cater to a more discerning customer base, for instance, can help establish Penndel as an up-and-coming area and provide the downtown with some of the necessary "buzz" that will get people from outside Penndel's market area interested in visiting.

→ **Strategy:** Explore "Pop-up economy" projects

The pop-up economy creates a mechanism to allow for the temporary use of vacant retail or business buildings throughout the borough. Typically, pop-up projects manifest themselves in one of three forms: pop-up shops, pop-up events, and/or pop-up planning. In each of those forms, the common variable is risk reduction. Because of the temporary nature of these projects, they become more attractive to entrepreneurs, restaurateurs, municipalities, non-profits, and citizens alike.

Penndel Borough should explore pursuing one or more pop-up economy projects to inject buzz into the community and attract temporary business interest that has the potential to evolve into a more sustained investment.

For more information, refer to The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's Municipal Implementation Tool #26 - The Pop-Up Economy (2014) that further outlines strategies around implementing pop-up economy projects.



*An example of a successful pop-up economy project, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's pop-up beer garden on South Street in Philadelphia, PA.*



## Design

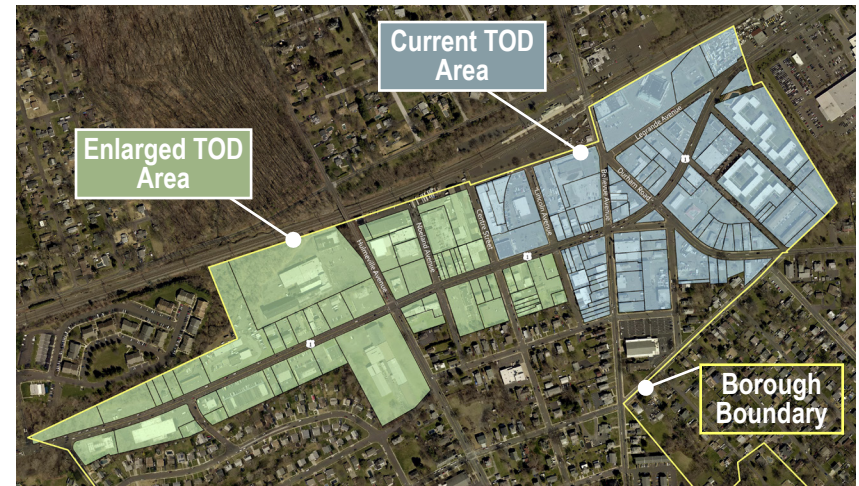
### → **Strategy:** Enact Revisions to the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay Ordinance

The revisions proposed to the borough's Transit-Oriented Development Overlay ordinance provide a framework that leverages the asset of the borough's proximity to SEPTA's Langhorne station through incentivizing higher density and higher quality design for potential projects to locate in the borough's downtown.

The proposed ordinance revisions seek to provide more flexible standards to attract development with specific aims to encourage the use of the overlay provisions and promote mixed-use type buildings. Modifications to the TOD Overlay District include:

- Enlarge the TOD boundary to encompass tracts along the Business Route 1 corridor;
- Increase residential density requirements;
- Integrate new compatible uses:
  - Wine Bar/Brew Pub
  - Accessory Outdoor Dining
  - Cultural and Entertainment uses (e.g. studios, galleries, theaters)
  - Market
- Decrease setback and minimum lot size;
- Increase impervious surface coverage; and
- Decrease required parking minimums.

The full ordinance is attached to this blueprint as Appendix A.



*Overview map of current and proposed enlarged Transit Oriented Development Overlay District.*

## Promotion

### → **Strategy:** Promote and Market the Downtown

Promotion and marketing is the process of informing target markets of the goods, services, and amenities of a business district that are available to potential consumers. Without a coordinated marketing plan and subsequent campaign, lucrative target markets outside of Penndel's current market area will remain untapped and the full potential of Penndel will go unrealized.

Marketing can be carried out by means of retail promotions, imagebuilding promotions, and special events. Retail promotions typically involve sales or some other customer-oriented event. Retail promotions are designed to produce immediate sales and are often store-based rather than district-wide.

Image-building promotions are public relations campaigns aimed at enhancing a commercial district's overall image. Image-building promotions help establish a marketing identity and are a means for promoting revitalization successes.

Publicity campaigns should include press releases and outreach designed to encourage write-ups in local newspapers and news-oriented websites.

Special events, such as festivals, are designed to produce eventual sales and establish a long-term relationship with the community and customer base. For example, a common marketing tactic employed by many business districts are festivals promoting a local cultural event. Such events include food festivals, arts and crafts festivals, and car shows. Many communities run weekly farmers' markets and summer concerts that also serve to support long-term sales.

Public improvements can aid marketing efforts, especially in an area that is looking to turn the corner. *However, public improvements alone—while important to a district's image and function—will not bring customers to a business district.* New amenities, such as sidewalks, streetlights, convenient parking, or benches, give an impression of progress and vibrancy to the district. Ensuring that a project's completion is well-covered in the press and promoted by the community is an important aspect of the marketing campaign.

Marketing plans must understand the demographics and preferences of the target market, the means by which the message will be delivered, and the stores and amenities that will bring the target market to the business district. Further, detailed analysis of the regional market will be required to determine both the market targeted and the message delivered. Marketing plans must also be coordinated with shopping center management companies to ensure amenities, image, mix of stores of individual shopping centers is consistent with the marketing efforts of the borough as a whole.



**Opportunity Awaits... in Penndel Borough**

**FIND OUT WHAT ELSE PENNDEL HAS TO OFFER . . .**

<p><b>TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>LOCATED STEPS FROM SEPTA'S LANGHORNE REGIONAL RAIL STATION</p> <p>TOD zoning promoting living, working, and shopping</p>	 <p><b>EASY ACCESS TO MAJOR HIGHWAYS</b></p> <p>LOCATED DIRECTLY ALONG BUSINESS ROUTE 1 AND MINUTES FROM THE PA TURNPIKE AND I-95</p> <p>High vehicular traffic along three commercial streets</p>
	<p><b>OPPORTUNITY SITE</b></p> <p>3.35 ACRE SITE SUITABLE FOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Potential to develop: 100+ residential units 6,000+ sf retail space</p>
	

Example marketing material used to draw developers to the borough, demonstrating what it has to offer.



## Organization

### → Strategy: Create a Non-Profit

Organization activities should ideally be carried out by one entity whose sole responsibility is the improvement of the business district. This can take the form of a municipally-designated entity or independent nonprofit.

Generally, a separate nonprofit is recommended to spearhead revitalization efforts. Nonprofits have several advantages, including:

- Ownership of revitalization process—A nonprofit must take ownership of its successes and failures.
- Independence from local politics—Nonprofits are not beholden to competing municipal or political goals.
- Nimble and freer from government process—A nonprofit doesn't have to wait on the governing body's approval for projects.

Nonprofit boards should have a diverse composition, including property owners, residents, local government, business owners, banks, school district, business association, and representatives from other non-profits that have complementary goals.

Regardless of whether the entity is municipally-designated or separate nonprofit, the responsibilities for the district's revitalization are the same:

- Act as a champion for the district and its vision;
- Identify projects and opportunities;
- Solicit memberships in the organization and fundraise;
- Engage property and business owners to understand their needs (e.g., helping to lower business costs) and develop public-private partnerships;

- Promote an identity of the downtown and attract stores that fit in;
- Develop and coordinate marketing strategies and efforts;
- Secure funding for operating costs and projects.

The organizing entity must maintain interest and momentum to ensure that Pennndel is kept in the minds of potential shoppers and visitors. Funding, project timing, periodic events that raise the profile of the district, and consistent marketing are critical aspects to the revitalization process.

Bucks County has several revitalization success stories, including Doylestown Borough, Perkasio Borough, and Bristol Borough. In all cases, efforts were spearheaded by a coordinating entity and group of volunteers that consistently drove the revitalization process forward.

Quakertown Alive! is a local, nationally-accredited Main Street program. Founded in 1998, then certified in 1999, its mission is to create strong broad-based partnerships that provide the leadership and resources necessary for a successful revitalization effort in downtown Quakertown. The Perkasio Towne Improvement Association retains the services of an economic development director, who is tasked with promoting the redevelopment of properties, recruiting new businesses to the borough, communicating the goals of the program with residents and business operators, and coordinating with businesses, financial institutions, developers, real estate brokers, and property owners to help broker new business opportunities and partnerships. In Bristol Borough, the non-profit "Raising the Bar" forms partnerships, recruits volunteers, and develops projects to promote tourism, the arts, historic preservation, greening, joint marketing, and economic development.

### 3. Impact and Measurement

Whether it's moving to a new home or setting up a new business, people make commitments based on emotion and a belief in the future despite challenging present circumstances. The task for PennDel is to create the emotional connection among residents, business owners, and visitors that fuels future economic development efforts.

→ **Strategy:** Start with an anchor development

The development of the site at the northeast corner of Business Route 1 and Bellevue Avenue provides an ideal opportunity to catalyze further development throughout the downtown area. Located at the central focal point of the downtown and steps away from SEPTA's Langhorne station, the development of

this site would signal an interest in the community from which could have the effect of drawing in additional investment to surrounding opportunity sites throughout the downtown area.

Neighborhood stakeholders should target promotional efforts around attracting a developer to this site. Specifically, an emphasis should be placed on the development incentives outlined in the revised Transit-Oriented Development ordinance and, more broadly, the benefits of advancing TOD projects overall. Myriad examples of successful TOD projects highlight the impacts that these developments have on a reduction of travel times to major employment centers, local congestion concerns, and quality of life effects stemming from environmental considerations and an increase in local amenities. All of these impacts, together with the more tangible development incentives outlined in the revised ordinance, build a strong case to attract a developer to this site.

*Concept plan (left) and photosimulation (below) for potential anchor development at Business Route 1 and Bellevue Avenue*



**BEFORE** .....→  
**AFTER**.....↓



# OPPORTUNITIES

## Overview

The opportunities to bring new life to Downtown Penndel can be sorted in to one of three tiers:

1. **Enhance the existing environment**—Improvements which cause minimal disruption to current businesses and residents
  - Façade improvements such as repainting or new awnings
  - Provide outdoor dining at restaurants
  - Provide additional trees and landscaping along the streets
  - Utilize vacant space for appropriate new businesses or public spaces
  - Incorporate public art as gateways into the Borough
  - Enhance crosswalks and sidewalks through different paving materials
2. **Adaptive reuse**—Convert existing spaces and buildings into new uses which are more conducive to making the downtown a vibrant commercial hub.
  - Convert vacant, underutilized, or buildings with otherwise undesirable uses into noncompetitive and complementary businesses in areas such as home furnishing supply, entertainment, or restaurants.
  - Relocate automobile-centric businesses which may be more suitable for a highway location to light industrial use zones either outside of or on the outer edges of the Transit-Oriented Development zone.
  - Renovate the parks and connect the trails that surround the downtown with an emphasis on providing additional

pedestrian access points to the Langhorne train station.

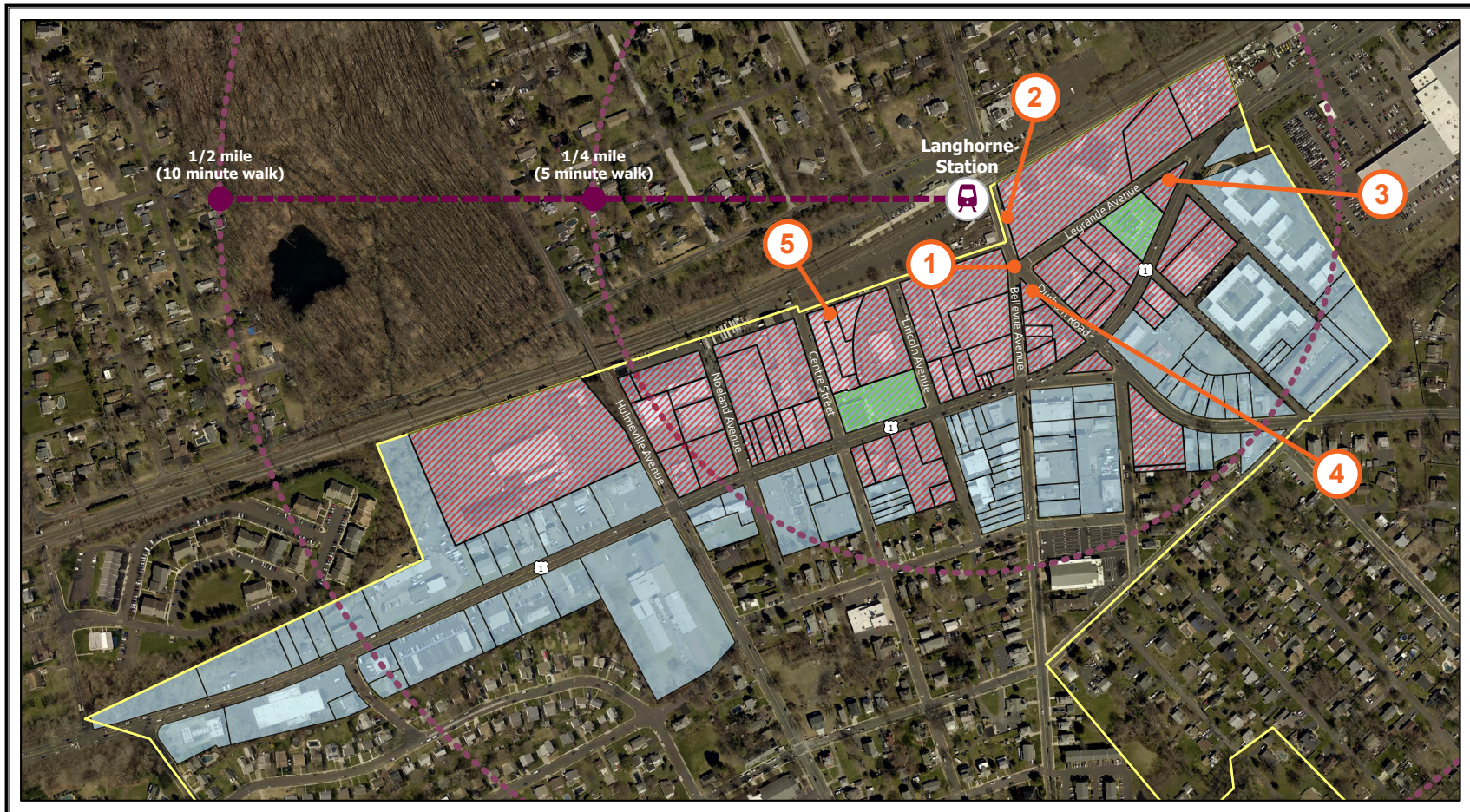
3. **Redevelopment**—Redevelop spaces that do not contribute to the vibrant commercial environment and build new developments which will provide the appropriate setting for a rich downtown.

- In prominent locations, construct buildings of a high quality of design to be centerpieces of the downtown.

## Build-Out Vision of a New Penndel

A long-range view of revitalizing Downtown Penndel would ultimately include more than just updating the existing conditions. It would potentially involve the redevelopment of some properties, and relocation of those businesses in order to make room for new construction. This new development would take the form of multi-story, mixed use buildings that would contain restaurants, bars, offices, apartments, theaters, and other active uses that would contribute to a lively downtown. The following map shows the extent of the downtown, along with areas that have been identified as potential opportunity sites for redevelopment and/or streetscape enhancements. Within those sites, five high priority locations have been selected that would likely have the largest impact on revitalization efforts within the downtown. These sites should be looked at in conjunction with the earlier discussed anchor development site at the intersection of Business Route 1 and Bellevue Avenue. Taken together, these improvements have the potential to fundamentally change the vitality of Penndel's downtown core.





#### Legend

- Borough Boundary
- Recently Developed
- TOD Area Parcels
- Potential Opportunity Area

### Penndel Borough TOD Expansion Area

**1** The five-point intersection in front of the strip mall and parking lot at Bellevue Avenue and Legrande Avenue

**2** Northern Gateway

**3** The narrow corner space where Business Route 1 meets Legrande Avenue

**4** The corner of Bellevue Avenue and Durham Road

**5** Large industrial buildings on western portion of downtown



## 1 Five-Point Intersection

The shopping center that fronts this five-point intersection occupies a prominent corner, and the majority of the site is taken up by a parking lot. Due to the size of the property, and the proximity to the train station, this would be an attractive property to be redeveloped with a mixed use building which includes retail space and residences.



## 2 Northern Gateway

This site occupies a location that could be used to serve passengers going to and from the train station. A café with outdoor seating would potentially contribute to the attractiveness of street life.





### 3 Bus. Rte 1 / Legrande

This triangular space formed by the intersection of these two streets presents an opportunity for it to be transformed into a small eastern gateway plaza that welcomes visitors to Pennadel.



### 4 Bellevue / Durham

This corner is the focal point of the view looking into Pennadel from the train station. This makes it a visually prominent location where high quality architectural design could enhance the image of the Borough.



## 5 Industrial Properties

These sites offer unique development opportunities either for adaptive reuse or for full scale redevelopment strategies. In the long-term, there is potential to redevelop these sites with larger mixed-use buildings, while in the short-term, the large industrial spaces can potentially be used for pop-up markets, brewpubs, flex office spaces, or recreation centers.

The photosimulation to the right shows a potential five-story mixed use development - a permissible use and density under the proposed modifications to the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay ordinance





# CONCLUSION

## Recommendations Table

<b>Recommended Activity:</b>	<b>Horizon:</b>
Understand the strengths and weaknesses of the physical conditions of the downtown.	Immediate-term
Understand the changing retail environment in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.	Immediate-term
Use promotional and marketing activities to begin to change public perception of Penn del to an area that is up-and-coming.	Immediate-term
Promote the Vision of a New Penn del to get “buy-in” from residents, property owners, and developers.	Immediate-term
Attract a TOD anchor project to the site at the northeast corner of Business Route 1 and Bellevue Avenue to serve as a catalyst to downtown revitalization efforts.	Short-term
Create an independent nonprofit whose sole responsibility is the revitalization of the business district. Ensure the board has a diverse representation including property owners, residents, local government, business owners, banks, school district, business association, and representatives from other non-profits that have complementary goals.	Short-term
Adopt revisions to the Transit-Oriented Development Overlay Ordinance to provide zoning and design requirements that incentivize denser development in the areas surrounding the Langhorne train station and emulate a pedestrian-friendly, traditional downtown.	Short-term/Medium-term
Become a member of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center to gain access to their resources.	Medium-term
Apply the Main Street Center’s model for downtown revitalization to Penn del’s downtown.	Medium-term
Develop a parking study to identify parking locations, supply and demand, potential sites for public parking, and shared parking opportunities.	Medium-term
Address blighted areas and property code violations.	Medium-term
Capitalize on the opportunities presented by the downtown.	Long-term
Adopt LERTA or other tax credit incentive program.	Long-term



# APPENDIX A

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## Transit-Oriented Development Overlay Ordinance

# APPENDIX B

## Funding Sources

### Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

#### *Community Conservation Partnerships Program*

The Bureau of Recreation and Conservation administers the Community Conservation Partnerships Program—known as C2P2—which combines several funding sources into one grant program. Applications are accepted once a year, typically in the spring.

#### Eligible Community Recreation Projects:

- Rehabilitation and development of parks and recreation facilities
- Design and construction of trails, including rail-trails, trail networks and local greenway corridors
- Acquisition of land for parks, active and passive recreation facilities, and trails
- Feasibility studies (pools, community centers, skateboard parks), trail and trail network studies
- Master site plans for development or redevelopment of a park or other recreational-use site
- Comprehensive recreation, park and open space plans—county, multi-municipal, local
- Playground rehabilitation in small communities (less than 5,000 residents)

#### Eligibility:

- Counties
- Municipalities
- Municipal agencies
- Nonprofit organizations
- State Heritage Areas
- Prequalified land trusts
- For-profit enterprises (for some grant types)

Most programs require a minimum cash or noncash matching contribution from the applicant that is equal to 50 percent of the project cost.

### Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

#### *Keystone Communities Program*

The Keystone Communities (KC) program is designed to encourage the creation of partnerships between the public and private sectors that jointly support local initiatives such as the growth and stability of neighborhoods and communities; social and economic diversity; and a strong and secure quality of life. The program allows communities to tailor the assistance to meet the needs of its specific revitalization effort.

A flexible tool for use in community and economic development for a variety of uses including planning activities, façade grant programs, accessible housing programs, and development grants.



**Eligibility:**

- Local governments (counties, cities, boroughs, townships, towns, and home rule municipalities)
- Redevelopment and/or housing authorities
- Nonprofit organizations to include economic development organizations, housing corporations, etc.
- Community development corporations
- Business improvement districts, neighborhood improvement districts, downtown improvement districts, and similar organizations incorporated as authorities

A dollar-for-dollar match is required for planning, development, and façade improvement activities.

***Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program***

Act 13 of 2012 establishes the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates funds to the Commonwealth Financing Authority (the “Authority”) for planning, acquisition, development, rehabilitation and repair of greenways, recreational trails, open space, parks and beautification projects using the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP).

Eligible projects include development, rehabilitation and improvements to public parks, recreation areas, greenways, trails and river conservation.

**Eligibility:**

- For-Profit Businesses
- Municipalities
- Councils of Governments
- Authorized Organization
- Institution of Higher Education
- Watershed Organization

Grants shall not exceed \$250,000 for any project. A 15% match of the total project cost is required.

***Multimodal Transportation Fund***

The Multimodal Transportation Fund provides grants to encourage economic development and ensure that a safe and reliable system of transportation is available to the residents of the commonwealth.

Funds may be used for the development, rehabilitation and enhancement of transportation assets to existing communities, streetscape, lighting, sidewalk enhancement, pedestrian safety, connectivity of transportation assets and transit-oriented development.

**Eligibility:**

- Municipalities
- Councils of Governments
- Businesses
- Economic Development Organizations
- Public Transportation Agencies
- Ports-Rail/Freight

Grants are available for projects with a total cost of \$100,000 or more. Grants shall not exceed \$3,000,000 for any project.

***Coastal Resources Management Program (CRM)***

CRM receives an annual grant award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This award provides for a portion of the funds to be used for eligible projects that address one or more of the priority areas of the CRM program. Applications are evaluated and awarded through a competitive process. The funds are distributed through sub-grant awards to state and local government agencies as well as nonprofit groups

located in or having facilities in the Delaware Estuary or Lake Erie Coastal Zones.

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program funds are provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and competitively allocated to local communities for a range of activities. Funds are primarily designed to assist low and moderate income households, which can be either through physical improvements such as road repair and housing rehabilitation, to providing operating assistance to homeless shelters and other public service projects. The activity must meet a national objective, being either to help low or moderate income persons or households, help erase blight on either an area or spot basis, or be an urgent need.

Eligible activities include, but are not limited to: Activities Related to Housing; Other Real Property Activities; Public Facilities; Activities Related to Public Services; Activities Related to Economic Development; Assistance to Community Based Development Organizations. This flexible grant fund can be used to target a neighborhood or provide municipal-wide support.

In Bucks County, the \$1.7M funds are administered by the County and are allocated on a yearly basis through an application process, usually begun in the early Spring.

### Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

#### *Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI)*

The Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) is an opportunity for the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to support smart growth in the individual municipalities of the Delaware Valley through initiatives that implement the region's long-range

plan, *Connections 2045 Plan for Greater Philadelphia*. This initiative focuses on linking land use and transportation planning by:

- Supporting local planning projects that will lead to more residential, employment or commercial opportunities in areas designated for growth or redevelopment;
- Improving the overall character and quality of life within the region to retain and attract business and residents;
- Enhancing and utilizing the existing transportation infrastructure capacity to reduce demands on the region's transportation network;
- Reducing congestion and improving the transportation system's efficiency by promoting and encouraging the use of transit, bike, and pedestrian transportation modes;
- Building capacity in our older suburbs and neighborhoods;
- Reinforcing and implementing improvements in designated Centers; and;
- Protecting our environment through growth management and land preservation.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as a number of counties within the region, have current programs to support community development. TCDI seeks to support and leverage those programs, by providing funding to undertake early stage planning, analysis or design initiatives. TCDI funds projects that directly support and enhance the efficiency of the regional transportation system and implement the goals of *Connections 2045*.

Funding for the TCDI program comes from a combination of state transportation dollars and federal funds. Through fiscal years 2002-2017, DVRPC has distributed over \$16 million to over 240 communities and counties throughout the region. TCDI projects are located in the downtowns, commercial centers,



neighborhoods, and transit corridors within the region as well as neighborhoods in the Core Cities of Camden, Chester, Trenton, and Philadelphia. Many projects are multi-municipal and often cross jurisdictional boundaries.

## **Bucks County Industrial Authority (BCIDA)**

### ***Bucks Guaranteed***

Bucks County has established a loan guarantee program backed by funds held by various county economic development agencies and lenders in order to foster increased bank lending and leverage. Bucks Guaranteed aims to increase private investment in both equity and debt, while reducing capital outlays from public financing programs, where demand traditionally outstrips available resources. The program will target companies in the county that have a clear and demonstrated competitive advantage that encourages growth and expansion, while still providing workers with good jobs at family sustaining wages. Examples of acceptable uses for this program include:

- Reuse of Greyfield and Brownfield sites that require remediation
- Main Street and downtown redevelopment related to smart growth
- Improvements to critical infrastructure
- Related activities

### ***Bucks Rebuilt***

A \$1 million fund designed to invest in the revitalization and adaptive reuse of older, vacant, and abandoned or underutilized Brownfields or Greyfields at industrial and manufacturing sites and facilities throughout Bucks County. Funds from this program can be used to:

- Acquire land and buildings
- Demolish abandoned, underutilized, or unutilized buildings
- Facilitate site clearance
- Infrastructure improvements including utilities, water and sewer systems, access roads, and parking
- Environmental remediation, but only as part of an overall development project

Generally, Bucks Rebuilt Investments (BRI) will be limited to support for the acquisition, demolition, site clearance, infrastructure improvements, and in certain instances environmental cleanup of abandoned, underutilized, or unutilized industrial and manufacturing properties.

Up to \$500,000 may be invested in such projects at below market interest rates to a developer, municipality, or other eligible not-for-profit entity for such purposes. In no case can BRI funds represent more than 40 percent of total project costs. The length of the loan and the other terms will be subject to negotiation with the Bucks County Industrial Development Authority (BCIDA).

### **Bucks Rebuilt Investments (BRI) Program Overview:**

- To restore abandoned, underutilized, or unutilized industrial and manufacturing property to productive use
- To target public resources for the redevelopment of properties in developed areas already well served by roads, rail, infrastructure and utilities, and where possible, public transportation
- To reduce the pressure on Bucks County's remaining open spaces, natural resources, and scenic areas by concentrating redevelopment efforts on such sites as opposed to supporting 'Greenfield' development

### ***Bucks Renewed***

A \$1 million fund designed to promote new investments in Bucks County's numerous downtowns. Funds are limited to renovations of significant downtown buildings, or a project that represents core improvements in a well thought out downtown revitalization plan. Funds from this program can be used to:

- Acquire, adapt, restore, and/or revitalize a building of significant commercial, historic or cultural value
- Make infrastructure or site improvements that will improve access, use, or viewsapes that will result in a demonstrable improvement to the downtown experience
- Undertake innovative investments, such as the re-purposing of alleyways or the backs of buildings to provide a second 'front door' for downtown consumers and guests
- Assist in financing a façade improvement fund; limited to occupied buildings that are already engaged in commercial enterprises and where the improvements are part of an overall merchandising and revitalization plan where there is a 4 to 1 private to public dollar match in funding
- Assist in financing investments in upper stories of downtown commercial buildings that will result in an income stream for merchants and affordable housing or other commercial uses which will strengthen the downtown economy

Up to \$500,000 may be invested in such projects at below market interest rates to a developer, municipality, or other eligible not-for-profit entity for such purposes. In no case can Bucks Renewed funds represent more than 40 percent of total project costs. The length of the loan and the other terms will be subject to negotiation with the Bucks County Industrial Development Authority (BCIDA).

### ***Core Industry Fund***

Over \$2 million is available in low interest financing to assist small businesses to grow and expand, particularly those seeking to acquire and improve blighted properties in distressed areas, areas of higher unemployment, or within Bucks County's state designated Enterprise Zone. Funding can be used for such activities as:

- The acquisition of land and/or buildings
- Site preparation, including clearance, demolition, and removal of abandoned or unutilized buildings and related infrastructure improvements
- Machinery and equipment acquisition
- Working capital loans

Businesses can secure as much as \$400,000 in funding from this program to support these kinds of ventures, so long as more than half the jobs created go to low and/or moderate income workers (generally a worker for whom no specialized skills are needed to perform the job for which they are hired or for underemployed or unemployed individuals), or the funds are used to prevent or eliminate blight (generally an area or building that cannot reasonably be occupied in its present state). One new full time job is created for each \$35,000 dollars of Core Industry Fund dollars invested when the borrower shows strong evidence of being able to pay back any loans made.

### ***New Economy Fund***

Over \$2 million in discounted financing is available to assist the BCIDA in pursuing a policy of 'intelligent growth' that:

- Supports and encourages the revitalization and adaptive reuse of older, vacant, and abandoned or underutilized industrial and manufacturing facilities
- Utilizes Bucks County's strength as a major freight center, in



road, rail, and water

- Capitalizes on good job opportunities and sustainable wages in areas including, but not limited to, biotechnology, life sciences, transportation, advanced manufacturing, distribution and related support enterprises in management, logistics, and Information technology
- Builds on the Bucks County's comparative economic advantage in the fields of healthcare, medical device manufacturing, and health care delivery
- Promotes job creation of sustainable wage and high skilled jobs essential to retain our young adult cohort, the future business and civic leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators  
Buck County will need to support a 21st Century economy

Businesses and investor/developers can secure as much as \$500,000 in funding from this program to support these kinds of ventures, so long as there is at least a dollar for dollar match in debt and equity financing. One new full time job is created for each \$35,000 dollars of New Economy Fund dollars invested when the borrower shows strong evidence of being able to pay back any loans made.

### ***Taste & Tour Bucks County***

The Taste & Tour program will provide micro-loans low interest financing to help support agri-business and tourism communities. This initiative also supports family-owned farms, farmer's markets, and the hospitality industry in Bucks County.

### **Visit Bucks County**

Visit Bucks County will designate a portion of the proceeds of the county's tax on lodging, agreed upon by the County Commissioners and the Bureau, towards funding a tourism grant program. The program will look to fund eligible participants in Capital Projects related to tourism promotion, marketing, historic

preservation and enhancement of attractions and the staging of special events designed to attract visitors to the county. Grant amounts vary.

#### **Eligibility:**

Eligible recipients are limited to non-profit (501-c3 or 501-c6) organizations or other entities that are located in Bucks County and are partners with Visit Bucks County.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Main Street Approach**

- <http://www.mainstreet.org/home>
- <http://www.padowntown.org/>
- <http://dced.pa.gov/download/keystone-communities-program-designations/?wpdmdl=76100>
- <http://www.pablightlibrary.com>
- <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtowneconomics/archives/>
- <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtowneconomics/archives/>
- <https://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/downtown-revitalization>
- Crow, Ed. Paths and Pitfalls: On the Way to a New Vibrancy in Older Retail Districts. 2003.
- <http://quakertownalive.com/>
- <http://www.perkasieoldetowne.com/pota/aboutus.html>
- <https://www.bbrtb.info/>

# APPENDIX C

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## Penndel Borough Open House Survey Results

# APPENDIX D

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## Penndel Borough Business Survey Results