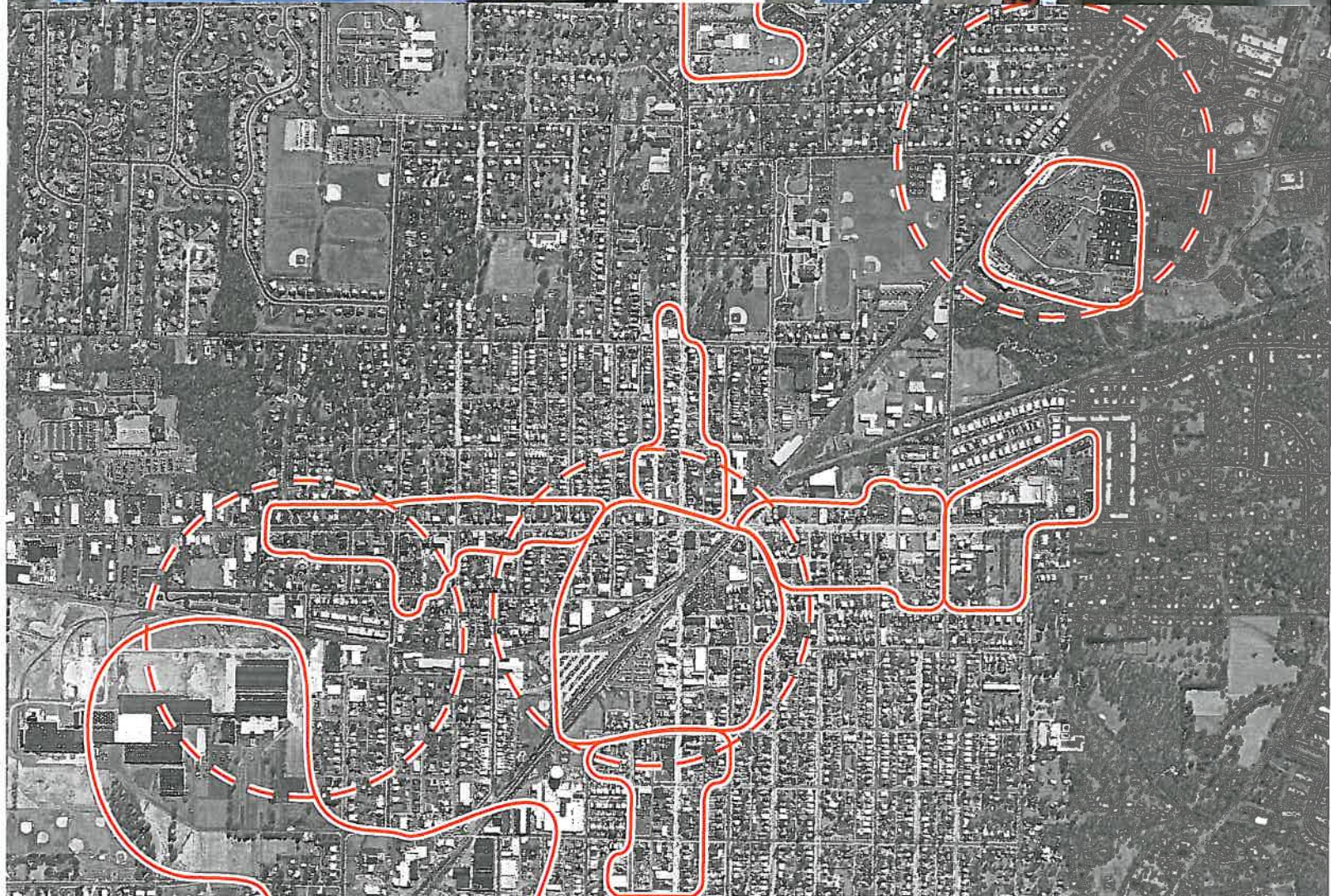




Revitalization Plan Update

Borough of Lansdale

November 2009



This plan was financed in part by Montgomery County through the Montgomery County Community Revitalization Program.

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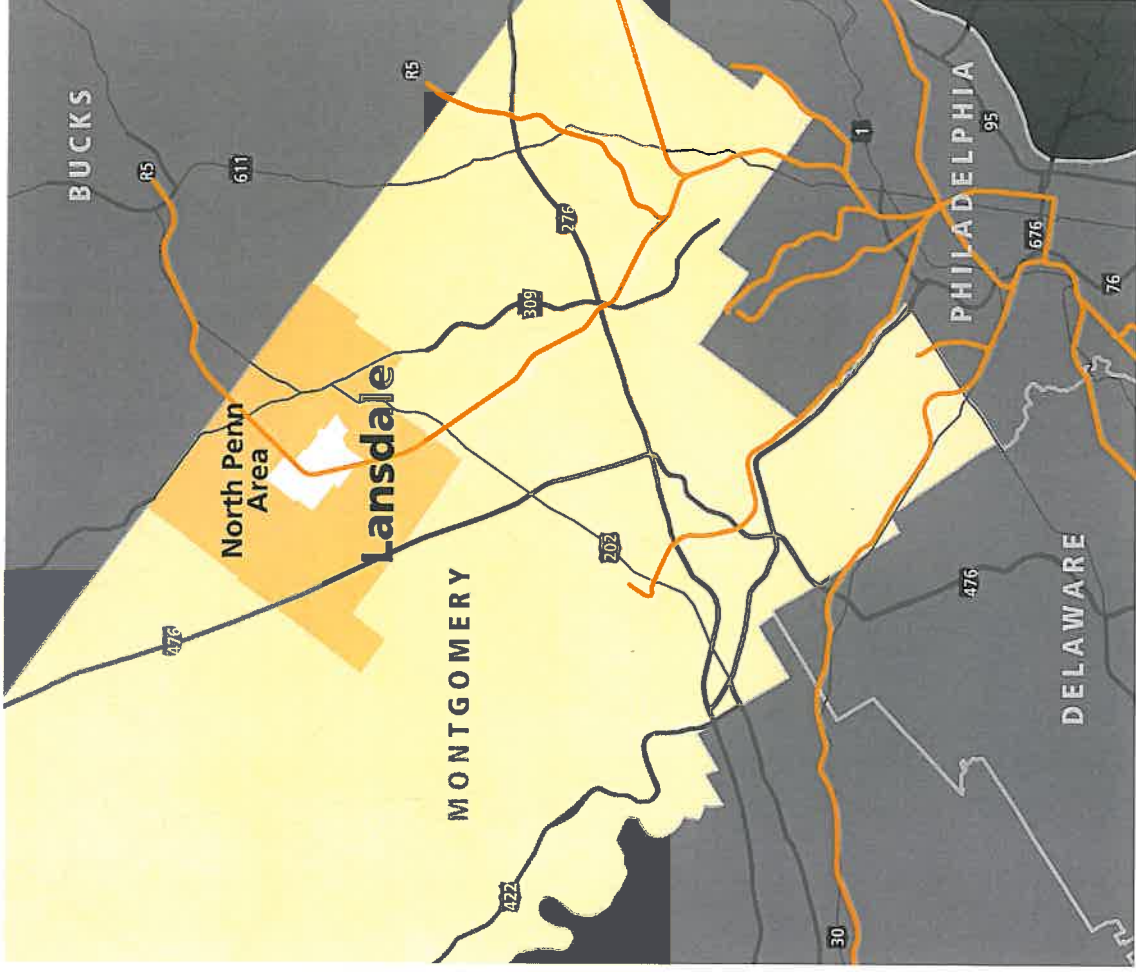
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introduction



A review of the Borough of Lansdale's 2001 Revitalization Plan shows the many revitalization actions the Borough has successfully implemented. (See Revitalization Plan Assessment in Appendix A.) These actions have yielded strong developer interest throughout the Borough. Currently, the Borough has over 500 residential units being proposed by developers, including luxury rental apartments, condominiums, and age-restricted housing. Several mixed use, commercial centers and transit-oriented development have also been completed in the Borough, such as Station Square and the Pavilion projects. In contrast, nonresidential development in the Borough's industrial district in the northern portion of the Borough has been very slow and the future of development in this area is very uncertain. Another substantial development change in Lansdale is the Borough's current implementation of a performing arts center on Main Street. Many changes have occurred in Lansdale since 2001. The Revitalization Plan Update provides the new direction the Borough will follow to overcome the current obstacles to further revitalization and achieve its vision for the future. This update has also been prepared to complement the Borough's Downtown Destination Plan completed in 2007, which focused more extensively on the potential for Lansdale's central business district to become a regional destination. The Revitalization Plan references the Downtown Destination Plan and there is consistency between both planning documents.

economic conditions scan



Lansdale's Development Context

Lansdale is often described as a “built out” community with not much land available for new development, particularly in its downtown area. However, as a result of the actions the Borough of Lansdale has taken since its 2001 Revitalization Plan, there have been substantial changes in the Borough.

Its approach for strategic redevelopment, the plans for the Regional Performing Arts Center, the completion of a new comprehensive plan, and the continuing proactive involvement of the Borough is attracting the interest of developers who are investing in older structures and building new. Current development activity indicates a healthy level of investment and confidence in the area's ability for sustainable growth. In recent years the Borough has seen over \$100 million dollars in new development. These current projects encompass a mix of uses, including office, retail, and housing, which includes over 500 residential units.

This revitalization plan update will better position the Borough to take advantage of its new growth, enhance its downtown, and determine a new strategy for its former industrial area with new business opportunities.

Current development activity indicates a healthy level of investment and confidence in the area's ability for sustainable growth

Strengths

- Reasonable tax rate
- Reliable and inexpensive energy
- Good regional transportation
- Business-friendly environment
- Stable and relatively safe community
- Located in a high growth county
- Small-town lifestyle
- Stable stock of housing options
- Housing in walking distance of shopping, professional services, parks and schools.
- Many recreation opportunities
- Regional amenities—the library, pools, and performing arts center
- Stable population projected to increase
- Designated as a DVRPC regional center

When compared to other municipalities in the region, Lansdale has a reasonable tax rate, a reliable and inexpensive source of energy, good regional transportation options, and a business-friendly environment. It is a stable and relatively safe community in a county that is growing in both population and employment. It is also in a relatively high growth part of the Philadelphia region. It is next door to the largest employer in Montgomery County, Merck & Co.

The Borough offers an affordable, small-town lifestyle. In the face of a growing region, Lansdale has been able to maintain a stable

stock of modestly-sized homes. Many of these homes are within walking distance of convenience shopping, professional services, and community facilities. With 160 acres of park and recreation facilities, there are numerous opportunities for both active and passive recreation throughout the Borough. Schools in Lansdale are close enough to housing that students can walk to school, and bus transportation is not always necessary. The Lansdale Public Library, White's Road Pool, Fourth Street Pool, and the Lansdale Center for the Performing Arts provide regional amenities right at home.



Small Business on Broad Street (Top Left)
 Lansdale Center for the Performing Arts (Top Right)
 Traditional Downtown Housing (Bottom Left)
 New Stony Creek Park (Bottom Right)

In 2000, Lansdale had just over 16,000 residents. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission estimated that Lansdale's population stabilized in 2003 from decline and projects that the Borough's population will increase through 2015. This is confirmed by a number of new residential and mixed-use developments in the Borough, including Station Square, the Pavilion, the Village at West Main Street, Andale Green, and the Silk Factory.

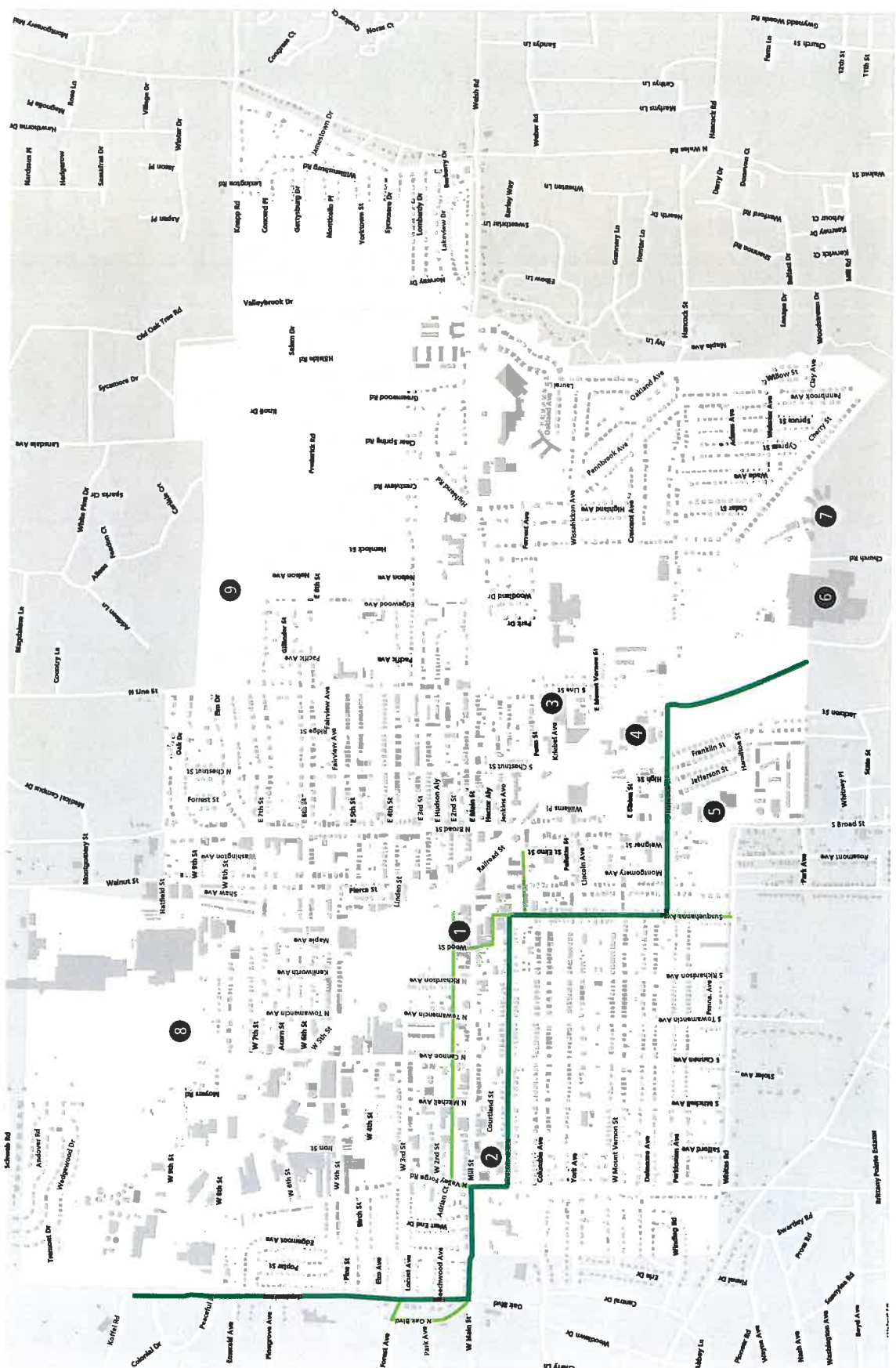
YEAR	POPULATION	CHANGE
1990	16,362	-291
2000	16,071	+129
2005	16,200	+110
2010	16,310	+130
2015	16,440	-20
2020	16,420	-10
2025	16,410	

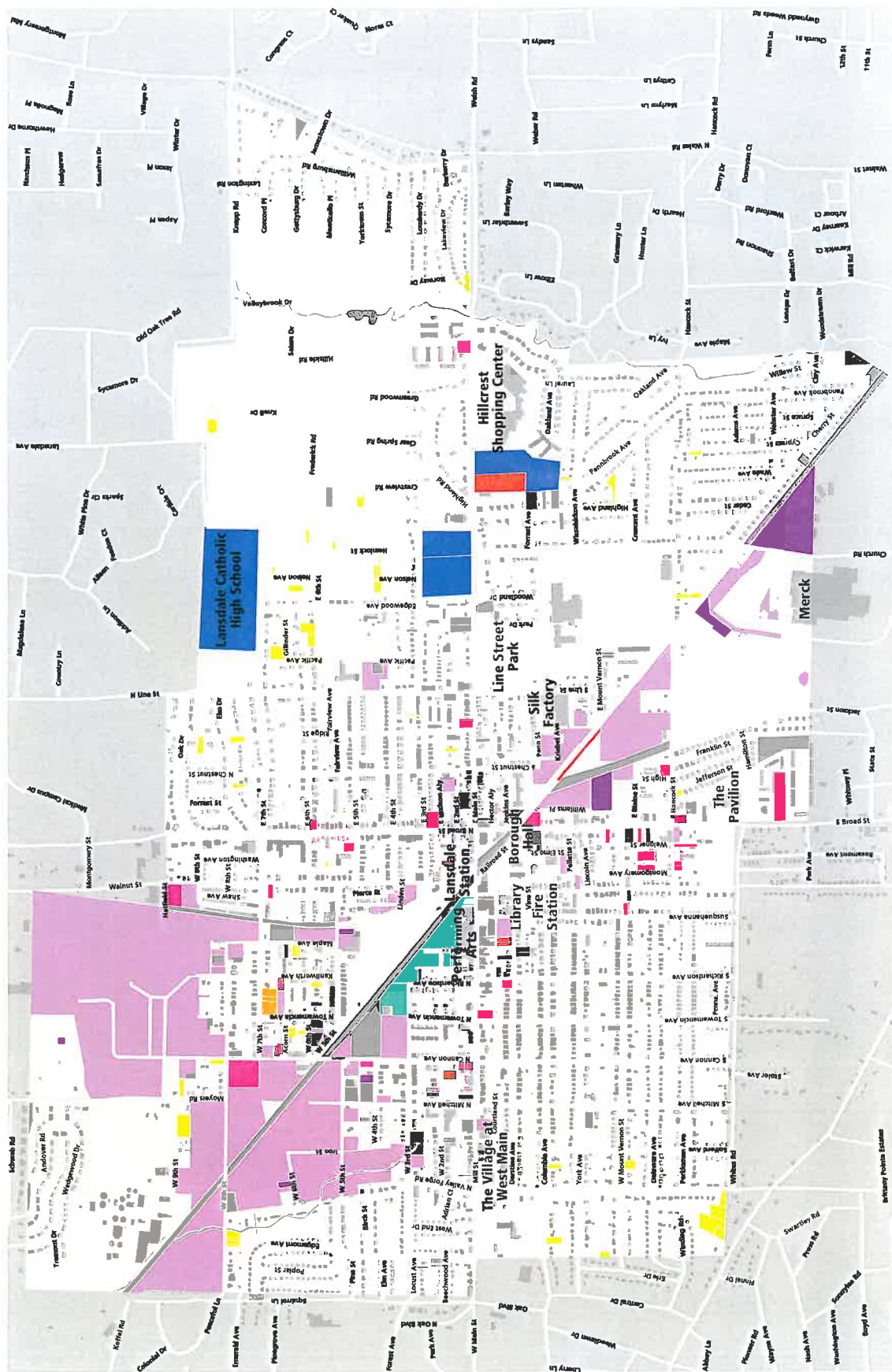
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population & Housing, 2000; DVRPC Projections (2005-2025)

Recent Development Projects

- 1 Masonic Hall**
450 seating capacity theater
220 seating capacity theater
3,200 sq ft restaurant
- 2 The Village at West Main**
29,680 sq ft retail
8,800 sq ft office
50-58 loft housing units
- 3 Silk Factory**
115 loft housing units
- 4 Andale Green**
288 age restricted housing units
30,000 sq ft non-residential space
- 5 The Pavilion**
132,382 sq ft retail
- 6 Merck Training Facility**
- 7 Station Square**
346 rental housing units
7,500 sq ft restaurant
38,300 sq ft professional office
3,000 sq ft bank
165 parking spaces
- 8 New Townhouses**
- 9 Lansdale Catholic High School**
high school intends to move, leaving this property ripe for redevelopment

..... Proposed Liberty Bell Trail Alignment
..... Point of Interest Spur Trail





In fact, mixed-use and transit-oriented developments have been very successful in Lansdale. Much of the development activity is focused on West Main Street and in the area between South Broad Street and the SEPTA R5 corridor. The development pressure seems to be coming from the southwest because of its access to multiple SEPTA stations (Pennbrook and Lansdale), its proximity to large employment centers, and its location near the Pennsylvania Turnpike Northeast Extension.

Yet, new development activity is and will be occurring on the northeastern edge of the borough. Proposed townhouses at

Eighth Street and Cannon Avenue indicate redevelopment potential in the largely industrial northern part of the borough. Also, Lansdale Catholic High School's intent to move from its current location at 7th Street and Lansdale Avenue offers an opportunity for redevelopment in a largely residential neighborhood.

With its affordable energy, multiple transportation options, stable and growing population, mix of uses, and numerous community assets, Lansdale is positioned well for sustainable development. In addition, the Borough is committed to encouraging sustainable practices.

Properties Susceptible to Change

- Residential Vacant Land
- Commercial Vacant Land
- Industrial Vacant Land
- Industrial Land
- Institutional
- Borough-owned
- Parking Lots
- Gas Station / Repair Shop
- Scrap / Junk Yards
- Utility
- Other

Recent Development

- The Village at West Main (Top)
- The Pavilion (Center)
- Silk Factory (Bottom)

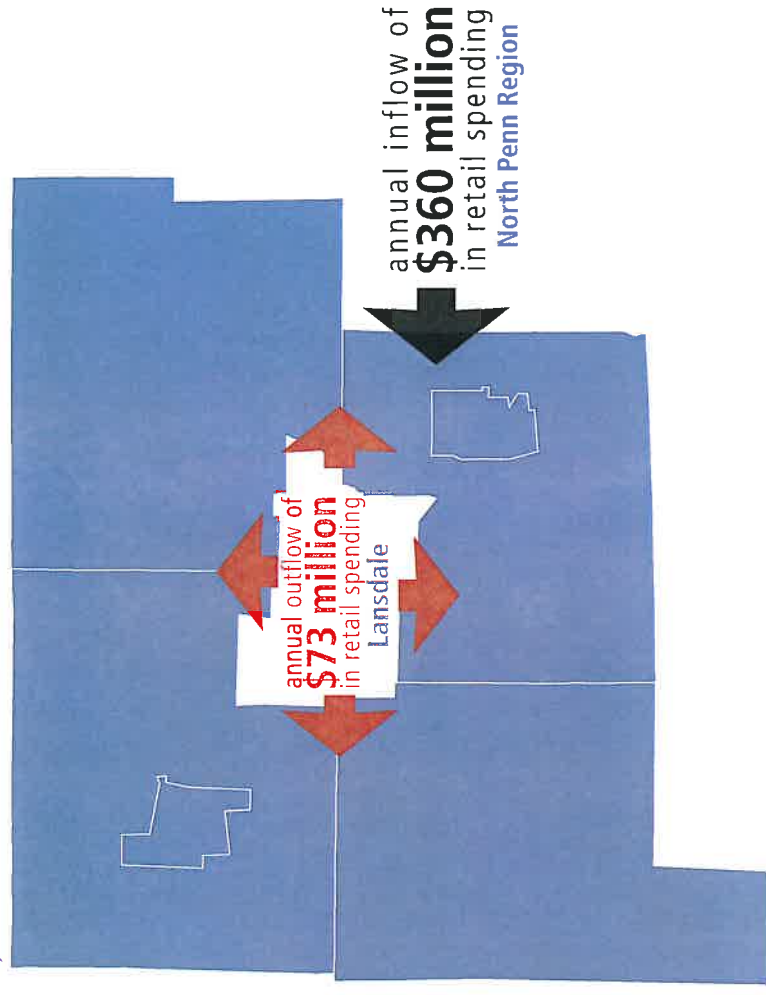


Weaknesses

- Decrease in owner-occupied housing units
- Projected decrease in employment opportunities
- Retail demand in Lansdale is \$220 million, but only \$146 million is spent in the Borough
- Lack of affordable product for the small office user
- Traffic congestion, particularly along Main and Broad Streets
- Fragmented parcel ownership for redevelopment

The diversity of Lansdale's mixed-use environment is declining. The current trend in housing tenure shows a decrease in owner-occupied housing units and an increase in renter-occupied housing units. While this is a trend that has been experienced widely outside the Borough as well, Lansdale should work to make sure that a sufficient mix of

owner- and renter-occupied housing units remain to balance its residential base. DVRPC projects a decrease of 4% in employment opportunities between 2000 and 2025, which amounts to the loss of approximately 400 jobs. This signals a possible decrease in the number of commercial and industrial uses in the Borough.



The overall annual loss of retail dollars from Lansdale is about \$73,409,000. At the same time, the North Penn region, with its 4,363,747 square feet of retail space, has a net inflow of retail dollars of just under \$360,000,000.

A major finding in the market analysis interview process for the Downtown Destination Plan was that there is a lack of product for the small—500 to 5,000 square feet—office user. Potential tenants in this group are professional services, health related users, finance, insurance, and real estate companies. These sectors have already shown strength in Montgomery County, and the projects that cater to them have done well. Finally, in a region where the population is increasing, it is likely that these sectors will continue to grow. (See the Downtown Destination Plan appendices for complete market analysis.)

Because Lansdale is in a high growth region, traffic congestion has increased in and around the Borough. However, with increasing energy costs, including the rising cost of gas, traffic congestion may decrease as people start to use other modes of transportation. With its walkable nature, two regional rail stations, and multiple bus routes, Lansdale offers residents more transportation options.

Along Main Street, parcel ownership is fragmented. This makes it difficult to coordinate a cohesive Main Street management program. Other potential redevelopment areas in Lansdale have the same issue. The Borough will need to be more proactive to fill the absence of leadership for such an effort.



Vacant / Underutilized Properties

Former commercial facility for sale near S Broad Street (Top)

Vacant store on Main Street (Center)

Industrial land for sale at 5th and Valley Forge Rds (Bottom)

Issues

- Redevelopment of industrial areas
- Expansion of downtown and neighborhood retail and services
- Capacity to implement the recommendations of the Downtown Destination Plan
- Protection of the Borough's small town character
- Energy costs
- Transportation congestion
- Housing balance and residential neighborhood character

Although Lansdale has seen a flurry of new development, development has been uneven. As previously mentioned, there has been a concentration of new development in the southwest corner of the Borough, while the northern industrial area has not significantly changed since the completion of the original revitalization plan.

Other new residential developments in the pipeline may have significant ramifications for the revitalization of Lansdale. The approximately 500 dwelling units that have been announced will bring new residents into the Borough, each with money to spend and needs to be met. If the household sizes in the new developments reflect the current estimated household size in the Borough of 2.39 residents, there would be an additional 1,075 new people living there.

If the incomes of the 500 new households that will live in the three announced developments were the same as the median household income for the North Penn Region, they would bring an additional \$32,539,950 to the Borough. If they spent approximately 35% of their incomes on retail goods and services, they would spend \$11,388,000 on those goods and

services. The challenge for the Borough is to maximize the capture of retail and entertainment dollars.

The Borough has produced a Downtown Destination Plan to maximize the potential of its core. The plan makes recommendations about how to leverage Lansdale's downtown assets to induce new mixed-use residential and commercial development. The Borough has made significant efforts to implement this Plan, including the creation of the Lansdale Center of the Performing Arts, several streetscape projects, and new downtown development regulations. However, it is critical at this time for the Borough to continue its progress with the Plan's implementation, particularly addressing the redevelopment of the Madison Avenue parking lot and completing streetscape improvements to create a new destination image for downtown.

New development in the region is typically automobile-oriented with large building setbacks and parking facing the street. Lansdale must be willing to work with developers to ensure that new development meets the developers' needs while preserving

the Borough's small town character on Main Street and in its residential neighborhoods. As with the Village at West Main Street, the resulting development can become a model for future projects.

As mentioned earlier, energy costs have started to rise and will likely continue to rise. Because Lansdale produces its own energy, it has a unique opportunity to pursue alternative methods of energy production to manage costs, including the use of renewable resources such as wind or solar. By doing so, the Borough can position itself as a leader in sustainable energy production.

With recent increases in traffic congestion, the Borough should consider expanding its traffic management approach to include both the installation of traffic control devices and the promotion of other transportation modes. Because it is served by multiple train stations and its community form is compact enough to be walkable and bikeable, there are viable modes of transportation other than the automobile. With a combination of targeted road infrastructure and the encouragement of using other modes of transportation, the Borough will be able to improve the effectiveness of its circulation system.

The character of Lansdale's neighborhoods is one of the Borough's greatest strengths. It is important to maintain a high standard for the quality of housing in Lansdale so that as new development occurs, neighborhood character is preserved and enhanced. It is also important to maintain a sufficient variety of housing types to accommodate households of different sizes and ages.

Lansdale is positioned to transform its downtown and revitalize the entire Borough. Its key assets are the small town character and diversity of housing, transportation, and recreation options. By reinforcing these assets and building on them, Lansdale will continue to add value to its established neighborhoods and become an even more vibrant center of the North Penn region.

ECONOMY

Lansdale is at the center of a bustling region. However, there is a net outflow of retail spending from Lansdale to the region. This presents an opportunity to expand niche retail sectors and capitalize on the time people spend in Lansdale using regional service and cultural facilities. Also, the underutilized industrial lands present new employment and residential opportunities.

SAFETY

Safety was determined not to be a significant revitalization issue for Lansdale. In 2008, there were 1,500 crimes committed in Lansdale. This represents an overall decrease of about 1.1% from 2007, including decreases in robbery, assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft and an increase in rape. Officers are involved in many community policing activities.

HOUSING

Lansdale's residential neighborhoods have a wide range of housing types. Protecting these residential areas is an important priority. Trends show a decrease in owner-occupied housing and an increase in renter-occupied housing. Lansdale should ensure a sufficient mix of these units to balance its residential base. The Borough should also promote home maintenance.

INFRASTRUCTURE

With convenient highway and rail access, Lansdale is a hub for the North Penn region. As such, it has significant traffic congestion. An emphasis on accommodating other modes, like walking and biking, can relieve congestion. Lansdale should also promote wayfinding, regional trails, and centralized parking facilities.

By reinforcing its assets and building on them, Lansdale will continue to add value to its established neighborhoods and become an even more vibrant center of the North Penn region.

revitalization vision, goals, and strategies



Vision Statement

Lansdale's Revitalization Plan will better position the Borough to **expand** on its new residential growth, **build** its downtown as a regional destination, **renew** employment centers, and **be a leader** in sustainable community development.

Economy

A fundamental component of Lansdale's revitalization effort is focusing on its economic performance. This section of the Plan provides policies and detailed actions to guide the Borough's future economic development program. These recommendations are based on the weaknesses and issues identified in the Plan's economic scan and provide the direction to achieve Lansdale's revitalization vision.

Goals

Continue to improve the business environment in Lansdale, and secure its reputation as a business hub for the North Penn region.

Revitalize Lansdale's downtown business district as a regional cultural, retail, and entertainment destination.

Enhance Main and Broad Streets as vibrant thoroughfares with a mix of neighborhood-scale commercial and residential uses that complement surrounding neighborhoods and create distinctive gateways into the Borough.

Promote transit-oriented development at appropriate scales near Lansdale's train stations.

Redevelop the Cannon Avenue Corridor as a transit-oriented, innovative business center.

Protect Lansdale's walkable town character as new investment and redevelopment occurs.

Strategies

Support the Borough's Strategic Investment Areas: Downtown, Mixed-use Corridors, Neighborhood Gateways, Employment Centers, and Transit-oriented Development that represent the different scales of business development opportunities and complement Lansdale's character.

Create a business-friendly development code that meets the needs of the different scales of economic activity.

Prepare a marketing initiative to communicate Lansdale's new suburban village lifestyle and amenities.

Establish development standards to maintain Lansdale's historic character, encourage green building, and support transit-oriented development.

Promote local energy and food access as sustainable community advantages.

Expand incentives to adaptively reuse existing historic buildings and create new uses at abandoned industrial sites.

Promote the Borough's community facilities as assets for the region.

Identify an organization to promote and coordinate revitalization.

Implement the revitalization and investment recommendations for the Borough's Downtown Destination Plan.

Actions

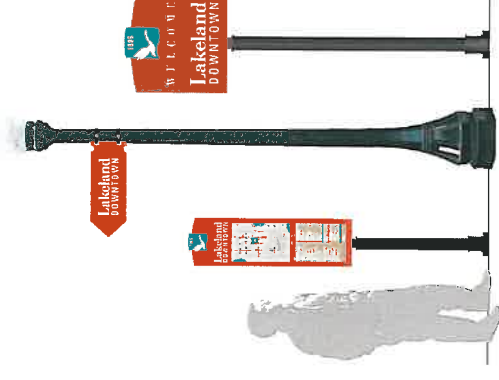
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|--|--|
| ☐ Hire an Economic Development Coordinator. | ☐ Create a gateway overlay district on Main and Broad Streets that accommodates larger scale commercial uses with attention to design, pedestrian scale, and streetscape amenities. |
| ☐ Develop a strong Borough branding and wayfinding initiative. | ☐ Support a new SEPTA train station at Ninth Street. |
| ☐ Establish traditional neighborhood development standards for new investment in the Borough. | ☐ Prepare a master plan for the Cannon Avenue Business Corridor. |
| ☐ Provide density bonuses or other incentives to encourage historic preservation, "green" building, and adaptive reuse of existing industrial structures. | ☐ Evaluate the creation of a business incubator for the Cannon Avenue Business Corridor to support emerging small commercial and manufacturing enterprises. |
| ☐ Implement an alternative energy supply system. | ☐ Create new employment center zoning district. |
| ☐ Create a downtown facade, signage, and window design program. | ☐ Expand the use of the TOD overlay zoning district around Lansdale's train stations. |
| ☐ Promote the role of the Lansdale Business Association in Main Street revitalization. | ☐ Create a Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) for Lansdale's Main Street station. |
| ☐ Grow the Performing Arts Center, the Library, and an additional regional attraction as economic anchors. | ☐ Create a concierge service at the Main Street station for Borough businesses. |
| ☐ Develop a restaurant cluster downtown. | ☐ Promote retail opportunities within and near the train stations. |
| ☐ Target 10 places that sell food, 10 destination retail shops, and 10 places open after 6pm downtown. | ☐ Extend the Lansdale Farmers' Market season with a covered pavilion. |
| ☐ Create new mixed-use corridor zoning district along Main and Broad Streets. | |



Lansdale Farmers Market (Above)
Example of Town Branding and Wayfinding, Cloud Gehshan (Below)



Lakeland
DOWNTOWN



Safety

People need to feel safe in a community to be willing to invest, enjoy shopping and entertainment, or purchase a home. Lansdale offers a pleasant and stable atmosphere in its commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. Policies and detailed actions provided in this section of the Plan are intended to maintain the high quality of life for the Borough's residents, businesses, and visitors.

Goals

Maintain the high quality emergency services in the Borough.

Create a vibrant center of entertainment and retail activity in downtown Lansdale, putting "eyes on the street" and allowing for comfortable and safe walkability throughout the day or evening.

Create a pedestrian friendly environment while accommodating automobile traffic.

Improve pedestrian safety at the downtown train station.

Strategies

Add traffic control devices at critical intersections.

Utilize traffic calming measures in critical locations.

Maintain the Borough's interconnected street network for effective circulation of automobile and pedestrian traffic.

Complete missing parts of the sidewalk network and maintain crosswalk striping.

Implement safety and circulation recommendations from the Downtown Destination Plan.

Promote a variety of businesses that offer both daytime and evening activity, attracting customers and visitors in the day and evening.

Actions

- ☐ Highlight pedestrian zones in the downtown and other key intersections with raised paving patterns.
- ☐ Create bike lanes throughout Lansdale to narrow travel lanes and better accommodate all users of streets.
- ☐ Expand police youth outreach with the North Penn School District.
- ☐ Develop a Borough Official Map.
- ☐ Light up building facades downtown to create a brighter, cleaner atmosphere at night.
- ☐ Install pedestrian-scale lighting on Broad and Main Streets.
- ☐ Create a tree canopy over streets and at gateways to the Borough to slow down auto traffic.
- ☐ Promote extended business hours and evening activities in the downtown.
- ☐ Add traffic lights at the intersections of Wood and Main Streets, Hancock Street and Stony Creek Park, Eighth Street and Moyers Road, and Broad and Ninth Streets.
- ☐ Create green gateways at strategic Borough entrances as recommended in the Borough's Open Space Plan.



Improved Crosswalk Example (Above)
Challenging Train Station Zone for Vehicles, Bikes, and Pedestrians (Below)



Housing

Lansdale has attractive residential neighborhoods with a diversity of housing types and styles. Protecting these residential areas is an important priority of the borough's Revitalization Plan. The policies and actions in this section of the Plan address the weaknesses and issues identified in the Plan's economic scan in order to preserve the quality and diversity of these valuable neighborhoods.

Goals

Maintain existing walkable neighborhoods and protect the character of existing houses.

Promote home-ownership opportunities.

Support Borough street tree maintenance and new tree plantings in residential areas.

Promote diversity in housing types to meet the needs of all Lansdale residents.

Allow an appropriate mix of commercial and higher density residential development in the Downtown, Mixed Use Corridor, Neighborhood Gateways, and Employment Center Investment Areas.

Provide diverse housing opportunities including higher densities concentrated around Lansdale's train stations.

Strategies

Support standards to maintain the Borough's residential neighborhoods and structures.

Encourage home-ownership throughout the Borough by instituting a Homeownership Initiative Program.

Support opportunities for a variety of residential types and combinations of commercial and residential uses in the Mixed-Use Corridor and Neighborhood Gateway Strategic Investment Areas.

Create opportunities for transit-oriented residential development in the Employment Center Strategic Investment Areas to provide convenient options for employees and transitional areas between the new centers and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Establish transit oriented development (TOD) development standards in all the TOD Strategic Investment Area.

Establish a residential tree program.

Actions

- ☐ Sponsor a "small house" design competition.
- ☐ Prepare TND design standards for residential districts.
- ☐ Provide density bonuses or other incentives for investors to adaptively redevelop selected historic structures into new residential units.
- ☐ Strongly enforce building and maintenance codes to maintain the quality of housing in Lansdale.
- ☐ Support additional housing density in downtown and TOD districts.
- ☐ Allow limited residential uses in the proposed Gateway District, Mixed-use Corridor District, and new Employment Center District.
- ☐ Support mixed use development, including residential development, around the proposed 9th St station.
- ☐ Promote DVRPC's Smart Commute Mortgage Program.
- ☐ Create volunteer tree stewards in Lansdale.
- ☐ Distribute small trees to Borough residents on Arbor Day or at other community events.



Example of Borough's Quality Housing (Above)
Elm Terrace Senior Housing (Below)



Infrastructure

Revitalization and new private investment in the Borough requires upgrading Lansdale's public infrastructure. The Borough continues to regularly complete repairs and significant improvements to its roads, storm-water systems, utilities, parks, and other facilities. The policies and actions identified in this section of the Plan provide direction for public infrastructure projects that will be catalysts for Lansdale's revitalization.

Goals

Enhance opportunities for all modes of transportation, including vehicles, transit, bicycling, and walking.

Maintain an efficient and safe flow of traffic throughout the Borough.

Provide central parking facilities in downtown Lansdale.

Create a green infrastructure network that links the Borough's parks, and environmental resources to the neighborhoods, downtown, and the regional open space system.

Provide opportunities for new clean energy sources and encourage green building practices.

Strategies

Continue Borough initiatives in street reconstruction, maintenance, and connectivity.

Add traffic controls at critical intersections.

Improve bicycle facilities at strategic locations.

Implement Lansdale's trail plan to connect with and complement the regional system.

Improve the Borough's wayfinding signage system.

Educate landowners, and adopt policies to require greener public spaces, streetscapes, and parking lots.

Continue to support the development of cultural amenities in parks.

Incorporate zoning incentives that encourage green building practices in new development and redeveloped properties.

Implement circulation and infrastructure recommendations from the Downtown Destination Plan.

Create green gateways at strategic Borough entrances.

Provide additional commuter services at Lansdale's train stations to improve multi-modal transportation services and expand commuter patronage of Borough businesses.

Actions

- ☐ Develop public/private partnerships to enable services and commercial ventures in the Borough's parks.
- ☐ Develop a strong Borough branding and wayfinding initiative.
- ☐ Encourage all schools, parks, the Library, and major shopping facilities to install up-to-date bike racks.
- ☐ Construct the proposed Liberty Bell Trail.
- ☐ Implement an alternative energy supply system.
- ☐ Develop a Borough Official Map.
- ☐ Provide density bonuses or other incentives to encourage green building practices and green infrastructure.
- ☐ Add traffic lights at the intersections of Wood and Main Streets, Hancock Street and Stony Creek Park, Eighth Street and Moyers Road, and Broad and Ninth Streets.
- ☐ Redevelop Madison Parking Lot with mixed-use development, and construct parking structures according to the Downtown Destination Plan.
- ☐ Complete transit plaza and station tunnel according to the Downtown Destination Plan.
- ☐ Install new trees along Main Street.
- ☐ Develop a trail loop around the Main Street corridor as recommended in the Downtown Destination Plan.
- ☐ Create green gateways at strategic Borough entrances as recommended in the Borough's Open Space Plan.
- ☐ Support a new SEPTA station at 9th St.
- ☐ Develop bike centers at Lansdale's train stations with local bike shops.



Parks and Recreation Building (Above)
Electric Department Equipment (Below)

