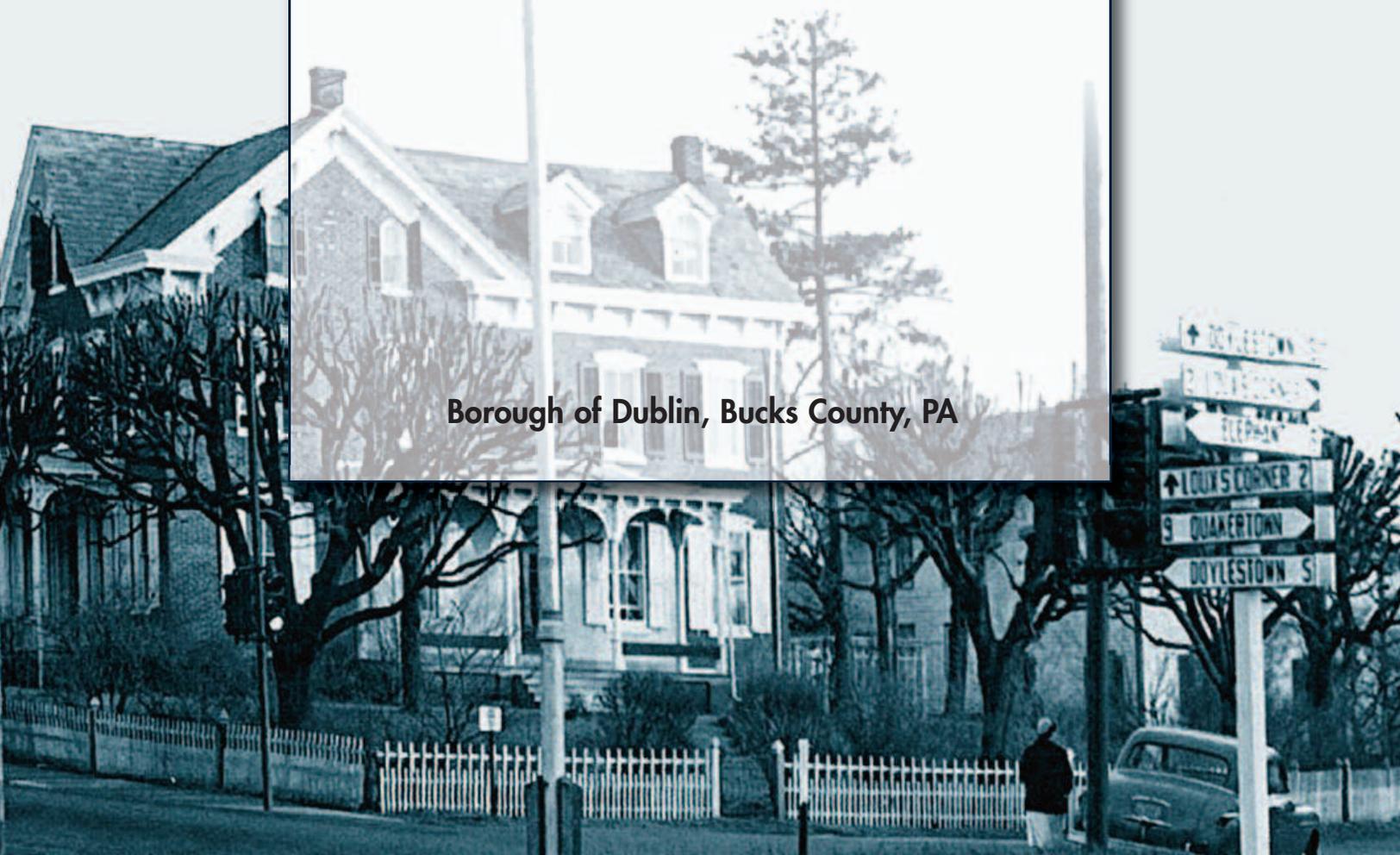


June 2013

Revitalization and Visioning Plan for Dublin Borough

Borough of Dublin, Bucks County, PA



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June 2013

Revitalization and Visioning Plan for Dublin Borough

Dublin Borough,
Dublin, PA

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

Prepared by
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Pearl S. Buck International *for the use of their facilities*

Dublin Business Community

Dublin Residents

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The statements, findings, conclusions, recommendations and other data in this report are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the funding agencies for this project.

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Background



Brief history of planning efforts

In 2011, the Borough of Dublin secured a Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to create a Revitalization and Visioning Plan. Matching funds were provided by *Discover Dublin*, a nonprofit organization, whose membership includes many borough businesses, and by Dublin Borough.

The Borough issued a request for proposals from Professional Planning Consultants to prepare a Revitalization & Visioning Plan for Dublin Borough in May 2012. The purpose of this Revitalization & Visioning Plan (RVP) was to develop planning tools and marketing materials that all stakeholders in the Borough can reference to help guide future business and community development, significantly assisting efforts to entice businesses to remain in Dublin as well as attract new businesses to relocate to Dublin. It should also encourage the residents of the Borough to utilize those businesses in their backyards, and reinforce that Dublin Borough is a great place to live, work, play, and visit.

Current planning documents

Dublin currently has the following Borough-specific planning documents:

- A 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update, prepared by Boucher & James.
- An April 2010 Open Space Plan, prepared by Boucher & James.
- A Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, updated on May 24, 2004.
- A Zoning and Map Ordinance, updated on November 26, 2007.
- A Regional Act 537 Sewage Plan.

Study area

While the vision plan study looked at the entire area of the Borough, it focused primarily on those properties that surround Route 313, which functions as the main transportation corridor and core of the Borough's business district. Currently, the business district has an approximate occupancy rate of 80%.

Dublin has two primary zoning districts designed to accommodate commercial and business opportunities; with a few exceptions, the Borough's vacant or underutilized parcels are located within these zones. These will be discussed more completely below.

Stakeholders

There are a number of partners who played an active role in the development of a vision plan for Dublin and who can contribute to the success of this program, including:

- the residents of Dublin Borough
- Borough Council
- Dublin Borough Planning Commission
- Discover Dublin, Inc.
- Borough staff
- Bucks County Planning Commission (BCPC)
- Delaware Valley Planning Commission (DVRPC)
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)

Task Force

A comprehensive public participation process was undertaken for this project in order to engage interested parties and stakeholders. The meetings involved ongoing meetings with a task force, was comprised of members of Borough Council and Borough administration, Discover Dublin, Inc., major property owners and members of the real estate and development community (including the Dublin Shopping Center, and representatives of BCPC, DVRPC, Pearl Buck International, Grand View Hospital, the Dublin TEC Center, and the Pennridge Chamber of Commerce.

Cities where small, locally owned businesses account for a relatively large share of the economy have stronger social networks, more engaged citizens, and better success solving problems, according to several recently published studies.

Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance
<http://www.ilsr.org/locally-owned-businesses-communities-thrive-survive-climate-change/#more-29>
804

Public involvement Meetings



Please join us!

Public Meeting #1 to discuss the Dublin Borough Revitalization and Visioning Plan

December 13, 2012 • 7:30 pm



**Pearl S. Buck Estate
Barn**
520 Dublin Road
Perkasie Pa 18944

Task Force Meetings

The initial meeting was undertaken to review the overall scope of the project, review information that was available for the project, and discuss current activities that would have an impact upon the planning process. Subsequent meetings reviewed and commented on consultant findings, and guided the direction of further consultant assessment and planning efforts.

Public Meeting 1

The purpose of the two public meetings that were held in conjunction with the development of the vision plan was to explore current conditions in the Borough, present the concepts determined in conjunction with the Task Force, and listen to what residents and business owners had to say about their vision for the future of Dublin.

A public meeting was held in the Barn at the Pearl Buck Estate on December 13, 2012 to discuss the finding of the assessment phase of the study and elicit public reaction. Approximately 35 people attended this session. After the assessment was presented by the consultant team, audience members were asked what were their favorites things about living or working in the Borough, and what were their major concerns; comments were written down. The audience could then vote on which like and concerns were most important to them by placing colored dots on the comment sheets. A listing of all responses is located in the Appendix.

The most frequently mentioned “likes” about the Borough were its historic character, safety, small town feel, the friendliness and convenience of local merchants. The greatest concerns of audience members were street lighting, heavy traffic, and the need to “spruce up” Main Street with trees and building renovation/restoration.

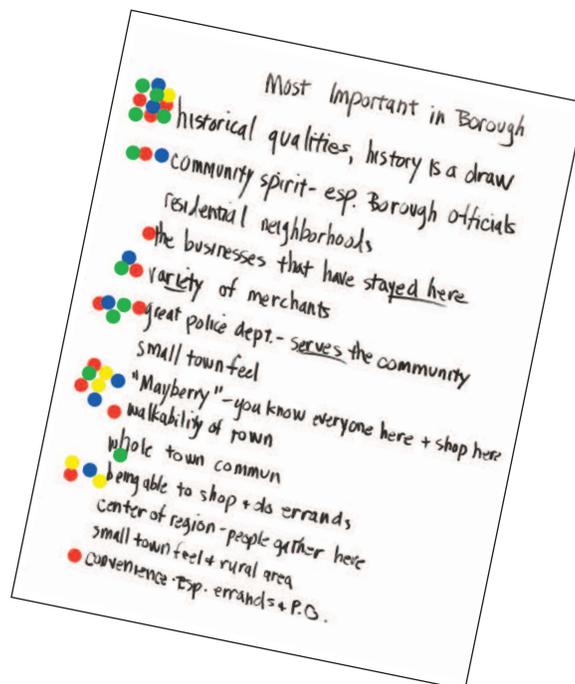
Most frequent comments from Public Meeting 1

What is most important to you about the Borough?

- Historical qualities, history is a draw
- Safety of community
- “Mayberry”—you know everyone here, and you can shop here
- Great police department—it serves the community
- Older buildings, mom-and-pop shops
- Being able to shop and do errands
- Kids in the street: the next generation; great for kids
- Local government is easy to work with

What are your biggest concerns?

- Street lights on Rt. 313; cobra lights there now
- Main Street should look nicer
- Fixing up buildings in town
- Trees on Main Street; slow traffic
- Restoration of historic facades
- Slow down the traffic; traffic in general
- Signage is very noticeable; needs better quality, more prominence



**Most frequent comments
from Public Meeting 2**

**What do you like most about the
Vision Plan presented tonight?**

- Preserves the past while embracing the future; cares about local businesses
- Inclusiveness of all the “players” in the vision
- Lower speed limits, traffic calming
- More lighting
- Safer and more walkable, especially crossing Rt 313
- Cohesiveness and sense of space
- Crosswalks and trees

**What are your concerns about the
Vision Plan?**

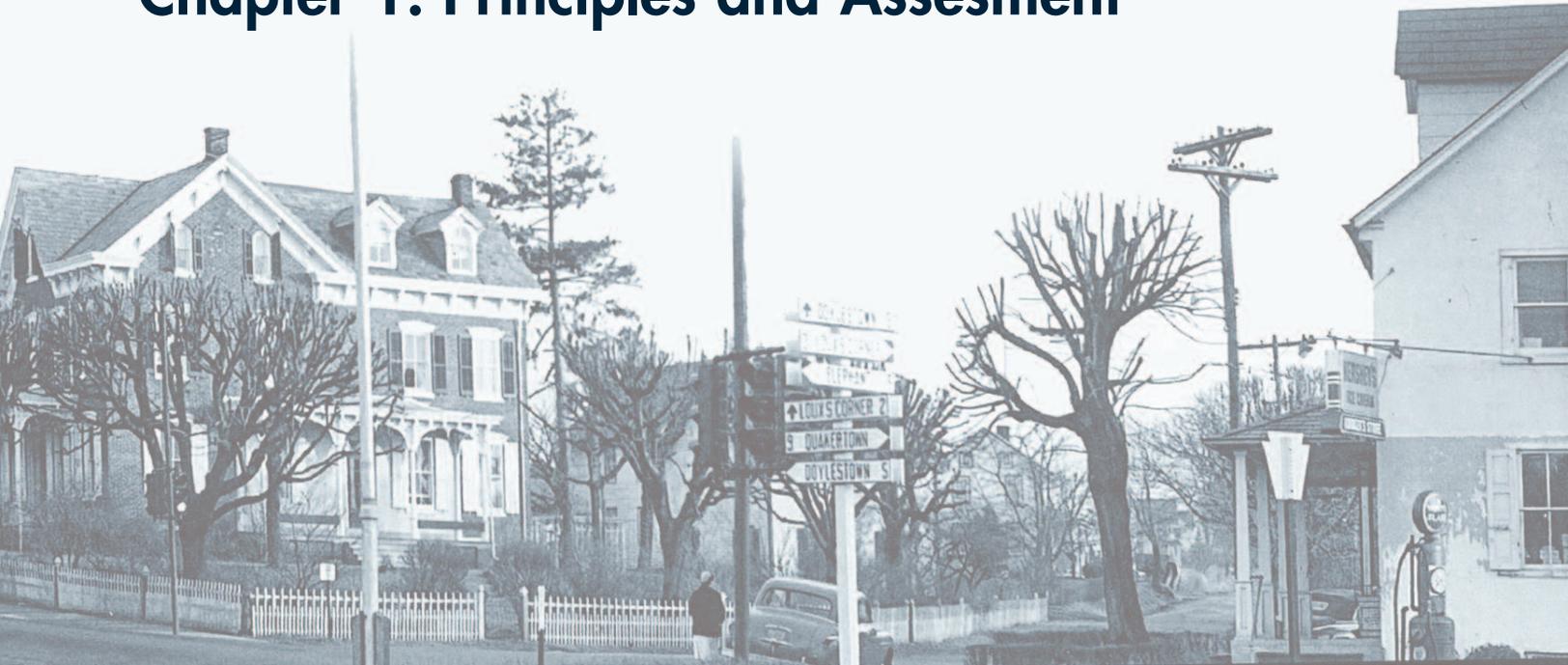
- Hidden costs with new development: hard costs like services & infrastructure
- Will changing road widths cause a loss of historic integrity?
- What aspects of the plan can be implemented early on?
- Where is the funding coming from?
- Biggest problem in the Borough is at Elephant & Maple
- Competition of objectives between through-travelers and residents
- What is the time frame to implement project: some properties along the corridor are for sale now

Public Meeting 2

The public meeting was held on April 11, 2013 with approximately 40 people in attendance. The purpose of the second public meeting was to present the vision plan recommendations. At this session the concepts for the four character areas were presented with examples of the new improvements.

After the recommendations were presented audience members were asked for their reaction to the plan recommendations. The overall reaction was very favorable to the concepts of the plan recommendations. It was felt that the plan embraces the unique character that makes Dublin Borough a great place to live, while providing a strategy for its sustainable growth and enhancement. Most of the concerns centered around the funding, time table, and the impact upon the widening of Main Street to accommodate a center turning lane.

Chapter 1: Principles and Assessment



Starting the process

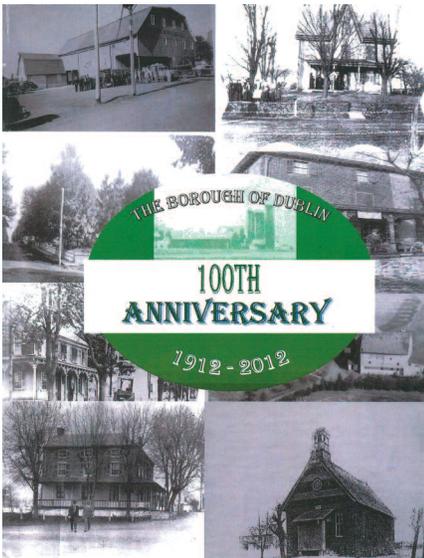
In developing a community vision plan we must keep two critical elements in mind:

- The establishment of new policies to support the vision
- Developing design standards that are based upon these policies

With over 138 historic buildings and a historic street pattern, Dublin has the assets that create the fabric of a walkable community. The historic buildings frame the center crossroads intersection at Main Street (PA Route 313) and Elephant Road and define Dublin's historic small town character. Indeed, its buildings and crossroads distinguish Dublin from other outlying regional suburban towns and begin to define a unique brand and ambiance that can be capitalized upon.

This vision plan for Dublin Borough presents an opportunity for the borough to enhance its walkability, protect its resources, and greatly increase property values, improve citizens' quality of life, and become a safer place for people of all ages. The timing is right—Dublin has just proudly celebrated its centennial. At present, however, the community is threatened with becoming just like Anytown USA, with strip centers and “air-dropped” chain stores surrounded with parking or big-box pharmacies that have more to do with Route 313 than with Dublin itself.

The purpose of this report is to show how Dublin can create a more vibrant, resilient and successful community by capitalizing on its assets. Creating such a community is not easy, because it can be easy to succumb to typical development patterns and lose what makes Dublin special, but it should be remembered that there is nothing as important in determining a community's image and identity as its appearance from the street. This report presents some planning ideas that stand in contrast to the conventional highway-oriented development that has destroyed so many of our communities. At first, these ideas may seem radical, because they are so



A recent open letter from a Michigan CEO offers a clear explanation of why protection of resources helps contribute to a healthy and sustainable local economy.

"We have a patent law firm in Troy [...] Today, we have 40 highly-paid employees and much of our work now comes from out of state. [...] "We'd like to stay in Michigan, but we have a problem. It's not taxes or regulations. There's lots of talk about these issues but they have no impact on our business. We spend more on copiers and toner than we do on state taxes.

"Our problem is access to talent. [...] Most qualified candidates live out of state and simply will not move here, even though they are willing to relocate to other cities. Our recruiters are very blunt. They say it is almost impossible to recruit to Michigan without paying big premiums above competitive salaries on the coasts. [...]"

"There's a simple reason why many people don't want to live here: it's an unpleasant place because most of it is visually unattractive and because it is lacking in quality living options other than tract suburbia. Some might call this poor "quality of life." A better term might be poor "quality of place." [...]"

"The fundamental problem it seems to me is that our region has gone berserk on suburbia at the expense of having any type of nearby open space or viable urban communities, which are the two primary spatial assets that attract and retain the best human capital."

From: Andrew Basile, Jr
Young Basile Hanlon & MacFarlane, P.C.
228 Hamilton Avenue, Suite 300
Palo Alto, California 94301
Offices also in Troy and Ann Arbor Michigan

Posted: July 30, 2010 12:16 PM

Source:
<http://rustwire.com/2011/03/11/michigan-business-owner-soul-crushing-sprawl-driving-us-a-way/>

different from the "suburban-sprawl" mentality that has embraced the region. One may not initially agree with some of the assessments of development in the Borough and possible courses of action, but they are intended to be thought-provoking. And, consider the adjacent blog posted by a Michigan attorney; it is one of the best summaries of why it's important to fight for a community you love.

Current trends affecting the community

Consider these trends:

- The share of automobile miles by Americans in their mid-twenties has dropped from 20.8 to 13.7 percent. And the number of nineteen-year-olds who have opted out of gaining their drivers license has tripled from eight to 23 percent.
- Studies have shown that increasing a community's "walk score" from 54 to 71 can increase the average house price from \$280,000 to \$314,000.
- Studies for the National Association of Realtors by the market research firm Belden, Russonello & Stewart have shown that nearly 50% of American adults prefer to live in a neighborhood with a mix of houses, shops and businesses. Only one in ten say that they would prefer to be in a residential neighborhood only. More than half of those surveyed selected an option where houses were smaller, closer together, and where it was easy to walk to schools, stores, restaurants, and playgrounds.
- A working family with an income of \$50,000 pays more for transportation than they do for housing.
- Despite spending one dollar out of six for healthcare here in the United States, fully one-third of American children born after 2000 will become diabetics. This is due partly to diet, but equally due to planning since people are less inclined to be walking. Communities where people can walk are three times more likely to achieve their CDC-recommended thirty minutes of daily exercise.
- A recent study in San Diego reported that 60 percent of residents in a "low-walkable" neighborhood were overweight, whereas only 35 percent of residents in a "walkable" community were overweight.
- Nearly a third of all car trips taken in this country are a mile or less in length—the equivalent of, at most, a 20-minute walk. Moving those trips out of cars and onto sidewalks would solve many of our transportation conundrums and add to community health.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists can actually spend more money per month in shops than drivers (they do spend less per visit, but visit more frequently).

So, what's the conclusion? Car-oriented suburban-style design is expensive, not healthy, and may not necessarily satisfy many people's wishes, including young adults. Fortunately, Dublin Borough is in an excellent position to offer an alternative and to present some viable and economically-responsible solutions to offset these trends.

Guiding principles

This report cites a number of resources that have relevance for Dublin. To start, we have used much of the framework established in Jeff Speck’s “Ten Steps of Walkability” in his book, *Walkable City*, because walkability is the core of what makes a community and defines a neighborhood. When a community addresses this problem, it is well on the way to providing the elements that will help to ensure economic success and a higher quality of life that will attract new business and new residents.

Assessment A mix of uses—Dublin’s character areas

Current land use

Towns developed to bring people together. The better they achieve this, the more they can thrive. Dublin’s Main Street retains a mixture of retail, institutional, office, and residential uses. Most commercial and office land uses in the Borough consist of small-scale retail and service establishments that are primarily located along North Main Street. The largest commercial use, a Shop-n-Bag grocery store, is currently the only conventional anchor. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation center where people get their photo for their driver’s license brings in regional traffic. South Main Street is dominated by residential uses with some infill of institutional, commercial and manufacturing uses.

Institutional uses within the Borough include St. Luke’s United Church of Christ, Dublin Volunteer Fire Company, U.S. Post Office, Dublin Borough Hall and Police Station, and the Pennsylvania State Police Barracks.



The primary land use within the Borough is residential. The Main Street corridor is surrounded by residential neighborhoods that are all within easy walking distance of the corridor. There are also residential neighborhoods just outside of the Borough, which are within easy walking distance of the central core of the Borough.

There are currently three vacant parcels within the Borough. The question of what to do with these three parcels was an initial stimulus for this study. One is located along Elephant Road in a primarily residential area, which is best suited for residential infill development and two parcels that are ripe for commercial development. A second is on North Main Street across the street from the Dublin Village Plaza. The third, at Rickert Road and North Main Street, is also known as the Moyer Farm. A primary goal for this study is to determine a vision for these vacant properties in a manner that will best benefit the community and maximize their development potential in today’s market place.

Comprehensive Plan road

The Comprehensive Plan of 2005 discusses the need for a local access road (also known as the “Local Relief Road”) behind any potential development on the Moyer Tract, connecting Rickert Road with the intersection of Deep Run Road and Elephant Road, that could permit traffic in a north and southbound direction, and connect with local residential streets to lessen local traffic on Main Street. Bedminster Township is also considering such a road north of the Rickerts Road and North Main Street area.



What about density?

In the *Comprehensive Plan* of 2005 a concern was raised about whether more housing would place an unnecessary strain on the Borough’s ability to provide the essential services and burden the transportation network even more if the new housing is single-family residential, because this use can cost more for the municipality to service than the homes pay in taxes. However, residential development at sufficient densities actually provides an excellent positive cash flow to the community. In addition, with a small population, Dublin desperately needs the density to support much more non-residential development. Tax ratables are further increased when the higher density residential is located above non-residential uses in mixed-use areas. FHA now allows developers to finance buildings that are 50% non-residential.

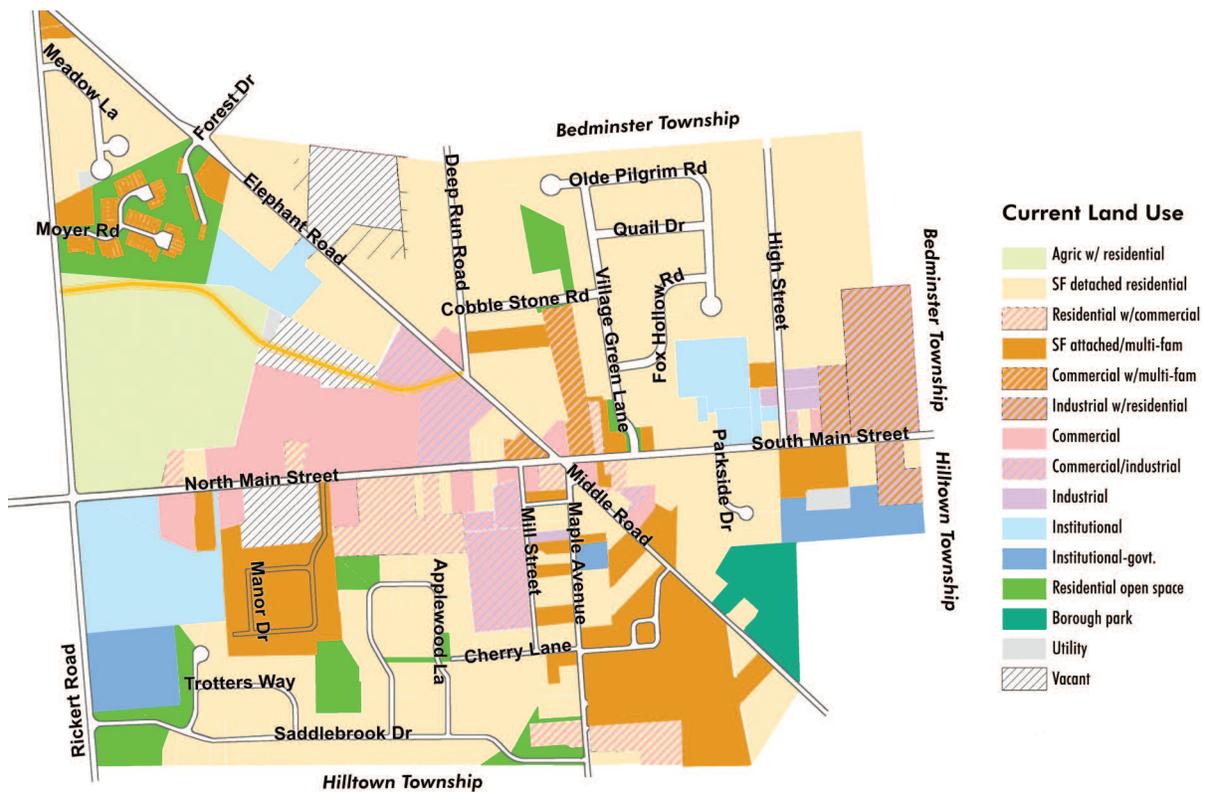


Lantern Hill (with a mix of housing types) and surrounding neighborhood in Doylestown

Density is not a dirty word when it comes to creating a livable town center. For example, Lantern Hill, a mixed-use development in Doylestown Borough, has a density of 10.5 DU/ac, but this is not apparent because there is a mix of single-family detached homes, twins, town homes, and manor homes. (Manor homes are composed of six units but look like a large single-family detached home.) Also, density does not necessarily increase traffic congestion—if this were true, then it would be logical that sprawl *decreases* congestion—because people have the ability to make short trips by walking or bicycling rather than using their cars or by avoiding major roads. While there is still the question about increases in local traffic congestion simply due to the concentration of activity, research suggests, however, that compact mixed-use areas are able to manage their traffic more effectively largely because of their connected streets and “redundancy” of road choices.

Dublin has only 2,158 residents as of the 2010 US census. It needs additional population to better support the town center and to become a more viable financially to support needed services. It is important to remember that by allowing for more intensive development within a village or town center gives a municipality one of the best ways to achieve the greatest returns. Allowing for mixed-use development with higher residential density can also enhance a walkable center and provide the following benefits:

- Higher densities create a more walkable streetscape because more destinations are closer to each other and provide the critical mass needed to support retail and offices
- Mixed-use allows for shared parking (more on this later)
- Mixed-use development is needed to create the scale and continuous streetscape that makes a downtown truly work for pedestrians. (more on this later)
- Mixed-use higher density development that is concentrated encourages walkability and does not contribute to congestion.



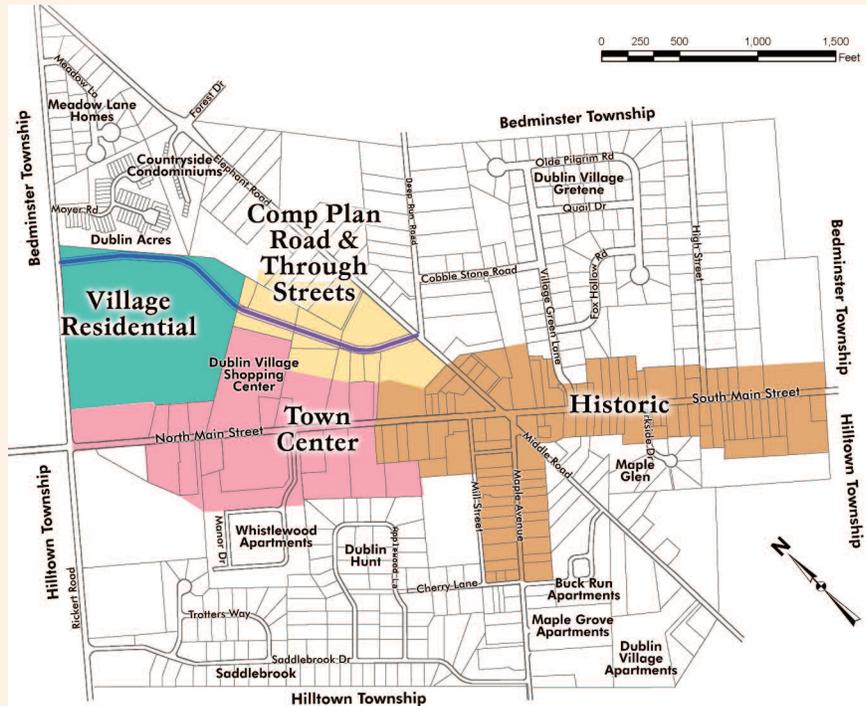
Source: Dublin Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005)

Dublin's Character Areas

After assessing the existing attributes in the Borough, four character areas were identified, each defined by such factors as street width, presence of sidewalks, historic structures, land uses, and opportunities for new development or redevelopment. Each area lends itself to different road and streetscape treatment, and each presents different possibilities.

Historic Character Area

The neighborhoods on South Main Street east of Elephant Road are for the most part built-out with historic single-family detached residences that are mainly located close to the road, reflecting typical historic development patterns. Currently the area along South Main Street is zoned Town



Center, which allows for a mix of residential and non-residential uses, home occupations, and existing non-conforming uses

For a commercial center to be viable it should be concentrated and no longer than a few blocks. For this reason, the community should consider retaining and enhancing the historic residential character of South Main Street, and concentrate the commercial center to a portion of North Main Street. This will also serve to retain and increase the value of the residential properties so that they would not have the conflict of non-compatible more intensive adjacent uses. The few existing non-residential uses add character to the neighborhood and should remain.

Town Center Character Area

The best location for new mixed-use infill development is between Elephant Road and Rickert Road along the Main Street corridor, more specifically, in the vicinity of the existing shopping center. These vacant and/or underutilized parcels are ideally suited for non-residential uses on the first floor and residences and offices above. The Town Center area is characterized by commercial and offices located mainly on the 1st floor, with some office and residential on 2nd & 3rd floors. The area has multiple driveway curb cuts and pedestrian mobility can be difficult.

Village Residential Character Area

A Village Residential area is proposed for the Moyer Tract. The tract, now considered vacant or underutilized, would be serviced by the Comprehensive Plan road and has sufficient space for a small common or park area in addition to providing a variety of residential housing types.

Comprehensive Plan Road Character Area

A number of underutilized parcels surround the proposed Comprehensive Plan road, linking the Moyer tract to Elephant Road.

Finally, determining the right mix of uses is beyond the scope of this study. (We recommend that an additional market study be undertaken to define the best uses and intensity of uses.) However, it should not be overlooked that Dublin is the gateway to Pearl S. Buck International, which is a regional tourist destination with over 20,000 visitors a year. This is an excellent opportunity for Dublin to market itself as a tourist stop with restaurants and services that are inviting to the visiting public. To successfully achieve this will also require authentically preserving the icons and buildings that had a close connection with Pearl S. Buck, when she lived within the area, so that viewing these buildings within the community will be part of the tourist experience.

Putting cars in their place when Main Street is a highway

A recent DVRPC traffic count in September, 2011 showed that Main Street (SR 313) in Dublin carries 20,279 vehicles per day. When compared to Main Street in Doylestown Borough, which has only 7,900 daily vehicle trips, it shows that this Dublin's two-lane road is efficient at accommodating through-traffic. Although the traffic speed going through town can be very slow, due mostly to the three signalized intersections, this does not impair the number of trips along Main Street. Further, these trips going through the center of town are an excellent opportunity for the right type of economic development. All these vehicles bring people who can use the retail and services within the Borough. Capturing this opportunity is part of the formula for success.

When a regional highway is also a main street, there is often a major conflict between highway engineers and the community. Engineers want to move as many cars as quickly as possible because they think this increases capacity, which is their main goal. Meanwhile, businesspeople with stores fronting onto the highway are interested in one thing—accessibility to their stores, which means people must be able to park in front. This is such an important issue that the Oregon Department of Transportation developed an insightful publication called *Main Street... when a highway runs through it: A Handbook for Oregon Communities*. This publication identifies safety, security, comfort, speed, crossing, access, and congestion as the elements that we need to understand to make create a livable and economically-viable town center in Dublin. In Oregon, they “got it” and they are restoring their main streets.

"When we have something that looks like a highway, people will drive like it's a highway. We are legally allowed to walk across that street, so we should be able to get across that street."

Council member Rodney Wiltshire,
Troy, New York

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/2013/04/17/the-best-policies-of-2012-and-a-bold-step-forward-in-chicago-complete-streets-news-april-2013/>

Transportation planning is complicated because it involves much more than the movement of vehicles. It includes the movement of pedestrians in a manner that is inviting and safe, the movement of bicycles, and providing parking and street design that encourages economic development. The inclusion of all modes of transportation is a goal of the *Complete Streets* movement.

The current *Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO)* for Dublin designates Main Street as a principal arterial that should be 120 feet wide (§22-707). Obviously, this would mean that virtually all of the buildings along Main Street would have to come down to conform to the SALDO and it implies that Main Street could become a six-lane highway. Not only would this be the end of Dublin as we know it, but studies have shown that more lanes bring more traffic and thus more congestion. So this does not even solve the problem of congestion, and it ruins the character, walkability, and livability of the community. Studies have also shown that it is possible to remove traffic lanes and actually improve highway capacity.



Main Street's 120 foot right-of-way

What Dublin's Main Street has going for it now and why it works

Dublin is centrally located between Doylestown and Quakertown, and is bisected by its Main Street. Both approaches to the borough, from north and south, have an excellent travel speed of 55 mph. When approaching the Borough the speed drops to 35 mph; during rush hour there may be a delay due to cars waiting for the traffic lights. What these delays mean for Dublin include:

- The streets are safer for walking than if traffic flowed at a higher speed. The chance of a pedestrian being killed by a vehicle driving at 35 mph is 85%, versus at 20 mph it is only 15%.
- Stores can actually be seen by the driver, which benefits businesses. An example is the large windows of Grates and Grills. There should be more large windows along Main Street.

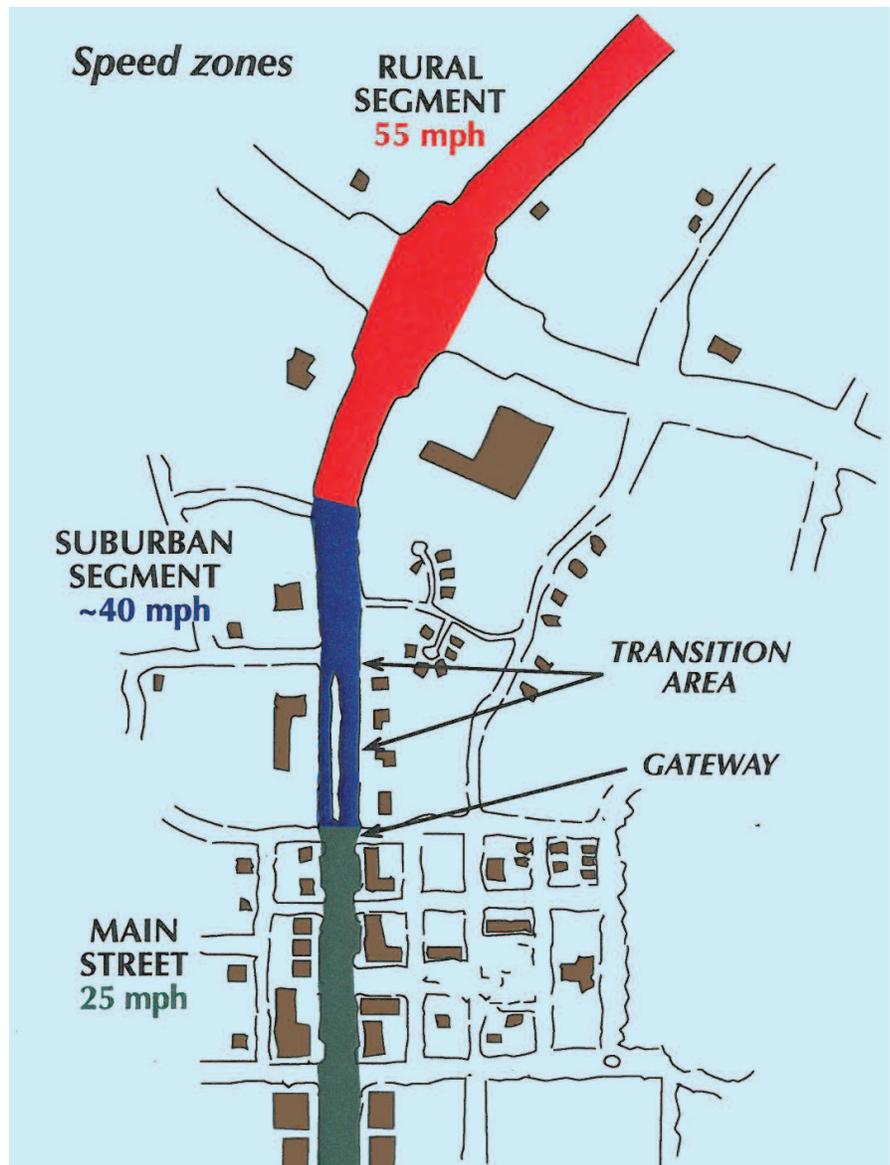
"Our communities are looking to modify how our streets are designed so they can better and more safely meet the needs of everyone who uses them—bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders and motorists [to] successfully increase a road's capacity, improve safety, stimulate economic growth, lower emissions and promote smarter growth."

Larry Brown, Clark County Commissioner and chairman of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC)

<http://www.rtcnv.com/press-archive/rtc-adopts-complete-streets-design-guidelines-for-southern-nevada/>

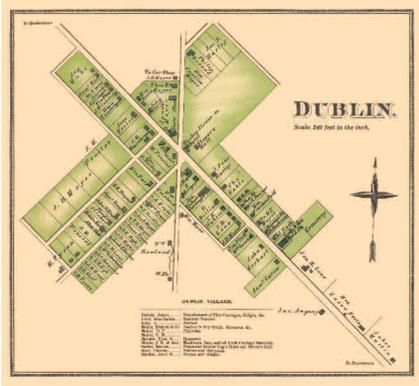
- Reduced speed makes for a more pleasant walking experience and improves the quality of life for Main Street residents because it also reduces the amount of traffic noise.
- The two lanes are an ideal width for pedestrians crossing.

Widening the cartway and right-of-way of Main Street are therefore not viable solutions to traffic issues. However, developing a parallel street, as currently proposed from Elephant Road to Rickert Road may definitely take some of the pressure off of Main Street while creating more opportunities for economic development.



Communities need a transition zone and a traffic calming zone to reduce vehicle speeds when they are located on a state highway.

Source: *Main Street... when a highway runs through it: A Handbook for Oregon Communities* (1999)



from the 1876 Centennial Atlas

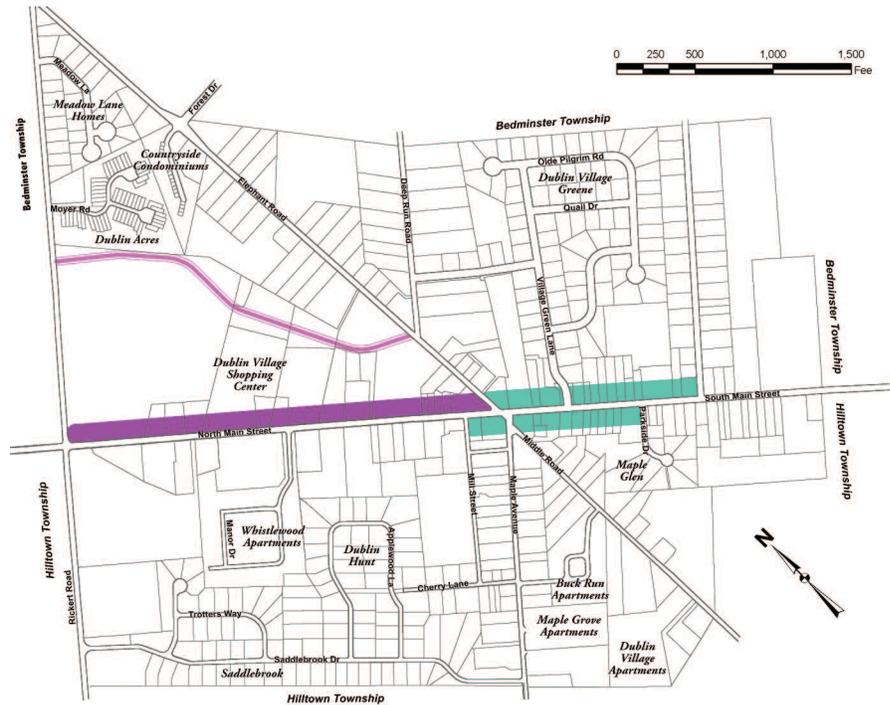
Protect—and plan for—the pedestrian

A key to an area’s revitalization is convenience for the most basic form of travel—foot traffic. Dublin Borough’s location on Main Street (PA Route 313) presents a fundamental conflict: how to provide inviting pedestrian connections in an area with regional through-traffic.

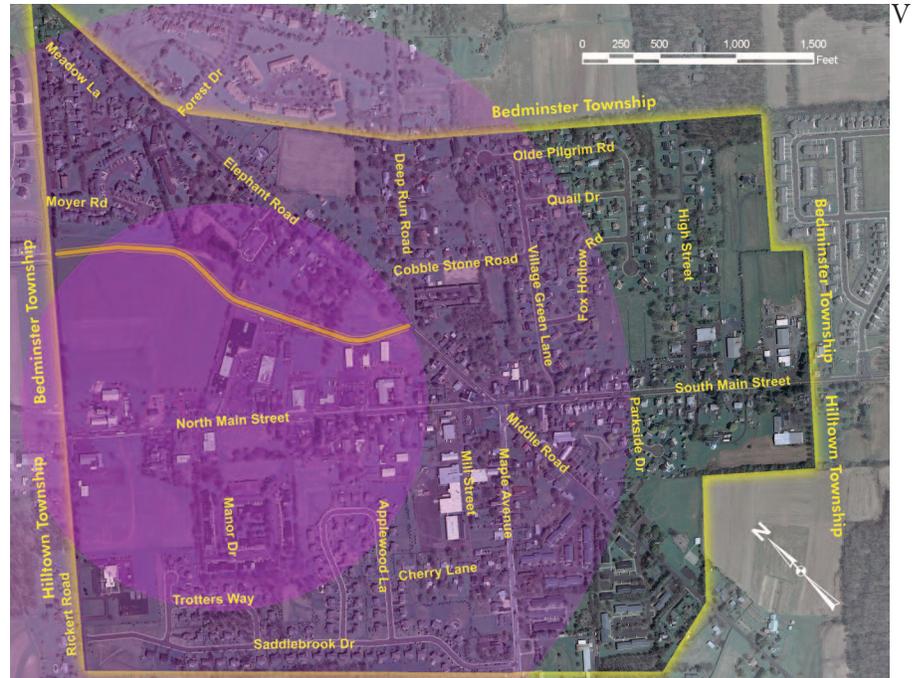
Block size and form

The original street layout of Dublin consisted of a few blocks with a traditional village scale. But this workable and time-tested design was not continued. The distance between Elephant Road and Richert Road is approximately 2,000 feet in length and is a single block. Currently there is no legal way for a pedestrian to get from one side of Main Street to the other side of this block except at the intersection with the Dublin Village Shopping Center. Studies have shown that downtowns “with the smallest blocks are the ones best known for walkability, while those with the largest blocks are known for as places without street life—if they are known at all.” The ideal length of a block is 200 feet, but blocks can vary to as much as 500 feet.

The blocks in green are typical of the older development patterns of South Main Street. The purple block is what is present today—much too long for pedestrian comfort.



A common way to study an area's walkability is to draw a 5 and 10 minute walk radius around a town center—in this case, the Dublin Shopping Center. Most of the Borough and large portions of the surrounding townships are included in the 10-minute walk zone.



Longer blocks are not necessarily better than shorter ones because:

- Main Street is the center of Dublin and should be connected by direct routes to all neighborhoods
- Traffic on Main Street can access businesses and additional parking located on the side streets
- Side streets provide on-street parking so that land can be used for buildings rather than off-street parking
- Local traffic can use side streets and connect to the planned Comprehensive Plan road for most trips and avoid the congested main street
- Shorter blocks encourage greater pedestrian movement
- There are more corner lots, which are most desirable for businesses
- Corners give life to streets and can add visual interest to buildings

Pedestrians need delineated crosswalks, but so do the merchants, for two reasons. First, these provide better access to their stores so that people who park on one side of the street can easily get to the other side. Secondly, side streets provide the needed additional on-street parking that serves the stores.

Recommendations for how to address the issue of Dublin's large blocks will be found in Chapter 2 of this report.



Trash day can mean difficulties for pedestrians

Sidewalk issues

There are important sidewalk issues in Dublin that need to be addressed:

- Sidewalks aren't completed along Main Street east to Croft Drive in Bedminster Township, or west to Rickert Road
- The intersection at Elephant Road with Maple Avenue and Main Street is intimidating to pedestrians
- Existing sidewalks along Main Street are close to heavy traffic volumes, and pedestrians are uncomfortable walking in close proximity to passing cars and trucks
- All walking connections currently center on a single intersection in the center of Dublin (Main, Maple and Elephant), unless people know informal "short cuts"
- Surrounding municipalities (Bedminster Township in particular) have installed pedestrian trails to which Borough trails/pedestrian paths can be connected
- Crossing Main Street at mid-block locations is intimidating to pedestrians
- Opportunities for new connections exist, and they should be capitalized upon
- Trash pickup days often mean that sidewalks and paths are blocked with roll-off containers



Sidewalk traffic/pedestrian conflicts on Main Street

Finally, there are no definitive formulas for the correct sidewalk width in order to promote walkability. However, the sidewalks along Main Street are five feet wide, which is not wide enough for street trees or sidewalk dining. The minimum width should allow for the growth of trees and provide ample width for pedestrians. But there are also other factors that define the best width of a sidewalk including the height of the surrounding buildings, the width of the cartway, and the ultimate scale of the street, and whether there is sufficient width to encourage sidewalk dining or congregating. Studies have shown that by allowing for sidewalk dining can increase business by twenty percent. These sidewalk design elements will need to be further developed depending upon the street and these factors.

Suggestions for sidewalk and road treatment in each of the Dublin character areas are included in the next chapter of this report.

"Rather than becoming a drive-through city where people fly by as fast as humanly possible, why not build places where you park once and do three or four different things? And small businesses can take root and be sustainable. Those things happen in communities that have walkability."

John Michlig, Chair of the Complete Streets and Connectivity Committee, Franklin, WI

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/2013/03/20/new-policies-in-florida-minnesota-nevada-and-ohio-complete-streets-news-march-2013/>



Deliveries can be difficult for some of the businesses in the Borough because of the street layout

Getting parking and circulation right

Currently there is no on-street parking on Main Street. No town center can succeed without on-street parking. Period! Parking between the street and the building, as occurs in front of Grates and Grills, or the new office building located next to Moyers meet the demand, but they are missed opportunities. Why? First, in the case of Grates and Grills, the parking layout requires cars to back out into traffic, which can be dangerous. It also destroys the sidewalk and pedestrian experience in front of the store. Second, because cars are parked between sidewalks and the front of the buildings, the buildings are pushed back too far and the character of the streetscape is lost. Locating buildings too far back from the street also removes the shop windows from the view of the driver, which hurts business. Large windows that are brightly lit up and attract people to stop are most effective.

Parking spaces should be located on the street for the following reasons:

- They make it safer for pedestrians by buffering the pedestrian from passing traffic
- Parking on-street greatly enhances business because there is always the perception that there is a space in front of a destined store, whether there is a space there or not
- On-street parking is efficient—it allows for the reduction of parking lots and off-street parking that can destroy town centers
- Countless studies have shown that eliminating the parking in front of businesses kills businesses, all in the name of benefiting the highway traveler
- On-street parking is another form of traffic calming, which again makes the streets safer for pedestrians, by providing “visual friction” that slows driving speeds
- On-street parking induces people to walk in front of other stores to get to their intended store. Shopping malls are intentionally designed to increased pedestrian foot traffic in front of stores because studies have shown that increased foot traffic increases business.

Many towns are over-parked, which has damaged downtowns such as Yardley Borough where there is more land devoted to off-street parking lots than to buildings. An over-abundance of parking causes the streetscape appears like a row of broken teeth, creating a poor walkable environment that is not conducive to economic vitality. Land that is dedicated to parking also does not produce the income that can be expected from higher uses such as commercial or residential buildings. So too in Dublin, where three of the key historic properties at the intersection of Elephant and Main Street each have a sea of parking spaces in front that are usually empty. This is not an attractive gateway to the community.

A key to resolving this problem is to eliminate the requirement for off-street parking, allowing for much needed parking efficiency. Parking spaces that are used by retail users or office workers during the day can be used by restaurant patrons and residents at night; opportunities for shared parking are not currently addressed with Dublin's ordinances. One of the worst things that can happen within a town center is to have a parking lot vacant during parts of the day. Vehicles that are parked within the vicinity instead of on-lot allow for flexibility, so that multiple businesses or



Some of the most historic buildings in the Borough seem overwhelmed by their parking lots

institutions can use the same parking lot during different times of the day. For example, in Doylestown and other communities the parking spaces that are used by office workers and retail establishments during the day can be used by restaurants, which are great parking generators, in the evening. By sharing parking, it is possible to eliminate the need for additional parking spaces; this greatly minimizes the visual impact of parking and the potential of blight caused by a sea of unnecessary parking.

These parking suggestions will be controversial, because most people think that parking is free, when it is not. The cost of parking is borne within the development of a site, with each parking space costing between \$4,000–\$10,000, including land costs. This cost is passed onto the tenant in the cost of the rent, which in turn is passed on to the patron. Current trends allow for alternate methods for calculating necessary parking to minimize the costs of parking, which makes development more affordable and leases more competitive. For example, multiple studies have shown that metered parking actually increases business because it ensures the turnover of valuable on-street parking. There are some municipalities that do not allow for any private off-street parking; instead all parking is metered and controlled by the municipality. (Doylestown Borough has both on-street and lot metered spaces.) This cost not only pays for the parking and maintenance, insurance, lighting, etc. but any surplus goes toward pedestrian enhancements that further benefit the businesses and add to the character of the community. (see Donald Shoup, *The High Cost of Free Parking*)

Shape the spaces and the streetscape

The space between buildings is often referred to as the *public realm*—the place where civic activity occurs. Without a framework of attractive buildings and a mix of uses, even the best street and sidewalk design will not be sufficient to support a vibrant local economy. A street has length, width, and height. These are the building blocks that need to be redefined to create a walkable community and optimal use of the land.

A particular streetscape is distinguished by its visual character and physical improvements—roadway width, paving, sidewalks, vegetation, and the surrounding buildings. A streetscape can form a coherent whole, with a uniform “street wall” created by trees, fences, walls, hedges, and buildings, or it can be broken up into smaller disconnected parts by parking lots or structures set farther back from the street than those on either side.

A streetscape is more than just front yards. In historic towns such as Dublin where the land development pattern reflected the habit of daily walking—usually with homes close to the road and garages to the rear of the property—the streetscape is marked by a consistency in side yard and front yard setbacks, porches, and sidewalks. Visual interest is maintained along the road, and walking is encouraged because there are no “missing teeth.” Pedestrian scale and “friendliness” are traits that are present in some parts of Dublin and absent in others, largely because of the types and “styles” of development that have occurred over the course of the Borough’s history.

Length

Many small town main streets are relatively short, a length of four to eight blocks, which is an area that could easily fit along Main Street between Elephant and Rickert Roads. This does not discount the fact that there already exists a separate viable historic commercial crossroads at the intersection of Elephant and Main.

As mentioned above, the distance between Elephant and Rickert Roads is problematic for a number of reasons. Shorter blocks are more comfortable for pedestrians; they offer more visual interest and have a more human scale. When an excessive block length is combined with insufficient storefronts, shop windows, and doors (and too many curb cuts or open spaces) pedestrians can be easily intimidated.

Width

Dublin's current zoning code is based upon highway- and suburban-oriented standards and not for a walkable community. For example, minimum front yard setbacks are 50 feet from the already 120 foot wide right-of-way. This setback was probably established to permit parking within front yards. However, this means that the closest that a building can be located is 110 feet from the center of Main Street, or 220 feet from building facade to facing building facade.

Within a viable mixed-use main street, buildings should be placed at the edge of the right-of-way, which reduces the width between buildings and helps to establish the sense of enclosure that is critical to create the necessary human scale. To address this, other zoning codes require "build-to" standards to make certain that buildings are placed next to the sidewalk, which is not the case in Dublin. Buildings that are close to sidewalks provide pedestrians with interesting things to look at such as windows, display cases, sidewalk cafes, and other people. What happens on the other side of the street is important also—if buildings are close enough to be seen, they too can attract shoppers (if there are sufficient safe crosswalks).

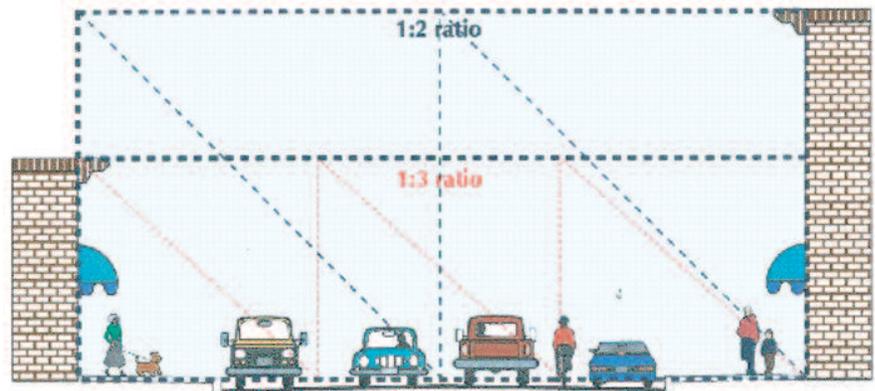
Main Street in Dublin measures thirty feet from curb to curb along most sections of the street. When one adds the two sidewalks on either side of the street the total existing right-of-way appears to be only forty feet in width. (There may be factors that make the right-of-way wider since the utility poles are set outside of the sidewalks.) Currently the setbacks of the historic buildings vary around fifteen feet from the edge of the sidewalk. This equates to a total width of approximately 70 feet from building facade to building facade.



Many of the Borough's buildings have close to the ideal height-to-street ratio—creating a comfortable pedestrian scale

Height

The ideal height of the buildings is a factor of the width of the street, and can be expressed in a ratio. The strongest design is 1:2; with one being the height of the building and two being the width of the street. The minimum ratio is 1:3. (These standards have been described over the years in various studies of successful commercial and residential streets, both in the US and other countries)



1:3 height-to-width ratio creates a human scale Main Street



1:7 height-to-width ratio creates a scale uncomfortable for pedestrians



Source: *Main Street... when a highway runs through it: A Handbook for Oregon Communities* (1999)

Based upon the current street width standards, which requires a width of 240 feet, the preferred minimum building height would have to be between 120 feet and 80 feet to reflect the ideal ratio. These are not acceptable heights for a borough, which is composed of mostly two to three story buildings, which range between thirty to thirty-five feet in height. Therefore the current streetscape meets the minimum formula for a definable sense of enclosure.

Allowing for taller building heights to further enhance the streetscape and add additional definition to a village center, such as 45 feet, will require a change from the current zoning standards, which limits building heights to thirty-five feet in height.



Sidewalk and bumpout planting beds can also function in stormwater management

Intensity

One of the ways to regulate the intensity of the use of land has been by regulating the amount of impervious surfaces that can be developed on a tract of land. In the past this was also done to provide for a means of handling storm water management. Today with green roof technology and stormwater recharge systems placed under parking lots, small parks or pedestrian plazas, or in “rain gardens” that are incorporated into street designs, these regulations are no longer applicable for stormwater management in a town center setting. For a small borough like Dublin, it is important to set standards that maximize the use land to achieve a concentrated, and thus walkable, center and to create the greatest return from potential tax ratables.

Currently the regulations limit a tract of land within the C-2 Regional Commercial District to between 60%–70% impervious surfaces. In a town center setting these remaining 30%–40% pervious surfaces becomes little slivers of green, which is what remains around the perimeter of each lot. It is preferable that any green area be incorporated into public spaces such as a green park or plaza for pedestrians and not be “left over” spaces. It is possible for a borough to lose between 30%–40% of its potential tax ratables through the inefficient use of the land. Over the years, this becomes a large potential economic loss to the community.

Visual and physical continuity

Continuity is related to intensity and refers to the continuous flow of doors and openings into buildings that create interest and flow along the sidewalk. Long blocks with one building with a single entrance or parking lots, gas stations, and bank drive-ins distort the human scale and discourage pedestrian movement. Shopping malls have developed the science of how to create the best retail space, all based upon continuity. In addition, malls factor in anchors (which in Dublin are the Shop ‘n Bag and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Motor Vehicles) and corner store locations, which can command higher rents.

Continuity is also a function of the types of uses that are permitted on the street level. Office uses are appropriate on street level in certain section of the town center, but not within the core retail area, where it is critical to have an unbroken connection of retail storefronts. Achieving good continuity is another reason to revisit intensity, types of permitted uses, and requirements for door openings in the Borough’s zoning regulations. Buildings with blank walls facing public streets should not be permitted.



Blank walls can deaden street life and discourage pedestrian traffic

Form-based codes

To address these critical issues many communities have developed form-based codes (as opposed to traditional zoning use codes) that describe the height and forms of the building, establish the locations of the entryways, and limit blank walls.

Currently Dublin Borough has no guidelines to control these factors. Given the potential for greater intensity of use and the importance of creating prime rentable spaces, the use of form-based codes has been warmly embraced by the private development sector.

Plant trees



While there are beautiful specimen trees on many of the Borough's roads, Main Street has very few street trees, resulting in increased traffic speeds and road heat.

The need for street trees was one of the items most frequently cited in the first Borough public meeting. Currently there is no street tree planting program within the Borough. On most of the streets there are overhead utilities on one side of the street. While these utilities can impact the choice of street trees on the utility side of the street, there is no reason not to have large graceful street trees on the opposite side. However, given the limited width of the existing right-of-way, the current five foot wide sidewalks, and the placement of the overhead utilities, the planting of street trees would either have to be incorporated onto the front yards of private lots within residential areas or within a widened right-of way in the future town center area. This is not the best solution for the placement of street trees. Suggestions for how trees can be accommodated on Main Street are discussed in the next chapter of this report.

In addition, overhead utilities within a town center area have negative impact upon the character of the street and the visibility of buildings that are lined with unattractive hanging wires. For this reason, there should at least be discussions on how to either relocate the utilities to back alleys or place them underground. however, given the expense or relocating utilities underground, this may not be a viable option.

Why all the fuss about street trees? Why should residents or businesses care about whether there are trees on your street, or on the streets nearby? Besides the obvious—that they make a street look more attractive—street trees are proven to provide numerous concrete benefits to residents in terms of increased property values, traffic calming, pedestrian friendliness, noise reduction, storm water run-off interceptors, and crime reduction. In addition, shade from street trees has been shown to increase the life of asphalt by protecting it from sun and heat damage.

Cars drive more slowly on streets with trees. Street trees have a traffic calming effect, and drivers are at least subconsciously aware that where there are trees, there are often pedestrians and children playing.

Street trees cut traffic noise. Street trees reduce the amount of engine noise created in the first place, because drivers go more slowly. But a line of large leafy trees can also absorb a great deal of noise. Even a line of smaller trees can be enough of a buffer to block traffic noise from reaching private yards and homes. This is a benefit not only the residents within the historic buildings of South Main Street, but future residents who could be living in potential mixed-use buildings located above the shops in the town center of North Main Street. And lastly, this noise reduction also makes for a pleasanter experience for pedestrians.

Residents walk more on streets with trees. When cars drive more slowly, pedestrians feel safer. Curbs and trees also provide a physical and psychological buffer between sidewalk and car traffic that increases this feeling of safety. This is one aspect that needs to be discussed further, since the current sidewalk configuration is too narrow to permit street trees where they could achieve this needed buffering effect. The busier the street, the more this safety buffer is needed. And of course, trees provide an environment in which it is more pleasant to walk—something attractive and green to look at, shade in the summer, a canopy from rain in the autumn.

The whole neighborhood benefits when people get out of their houses to walk. Residents are more likely to meet up regularly with their neighbors, to keep an eye on each other's property, to use their local parks and to patronize local businesses.

Trees improve air quality. Trees consume carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. In general, the more trees we plant, the better the air we breathe. This is important since nationally there is an increase in asthma-related health problems.

Street trees increase property value. Streets with trees look more stable and prosperous. Families with children are more attracted to a neighborhood where they can picture themselves going for walks. A neighborhood that looks cared for, with visible sidewalk activity, experiences less crime and especially fewer break-ins. A study in Portland, Oregon showed that houses with street trees had an average increase in values of 3% over a similar house without street trees. The following web site will also provide the annual savings for heating, air conditioning, etc. per each tree on any property: <http://www.treebenefits.com/calculator/>. This increase also equates into higher ratables for the community as property values escalate.

Further, studies show that the cost of maintaining street trees is often approximately less than 1/10th of the revenue generated by increased property values.



The presence of street trees has been shown in numerous studies to increase property values

(Birmingham, MI)

“If we want to sustain things long into an uncertain future, we really should stack the deck in our favor by doing work that embodies principles proven to produce things humans love, and that can become part of a living tradition... one with a heartbeat

Steve Mouzon

<http://www.originalgreen.org/blog/>
posted 3/15/2013

Make friendly and unique places

Why historic Dublin is an asset

People seek places that are interesting. Dublin, with its historic buildings, has much to bring people to the community. These historic buildings, especially where they frame the center crossroads intersection at Main Street (Rt. 313) and Elephant Road, help to define the historic character of the community, making it unique within the region. A report prepared by the Heritage Conservancy determined that 138 buildings and one site would be considered as elements that contributed to the historic integrity of a proposed historic district within the Main Street corridor. Key buildings contributing to the historic district include:

- Reuben Stever Hotel (c. 1790, currently the Dublin Inn)
- Jonas D. Moyer Store (c. 1860, currently Dublin Hardware)
- St. Luke’s United Church of Christ (c. 1891)
- Willy Knight automobile manufacturing building (c. 1870, 114 S. Main St.)
- Dublin Fire Company House (c. 1925)

As reported within the historic survey “some changes have occurred to the buildings, but the changes are minor and overall the district retains its integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association.” This is especially true regarding some of the commercial buildings that have undergone some adaptive reuse. For this reason the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) determined that the proposed district does not meet National Register Criteria. The PHMC states that “alterations at the principal crossroads have compromised the integrity of the proposed district,” and that Dublin’s Main Street District does not compare favorably with similar communities in Bucks County, “based on historic architecture and integrity.”

As the pictures of these historic buildings indicate, the “bones” of these historic buildings remain. They just need to be brought back to their former glory. Removal of the pavement in front yards and the replacement of lost historic fences will do a great deal to restore the historic character at this important gateway and add lasting value. The South Main Street corridor is characterized by historic residential buildings, which for the most part remain fairly intact. With some minor enhancements, these residences can become a handsome regional historic landmark.

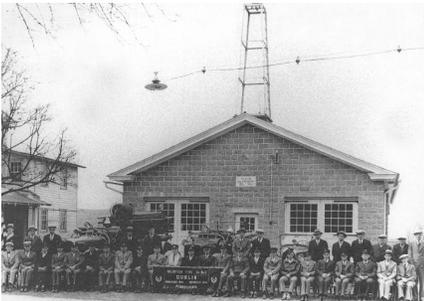
Fortunately, most all of the historic buildings remain, thus providing a great asset with an engaging history about the evolution of the community. Without an historic district designation or some type of form-based code guidelines, all of these historic buildings are at risk of possible demolition as land values increase and provide incentives for redevelopment.



Dublin Diner



Dublin Pants Factory—now the TEC Center



Dublin Firehouse—now Winterhouse

Why to fight against sameness

Much of this report is about creating a community that does not look like “Anytown USA”. It is important to focus upon the fact that Dublin is Dublin and should always remain Dublin. As Jane Jacobs, a noted observer of downtowns wrote “Almost nobody travels willingly from sameness to sameness and repetition to repetition, even if the physical effort is trivial.” This sameness is characterized in a number of ways: national chain stores that have been air-dropped into the community with no reference to community context, and boring and mediocre architecture. Freeport, Maine is an excellent example of where national chains have had to respond to local tastes. Thus the McDonalds fast food chain store there is located within an historic building without a drive-through window. Other examples can be found on web site such as [www.communiy matters.com](http://www.communiy.matters.com) or reviewing comments by Ed McMahon, Senior Resident Fellow at the Urban Land Institute – see: <http://plannersweb.com/topics/columnists/mcmahon/>. Sameness also deals with the character of buildings. For example, horizontal windows with very little vertical detail can make for boring buildings. Form-based codes can address these issues. As Ed McMahon has stated “It is more important what we build than where we build.”

Seek larger display windows

Currently Grates and Grills is the only building that has large display windows that face onto Main Street. Many of the existing retail buildings could be retrofitted to provide adequate retail windows that are filled with products that will entice people to shop. In addition, merchants should be encouraged to leave the lights on within their display windows in the evening. This not only makes for safer streets, but it encourages people to walk in the evening. This is another argument for developing a form-based code, which can set window standards for buildings.



A word about signs

Sometimes the best efforts for revitalization come about by simply uncovering what already exists. It is important to evaluate the need for every sign within the right-of-way. Some are necessary, such as speed limit signs. Some are helpful, such as route markers. But, unnecessary signs warning of every possible ill should be reevaluated. The federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices offers helpful consideration, by stating that every traffic control device or sign should do all of the following:

- Fulfill a need
- Command attention
- Convey a clear, simple meaning
- Command respect from road users
- Give adequate time for proper response

These guidelines can be applied to nearly every sign, not just road signs. We encourage these principles be applied to the many signs in Dublin. We believe the results of the evaluation will become obvious—that about half of the signs can go away. Often the layperson can make that determination, and make the suggestion to the proper people.



On-site signs: There is a wide variety of signs the types of signs within the community. Many of these signs are old and in need of renovation; there are temporary signs that are also out-of-date. Within greater concentration of historic buildings, there is an opportunity to establish sign standards that would be more in keeping with the historic character of the buildings. Upgrades to signs are not very costly, but they do a lot to enhance the brand of the community and help create a sense of place.



As the town center is further developed most freestanding signs may no longer be necessary. This is because when all aspects of the plan have been incorporated, vehicular travel speeds and a pedestrian scale streetscape will make freestanding signs out of scale with the streetscape. This will further reduce the clutter of signs that currently diminishes the character of the community.

Too many signs can make it difficult to get a clear message across

Do pedestrians spend less money in stores than auto drivers?

- When trip frequency is accounted for, the average monthly expenditures by customer modes of travel reveal that bicyclists, transit users, and pedestrians are competitive consumers and for all businesses except supermarkets, spend more on average than those who drive
- The built environment matters ... residential and employment density, ... and the amount of automobile and bicycle parking are all important in explaining the use of non-automobile modes. In particular, provision of bike parking and bike corrals are significant predictors of bike mode share at the establishment level.

Source: Examining Consumer Behavior and Travel Choices (OTREC-RR-12-15)
February 2013
www.otrec.us

Welcome bicycles

There has been a dramatic rise in the use of bicycles throughout the nation and the region. As communities have begun to provide for bike lanes there has been an increase of as much as 35% in some communities in one year alone. Cycling may be one of the healthiest forms of exercise that there is. It is easy to encourage an increase of ridership: you only have to provide for safe routes and places for bicyclists to park their bikes. Bicycling also offers benefits to businesses by reducing the number of parking spaces required when people are able to cycle safely and easily into the Borough. Since most vehicle trips are less than two miles and are for small errands, a good bicycle network may increase the probability that bicycling could replace auto use for some trips.

Studies have also shown that bicycling, when connected to a regional trail network, can be an important economic driver for a region. A recently completed Bucks County Bicycle Plan illustrates a regional trail network that, when completed, may benefit Dublin Borough.

There are a number of ways to encourage bicycling within Dublin. There are already wide shoulders along Main Street as it goes through the Borough, but the amount and speed of traffic is not conducive to casual bicycling. If a more village-like street network is implemented in Dublin, there will be more low volume streets where people can cycle in safety. In addition, where streets are not wide enough for bike lanes, the streets can be marked with "sharrows", which are bicycle symbols that tell the motorist to share the road with bicyclists. There are many examples of these sharrow markings within the County. The Bucks County Planning Commission has been working with other communities to negotiate with PennDOT on the use of sharrows, as well as guiding the Bucks County Bicycle Plan.

The next step is to provide for bike racks at key locations. It should be noted that it is easy to fit ten bicycles in the area of a parking space for one vehicle.

Helping public transportation work

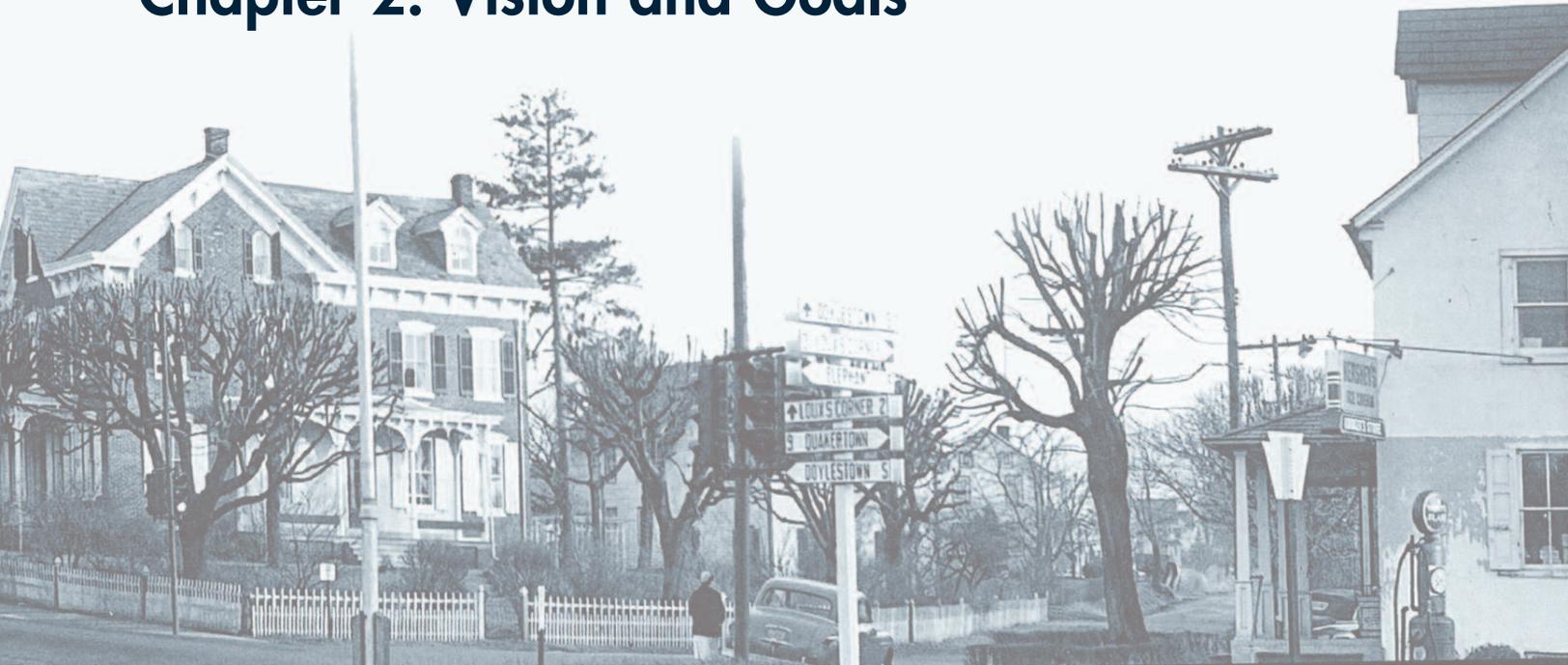
Dublin has limited public-transit service; there is no SEPTA public transit service in the community. However, there are a number of busses that travel through the Borough, including the Trans-Bridge Lines bus company that runs service to Quakertown, Doylestown, and on to New York City. Currently the Trans-Bridge bus stops on North Main Street, where it picks up and drops off passengers along the side of the road where there are large shoulders. Plans should be made to seek the best location for this transit stop on Main Street so that the greatest number of businesses can benefit from this service.

There are also numerous busses that run tours to Pearl S. Buck International just outside of the borough. The Borough should discuss with the institution the possibility of providing bus parking spaces within the town center to provide tourists with opportunities to walk through Main Street and enjoy local restaurants and shops.

Pick your winners

It is important to note that one must first plan for the vision and not for the budget. Once the vision is in place, then planning for funding can begin. As the community continues through the planning process it will be possible to develop priorities for implementation and strategies for budgeting. The following chapter provides a summary of the new vision and the methods for implementing the plan.

Chapter 2: Vision and Goals



Goals

- Create a sense of place through community design
- Make it happen with planning tools and incentives
- Organize for success
- An implementable long-term plan to ensure that new development brings the greatest possible benefits to Dublin Borough

Vision for Dublin Borough

The following vision statement paints a bright picture of the future—the way things may look if these steps are taken to implement the goals of the plan.

Dublin Borough is a small community with a variety of land uses that offers a unique living and work environment that serves local residents and the region. Located within the heart of Bucks County, it is surrounded by open space and farmland, which help define its boundaries. As one approaches Dublin, one is immediately aware that the community is rich with historic assets that also help to define it as an authentic walkable historic Bucks County community.

The town is characterized by four distinct character areas:

- *Historic Character Area*
- *Town Center Character Area*
- *Comprehensive Plan Road and Through Street Character Area*
- *Village Residential Character Area*

The Historic Character Area has a mix of retail and residences that have been lovingly cared for; the new Town Center and the Comprehensive Plan Road and Through Streets Character Areas maintain many of the traditions of the historic area, but provide for a mixed-use downtown center that has become a local destination, and the Village Residential Character Area provides for walkable streetscapes and open space opportunities for current and new residents. Together, these areas weave together a pedestrian-friendly local community with a regional destination that is an attraction for tourists who frequent the Pearl S. Buck Foundation and the area's recreational facilities.

Goal 1 Create a sense of place through community design

Character areas

There are two separate character areas proposed along Main Street (Route 313) within the Borough; each with a separate design criteria. The following are descriptions of the recommendations for each character area:

Historic Character Area: Main Street south of Dublin TEC Center

Land use

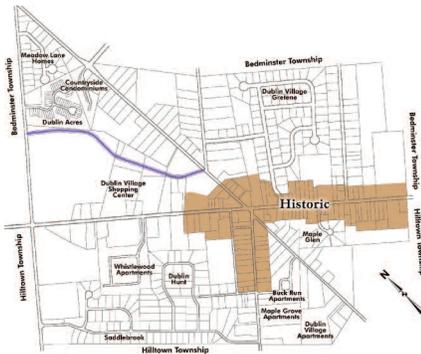
- Retain the current mix of land uses, but provide incentives to preserve the residential character, since the current building stock, which is mostly residential, is not easily adaptable to non-residential uses. This area is also poorly suited for both on-street parking and off street parking for non-residential uses.
- Allow for the continuation of existing non-conforming uses.
- Allow for home occupations.
- Create new zoning regulations that monitor the mix of uses and retain the historic and residential character of the historic area.

Design Guidelines

- Develop and implement a set of design guidelines that are reflected within the zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development regulations that reinforce this historic identity. Consider the application of a form-based zoning code that references design and character of the community. Specifically create a build-to front setback line that represents what currently exists within the historic area and change the ultimate right-of-way from 120 feet to 40 feet in width.

Historic Preservation

- Work with the Heritage Conservancy to create an Historic District through the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission.
- Adopt the necessary Historic Preservation Ordinance to protect these historic structures and provide the opportunity for tax credits for non-residential properties.
- Establish an anti-demolition ordinance to protect historic properties.



Historic Design Guidelines

- Develop a handbook of historic preservation design guidelines that illustrate methods and details for historic preservation.

Historic restoration

- There are a number of historic structures that have been converted to commercial uses. These buildings should be sensitively restored to reflect their original historic architectural precedents. Work with organizations such as Pennsylvania Department of Community Economic Development (DCED) to seek grants for facade improvements. examples of historic restoration may include:
 - *N. Buckner Building*: restore the front roof and windows
 - *Jonas Moyer residence*: restore the fence and landscaping; remove front-yard parking
 - *Grates and Grills*: create a large open shed roof in the front of the building that is typical of the early twentieth century period
 - *Dublin Inn*: restore the front porch and brick facade to match the original architecture; add a fence and landscaping in the front yard, get rid of the bar look and make it look like an inviting inn.
 - *Dublin Hardware Store*: Restore the front facade to reflect historic images. Add a front canopy for the outdoor storage of materials, in keeping with an old hardware store.
 - *Dublin Pants Factory/TEC Center*: build out the front of the building to the sidewalk. The new addition should mimic the existing historic structure.
 - *Existing residences*: There is a large number of beautiful historic residential structures within the Historic Area that would benefit from sensitive restoration.

Traffic calming

- Reduce the cartway from 30 feet in width to 25 foot wide, then re-stripe each travel lane so that there are two 11-foot wide travel lanes and two 1.5-foot wide shoulders.
- Create a gateway outside of the Borough that includes a landscaped median where there is currently a painted median.

Walkability

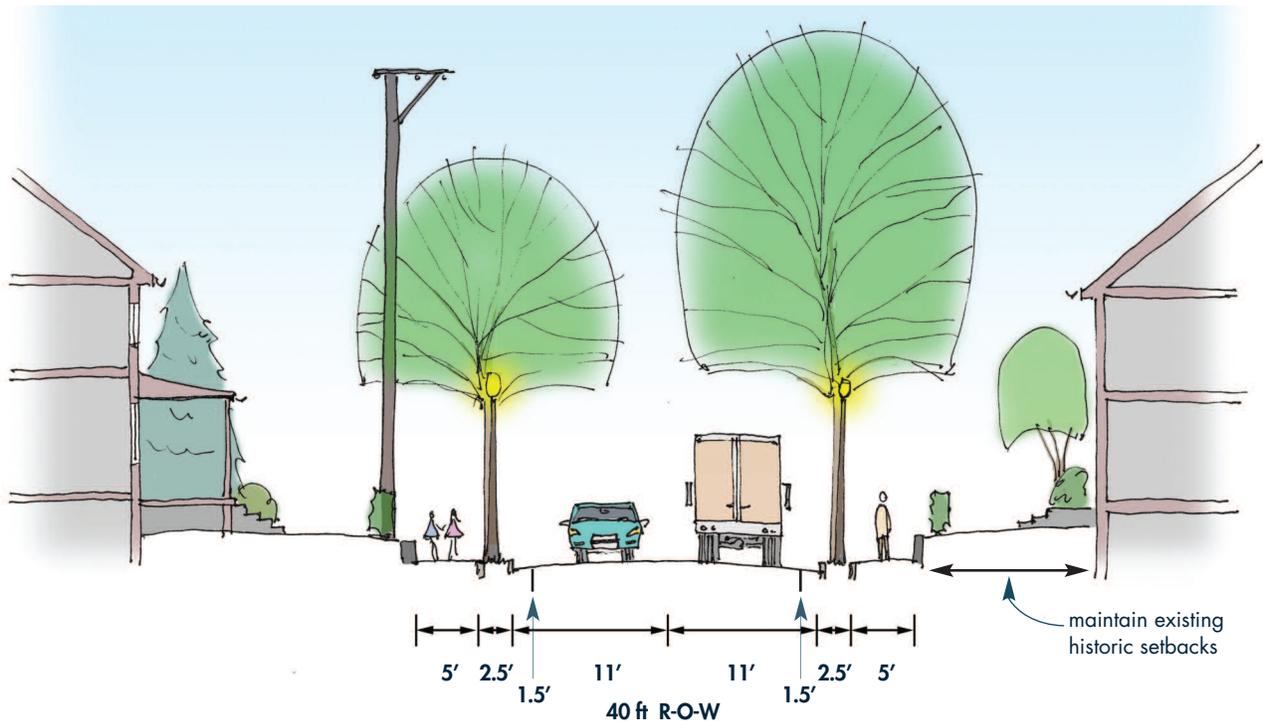
- The Borough's existing sidewalks are only five feet wide. To support traffic calming and make the sidewalks safer, the sidewalks should be widened by two feet, plus the width of the curb on either side, so that they are each 5 feet wide plus a 2-foot wide planting strip and a 6" curb. The added two feet should be planted with a salt-tolerant ground cover, such as lirioppe, to allow for street trees. Driveway curbcuts should be redesigned where possible to eliminate the current up-and-down grades of the sidewalk, making it safer and more pleasant for pedestrians, especially those with strollers or walkers. The added buffer with tree planting and street lights will also enhance pedestrian safety.

- Create cross walks at the following areas and place Yield to Pedestrians signs at each intersection:
 - Village Green Lane
 - Parkside
 - High Street
- Upgrade the crosswalk at Elephant Road and Main Street

Parking and circulation

- Front yard parking has been common in much of the historic section of the Borough in the past, but the result of the practice is that the historic context of the architecture has been destroyed. To restore the original streetscape, remove off-street parking in the front yards of many of the commercial businesses. The following historic properties are critical for the removal of parking in their front yards:
 - The Dublin Inn
 - Grates and Grills
 - Jonas Moyer residence
 - Dublin Hardware Store

Historic character area: typical streetscape



Design recommendations

- 5-ft. wide sidewalks with 2 ft wide planting strip with 6 in. curb for street trees
- Shorter street trees under utility lines; taller trees on south side
- Travel lane reduced to 11 ft. to promote traffic calming
- 1.5 ft. painted shoulder
- Historic street lights

What this design addresses

- Pedestrian safety and traffic calming increased because of tree buffer
- Street trees provide cooling for pedestrians and homes and noise reductions
- New historic style street lighting provides sense of place
- Right-of-way and building setbacks conform to historic building setback distances

- Widen the cartway by 8 foot to create on-street parking aisle at the following locations:
 - *Main Street*: Grates and Grills and the property just south of it
 - *Main Street*: in front of the Hardware Store
 - *Main Street*: in front of the old General Store
 - *Main Street*: in front of the Dublin TEC Center
 - *Middle Road*: In front of the Jonas Moyer Residence
 - *Maple Avenue*: On the right before the intersection with Middle Road
 - *Elephant Road*: From the TEC Center parcel to the Hardware Store
- Between Grates and Grills and the Dublin Inn, create an entrance-only drive that will provide access to parking on the side of Grates and Grills and a connection to Cobblestone Road.
- Coordinate with Grates and Grills to create a new public parking facility that would be located at the rear of Grates and Grills and provide access to a residential town house development that could be developed in the rear of the parcel. Allow for exit and entrance to the new public parking lot located on Grates and Grills property through the rear of the Dublin Inn property, and allow the Dublin Inn to share and participate in the use of the public parking lot to be located on the Grates and Grills property.
- Coordinate with the TEC Center to create a new public parking facility between the TEC Center and the proposed Bypass Road.
- Add a left-hand turning lane off Grates & Grills and the Dublin Inn to allow turns onto Maple Avenue.

Landscaping and street trees

- **North side of street**
Add low-branching street trees within the two feet of the newly widened sidewalk on the north side of the street where there are existing overhead utilities. Tree placement here will also provide a feeling of safety from the adjacent traffic and will add an important traffic calming effect.
- **South side of street**
Add larger street trees to be located within the two feet of the newly widened sidewalk on the south side of the street where there are no overhead utilities. These trees will branch out over the street
- Restore historic fences or privet hedges between the sidewalks and the front yards to the residential and non-residential properties.
- Create a pedestrian plaza in front of the Dublin Hardware Store and place the new Town Clock in this location with benches. Incorporate a decorative fence or hedge to define this new public space.



In shape, color, location, text, design, construction, material, and history, the Keystone Markers speak about what it means to be from Pennsylvania.

Street lighting

- Develop pedestrian-level streetlights that are placed within the newly widened sidewalk. The streetlights should match the existing streetlights that have already been chosen for the Borough.

Signage

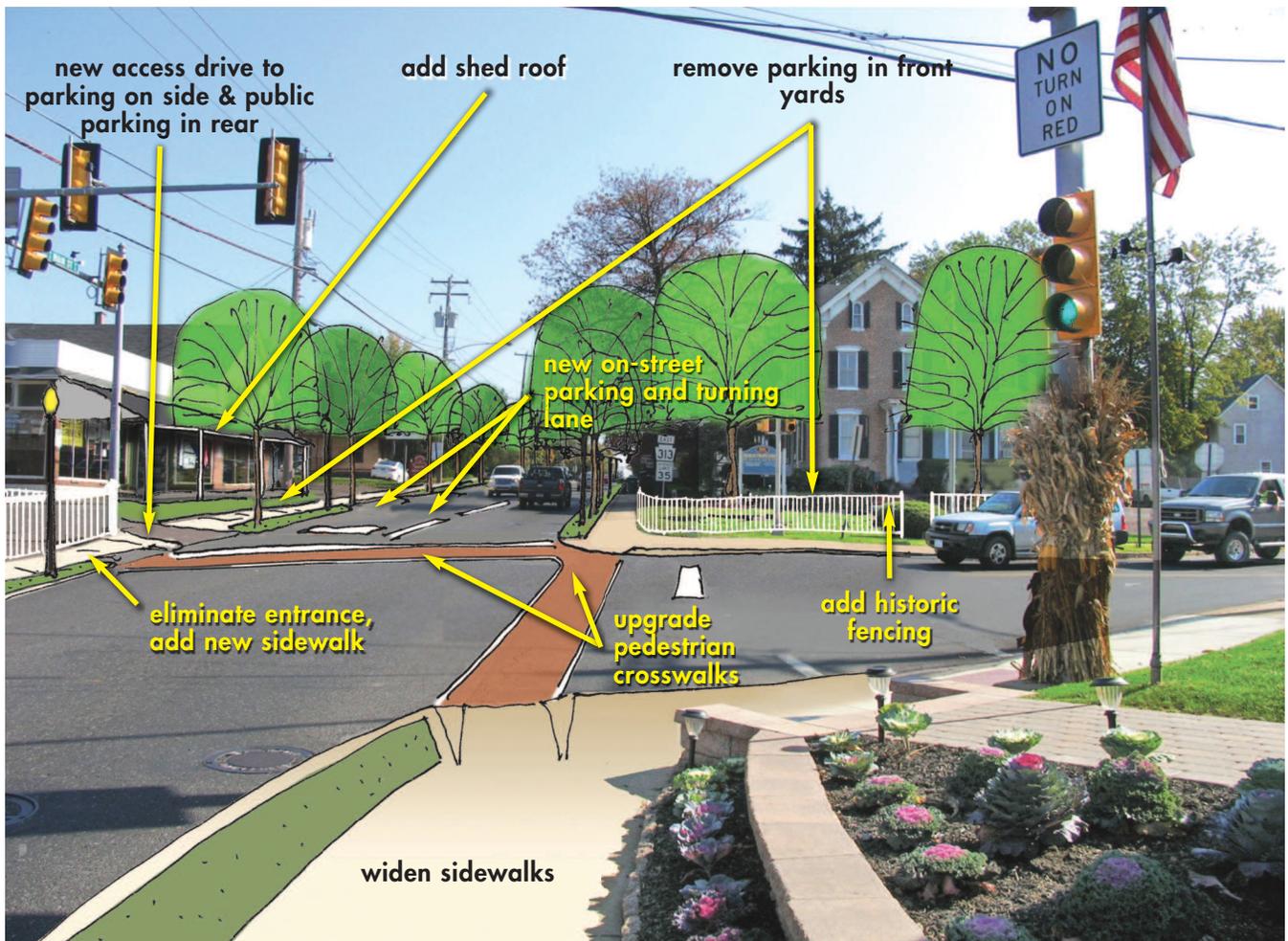
- Create an historic gateway sign at the south entrance to Dublin. Such a sign should define Dublin Borough, the date of incorporation, and state “Home of Pearl S. Buck”, or words to that effect.
- Consider the installation of replicas of the historic Keystone markers for use in gateways and at Borough borders (www.keystonemarkertrust.org/)
- Review the sign standards within the historic area and incorporate design review through the newly formed Historic and Architectural Review Board (HARB).
- Encourage businesses to redo their signage to be in keeping with the new sign standards. Look at examples, such as Chestnut Hill or City of Bethlehem, PA, for detailed sign design standards. Work with organizations such as Pennsylvania Department of Community Economic Development (DCED) to seek grants for new signs. As an example, recreate the historic Dublin Inn sign.

Potential streetscape improvements in the Historic Character Area: Moyer Building



before

after



What this design addresses

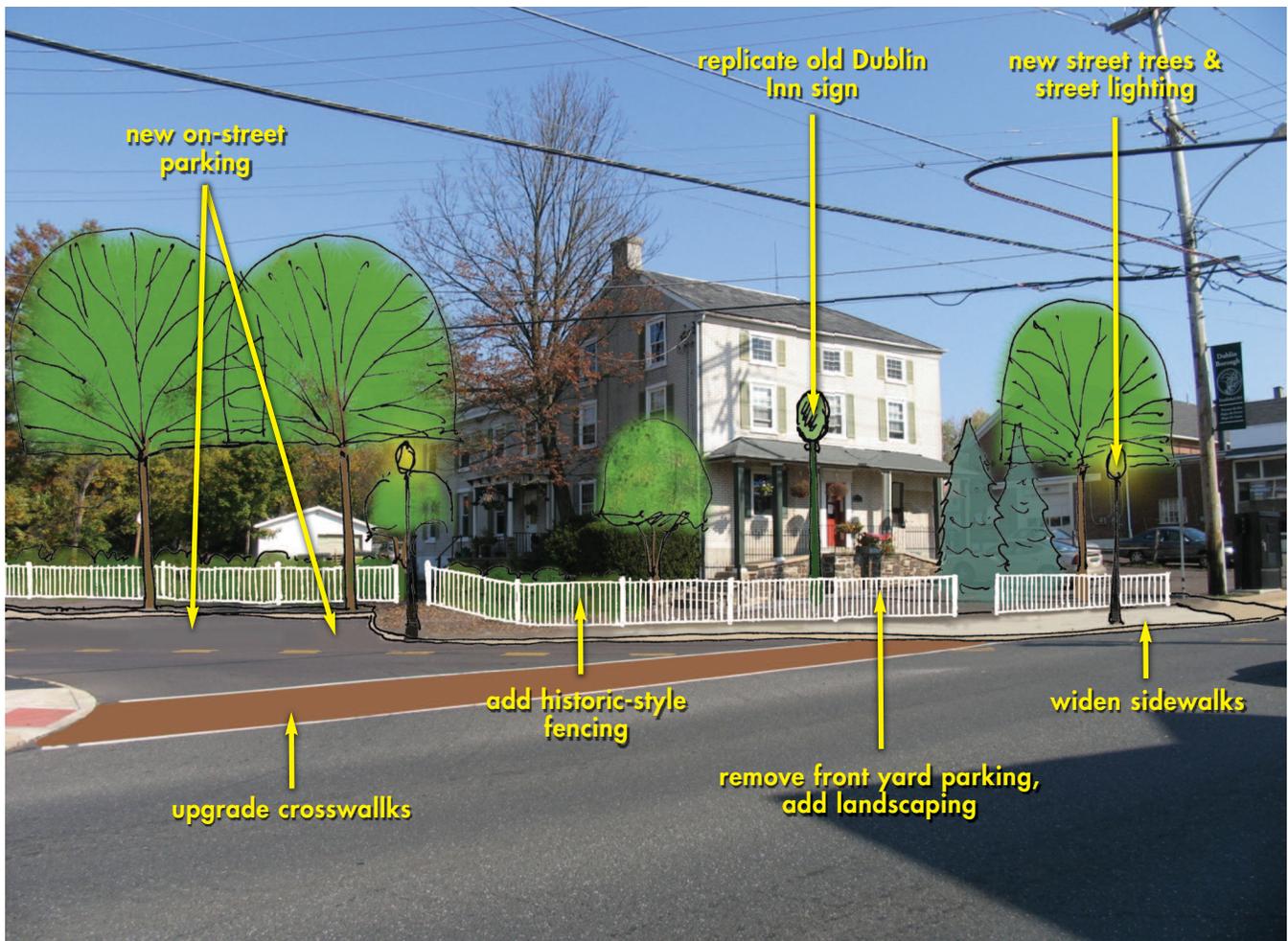
- Eliminates backout parking onto Route 313 at Grates & Grills
- Adds new on-street parking and access to parking for Grates & Grills
- Increases pedestrian safety by clearly delineating crosswalks
- Restores the historic fence in front of the Moyer building
- Restores green front yards to historic buildings
- Left-hand turn lane onto Maple Avenue
- Historic-style street lights reinforce sense of place
- New trees beautify streetscape and announce that this is a community

Potential streetscape, circulation, and building improvements in the Historic Character Area: Dublin Inn
new on-street parking and signage

before



after



What this design addresses

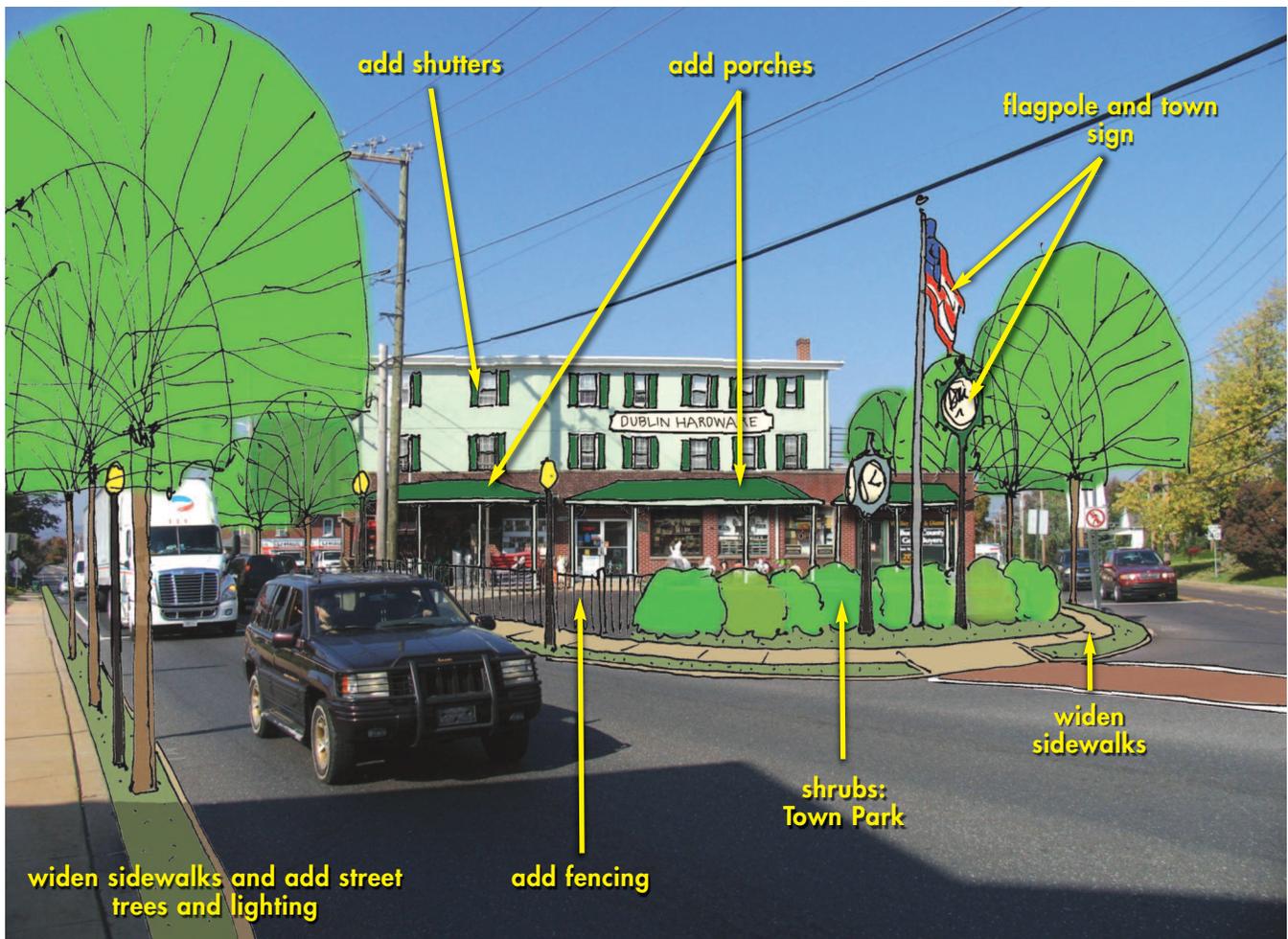
- Restoration of front of Dublin Inn
- Sidewalks and fencing unify street visually
- Creates stronger positive gateway image for motorists coming from Pearl Buck International on Maple Avenue

- On-street parking added
- Pedestrian safety increased by new crosswalk emphasis
- Reestablishes historic Dublin Inn sign and to reinforce historic Dublin

Potential streetscape, circulation, and building improvements in the Historic Character Area: Town Center Park

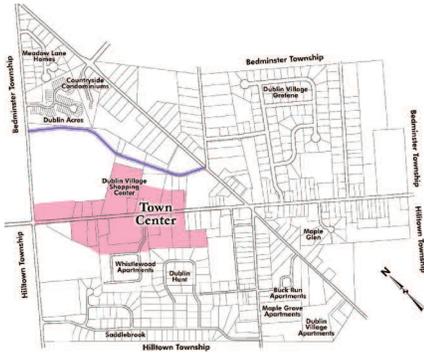
after

before



What this design addresses

- Small “pocket park” for new town sign to enhance community identity
- Provides needed on-street parking and pickup areas for the hardware store
- Provides sales/display area on front of the hardware store in keeping with an historic store
- Reconfigured loading dock would allow customer parking in rear of hardware store
- Access drive changes on Elephant Road create easier and safer loading area for tractor trailers
- Pedestrians can now walk safely round the corner of Rt. 313 and Elephant Road on a sidewalk
- Recommended renovations to building with added porches and shutters bring back its historic charm



Town Center Character Area: Main Street north of TEC Center

Land use

- Create zoning incentives to encourage mixed-use development that will encourage walkability and that maximize ratables for the Borough. Mixed-uses should include retail and office uses on the first floor, and office and residential on the second and third floors.
- Require build-to lines so that buildings are located adjacent the right-of-way and sidewalks. Drive-through windows or auto-centric uses should not be permitted in this area.

Development opportunities

- It is critical that the Dublin Shopping Center remain as a key anchor for the Town Center. To achieve this it will be necessary undertake the following:
 - Link Main Street at the shopping center traffic light to the Comprehensive Plan Road with a new through street with on-street parking
 - Upgrade the buildings and landscaping of the existing shopping center to create a more welcoming environment
 - Upgrade the shopping center with more intensive mixed land uses
 - Enlarge the grocery store to become more competitive with new local grocery stores
 - Partner with the Borough to maintain adequate parking
- There are two under-utilized parcels within the Town Center Character Area that need to be developed with intensive mixed-uses in conjunction with the respective through roads, and it will be necessary to partner with the Borough to maintain adequate parking:
 - The W.C. Weiss property opposite the Dublin Shopping Center
 - The property owned by Grand View Hospital

Design guidelines

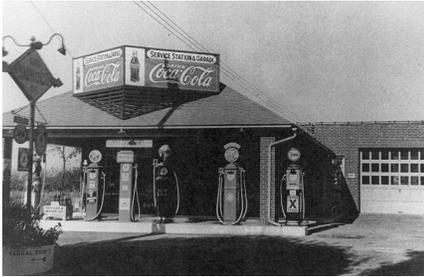
- Develop and implement a set of design guidelines that are reflected within the zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development regulations to encourage two- to three-story buildings that set high architectural standards for new development that fits within the scale and character of the community.
- Consider the application of a form based zoning code that references community design and character. Specifically, create a build-to front line to the edge of the right-of-way, prohibit parking in front yards, require no blank walls and a minimum spacing for door openings, and require minimum size of retail windows.

Historic preservation

- This area would not be within the historic district.

Historic design guidelines

- Design guidelines for the historic character area could be incorporated into the recommendations for form-based codes.



Pearl Buck's car was serviced at the Dublin Garage

Historic restoration

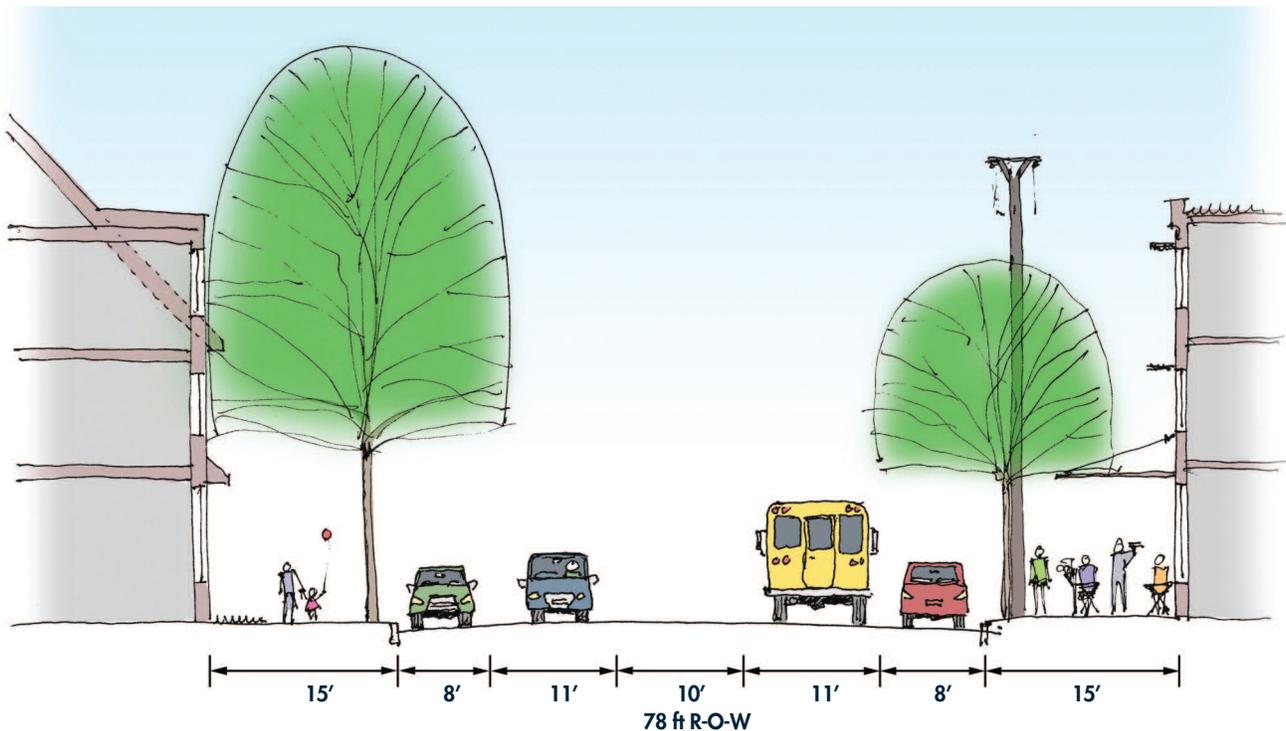
■ There are a few buildings that retain their historic significance within this area. It would ideal to restore the following buildings:

- *Dublin Service Center*: restore the old signs, pumps, and retain the historic accessories (e.g., possible use as a museum combined with a restaurant use)
- *Dublin Star Diner*: restore the facade to recreate the portions of the the original Goldies Diner. Encourage outdoor dining in front of the building
- *Moyers Farm*: restore the barn and residence and adaptively reuse to create a boutique retail center with restaurant

Traffic calming

■ Create new blocks with intersections for traffic calming; this can allow safe pedestrian crossings and additional on-street parking, and can provide for high quality retail space on corner locations. In addition, these new blocks will add to the pedestrian-friendliness of Main Street, because shorter blocks can encourage the walking that large blocks discourage. These new blocks will be created by establishing new through streets that connect to the Comprehensive Plan road located behind the TEC Center to the Dublin Shopping Center to a second new

Town Center character area: typical streetscape



Design recommendations

- 15-ft. sidewalks accommodate sidewalk cafes where possible
- Shorter street trees under utility lines; taller trees on south side
- Travel lane reduced to 11 ft. for traffic calming
- Two on-street parking aisles
- Center lane for left-hand turns onto through-streets
- Historic-style street lights reinforce pedestrian-scale
- 2¹/₂-3 story buildings built to street line

What this design addresses

- On-street parking is critical to the success of businesses
- Center turning lane ensures continuous vehicle movement
- Wide sidewalks that are pedestrian friendly
- New trees provide shade for pedestrians and shoppers
- New infill buildings create great pedestrian scale
- **This can be built in phases as land is developed**

Choosing a locally-owned store generates almost four times as much economic benefit for the surrounding region as shopping at a chain, a new study has concluded. The analysis also found that eating at a local restaurant produces more than twice the local economic impact of dining at a chain restaurant.

Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance
<http://www.ilsr.org/independent-business-deliver-bigger-economic-benefit/>

street across Route 313 that follows the existing alley located behind Meyers Mower Service and connects to Mill Street. The following new through connector streets are recommended:

- Between the TEC Center and the Dublin Post Office
 - At Manor Drive through the site presently owned by Grand View Hospital
 - At Manor Drive to the entrance to the Dublin Shopping Center
 - At the entrance to Moyers Farm
- Encourage a boulevard west of Rickert Road in Bedminster, outside of the Borough, that includes a landscaped median.
 - To allow for these new through streets, it will be necessary to widen Main Street from the area in front of the TEC Center to Rickert Road to accommodate a central left hand turn lane. The new road design would require two 11-foot lanes plus one center turning lane that is 10 feet wide.

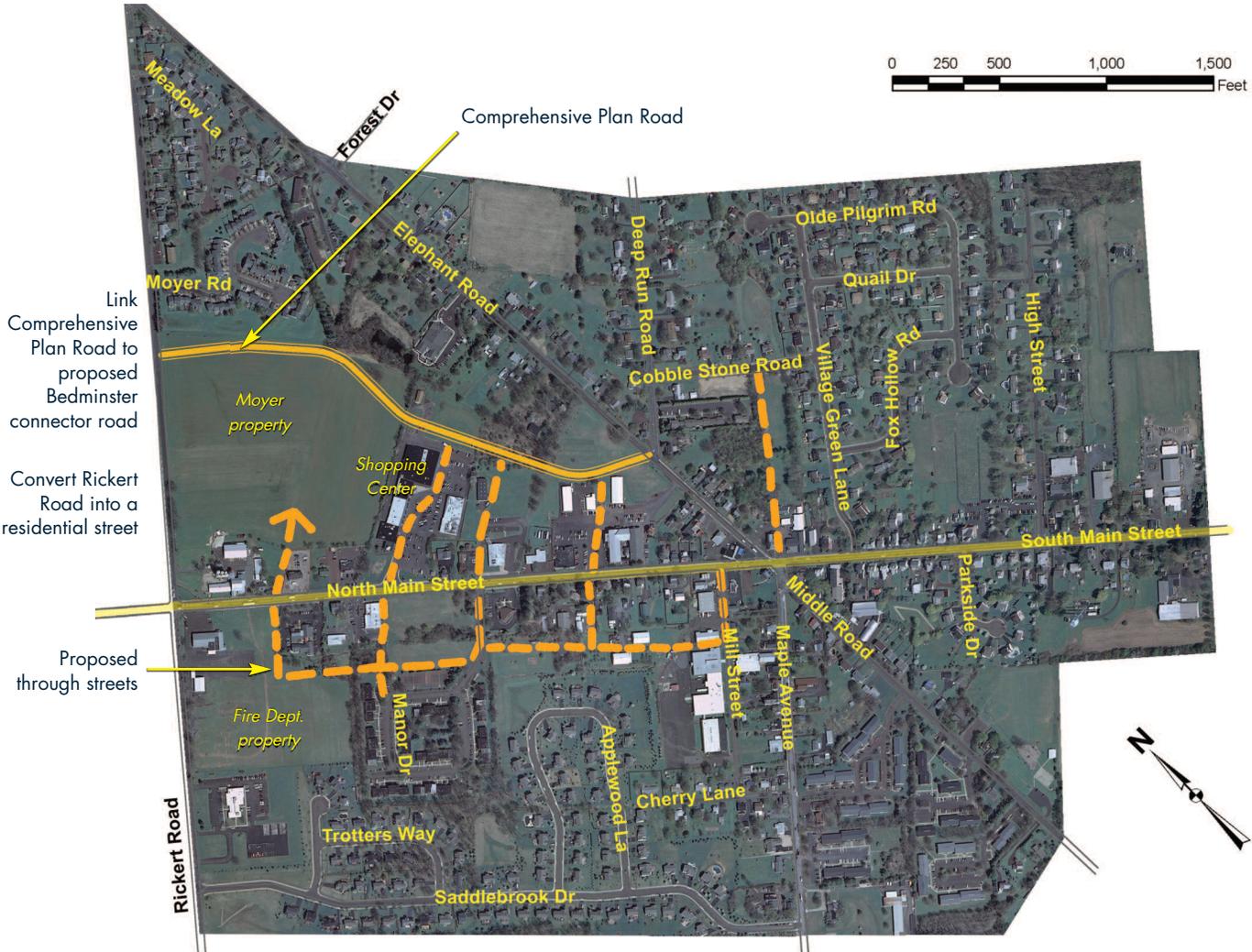
Walkability

- The existing sidewalks are only five feet wide. To make this area a viable town center for Dublin, it is recommended that the sidewalk be widened to fifteen feet on either side of the street. The added width will accommodate sidewalk cafes, sidewalk sales, and street trees and street lights. Private driveway curb cuts onto Main Street should be prohibited.
- Create cross walks should be located at the following areas and place *Yield to Pedestrians* signs at each of the following intersections:
 - Dublin Post Office through street
 - Grand View site through street
 - Dublin Shopping Center through street
 - Moyer Farm through street
 - Rickert Road intersection

Parking and circulation

- Remove off-street parking from the front yards of the commercial businesses.
- Consider not requiring off-street parking at all. Instead, allow new uses to count on-street parking in front of the new use and to require a contribution toward public parking facilities.
- To achieve on-street parking, widen the cartway to permit two 8-foot parking aisles from the front of the TEC Center to Rickert Road on both sides of the street, creating a cartway of 48 feet. With two sidewalks and turning lane added, the ultimate right-of-way will be 78 feet in width. As part of the widening, it is recommended that the possible relocation of utilities underground should be explored, or have the utilities relocated to the rear of the lots.
- Coordinate with new businesses and developments to create new public parking facilities that are managed by the Borough.
- Create new through-streets that will form short blocks to break up the long block between the Shopping Center and Rickert Road and link to the Comprehensive Plan Road. Specific recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan Road Character Area will be discussed below.

Town Center and Comprehensive Plan Road Character Areas: new block recommendations



Proposed road network to create new blocks

- New road between Grates & Grills and Cobble Stone Road
- Through street can connect with the Comprehensive Plan Road at the following locations:
 - Post Office/Dublin Diner
 - Moyer Farm and Dublin Fire Company land
 - Grand View property
 - Shopping Center to Manor Drive
- New street behind Meyers Mower Service, parallel to Main Street

What this design addresses

- Takes traffic pressure off of Main Street by providing alternative choices for drivers—especially non-through traffic
- Eliminates excessively long block on North Main Street and enhances walkability of Town Center
- Provides the “critical mass” needed to support additional retail
- Creates more corner buildings that command higher rent
- Greatly increases on-street parking
- More (and safer) pedestrian and bicycle routes into the Town Center
- Provides needed crosswalks for pedestrians

Landscaping and street trees

■ **North side of street**

Add low branching street trees within the two feet of the newly widened sidewalk on the north side of the street where there are existing overhead utilities. This location will also provide a feeling of safety from the adjacent traffic and it will add an important traffic calming effect.

■ **South side of street**

Add larger street trees where there are no overhead utilities that will branch out over the roadway that are located within the newly widened sidewalk on the south side of the street.

Street lighting

- Develop pedestrian-level streetlights that are placed within the newly widened sidewalk zone. The streetlights should match the existing streetlights that have been installed in the Borough.

Signage

- Create an historic gateway sign at the north entrance to Dublin. Such a sign should define Dublin Borough, the date of incorporation, and state “Home of Pearl S. Buck”, or words to that effect.
- Develop new sign standards within the historic area and incorporate design review through the newly formed Historic and Architectural Review Board (HARB).
- Encourage businesses to redo their signage to be keeping with the new sign standards that exchange free standing signs to wall or projecting signs. Look at examples, such as Chestnut Hill or City of Bethlehem, PA, for detailed sign design standards. Work with organizations such as Pennsylvania Department of Community Economic Development (DCED) to seek grants for new signs.

A retail street in Frederick, MD shows how a variety of building heights and design can frame the streetscape and provide visual interest. The continuous frontage and large display windows draws pedestrians onward.

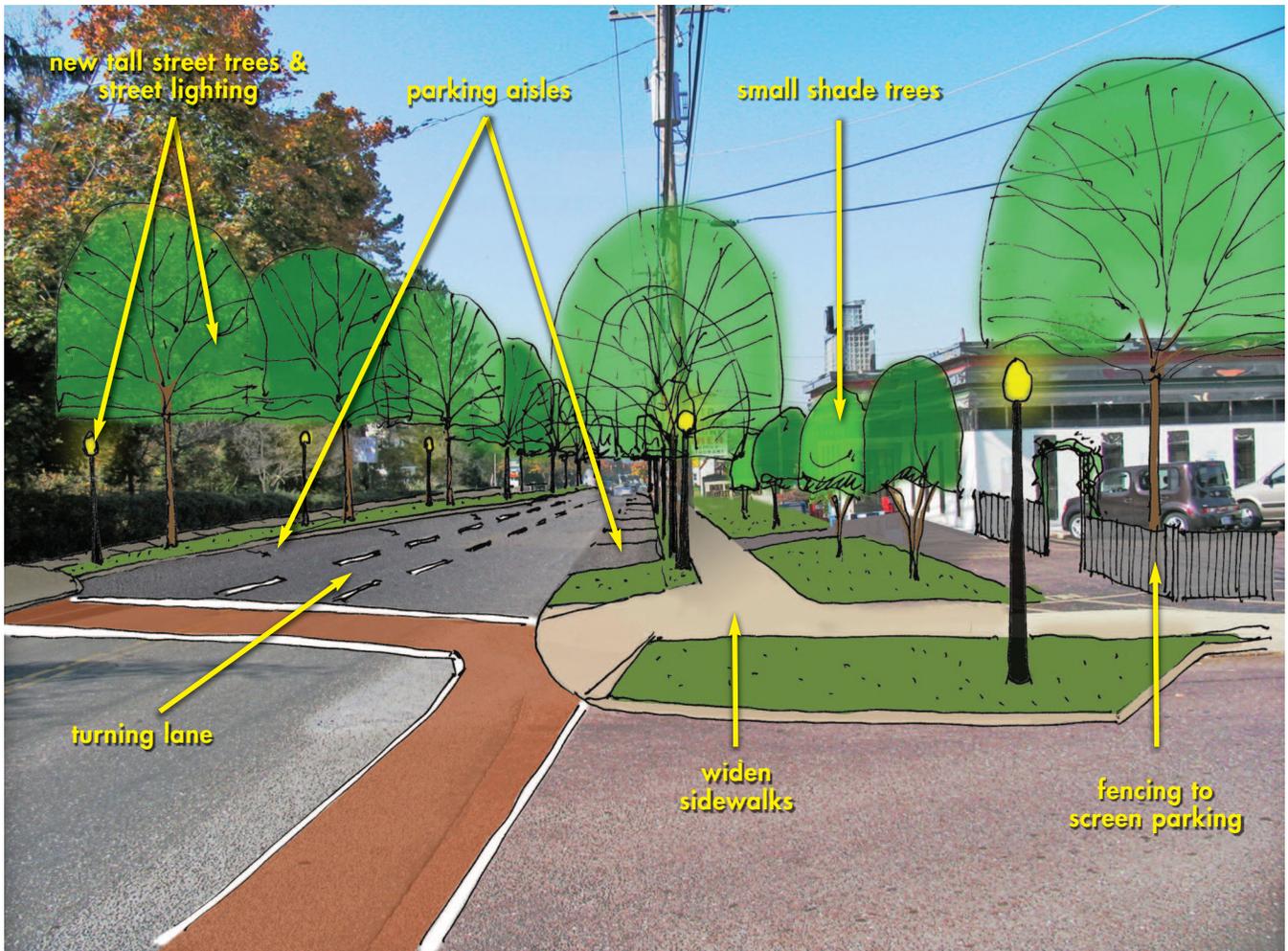


Potential streetscape, circulation, and building improvements in the Town Center Character Area: Dublin Diner



after

before



What this design addresses

- Creates turning lane for uses along Main Street
- Can be implemented over time, as properties are redeveloped
- Adds on-street parking in the commercial core
- Increases pedestrian safety by emphasizing crosswalks
- Adds pedestrian-scale historic-style street lighting



Wider sidewalks offer an opportunity for decorative planting beds that can capture stormwater as well as beautifying a block

Land use

- See Town Center Character Area. It is imperative that there be a continuous row of buildings facing the Comprehensive Plan Road to create a walkable street. All new development should be constructed to the edge of the right-of-way, or a build-to line. No off-street parking should be permitted within the front yards or along this street.

Historic preservation

- See Town Center Character Area.

Traffic calming and circulation

- Maintain a cartway of 36 feet that provides for two 10-foot wide travel lanes and two 8-foot wide parking aisles for both the Comprehensive Plan road and the through streets.
- Add the through streets as proposed above.

Walkability

- For both the Comprehensive Plan Road and the through streets, create sidewalks that are 10 feet wide, plus the width of the curb. This will equate to a total right-of-way of 56 feet.

Parking

- On-street parking is encouraged in this area. This includes the Comprehensive Plan Road and all of the proposed through streets that connect the Comprehensive Plan Road to Main Street and the street proposed behind Meyers Mower Service.

Landscaping and street trees

- Large street trees can be planted on both sides of the street and on all connecting through streets.

Street lighting

- The streetlights should match the existing streetlights in the Borough.

Signage

- See the Town Center area



Why does this plan recommend a variety of house types and sizes?

Steve Mouzon is the founder of the New Urban Guild in Miami. The New Urban Guild is a group of architects, designers, and other New Urbanists dedicated to the study and the design of true traditional buildings and places native to and inspired by the regions in which they are built. In an article discussing why so many houses pre-housing meltdown look so similar, he writes:

“Consider this: people may have a home-owning life of sixty years or more, from their early to mid-twenties to their early to mid-eighties. The period of time that children are at home (assuming the heads of household ever have children) is roughly 30% of that time. So for 70% or so of your home-owning life, you’re saddled with a house larger than what you need. And it isn’t just size, either. The types are so similar that it seems we’ve forgotten how much housing once varied.

Each old city has its own wealth of home types. Look at Beacon Hill in Boston, for example. Or Charleston. Or Alexandria. The home types were so varied because the people were so varied... but today, the American population is more varied than ever before, even while our housing choices have become more bland.”

<http://www.originalgreen.org/blog/the-long-tail-of-housing.html>
Posted February 24, 2010

Village Residential Character Area

A Village Residential area is proposed for the Moyer Tract. Within this area it is intended that there will be sufficient area for a small common or park area that will allow for outdoor gathering and an informal play area for children.

Land use

- Residential densities, lot sizes, and housing types should vary in this area. For example, for the frontage along Rickert Road we recommend twins and single-family detached homes with 40 feet wide lots, with all drives and garage accessed from rear alleyways. Rickert Road should be developed as a stately residential street with attractive homes that would be opposite the newly proposed church in adjoining Bedminster Township.

For the Comprehensive Plan Road we recommend a mixture of twins and single-family detached homes with lot that are 30 feet in width, with all drives and garage accessed from rear alleyways. On the infill streets we recommend higher densities such as three- to three 1/2-story condominium units that allow for parking under the buildings to maintain an attractive and walkable streetscape. (Note: Surface parking lots for residential development should be discouraged.)

Residential densities should vary and should be dependent upon whether transfer development rights are purchased from adjoining municipalities. The highest priority for the purchase of development rights should be in the area between Dublin Borough and the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. (Note: to achieve maximum walkability and ratables, densities between 10 and 25 DUs/acre are recommended.)

Historic preservation

- None. However, the design standards should be developed to reinforce the character of the type of buildings to make certain that they are all complimentary to the overall character to the Borough. This can be achieved by incorporating a form-based code into the Zoning Ordinance.

Traffic calming

- Maintain a cartway of 36 feet that provides for two 10 foot wide travel lanes and two 8 foot wide parking aisles for Rickert Road, the Comprehensive Plan road and the side streets. Provide for a round-about within the center of the complex to provide for a focal point and some much needed common park area.

Walkability

- For Rickert Road, the Comprehensive Plan Road and the side streets create sidewalks that are 5 feet wide with a 5-foot wide green strip for tree planting, plus the width of the two curbs. This equates to a total right-of-way of 56 feet.

Parking

- Parking is encouraged on-street, including Rickert Road, the Comprehensive Plan road and the side streets. The single-family detached, twin, and townhouses should be served from alleyways at the rear of the unit. For the manor houses and condominium units, the parking shall be in the basement of the units so that there are no surface parking lots.



Landscaping and street trees

- Large street trees can be planted on both sides of the street and all connecting through streets.

Street Lighting

- The streetlights should match the existing streetlights that have currently been chosen for the Borough.

Signage

- Only wayfinding signage should be permitted.

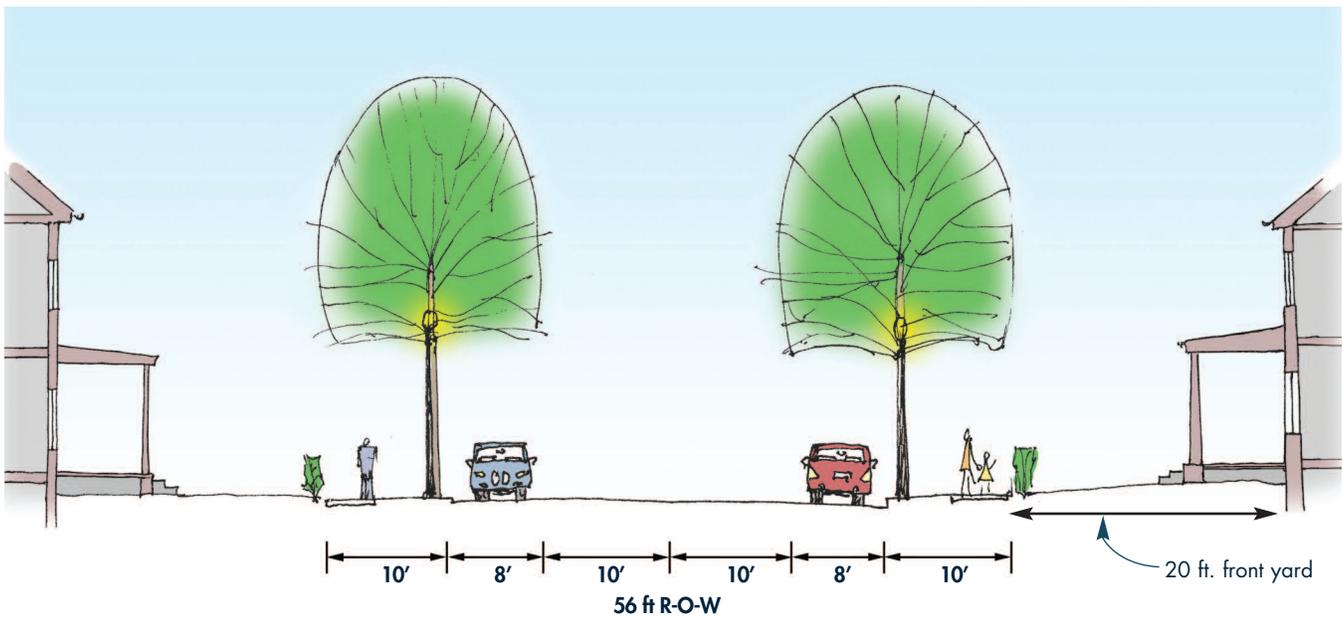


Examples of potential Village Residential housing types

There are a number of key approaches to Dublin from outside of the community:

- Route 313 from Doylestown
- Maple Avenue from the Pearl S. Buck Foundation
- Deep Run Road from Bedminster
- Elephant Road from Bedminster
- Route 313 from Quakertown

Village Residential Character Area: typical streetscape



Design recommendations

- 5 sidewalk and 5 ft. planting bed provides green and tree-lined streets
- “Build-to” line with a 20 ft. front yard creates a continuous streetscape
- 10 ft. travel lane promotes traffic calming
- Historic-style street lights links to other neighborhoods of the Borough
- On-street parking permitted, but most residential lots will be served by alleys and rear garages

What this design addresses

- Pedestrian safety and traffic calming increased because of tree buffer and on-street parking
- Creates a walkable village streetscape that reflects Dublin’s history
- New historic-style street lighting provides sense of place
- Wider sidewalks create generous paces for strolling

Maintaining these approaching corridors as undeveloped and as open space are key to preserving the character of the region as well as the identity of Dublin Borough as a town center. Studies have shown that minimizing additional curb cuts and traffic signals along these approaching roads will have a large impact upon the capacity of these highway networks.

In addition, the cultural landscape between Dublin Borough and the Pearl S. Buck Foundation is critically important to preserving the important cultural tourism connection between that institution and the Borough of Dublin. We recommend that the Borough work closely with the Bucks County Planning Commission, Hilltown Township, Bedminster Township, and area non-profits, such as the Heritage Conservancy, the Bedminster Conservancy, etc. to develop initiatives for open space preservation of these important gateways.

Gateways

Gateways are visual treatments that serve a dual function: they help create a sense of place by announcing that a motorist is entering a new community, and they cue motorists to change speed and slow down for the safety of the pedestrian. Gateways are appropriate for Dublin on the following roadways:

- Main Street (both ends of the Borough on Rt. 313)
- Middle Road
- Elephant Road
- Maple Avenue



Dublin's current gateway from Pearl Buck International should be upgraded

An example of a gateway is already in place on Maple Avenue. Particularly at night, the presence of freestanding lanterns is a pronounced change from the rural nature of Dublin Road immediately to the southwest. Gateways are more than just signs; in fact, they are best achieved by relying on other treatments, such as:

- Changes in pavement texture
- Addition of on-street parking
- Addition of lighting
- Addition of sidewalks
- And perhaps most effectively, the addition of people

Additional pedestrian safety measures

There are also a number of subtle design elements within the street design that can be incorporated to enhance pedestrian safety and walkability:

- Bumpouts at intersections allow for shorter walking distances across streets.
- Narrowing the cartway lane width from 14 feet to 10 feet slows traffic. Traffic can be further slowed with the elimination of the center painted line. The narrower cartway is still effective at moving traffic at a reasonable speed, however.
- Adding crosswalks along the length of Main Street with signs giving pedestrians right-of-way will help reduce speeding.
- Corner radii that are not too rounded will make the crosswalk shorter and decrease vehicular speeds. They are also much more representative of traditional village street design.

Goal 2: Make it happen with planning tools and incentives

Currently there are no incentives or regulations that would help the Borough attract more visitors, shoppers, and potential homeowners, and funding strategies have not been fully explored. In the past, public and private investments to improve the Borough have been made in isolation, and without attention to the goals identified within this study. In order to make the necessary extensive and meaningful changes discussed above, the following strategies are recommended.

Planning tools **Historic District designation**

There are now no regulations to protect the historic resources within the Borough. At a minimum the Borough should immediately adopt an anti-demolition ordinance. Next, it is important to partner with Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission to develop a historic district, a historic district ordinance, a Historic and Architectural Review Board, and the staff necessary to administer the issuance of building permits and review new construction for compliance.

Historic District Design Guidelines

An historic district will require a document or handbook that will set specific design guidelines that will provide guidance for the property owners on the best methods for maintaining their historic buildings.

Marketing and fiscal impact plans

As part of the planning process, it is recommended that a marketing/fiscal impact plan be developed that will provide the tools necessary to best define how large or concentrated the commercial town center should become, make recommendations for development standards and the intensity of development, provide a market plan for the types of retail uses that the community can support. The plan should also cover developing a housing plan with appropriate densities that will be responsive to the current demographics and that will achieve the goals of creating economic sustainability, resilience, and walkability.

One of the concerns voiced in the Borough's second public meeting was the possibility of hidden hard costs associated with new development such as services and infrastructure. These should be addressed in any fiscal impact studies that are performed.

Zoning Ordinance revisions

The current zoning ordinance encourages the suburban auto-centric types of development that are to the opposite of the recommendations in this vision plan—to create a concentrated walkable community that reflects the Borough’s historic development pattern. It is recommended that a new form-based zoning ordinance be developed to reinforce the architectural character that makes Dublin a unique community. Good planning is more about the design and character of a community than its land uses. The best way to preserve community character is through adoption of a form-based code.

Parking study

Public parking is the best way to address the parking needs of a community; it provides a needed funding base that can support a small community, and it encourages walking. A parking study and plan would develop a funding program that would be feasible for the implementation of appropriate numbers of on-street spaces and in public lots.

Developing a sustainable parking strategy may be the most important thing the Borough Council can do to ensure the success of this plan. There are too many once-great communities that have failed because of a lack of leadership in addressing parking issues. The city of Norristown is one of them.

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

Along with the changes to the zoning ordinance, it will be necessary to develop detailed design standards that will reflect the character areas described within this study. Currently the land development ordinance is based upon auto-centric design standards, which are not suitable and which hurt the character of the community that is highlighted in this report.

Funding strategies and sources

It is important to explore a broad range of funding sources that will be necessary to implement the strategies within this study. While funding sources are more limited, there still remain sources that are available. The following is a discussion of some of the funding sources that are available:

Property taxes: property taxes are typically the primary revenue source for local governments. However, property taxes go toward operating funds and are not used for new capital improvements.

Gas tax revenues: the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania collects gas taxes, vehicle registration fees, and truck taxes. A portion of these taxes are returned to the municipalities. Typically these funds are used mostly importantly for maintenance. However, these funds can be used to make any transportation-related improvements within the right-of-way including sidewalks, intersection upgrades for pedestrians, and bicycle lanes.

Local Improvement District (LID) is a funding mechanism for local capital improvements such as sidewalks, streets, and streetscape enhancements. The assessment for a LID is based upon the linear frontage of a property, trip generation, or other similar criteria. Individual property owners have the option for paying the assessment in cash or by applying for assessment financing over a period of years.

Business Improvement District (BID) is a funding mechanism where assessments are based upon property assessment values or are a simple fee on a property. The assessment is paid for by the business rather than the property owner. BIDs cannot pay for capital improvements but may fund smaller projects that support other downtown improvements. A BID can have a time limit or it can be perpetual.

Grants and loans: Each year the state legislature develops a series of grants and loans for municipalities. The following web site is a good starting point.

<http://www.pahouse.com/Mundy/documents/PA-Grant-and-Resource-Directory.pdf>

Potential funding sources

- *Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)*
Growing Greener II/Main Street and Downtown Redevelopment Grants: helps to fund main street revitalization. May include facade and anchor building activities.
Keystone Communities Program/Elm Street:
helps to fund street tree programs
- *Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)*
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
Intended for construction of roadway improvements which remove congestion. This could be used for a redo of the main intersection in town.
Transportation Alternatives (TA)
This program includes the Transportation Enhancement (TE) for pedestrian and bicycle improvement construction, Home Town Streets (HTS) and Safe Routes to School (SRS) programs. These programs could fill in the balance of the construction funding needed, although it could take a number of submissions and years to do it. Since there is no school within walking distance in Dublin, the HTS may not apply.
Efficient Growth for Growing Suburbs (EGGS)
This funding may be applicable for planning and engineering of areas such as the Moyer Tract.
- *Bucks County Economic Development Program*
Loan programs for economic development
- *Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)*
TCDI Grants for planning and implementation
- *Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC)*
Grants for developing historic districts and design guidelines.
- *National Endowment for the Arts*
Grants for public art
- *Hart Family Fund for Small Towns*
Grants for seed money to encourage preservation projects in small towns

There is a search engine on the DVRPC website called the Municipal Resource Guide. By typing in the type of funding sought and the location, it offers other specialized resources. See: <http://www.dvrpc.org/asp/MCDResource/>

- *Highway Beautification opportunities*

Finally, the Borough should investigate other partnerships in Bucks County such as Bucks Beautiful's Bulbs for Bucks Program, which is dedicated to planting one million daffodil bulbs along major highways and byways in the county. See www.bucksbeautiful.com/bulbs.shtml.

Goal 3: Organize for success

The following is a list of people and organizations and their roles that will be key for the successful implantation of this Revitalization Plan.

Borough Council

- Seeks funding grants for implementation of the Revitalization Plan
- Lets bonds for new improvements, as needed
- Develops overall funding mechanism
- Hires consultants to implement the plan
- Adopts the Revitalization Plan as a component to the Borough Comprehensive Plan
- Adopts new ordinances that support the Revitalization Plan
- Develops implementation strategies
- Approves new developments that support the Revitalization Plan
- Works with Bucks County Redevelopment Authority to assist with implementation loans for economic development, if applicable
- Hires a part-time Main Street manager to help draft grants and direct the right businesses into Dublin
- Hires professional support staff to administer the new ordinances and new development
- Develops a new parking organization to administer the improvements, administration, and maintenance of all public parking

Borough Planning Commission

- Supports the historic district
- Develops new zoning ordinance and design guidelines to support the Revitalization Plan
- Develops new subdivision and land development ordinance to support the Revitalization Plan
- Reviews and administers new developments so that they support the Revitalization Plan
- Partners with adjoining municipalities to preserve gateways and set up joint TDR programs

Discover Dublin

- Organizes events to promote Dublin
- Arranges for decorations to promote Dublin
- Supports business development to attract the right type of business

- Maintains a partnership between the public and private and non-profit sectors to remain active in the planning and implementation process
- Recommends real estate projects for specific parcels of land
- Participates in physical design strategy for the implementation of the Revitalization and Visioning Plan

Bucks County Planning Commission

- Continues to provide technical support
- Works with surrounding communities to maintain the corridors
- Provides assistance in identifying sources of funding to implement the plan
- Assist with obtaining funding sources

Professional staff

- Assists the Borough Manager and part-time Main Street Manager in the implementation of the coordinated improvement projects of the Revitalization Plan
- Assists Discover Dublin with event planning
- Administers the new parking program

Key Stakeholders

- Partner with the Borough in implementing the plan
- Support the architectural design standards
- Partner with the Borough with the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan road, through streets and other public improvements

Borough residents

- Provide input on the architectural design studies
- Provide input on the parks and open space elements of the study
- Support the initiatives that will encourage development within the Borough that will increase the tax base, increase the quality of life within the Borough, and help to preserve open space within the surrounding communities

Support agencies

- Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development (DCED)
Lisa Worden, Director
South Eastern Regional Office,
Pennsylvania Elm Street Program
215-560-5830
lisaworden@pa.gov
- PennDOT District 6-0
Francis J. Hanney
Traffic Control Services Manager, ADA Coordinator
610-205-6560
fhanney@pa.gov

Goal 4: An implementable long-term plan to ensure that new development brings the greatest possible benefits to Dublin Borough

An important component of a vision plan is to be sure that it produces a fiscally sustainable local economy and resilient community. Creating a plan that protects local assets and enhances quality of life does not happen overnight; it takes a long-term commitment to collaboration, energetic mobilization, and dedication of resources and time to make it a success. In addition, efforts and decisions should be monitored to ensure that they move the vision forward and that they are effective in doing what they are supposed to be doing.

Chapter 3: Management Action Plan



The following management action plan presents recommended tasks and a timing matrix to help prioritize resources—whether they require public or private support. Action items are drawn from the assessment and visioning goals in this Vision Plan. Many of them also reflect recommendations that were made in the *Comprehensive Plan* of 2005.

Actions have been grouped into major categories, identified according to lead or support agencies/groups, and further grouped into a timeline.

Management Action Plan

| Task | Highest priority | Lead (L) / Support (S) | | | | | Timing | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------|---------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | | Dublin Borough | Discover Dublin | BCPC | PennDOT | Stakeholders | 1-2 years | 2-4 years | 5-6 years | 7-8 years | 9-10 years |
| 1. Planning | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Adopt Revitalization and Visioning Plan as component to Comprehensive Plan | * | L | | S | | | ● | | | | |
| 1.2 Initiate a marketing and fiscal impact study | | * | L | S | | | | ● | | | |
| 1.3 Initiate a parking study: on-street parking, public parking | * | L | S | | | | ● | | | | |
| 1.4 Adopt a demolition ordinance | * | L | | | | | ● | | | | |
| 1.5 Create historic district and HARB | * | L | | | | S | ● | | | | |
| 1.6 Create historic district design guidelines | * | L | | | | S | ● | | | | |
| 1.7 Zoning Ordinance: adopt a form-based code | * | L | | S | | S | ● | | | | |
| 1.8 Subdivision and Land Development: adopt new design standards | * | L | | S | | | ● | | | | |
| 1.9 Work with surrounding townships to develop transfer of development rights (TDR) program | * | S | | L | | S | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 1.10 Update wastewater Act 537 plan | | | * | L | | S | | | ● | | |
| 2. Administration | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Hire a part-time Main Street Manager | * | L | S | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 2.2 Develop administration to implement projects | | L | | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 2.3 Develop administration to manage public parking | | L | | | | | | | ● | ● | ● |
| 3. Transportation | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 Amend Official Map to include new Comprehensive Plan Road and Through Streets | | * | L | | | | | ● | | | |
| 3.1 Install gateway traffic calming | * | L | | S | S | | | ● | ● | ● | |
| 3.3 Install new cross walks | * | L | S | S | S | | ● | ● | ● | | |
| 3.4 Phase 1: reconfigure Main Street/ Historic Area | | L | | S | S | S | | ● | | | |
| 3.5 Phase 2: reconfigure Main Street/ Town Center Area | | L | | S | S | S | | ● | ● | ● | ● |

Management Action Plan (cont.)

| Task | Highest priority | Lead (L) / Support (S) | | | | | Timing | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | | Dublin Borough | Discover Dublin | BCPC | PennDOT | Stakeholders | 1-2 years | 2-4 years | 5-6 years | 7-8 years | 9-10 years |
| 3.6 Phase 1: Comprehensive Plan Road | | | L | | | | S | | ● | ● | |
| 3.7 Phase 2: Comprehensive Plan Road | | L | | | | S | | | ● | ● | ● |
| 3.8 Initiate a wayfinding program | | S | L | | S | S | | | ● | | |
| 3.9 Initiate Keystone Marker Program | | S | L | | | S | | | ● | | |
| 3.10 Bucks Beautiful Bulb Program | | S | L | | | S | | | | | ● |
| 3.11 Research options for public transit | | S | S | L | | S | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 4. Economic Development | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Partner with stakeholders to upgrade properties | * | L | S | | | S | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 5. Funding | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 Obtain funding /grants | * | L | S | S | S | | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 5.2 Initiate a facade improvement grant program | * | L | S | | | S | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 5.3 Seek alternative funding mechanisms (BID) etc. | * | L | S | | | S | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 5.4 Set up parking funding/program | * | L | S | | | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| 5.5 Partner with local banks for low-interest loan funds | * | L | S | | | S | | ● | ● | ● | ● |

