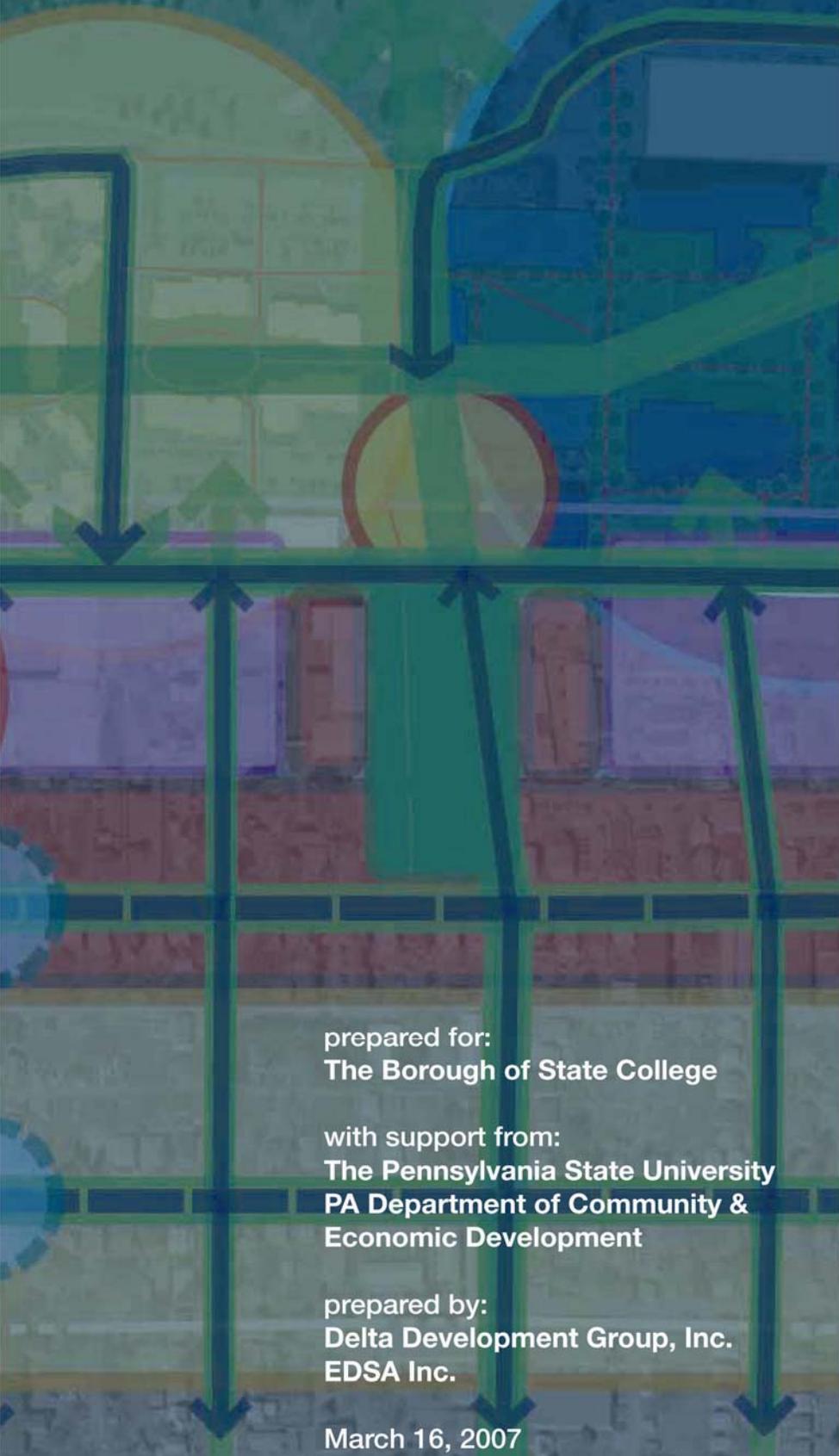




West End

revitalization plan



prepared for:
The Borough of State College

with support from:
**The Pennsylvania State University
PA Department of Community &
Economic Development**

prepared by:
**Delta Development Group, Inc.
EDSA Inc.**

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Executive Summary

Project Overview

The concepts in this revitalization plan were shaped through an extensive collaborative planning process, including input from the original Urban Village Neighborhood Revitalization Plan Steering Committee, property owners, businesses, students and residents, State College Borough staff, and other public agencies. It reflects the common interest to revitalize the Urban Village neighborhood into a vibrant, diverse, community that meets the needs of those who live and work there.

The Urban Village neighborhood encompasses an area in the western portion of State College Borough bounded by North Atherton Street on the east, Ferguson Township on the west, Penn State West Campus on the north, and it is a part of the larger Holmes-Foster neighborhood to the south. When the Urban Village zoning district was established in the early 1990s, the hope was to use the new district to preserve historic buildings in the area, provide a mix of uses, and develop a neighborhood where residents' basic needs would be within walking distance. Since then, the neighborhood has experienced an increase of student-oriented housing and loss of some commercial uses, which have been replaced with housing. The goal of the Urban Village Neighborhood Revitalization Plan project is to enable the Borough to correct the imbalance of development in the Urban Village neighborhood, create a vibrant community that retains the character of the existing neighborhood, and improve the tax base of the Borough through development.

Vision Statement

A vision of this plan evolved by evaluating conditions, and listening to property owners, residents, municipal officials, and other interested community members. A recurring theme expressed throughout the community has been a desire to re-brand the Urban Village to give it a positive, memorable, and recognizable identity that will resonate with residents, businesses, and potential investors. In response to that wish, and to begin that branding, the Urban Village Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is hereafter referred to as the West End Revitalization Plan in this report (abbreviated geographically as West End).

It is important that all stakeholders in the West End Revitalization Plan have a shared vision to guide its implementation. The vision statement responds to the wishes and needs of residents and property owners in the West End. It describes an attractive, mixed-use development that has a unique identity and creates a sense of place where people want to live, work, and play. The vision statement has been a guide for the revitalization concepts in the West End Revitalization Plan.

The revitalized “*West End*” will be a mixed-use community reflecting the interests and serving the needs of those who live and work there. It will be the place where Penn State University and the local community can integrate to create a vibrant, diverse neighborhood of students, families, and retail and professional businesses.

The West End will provide the necessities and pleasures of daily life within walking distance of those who live and work in the area. A beautified streetscape and design, with emphasis on green space and pedestrian and bicycle transportation, will create a sense of place that celebrates the character of this community.

The West End Revitalization Plan is the western gateway to State College, yet is removed from the core downtown district. With a focus on small, locally owned retail businesses that support the existing artistic community, revitalization will complement the downtown by expanding the number and types of experiences available to State College Borough residents and visitors.

Key Goals

Working within the context of the defined revitalization principles, a catalog of key goals for the revitalization of the West End was created. The related challenges and specific implementation actions were established for each of the overarching goals of this Plan. The goals are designed to articulate the key themes that emerged during the planning process, which were subsequently incorporated into the vision for the West End. They reflect input from the Borough, steering committee, key stakeholders, and the public. The plan goals are tools to evaluate development and/or other improvements within the plan area. The plan goals are:

- Improve the visual appearance of the West End to provide a quality setting for residents and businesses.
- Improve the above- and below-ground infrastructure in the West End.
- Provide adequate open space for residents and patrons to enjoy.
- Provide a pedestrian focused, friendly environment.
- Improve vehicular traffic circulation in the West End.
- Improve parking and access management to provide adequate, effective parking.
- Preserve and promote the unique character and historic significance of the West End.
- Diversify housing opportunities to create a well-balanced mix of owner-occupied and rental units for all age and income groups.
- Increase neighborhood-scale retail and commercial activities to meet the needs of West End residents.
- Encourage optimal revitalization of sites within the West End to ensure highest and best uses are realized.
- Create a seamless, cohesive urban environment that integrates with the Penn State West Campus and Ferguson Township’s commercial corridor.

- Create a unique and positive identity of the West End.
- Establish leadership and commitment necessary for the implementation of the Revitalization Plan

The following outlines the 15 challenges and 40 actions identified to achieve the key goals of the plan.

West End Revitalization Plan Implementation Matrix

IMPROVING THE WEST END'S VISUAL APPEARANCE	
CHALLENGE 1	The West End has not seen significant public infrastructure investment in over three decades, making it very tired looking and difficult to market.
Goal 1	To update and enhance the West End's infrastructure, utilities and public realm amenities to create a marketable image, stimulate private investment and provide a quality setting for residents and businesses.
Action 1A	Redefine the West End's and Borough Center's gateway image.
Action 1B	Redefine the walkway, bikeway and streetscape hierarchy throughout the West End.
IMPROVING THE WEST END'S INFRASTRUCTURE	
CHALLENGE 2	Equally important to streetscape beautification initiatives are the above and below ground utility/infrastructure upgrades that are typically required to foster revitalization in older neighborhoods like the West End.
Goal 2	To improve the West End Neighborhood's above and below ground infrastructure.
Action 2A	Focus infrastructure and utility upgrades in areas of highest revitalization potential.

PROVIDING ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE FOR THE WEST END	
CHALLENGE 3	The West End is void of any significant centralized park, plaza or open space resources for residents and patrons to enjoy.
Goal 3	To create a series of new park and open space amenities that promote environmental preservation in the West End, with linkages to surrounding public open spaces in the Holmes-Foster/Highland Neighborhood and Penn State’s West Campus.
Action 3A	Create a new “Community Quadrangle” park commons north of College Avenue.
Action 3B	Encourage additional West End private property pocket parks.
PROVIDING A PEDESTRIAN-FOCUSED AND -FRIENDLY WEST END ENVIRONMENT	
CHALLENGE 4	The West End is largely dominated by auto and truck oriented roadway systems with little attention given to the quality of the pedestrian, transit rider or cyclist experience throughout the district.
Goal 4	To redefine and enhance the street and walkway system hierarchy to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and movement throughout the West End.
Action 4A	Conduct a traffic calming study of the West End area to substantiate needed traffic calming improvements.
Action 4B	Introduce Route 26 one-way loop, traffic-calming measures for safer pedestrian street crossings in the West End.
Action 4C	Improve north-south pedestrian and bike linkages between the West End and West Campus.
Action 4D	Establish a West Campus Drive pedestrian and bike trail linking the Central Campus with the West End, West Campus, and golf course trails to the west.

IMPROVING THE WEST END'S VEHICULAR TRAFFIC CIRCULATION	
CHALLENGE 5	On-Street vehicular circulation for the blocks north of College Avenue is confusing and difficult to navigate due to dead end configurations. Also, many of the internal block alley systems are congested by disorganized private parking.
Goal 5	To improve traffic circulation through the Village by providing more choices for access and encouraging a dispersed approach to traffic and parking in the West End.
Action 5A	Remove the remnant portions of Railroad Avenue between North Barnard Street and North Sparks Street.
Action 5B	Extend West Campus Drive to the east to link with North Gill and North Barnard Streets.
IMPROVING THE WEST END'S PARKING AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT	
CHALLENGE 6	Parking poses one of the greatest challenges to the West End's revitalization effort and therefore, must be better managed and enforced to achieve the desired outcomes for the plan. The current parking situation is not properly managed and creates extreme inefficiencies for long-term parking and does not provide adequate short-term/high turnover usage for business owners.
Goal 6	To implement a more effective parking and access management program for the West End and encourage on- and off-street parking strategies that support a vibrant, neighborhood-based mix of retail, service and residential uses.
Action 6A	Institute an overall parking and access management strategy for the West End.

PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WEST END	
CHALLENGE 7	The West End has a unique, eclectic character that is gradually being lost to inappropriate changes in building materials, construction techniques, space conversions, demolition and economical, yet bland, architectural design. The evidence and appreciation for the neighborhood's heritage and history is diminishing to a point where immediate intervention must occur to protect what remains.
Goal 7	To celebrate West End's cultural and architectural heritage through conservation and/or preservation and sensitive adaptive reuse of contributing structures to the Holmes-Foster/Highland Historic District and railway heritage of the area.
Action 7A	Establish a required development/design guidelines process and compatibility review process for the district's historic structures and new construction.
Action 7B	Relocate historic structures to designated sites in the West End.
Action 7C	Preserve, adapt and re-use contributing structures to the Holmes-Foster/Highland Historic District in the West End, while encouraging new business locations that meet neighborhood needs.

DIVERSIFYING THE WEST END'S HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES	
CHALLENGE 8	The West End has gradually become a homogeneous, renter population that is continuing to spread into and displace owner-occupied homes and families in the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood to the south.
Goal 8	To create a well-balanced mix of owner-occupied and rental housing units for all age and income types.
Action 8A	Reinforce single-family home ownership on Beaver Avenue and the side streets between College Avenue and Beaver Avenue.
Action 8B	Encourage live-work residential infill along College and Beaver Avenues.
Action 8C	Encourage workforce-oriented housing to be developed on underutilized sites that are not currently used for rental income.
INCREASING NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE, RETAIL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES	
CHALLENGE 9	The need to promote and foster retail commercial activities that serve the local area and have minimal impact on surrounding residential uses and existing Downtown State College businesses is necessary to diversify the local tax base and provide the essential mix of uses that support a true sense of place for West End residents.
Goal 9	To encourage sensitive commercial growth along College Avenue and limited professional office growth along Beaver Avenue.
Action 9A	Retain and build upon current commercial establishments by attracting new businesses.

ENCOURAGING OPTIMAL REVITALIZATION OF SITES WITHIN THE WEST END	
CHALLENGE 10	There are a handful of small vacant lots or underutilized parking sites in the West End that could be better utilized as immediate short-term revitalization sites for infill commercial, mixed-use or residential use.
Goal 10	To promote the revitalization of abandoned, underutilized and environmentally damaged properties.
Action 10A	Focus sensitive scaled infill development on currently vacant sites.
Action 10B	Encourage future higher density, mixed-use revitalization of the eastern gateway sites.
Action 10C	Encourage institutional and mixed-use revitalization of the block defined by Barnard Street, West Campus Drive, Atherton Street and College Avenue.
Action 10D	Encourage owner occupied workforce housing infill development on the block defined by Gill Street.
Action 10E	Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment revitalization and owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Sparks Street, West Campus Drive, Gill Street and College Avenue.
Action 10F	Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment revitalization and infill owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Sparks Street and College Avenue.
Action 10G	Encourage apartment revitalization and owner occupied workforce housing infill on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street and College Avenue.
Action 10H	Encourage commercial building revitalization and woodshop infill on the block defined by Butz Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street and College Avenue.

CREATING A SEAMLESS, COHESIVE URBAN ENVIRONMENT	
CHALLENGE 11	Historically, the West End, Penn State's West Campus, and Ferguson Township have developed in a manner where each has backed onto the other with little attention given to blending and linking the three areas together.
Goal 11	To better integrate the West End's environs with Penn State University's West Campus and Ferguson Township's highway commercial corridor, to create a seamless, cohesive urban environment that benefits all.
Action 11A	Implement the Corl Street extension to the proposed future West Campus parking structure.
Action 11B	Consider a new transit/transfer station and a north-south transit linkage between West Campus and the West End with future West Campus development.
Action 11C	Consider infill of additional West Campus graduate student residential buildings.
Action 11D	Pursue West College Avenue streetscape and gateway improvements with PennDOT.
Action 11E	Conduct a West College Avenue corridor revitalization study in Ferguson Township.

CREATING A COHESIVE IDENTITY – A NEW BRAND – FOR THE WEST END	
CHALLENGE 12	The West End must be rebranded from its current image as a dull and unattractive community to achieve a new identity as a genuine mixed use, urban destination and livable community.
Goal 12	To establish a positive identity of the West End in the minds of the residents, the broader community, and potential investors by establishing its uniqueness, creating a market need and opportunities for new homeowners and businesses alike.
Action 12A	Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for the West End to promote and advertise the community.
Action 12B	Develop a West End logo to establish an identity and promote the new district name.
Action 12C	Develop and install street light banners, gateway entry and way finding signs.
IMPLEMENT THE DESIRED FUTURE LAND USE PATTERN THROUGH NEW REGULATIONS	
CHALLENGE 13	The West End's past and current zoning has created a unique and ever-changing pattern of industrial, commercial and residential uses, and much uncertainty for property owners and developers.
Goal 13	To codify the vision established in the West End Revitalization Plan.
Action 13A	Create a new comprehensive zoning district code and development guidelines to support the preferred land use pattern and foster the revitalization opportunities depicted in the West End Revitalization Plan.

STRENGTHEN PROPERTY CODE MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT	
CHALLENGE 14	The West End's high proportion of rental properties poses significant challenges for property owners and code enforcement officers with respect to compliance with existing codes and regulations.
Goal 14	To promote orderly community development and improve economic vitality of the West End by improving its aesthetic appearance, health and safety.
Action 14A	Strengthen code monitoring and enforcement of all properties to ensure equal and fair compliance for all State College Borough residents.
ESTABLISH THE LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	
CHALLENGE 15	The Redevelopment Authority has the potential to direct the resources and energies necessary to achieve successful implementation of the revitalization strategy.
Goal 15	To provide the leadership necessary to implement and maintain the West End Revitalization Plan.
Action 15A	Capitalize the Redevelopment Authority.
Action 15B	Consider the financial and staffing requirements for operating the Redevelopment Authority.
Action 15C	Declare the West End as a revitalization area so as to require revitalization to occur under the provisions and authorities of the Urban Revitalization Law.

Introduction

Background and Purpose

The “Urban Village Zoning District” was created in 1991 from land previously zoned Industrial (M), Residential-Office (R-O) and R-3 Residential. The purpose of creating this particular zoning district was to: encourage development that would reuse existing buildings; foster residential and non-residential uses; apply design guidelines to maintain neighborhood scale; and to improve pedestrian and traffic safety. The goal was to foster a pattern of land use and development reminiscent of a traditional village. Since that time, only modest development has occurred, predominantly renovation of older buildings to be utilized as student-oriented rental housing.

The purpose of the West End Revitalization Plan is to develop a master plan for the revitalization of the designated Urban Village district through a process of consensus building among key stakeholders. This includes residents, businesses, students, and property owners in and near the West End. Development of the Plan evolved from an earlier market assessment feasibility study completed in late 2005.

In December 2004, the Borough of State College retained the services of Economic Research Associates (ERA) to complete a market feasibility study as the initial step in the Revitalization Plan. The ERA study was compiled in late 2005 and established a framework for revitalization based on their findings. The study identified the following core attributes of the West End as key considerations for future development.

West End Key Attributes

- Renovate historically relevant housing, fronting along West College Avenue, for mixed-use activities.
- Strengthen home ownership in existing residential areas south of West College Avenue.
- Change the mix of uses and focus on Railroad Avenue, re-positioning it as the West End’s “front door” with West Campus, creating a primary pedestrian link between the West End and Penn State’s West Campus.
- Build off existing neighborhood anchors, such as O.W. Houts and Penn State’s West Campus.
- Consider higher mixed-use densities between Atherton and Barnard, anchoring the eastern edge of the West End.
- Strengthen home ownership in existing residential areas south of West College Avenue.
- Consider higher density residential development in Ferguson Township, along West College Avenue to Corl Street, extending the existing residential neighborhood from Buckhout Street to Corl Street.

In the fall of 2006, the Borough of State College retained the services of the Delta/EDSA team to develop a West End Revitalization Plan. To ensure the plan is based on consensus from the community, the Borough Council appointed 16 stakeholder representatives to serve on the West End Revitalization Plan Steering Committee. The ability of the Steering Committee to bring a broad range of opinions was instrumental in the successful development of the Plan. A list of Steering Committee members is provided in the Acknowledgements section. The charge to the Steering Committee was to:

- Serve as a resource for ideas and approaches.
- Provide direction to the consultants.
- Review material prepared by the consultants.
- Provide input on proposed strategies and actions.
- Participate in the public input process.
- Provide updates to Council.
- Recommend priorities for the Revitalization Plan.
- Review and comment on the final plan and advise Council of the Steering Committee's recommendations.

The Steering Committee met four times during the planning process to carry out the charge from the Borough Council. The project was introduced to the group at an initial kick-off meeting on November 6, 2006. Subsequent Steering Committee meetings were held on November 14 and December 14, 2006, and on March 21, 2007. At each of these meetings, the consultant team presented concepts and reported on the comments gathered at public input meetings and in stakeholder meetings. The Steering Committee was instrumental to validate information for the consultant team and to work toward Plan consensus.

Three public meetings were held throughout the process to present information, garner public input into the process, and build consensus on the final plan.

The first public meeting was held on November 13, 2006 at the Borough of State College Building. The consultant team presented an overview of the existing conditions and initial impressions of the neighborhood, while the 39 participants were asked to discuss the opportunities and challenges they perceived.

The second public meeting was held on December 13, 2006 at the Unity Church, located in the heart of the West End. The consultant team presented a conceptual plan to 83 attendees who identified where residential, commercial, green space and linkages to Penn State's West Campus may occur. Meeting participants communicated their "likes" and "dislikes," which ultimately were integrated into the preferred plan.

A third public meeting was again held at the Unity Church on March 22, 2007. The West End Revitalization Draft Plan was presented to 60 attendees. The presentation was followed by a question and comment discussion about the plan.

A number of properties were identified as catalysts to carry the plan to implementation. The consultant team had additional meetings with eleven property owners to engage them in the process and gain their consensus for the plan.

History of the West End

Located in Centre County, Pennsylvania, the Borough of State College has a population of 38,500 and is the largest Home Rule municipality in the Commonwealth. Home of The Pennsylvania State University, two-thirds of the Borough's residents are students. The Borough and the University enjoy a historical collaborative working relationship on town-and-gown issues.

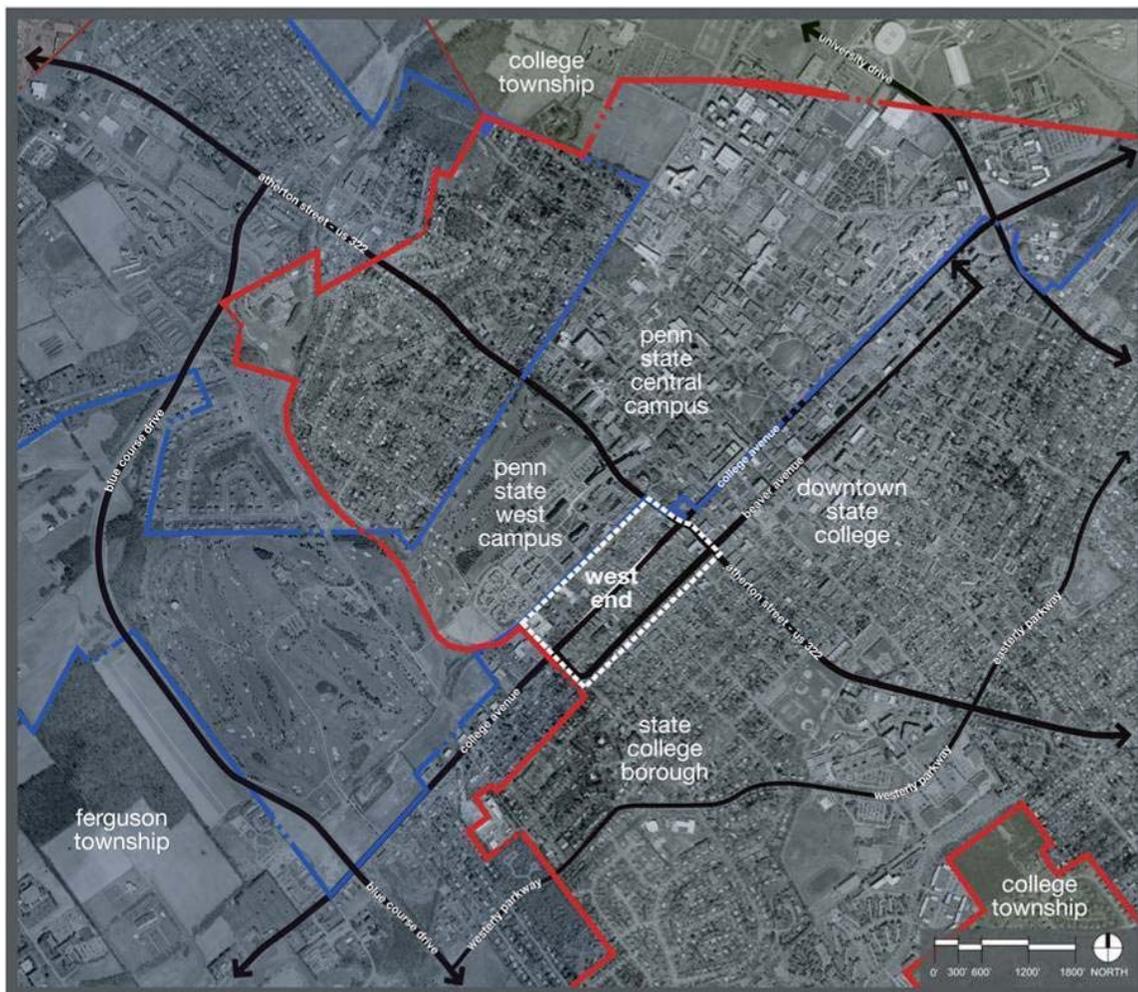
The Urban Village (UV) zoning district is located in western Borough of State College, containing approximately 37 acres. The UV is bisected by West College Avenue (PA Rt. 26). It is bounded to the north by the West Campus of Penn State University; to the south by State College Borough land zoned moderate to low-density residential uses; to the west by commercially zoned land in Ferguson Township; and to the east by downtown State College.

These lands were some of the earliest to be developed within the Borough limits, due in part to the close proximity to the downtown, university, and the Bellefonte Central Railroad. Dubbed the "West End," this urban village neighborhood contains some of the older buildings in the Borough, dating to the early 20th Century. The predominant land use in the neighborhood is multi-family residential, primarily occupied by Penn State students. Several of the older buildings, especially those located along West College Avenue, were originally built as rooming houses for Penn State students. They have remained as student housing. Many other residential buildings have been converted to apartments from dwellings formerly used as lower-density residential dwellings.

West End District Context

The West End district is centrally located within the Centre Region community and is surrounded by a variety of dynamic neighborhoods and campuses, all of which influence the character and function of the “urban village.”

Figure 1
West End Study Area Regional Context



These surrounding communities include:

Downtown State College - Functioning as the hub of the Centre Region, downtown provides a vibrant mix of shopping and dining, cultural attractions, and student oriented uses.



Allen Street Grill



Downtown Shopping



College Avenue

Penn State Central Campus - This historic center of Penn State's main campus functions as the major activity center for students. A wide variety of campus buildings are located here, including numerous academic buildings, West Halls, Old Main, and Pattee Library.



Old Main



Pattee Library



West Halls

Penn State West Campus - Linked by a pedestrian bridge via the IST Building, the West Campus area is anticipated to absorb much of the university's expansion and growth. Several academic buildings and the university's graduate housing are now located here.



Leonhard Building



IST Building



Graduate Housing

Holmes Foster Neighborhood and Historic District - This neighborhood is composed of a wide variety of historic buildings, most of which are single-family homes. The community centers around the Holmes-Foster Park and is located on a rising hill south of the West End.



Single-Family Residence



Holmes-Foster Park



Historic Vernacular

Ferguson Township - There are a variety of uses located along College Avenue on the Southwestern edge of the West End, including a small residential neighborhood, small professional offices, small retail/service establishments, O.W. Houts and more.



O.W. Houts



Retail along College Avenue



Single-Family Residences

The West End is also strategically located along several of the Centre Region's primary transportation routes and is well-linked to the surrounding community. Primary transportation routes within the area and surrounding communities include:

U.S. Route 322- Atherton Street - As the major north/south transportation link running through State College, Atherton Street functions as the primary gateway into downtown. The roadway has a predominantly four-lane road section and currently caters more to vehicles than pedestrians.

PA Route 26- College Avenue/Beaver Avenue - College Avenue and Beaver Avenue function as a pair of one-way roads that funnel traffic through downtown. Each roadway has two dedicated lanes of traffic, with some off-peak/on-street parking located along portions of Beaver Avenue. College Avenue traffic has no stops within the West End, which allows traffic to flow freely and sometimes at undesirable speeds. Beaver Avenue traffic is stopped at the signaled intersection with Sparks Street, but the wider road section still lends to traffic flowing at higher speeds as well.

Blue Course Drive - Blue Course Drive functions as a “bypass” between downtown State College and areas along North Atherton Street, which include several new retail complexes and student-oriented apartment communities.



U.S. 322/Atherton Street



PA Route 26/College Avenue



PA Route 26/Beaver Avenue

Analysis

ERA Market Assessment – Retail and Residential Overview

In fall of 2005, Economics Research Associates (ERA) conducted a market assessment of retail and housing demand in the State College area, with specific emphasis on the West End.

Following is a summary of ERA's study findings.

- Housing
 - Centre County is growing three times faster than the rest of Pennsylvania, clearly indicating a demand for additional housing.
 - The core suburban product currently under construction is single family housing.
 - The retiree/boomer age segments represent a potential market opportunity in the region; consideration should be given to introducing a greater variety of housing ownership product in the market.
 - Significant levels of new multi-family housing units in the region raise concerns of a saturated market.
 - With a student population that is not growing, the new multi-family units could place competitive pressures on older multi-family rentals, limiting the ability to raise rental rates.
- Retail
 - 85 percent of the population within walking distance of the West End is students, making the population base too seasonal to be a daily driver of retail demand.
 - Retail development in the West End should hinge on other development elements such as:
 - pedestrian linkages with West Campus
 - diversification of the resident base
 - ability to package public transportation services in the revitalization plan
 - retail development in the West End should be neighborhood focused (serving day-to-day needs), with emphasis on cafes, restaurants, and similar options
 - retail component in the West End must be concentrated to gain economies of scale.

Supplemental Market Assessment

Residential

As reflected in the ERA study, the population in the Centre Region is growing faster than other areas of the state. Housing will be a key factor in managing and accommodating future growth. According to projections obtained from ESRI, over the next five years, the population within a five-mile radius of the West End is expected to increase by over 6,000 residents; some 1,800

additional housing units will be needed to support the population growth, according to ESRI projections.

The median household income in Centre County in 2000 was \$36,165. Assuming the average household would spend 30 percent of its income for housing, using current interest rates, half of the households in Centre County would not be able to afford to buy a home for over \$150,000, with 35 percent able to afford \$100,000 or less. Listings for State College real estate revealed only eight percent of homes for sale were \$150,000 or less; only one percent were \$100,000 or less.

Retail

To further assess the retail market in the West End, Delta assessed additional market factors related to the market with the following observations.

- Largest “clusters” of retail are in Nittany Mall Area and on North Atherton, with around 1.1 million square feet of retail in each area.
- Approximately 453,500 square feet of retail in downtown.
- 69% of retail space in the Nittany Mall Area is devoted to general merchandise and apparel, compared to 39% in the North Atherton area.
- 35% of downtown retail space is devoted to restaurants/bars, with another 35% devoted to general merchandise and apparel.
- The existing square footage of retail in the State College Region (Downtown, SC Boro, Mall area, North & South Atherton, and portions of adjacent Twps.) compared to residential sales potential in the Study Area (5-Townships plus SC Boro) indicates that the current retail establishments are capturing consumer spending beyond the Study Area from a combination of the student population, other areas in the Centre Region, and from visitors to the area.
- Considering the “clusters” of retail establishments (as described in the ERA Study) as competitive retail areas, the resident (non-student) population within walking distance of the UV and within the Boro could support an additional 252,700 square feet of retail. The proposed retail for the UV would need to capture at least 12% of that market. Adding students to the same area would increase the additional square footage supported to 434,800, and the required market share to around 7%.
- According to ESRI BIS Retail Goods and Services Report for households within a 3-mile radius of the West End, consumer spending strengths compared to national averages include:
 - Apparel products and services (dry cleaning, tailoring, etc.)
 - Computer hardware, software & accessories
 - Admissions to movies, theater, opera, ballet etc.
 - Audio & video DVDs
 - Rental & repair of TV/Sound equipment

- Video game hardware & software
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Moving, storage & freight express
- School books & supplies
- A significant amount of “Entertainment” dollars are leaking outside the area based on sales and consumer spending estimates.
- The attractiveness of retail in the West End to residents outside the immediate area will depend largely on the mix of establishments and the uniqueness of the products/services offered that will set it apart from existing downtown retail.
- Providing convenient pedestrian/vehicular linkages from the West End to downtown can make unique West End retail complementary to, rather than competitive with downtown retail.

**Table 1
Retail Mix in Centre Region – Square Feet**

Type	Borough	Downtown	Nittany Mall Area	North Atherton	Other Twp.	South Atherton	UV/Twp	Total
Grocery/Pharmacy	59,750	44,171	191,121	305,049	13,551	60,188	20,707	694,537
Restaurant/Bar	11,122	160,459	37,789	164,328	16,271	23,852	3,948	417,769
Retail - Appliances/Electronics		2,998		64,995				67,993
Retail - Entertainment	4,000	17,000	51,322	19,672				91,994
Retail - General Merch/Apparel	127,875	158,457	760,837	438,152		77,020		1,562,341
Retail - Home Furnishings/Home Imp.		6,300	25,174	88,468		9,841	15,000	144,783
Retail - Other		25,688		4,260	2,960	176,268	2,421	211,597
Services - Cleaners		1,600						1,600
Services - Financial		6,250						6,250
Vacant		18,070	41,749	35,000			885	95,704
Services - Personal		6,284						6,284
Services - Other		4,464						4,464
Services - Business		1,757						1,757
Total	202,747	453,498	1,107,992	1,119,924	32,782	347,169	42,961	3,307,073

Table 2
Retail Mix in Centre Region – % of Total

Type	Borough	Downtown	Nittany Mall Area	North Atherton	Other Twp.	South Atherton	UV/Twp	Total
Grocery/Pharmacy	29.47%	9.74%	17.25%	27.24%	41.34%	17.34%	48.20%	21.00%
Restaurant/Bar	5.49%	35.38%	3.41%	14.67%	49.63%	6.87%	9.19%	12.63%
Retail - Appliances/Electronics	0.00%	0.66%	0.00%	5.80%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.06%
Retail - Entertainment	1.97%	3.75%	4.63%	1.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.78%
Retail - General Merch/Apparel	63.07%	34.94%	68.67%	39.12%	0.00%	22.19%	0.00%	47.24%
Retail - Home Furnishings/Home Imp.	0.00%	1.39%	2.27%	7.90%	0.00%	2.83%	34.92%	4.38%
Retail - Other	0.00%	5.66%	0.00%	0.38%	9.03%	50.77%	5.64%	6.40%
Services - Cleaners	0.00%	0.35%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%
Services - Financial	0.00%	1.38%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%
Vacant	0.00%	3.98%	3.77%	3.13%	0.00%	0.00%	2.06%	2.89%
Services - Personal	0.00%	1.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.19%
Services - Other	0.00%	0.98%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.13%
Services - Business	0.00%	0.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

**Table 3
Estimated Retail Square Footage Supported (Excludes Service Retail) – Residents (Non-Student)
(2010 Projected)**

	Walking Distance	State College Boro	Ferguson Twp	Four Townships	Total SF Supported	Total SF Inventory – State College Region	Surplus/ (Leakage)	Boro & Walking Distance Supported	Downtown SF Inventory	Surplus/ (Leakage)
Grocery/Pharmacy	5,118	130,510	158,604	295,772	590,003	694,537	104,534	135,628	44,171	(91,457)
Restaurant/Bar	3,777	96,309	117,041	218,263	435,389	417,769	(17,620)	100,086	160,459	60,373
Retail - Appliances/Electronics	3,460	88,229	107,221	199,951	398,862	67,993	(330,869)	91,689	2,998	(88,691)
Retail - Entertainment	3,999	101,983	123,936	231,121	461,038	91,994	(369,044)	105,981	17,000	(88,981)
Retail - General Merch/Apparel	4,829	123,160	149,672	279,114	556,776	1,562,341	1,005,565	127,989	158,457	30,468
Retail - Home Furnishings/Home Imp.	1,640	41,823	50,825	94,781	189,069	144,783	(44,286)	43,463	6,300	(37,163)
Retail - Other	2,375	60,574	73,614	137,278	273,842	211,597	(62,245)	62,950	25,688	(37,262)
Total	25,197	642,588	780,912	1,456,280	2,904,978	3,191,014	286,036	667,785	415,073	(252,712)

Table 4
Estimated Retail Square Footage Supported (Excludes Service Retail) – Residents and Students
(2010 Projected)

	Walking Distance	State College Boro	Ferguson Twp	Four Townships	Total	Total SF Inventory – State College Region	Surplus/ (Leakage)	Boro & Walking Distance Supported	Downtown SF	Surplus/ Leakage
Grocery/Pharmacy	13,424	172,808	167,013	313,728	666,972	694,537	27,565	186,232	44,171	(142,061)
Restaurant/Bar	12,114	143,641	125,481	236,656	517,893	417,769	(100,124)	155,756	160,459	4,703
Retail - Appliances/Electronics	4,460	94,945	108,234	202,236	409,875	67,993	(341,882)	99,405	2,998	(96,407)
Retail - Entertainment	6,237	119,579	126,202	236,429	488,447	91,994	(396,453)	125,816	17,000	(108,816)
Retail - General Merch/Apparel	8,982	155,670	153,876	288,951	607,478	1,562,341	954,863	164,652	158,457	(6,195)
Retail - Home Furnishings/Home Imp.	2,307	46,300	51,500	96,305	196,411	144,783	(51,628)	48,607	6,300	(42,307)
Retail - Other	3,134	66,301	74,382	139,060	282,878	211,597	(71,281)	69,436	25,688	(43,748)
Total	50,659	799,243	806,688	1,513,364	3,169,954	3,191,014	21,060	849,902	415,073	(434,829)

Note: Square footage estimates are based on ERA's projected 2010 resident spending, and sales per square foot estimates for neighborhood retail from the International Council of Shopping Center's *Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers: 2006* (adjusted to 2010 dollars).

Market Observations and Recommendations

Demand statistics in the Centre Region indicate a relatively strong market for housing, however, the cost of housing in and around Borough of State College makes owning a home out of reach for the average worker. Anecdotally, Delta heard that many young families are moving further away from the Borough to afford a home.

With many of the homes in the West End converted to student housing, the area is currently not conducive to homeowners. In addition, statistics show that retail in the West End is subject to the transient nature of the student population and could be risky. Further complicating the retail market is the location of the West End adjacent to downtown State College; the concern is that retail in the West End should not compete with downtown retail.

Looking at these factors individually presents a challenging picture of the market. However, Delta believes an integrated approach to revitalization could be successful and provide a solution that could benefit all stakeholders.

To support retail in the West End, more families and homeowners need to be attracted to the area to provide a more seasonably stable market. In today's society, three key elements attract residents to live in a community: accessibility, image, a "sense of place". The West End has many assets and opportunities that if properly aligned, could distinguish it from other neighborhoods and create an attractive ambiance to homeowners and students alike. Based on ERA's findings, Delta's supplemental research and public input, following are key observations and recommendations for ways to best capture the housing and commercial markets in the West End.

1. *Image* – Beautification of the West End area is key to making it attractive to new residents and retail consumers. Strategically located "gateways" to the West End area should be inviting to both residents and visitors. "Branding" the neighborhood is also key to successful revitalization. Consideration should be given to a name for the West End that reflects the character and image to be projected to the potential market.
2. *Sense of Place* – The West End will be more attractive from a market standpoint if the revitalization is planned to create a "sense of place." A key theme observed through the public input process was the idea of providing more open and green space within the neighborhood. The central location of open space could serve as a community "gathering place" and the hub of neighborhood activity. The availability of WIFI in the neighborhood, especially in activity hubs, will add to its attractiveness.
3. *Accessibility* – While the West End is conveniently located adjacent to the West Campus of Penn State and to downtown State College, concerns were raised about its pedestrian and vehicular connections to the surrounding area. Revitalization should provide for pedestrian-friendly access from both the downtown and the Penn State campus. A pedestrian-friendly transportation network within the West End will make it more attractive to potential new

residents. A transit stop centrally located in the West End could provide additional accessibility and be the central focus of a community “gathering place” atmosphere. A pedestrian-oriented neighborhood with a central transit stop can also reduce dependence on automobiles and provide relief for traffic congestion and parking.

4. *Residential Development* – The current residential configuration in the West End is not conducive to options for single-family home ownership, as many of the single-family homes have been converted to student housing. The addition of higher density student housing in the areas adjacent to Penn State’s West Campus could allow some of the homes converted to student housing to be re-converted to single-family homes. However, with the high value of student rental property in the neighborhood, incentives would need to be considered to make conversion economically viable for property owners. The mix of housing options in the neighborhood should be diverse, with consideration given to affordable housing for the average Centre County resident.
5. *Retail Development* – Retail development in the West End should be clustered to maximize marketability and should be limited to neighborhood and/or convenience or service retail. Typical neighborhood and convenience retail includes establishments such as food stores, restaurants, drug stores, dry cleaners, hair/nail salons, daycare centers, etc. Currently, O.W. Houts serves as an anchor retail store on the western portion of the neighborhood and provides a wide variety of food items, hardware, and furniture. Façade improvements could increase the “curb appeal” of the establishment and re-establish it as a neighborhood retail anchor.

Additional retail could be centered around the recommended central “gathering place.” Delta frequently heard from residents during the interview process that a few ethnic restaurants in the area would also draw residents from surrounding neighborhoods. Regular neighborhood events, such as outdoor concerts, could be held in the central gathering area to increase foot traffic and increase retail marketability. This would require either a new or existing entity, such as the Holmes Foster neighborhood organization, to take responsibility for organizing events. Including the Holmes Foster neighborhood group and student representatives in this responsibility could increase participation and serve as a catalyst to draw residents together and help create a true “sense of place.”

6. *Commercial Development* – Commercial offices, such as professional offices, is not as dependent on clustering as retail development. Existing structures within the neighborhood could lend to infill locations. One viable clustering option for commercial development would be live/work housing. For instance, commercial space could be occupied on the ground floor or a building, with the business owner’s residence on the upper floors. This option could be targeted to professionals who need office space. Also, clustering live/work businesses, such as artistic studios, could present an attractive market.

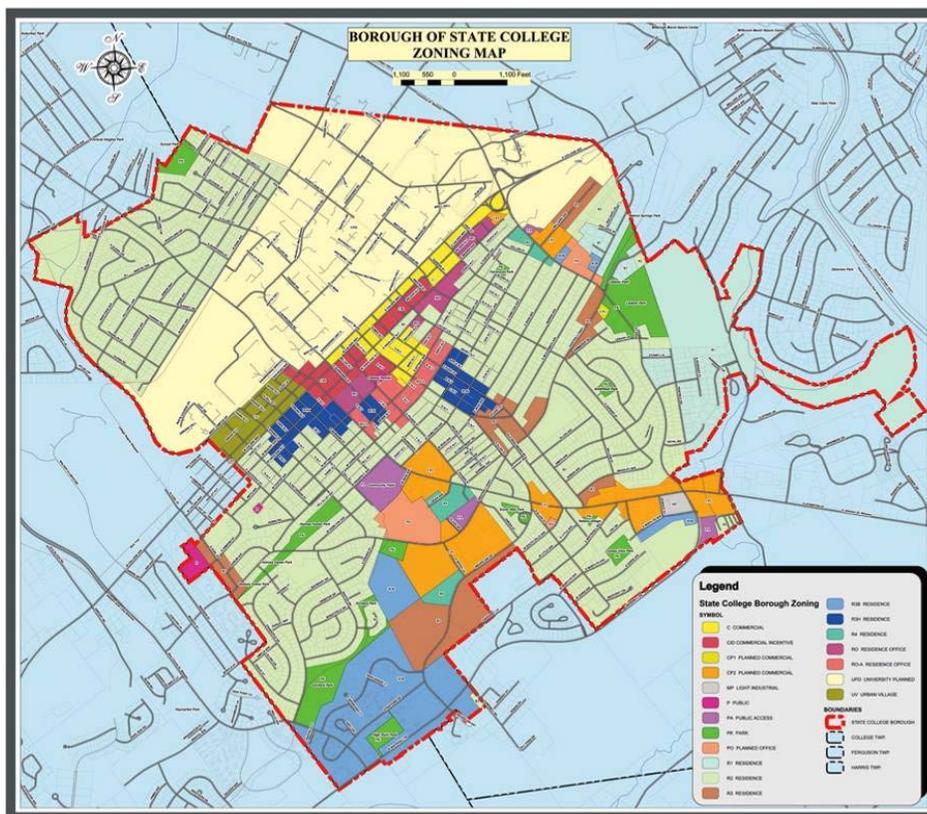
7. *Gateway Commercial* – Commercial development could be a good transition and “gateway” from downtown State College to the West End neighborhood at the intersection of Atherton and West College Avenue. New commercial buildings at the western corners of the intersection could include a hotel or commercial office space. A hotel could create additional foot traffic to both downtown businesses and to West End retail establishments if pedestrian linkages are created. Commercial office at this intersection could include medical, professional, or research and development offices.

8. *Parking* – One of the key themes heard repeatedly in the public input sessions was the issue of the lack of parking. While walking to events and establishments within the neighborhood should be encouraged in the design, the success of retail in the West End, could hinge on parking near the central gathering area, especially considering the seasonal nature of its student resident base. Consideration should be given to maximizing parking availability in the area with potential “shared” parking in nearby parking garages/lots.

Urban Village Study Area Land Use and Zoning Context

As illustrated in Figure 2, the West End study area encompasses four zoning districts: Urban Village (UV), Commercial District (CD), R3H Residence District, and R2 Residence District.

**Figure 2
Existing Zoning Map for Borough of State College**



Urban Village (UV) District

The UV zoning district is located on the west end of Borough of State College and encompasses approximately 37 acres. The district is bisected by West College Avenue (PA Route 26) and is bounded to the north by the Pennsylvania State University's West Campus; to the south by lands in the Borough zoned for moderate to low-density residential uses; to the west by highway commercially zoned lands in Ferguson Township; and to the east by downtown State College.

The UV zoning district contains some of the oldest buildings in the Borough, many of which date to the early 1900s. As such, a significant portion of the UV district is included in the Holmes-Foster/ Highlands National Register Historic District, as illustrated in Figure 2. The predominant land use is multi-family residential, primarily occupied by Penn State students. Many of these uses are contained in buildings that have been converted from single-family (low density) to multiple family dwellings (high density). Recent changes to the UV have allowed a wide range of commercial uses along West College Avenue, but to-date these changes have not spawned any new commercial development.

The UV district was created in 1991 from land previously zoned Industrial (M), Residential-Office (R-O), and R-3 Residential. The purpose of the UV zoning district is to facilitate traditional neighborhood development, as defined in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. As such, private owners and developers are encouraged to:

- Preserve and reuse existing buildings, many of which exemplify periods of the early development of State College.
- Provide a mix of moderate-density residential, commercial, and office uses.
- Undertake new construction that maintains the essential character of its surrounding environment, as expressed in the *Design Guidelines for Historic Properties and Historic Districts*.
- Provide a pedestrian environment that is both pleasing and safe.
- Limit vehicular access to developments on arterial streets to minimize the impact on traffic safety.

The northern half of the West End was zoned industrial, because it bordered the railroad that served town and campus. Lumber and coal yards were located along this rail corridor. Also located here were food and beverage warehouses and distributors, oil storage and distribution facilities, and small scale industrial uses, such as metal fabrication, building contract shops, and mining equipment. Over the years, buildings in the West End district have been adapted to a wide variety of other uses, including scientific research and development, vehicle sales and repair, groceries, restaurants, retail services, and housing, particularly rental housing for Penn State students.

Convenience uses were the primary emphasis for the types of uses encouraged to locate in the West End. These included groceries, drugstores, eating and drinking establishments, and personal and business services. The goals were to foster an area of State college where the pattern of land use and development was reminiscent of a traditional “urban village” that:

- contained a variety of housing types, densities, and tenancy;
- contained a wide enough mix of uses, so the majority of needed goods and services would be within walking distance;
- provided the majority of needed goods and services of residents of the West End and surrounding streets, students, and employees at Penn State’s West Campus;
- maintained the scale of the existing built environment.

Only a modest amount of new development has occurred in this section of State College since the enactment of the West End district, the majority which has been new housing. There has been more activity in the area related to the conversion of nonresidential buildings to residential uses that are primarily, if not exclusively, for student rental housing. Although the intended outcome for the West End zoning was to develop a strong neighborhood commercial component, it has not come to fruition. One positive outcome of the widespread reuse trend has been the overall maintenance of the neighborhood.

Commercial District (CD)

Only a small portion of State College Borough’s entire Commercial District extends into the project study area. This portion of the CD zoning is bound on the north by Railroad Avenue, to the west by Coal Alley, to the south by Highland Alley, and to the east by Atherton Street.

The purpose of CD zoning is to promote pedestrian-oriented retail sales and services. The CD zoning defines the core commercial activity area of downtown State College. The intensity of pedestrian-oriented retail uses changes dramatically from East College Avenue to West College Avenue. This change in pedestrian-oriented retail use activity is defined by Atherton Street, which is a high volume (28,000 AADT) vehicular traffic carrier and as such, greatly inhibits pedestrian movement beyond East College Avenue at the Atherton/West College intersection.

R2 Residence District

A limited portion of the R2 Residence District is included in the study area. This portion is bound to the west by highway commercially zoned lands in Ferguson Township; to the south by Highland Alley, to the east by the R3H Residence District; and to the north by Calder Way. The development density is medium, with roughly .23 dwelling units per acre. The uses are predominantly residential, interspersed with residences that have been converted to personal service use businesses. This portion of the R2 District includes a significant number of buildings that contribute to the Holmes-Foster/Highlands National Register Historic District.

R3H Residence District

A portion of the R-3 District included in the project study area is bounded to the north by Calder Way; to the west by South Sparks Street; to the south by Highland Alley; and to the east by Coal Alley. The purpose of the R-3H zoning district to:

- Provide a density transition between higher-density and lower-density zoning districts.
- Facilitate the preservation and reuse of buildings that are contributing structures to a National Register Historic District.
- Provide opportunities for non-residential uses that are compatible with the surrounding residential environment.
- Encourage investment opportunities consistent with maintaining or enhancing the character of the neighborhood.

The R-3 District includes a significant number of buildings that contribute to the Holmes-Foster/Highlands National Register Historic District.

Stakeholder Interviews

Statistical analysis can provide key benchmarks to guide decisions on the revitalization of the West End. However, it is equally important to understand public knowledge, experience, and perceptions, and capture the innovative ideas of local community members. Public support of any Revitalization Plan is critical to its success. Public input facilitation engenders community process partnership, and creates opportunity for consensus building and strong public support.

Delta's public input process was conducted on two levels. We conducted three public meetings with 125 local residents. We conducted individual interviews and focus groups with 63 key stakeholders. The following key themes consistently emerged.

- Beautification
 - West End gateways
 - Streetscape improvements
 - Building façades
 - Green space
- Traffic
 - Pedestrian friendly UV environment
 - Pedestrian and bike linkages
 - Traffic improvements
 - Traffic calming
 - Crosswalks
 - Signalization

- Atherton St. crossing is difficult
- College – Beaver intersection at Corl St.
- Railroad Ave. is under-utilized
- Development
 - Strengthen neighborhood character
 - Need buy-in from property owners
 - PSU West Campus master plan
- Housing Needs
 - Student housing
 - Owner-occupied
 - Workforce housing
- Policy
 - Zoning and code enforcement
 - Design guidelines
 - Parking requirements
 - Higher density build-out
 - Business friendly policies
 - Planned development
- Financial Considerations
 - Rental properties are profitable
 - Development incentives
 - Public/private partnerships
- Retail Market
 - Serve neighborhood residents' needs
 - Complementary to downtown - not competitive
 - Accessible location
 - O.W. Houts an anchor on western portion of the area
- Market branding
 - Create new identity
 - Create a sense of place
- Student Impact
 - Economic driver
 - Noise/litter

Public Meetings

A public input meeting was held at the State College Municipal Building on November 13, 2006 with 39 participants from the local community in attendance. The meeting was facilitated to obtain feedback from participants who answered the following questions:

1. Why should the West End be revitalized?
2. What characteristics do you identify with the West End?
3. What do you see as the potential catalysts and obstacles to revitalizing the West End?
4. What are the most important trends occurring in the State College area, especially those that impact downtown commercial establishments?
5. What opportunities do these development trends present to the West End?
6. What is your vision of a revitalized West End?
7. On what top three issues would you like to see the revitalization strategy focus?

Following are the key responses to these questions from the public input meeting.

1. Why should the West End be revitalized?
 - better use of the area's resources – more potential than currently being used
 - to imbalance of users to residents
 - to preserve and protect the family areas
 - to build upon successes
 - owner-occupied homes as anchors instead of businesses
 - to retain local business focus
 - beautiful buildings are rotting away
 - tax base for the Borough
 - need for physical connection neighborhood to campus
 - parking is haphazard
 - creation of greenspace and correcting storm water problems
 - lack of planned revitalization – need to avoid haphazard infill
 - could help to define vision for the Borough and property owners
 - to create a sense of place.

2. What characteristics do you identify with the West End?
 - O. W. Houts Store and history of the community
 - Many nice properties and owners who care about their appearance and impact
 - Many alleys – maybe too many alleys operating as private parking lots
 - Disconnected from the downtown – people won't flow across Atherton
 - Evening social hour dangerous crossing with Atherton
 - Urban Village is party central - people return to East Borough intoxicated
 - Borough Center/Urban Village commercial is moving out of the area
 - Urban Village name doesn't represent the areas locale or character
 - Diverse area with walkable business cluster – better proportion of students (for sanity sake).

3. What do you see as the potential catalysts and obstacles to revitalizing the West End?
 - Obstacles
 - strict building codes = high cost
 - other uses can't match-up with rental cash flow
 - maintenance/beautification issues
 - occupancy limitation – “One less parking stall than bedrooms”
 - existing parking is used for storage
 - lack of owner occupied residences
 - lack of transportation connections with West Campus
 - Patterson intersections at Beaver and College Avenues – tough visibility
 - more keg parties and male residents in older rental properties - policing the area is more difficult
 - alley along West Campus is an ugly walkway connection
 - need to spread, rather than cluster students and possibly integrate with empty nester residential infill
 - need to make new buildings with as much character as old – its not a net gain to have a “box” with additional amenities.
 - Catalysts
 - proximity to downtown and campus
 - abandoned railroad – could be trail or pedestrian mall
 - new neo-traditional village is proposed behind Rider Auto
 - O. W. Houts reinforcement and/or revitalization?
 - university plans could be catalyst or obstacle, unknown?
 - maintain no vehicular access on Sparks Street to campus, but pursue bike and pedestrian linkages

- potential partnership groups in the Borough could make revitalization deals that serve as catalysts
 - simple fix-up of houses could be character catalyst
 - incentives for property owners of old apartment houses to provide amenities and building enhancements
4. What are the most important trends occurring in the State College area, especially those that impact downtown commercial establishments?
- National retailers versus local owners – try not to bring in “chain commercial” – encourage local business pioneers
 - Student focused housing is expanding
 - New parking garage is under-used
 - New developments - Circleville Farm and Ferguson Town Center
 - Downtown commercial is being pulled to edges of Borough
 - Fraser Street project and Townhome project is keeping interest in the downtown
 - Downtown has grown for students; residents have gone to the “burbs”
 - Should the “urban village” be its own self-sustaining village with its own community center, or a bedroom village for the broader Borough?
5. What opportunities do these development trends present for the West End?
- People want walkable communities and less reliance on the automobile.
 - Encourage focused alternative transportation corridors that are pedestrian friendly.
 - Develop niche businesses.
 - Create focus areas/nodes of activity
 - Public investment in “flip” properties
 - Faculty housing in the West End
 - Community center
 - Green area, basketball/recreation area
 - Senior housing – condominiums
 - Train station building and Post House building should remain as part of the community
 - Affordable housing vs. attainable housing for university staff – workforce housing is good for tax base
 - Explore business opportunities to capture focused pedestrian/bike flow to campus

6. What is your vision of a revitalized West End?
 - affordable housing vs. attainable housing for university staff – workforce housing is good for tax base
 - need for longer term residents beyond 3-4 year lease, such as retirees or empty-nesters
 - need for better student, resident and business ratios
 - university and neighborhood should front/face one another, rather than turn back on one another, like now
 - restaurants were high on resident and student survey and do better in mass
 - require commercial first floors under new residential development
 - nicer student residential would spark students to care more about buildings

7. On what top three issues would you like to see the revitalization strategy focus?
 - enhanced look/feel of the district
 - stricter code enforcement of properties
 - how to reclaim West Beaver and West College
 - do not let White Course Drive connect with College Avenue
 - pedestrian only spaces – “create a destination”
 - economics, aesthetics, and property owner cooperation
 - reestablishing/resolving gateways
 - basic infrastructure improvements
 - better connections
 - Memorial Park expansion and the new high school parking and traffic impacts to the south
 - need more transit to loop through the West End to get to the east campus

Stakeholder Input

In addition to public meetings, the Delta team interviewed 63 stakeholders to gain insights from key individuals who are closely related to the West End and would be impacted by its revitalization. Stakeholders were asked the same questions that were asked in public meetings. When asked about the top three issues they believed should be the focus of revitalization efforts, the following themes emerged:

- more balance of uses (9 times)
- infrastructure improvement (9 times)
- aesthetic improvements (8 times)
- zoning/ordinance changes (7 times)
- consensus/cooperation (6 times)
- need developer incentives (4 times)

- better connections/gateways (3 times)
- code/ordinance enforcement (3 times)
- need branding (2 times)
- consistent planning (2 times)
- student behavior (2 times)

In addition to the above, the following themes were heard throughout the interview process:

- Housing
 - need more owner occupied housing
 - should preserve the character of the older buildings
 - increased competition in student housing market with new student housing developments in the suburbs
 - new competitive student housing offers more amenities
 - need a mix of housing options that includes workforce housing
 - should include some higher density options
 - need better balance of student vs. single family housing
 - student rentals are profitable - would need incentives or public/private partnerships for property owners to convert to single family units
 - getting buy-in from property owners could be a challenge
 - West End is good location for student housing market due to proximity to PSU campus
 - student housing market in the UV will increase with West Campus Development
 - should consider using traditional neighborhood development concept in revitalization
- Transportation
 - atherton is major "barrier" to pedestrian access to downtown
 - need vehicular and pedestrian connections to both West Campus and East Campus
 - alleys could be used for pedestrian walkways
 - Beaver & Atherton intersection is most dangerous in the Borough
 - minimize vehicular traffic in residential areas
 - encourage focused alternative transportation corridors that are pedestrian friendly
 - need infrastructure upgrades such as stormwater, proper lighting, sidewalks & traffic signals
 - tough visibility at Patterson intersections at Beaver and College Avenues

- Retail
 - not enough residents in the West End to support neighborhood retail
 - retail in the West End should not compete with downtown retail
 - restaurants were most frequently noted as needed business
 - preference is for unique, locally owned restaurants, as opposed to national chains
 - current retail hours in the West End are not convenient for residents
 - restaurant development would require liquor license
- Branding
 - West End needs a "theme" and a new name
 - name "UV" doesn't represent area or character - let the process drive the name
- Parking
 - parking is insufficient and haphazard
 - new parking garage is underutilized
 - perception of no parking is barrier to attracting consumers
- Student Behavior
 - noise and excessive drinking
- Miscellaneous
 - create open space for recreational activities
 - create a "sense of place"

West End Framework Analysis

Before a vision and recommendations for improvements in the West End can be made, it was important for the planning team to understand the opportunities, constraints, and challenges that would influence the revitalization plan. The project team has focused on changing the constraints into opportunities and building on existing assets.

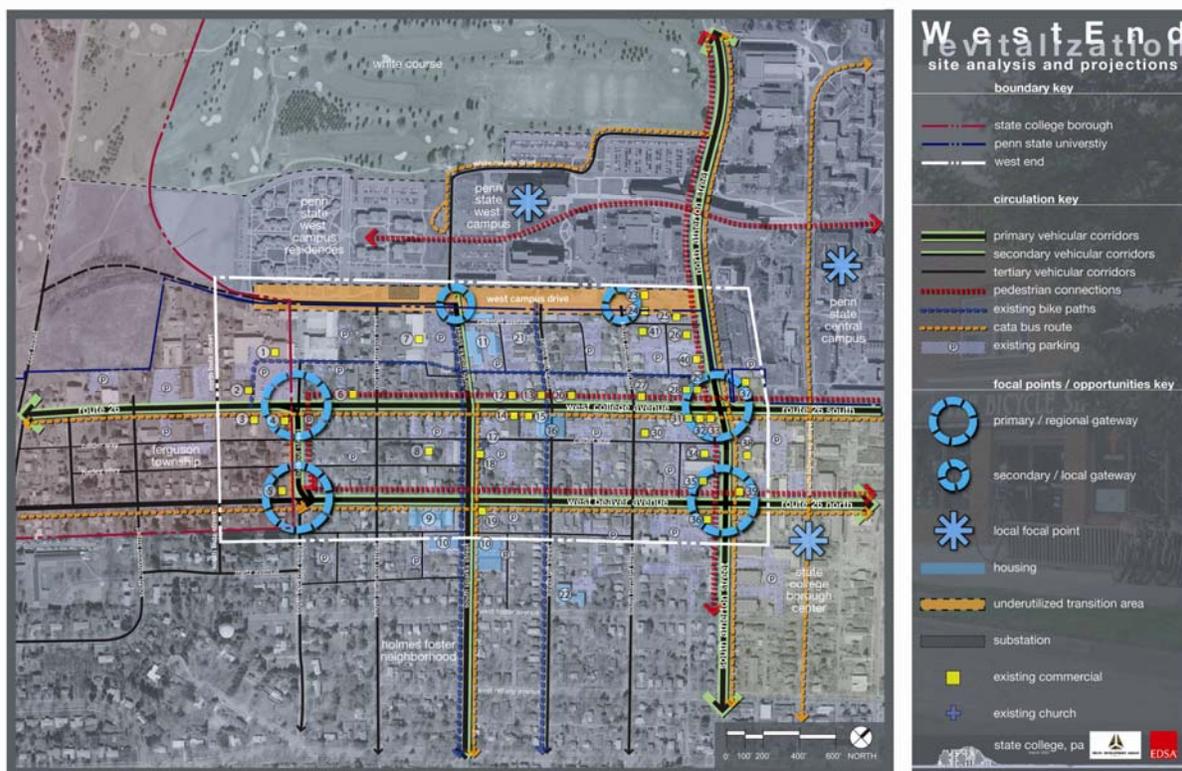
The assets, challenges, and ideas raised in the stakeholder interview and work session process led to some broad conclusions about the West End and the nearby Borough center. This information was supplemented by a thorough analysis of the West End through parcel-by-parcel field reconnaissance and documents research. The team then synthesized the information from the gathering process to produce a summary analysis/framework diagram.

Understanding Existing Conditions in the West End

The existing conditions assessment documents the context within and around the revitalization study area. The diagram identifies the major and minor vehicular routes, commercial and residential land uses, parking resources, green spaces, etc. It also illustrates the location of the following items:

- vacant lands
- new developments
- underutilized properties
- transit routes (CATA)
- parks and recreation attractions
- bicycle routes
- religious centers
- traffic circulation
- key gateway intersections
- historic landmarks
- business attractions
- major apartment complexes

Figure 3
Existing West End Conditions Analysis and Framework Diagram



During the analysis of the West End, the planning team identified several framework elements that play an important role in its revitalization. These elements include:

Gateways - Gateways are important elements in signifying one's arrival to a destination, giving an identity to a particular use or highlighting different districts/neighborhoods within a community. Several potential gateway locations were identified within the study area and include:

- **Atherton Street and College Avenue** – This important intersection functions as a major threshold between the West End, Downtown, and the Penn State Campus. Functioning as the major pedestrian connection between all of these uses, this location lacks a strong identity and sense of arrival to downtown. Current uses here include the Arby's, Citgo/MinitMart, Kinko's, and Student Apartments.
- **Atherton Street and Beaver Avenue** – This strategic intersection functions as the primary gateway into Downtown State College, signaling the entrance/arrival into the Downtown community. This location also lacks a strong identity and sense of arrival into Downtown. Current uses here include BioLife, Alpha Fire Company, Graduate Apartments and Balfurd Cleaners.

- **College Avenue at North Buckout Street** – The existing open lawn and surface parking area located at the intersection where College Avenue and Beaver Avenue become a one-way pair (at North Buckout Street) is an excellent location for a gateway into the Urban Village District and Downtown State College as well.
- **Beaver Avenue at North Buckout Street** – There is an opportunity to highlight the entry into the Urban Village District in the form of both public realm improvements and private revitalization at this noteworthy location.



College Ave/Atherton St. Gateway



Beaver Ave/Atherton St. Gateway



College Ave/Buckout St. Gateway

Street Hierarchy – The West End has a distinct street hierarchy that is broken down into east/west and north/south systems. A clear and efficient street hierarchy is already established within the area, and includes a mix of primary, secondary, and tertiary roads that include the following:

- **Primary Roadways** – Regional and local traffic flows along the one-way pair system of PA Route 26 (College and Beaver Avenues) and U.S. Route 322/Atherton Street.
- **Secondary Roadways** – Several smaller roadways divert and dispense local traffic within the area and primarily run north/south. These roadways include Buckout, Patterson, Sparks, Gill and Barnard Streets. West Campus Drive is currently disconnected from the Core of Penn State’s West Campus and functions as a secondary street/connection to the graduate housing and service areas of the university.
- **Alleys** – Numerous alleyways are located throughout the area and are often used to access shared parking areas for student housing, retail establishments, and secondary roadways.



College Ave. is a Primary Street



Barnhard St. is a Secondary Street



Tertiary Alley Conditions

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Routes – State College, like most college towns, benefits from the use of alternative forms of transportation by students and local residents. Many of these alternative uses are located within the West End and include:

- **Pedestrian Linkages** – Most roadways within the area have existing sidewalks in varying states of repair. Sidewalks along major pedestrian corridors, which include College Avenue, Beaver Avenue, and Atherton Street would benefit from having wider sidewalks in place to handle additional pedestrian volumes. Pedestrian connections between the West End and Penn State’s West Campus are minimal and should be expanded. Several “cow paths” (informal and unpaved connections) have been created by students and residents transversing between the campus and West End. The pedestrian crossings along Atherton Street are not pedestrian friendly and are difficult to cross, which creates a physical barrier between the West End and downtown.
- **Bicycle Linkages** – Several bike routes are designated through the West End and connect to surrounding uses, but are poorly marked and signed. These systems should be highlighted and extended into the West Campus and interconnected with the excellent regional bike system already in place.
- **Transit Routes** – CATA operates several service lines that run through the West End, but with a lack of bus stops, ridership is limited. Service is also encumbered, because it is sometimes faster to walk, as buses must first head away from downtown and the Penn State Main Campus due to the one-way pair system along College and Beaver Avenues. This lengthens ride times.



Existing Sidewalk



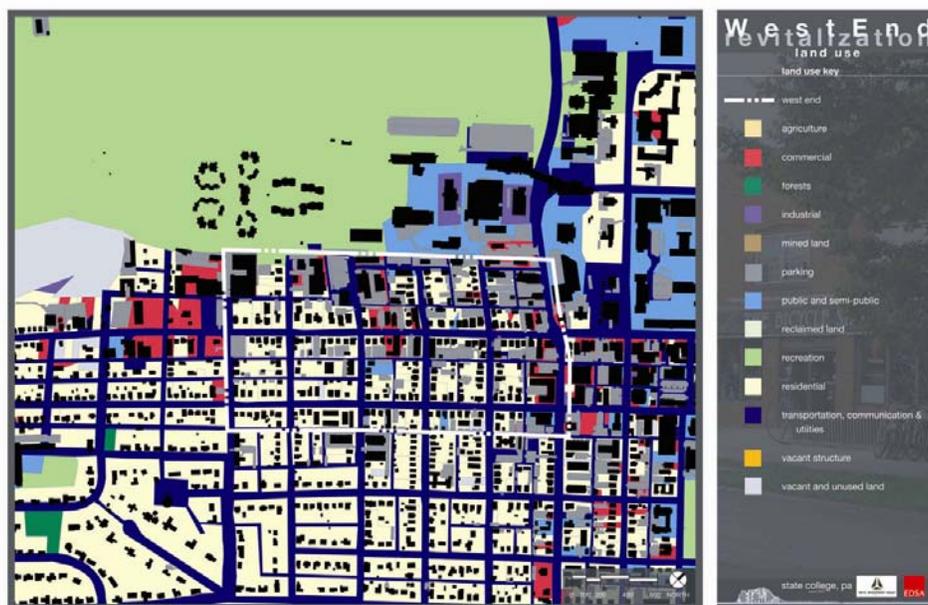
CATA Bus Service



Regional Bike Path

Existing Land Uses – A wide variety of residential, retail, and industrial uses are located throughout the West End. These land uses come together to create a unique character and atmosphere and include:

Figure 4
Existing West End Land Use Conditions



Residential Land Uses

Existing Student Rentals – A majority of the single-family homes within the West End have been converted into rental housing for Penn State students. The condition of these homes varies greatly throughout the area, with some properties in excellent repair and others in need of major renovations and maintenance.

Existing Single-Family Residences – A handful of homes within the West End have remained as single-family residences. These homes tend to be in excellent condition and are widely scattered throughout the study area.

Existing Apartment Complexes – Several apartment complexes are located in the West End. Those located closer to Main Campus are predominantly student-oriented, while those to the south cater to students and residents. Though larger in scale and use than adjacent single-family residences, many of these buildings fit well into their surroundings.



Student Rental Homes



Single-Family Residence



Apartment Building

Commercial Land Uses/Existing Businesses – A variety of existing businesses are scattered throughout the West End, a majority of which are food and service-related. Many of these establishments are located along the College Avenue corridor. A variety of professional offices are also located here and fit very well into the existing character of the neighborhood. O.W. Houts, which is located on the western edge of the study area, historically has been the anchor retailer for much of the surrounding communities. The West End lacks convenience types of retail uses, which could service the large student population and surrounding neighborhoods.



All Seasons Deli



The Bicycle Shop



Accountant's Office

Public/Semi-Public Land Uses / Existing Churches and Establishments – A host of public and semi-public uses are located within the West End and include several churches, the VFW, and American Cancer Society.



American Cancer Society



Holy Trinity Orthodox Church



Unity Church of Jesus Christ

Existing Parking Areas – Numerous parking areas are located in the West End, much of which is haphazard along the alleys between student apartments. Several lots have been converted into surface parking areas, as well. The primary roadways predominantly do not have parking on them, but most of the side streets accommodate on-street parking.



Unorganized Parking along Alleys



Surface Parking on Vacant Lot



On-Street Parking

West End Village Physical Assets and Opportunities to Build Upon

The planning team has identified a series of assets that give the West End a unique identity and sense of place within State College and the Centre Region. The West End is fortunate to have an inventory of physical and historic assets that provide a strong foundation on which the revitalization and revitalization plan can be built. Some of the West End's most prominent assets and opportunities include:

- the potential for enhancing gateways to and from Borough of State College and Ferguson Township
- the ability to build on unique, existing West End district assets
- the close proximity and linkage between the Borough and Ferguson Township
- transit-oriented design and planning
- the potential for public and private investment
- the unique businesses
- the many existing and potential new locations for small businesses
- the walkable scale of the community and linkages to Penn State's West Campus
- the Borough-owned parking site
- Key potential for catalytic project(s), hubs, and linkages.

West End Physical Problems and Constraints to Overcome

Throughout the process, the planning team encountered a number of constraints and obstacles that must be overcome for the revitalization plan to be successful in State College. The issues are not restricted to physical planning problems. There are also program, policy, and fiscal issues in Borough of State College that must be resolved to move forward efficiently and effectively. Some of the issues identified by the planning team include:

- Atherton as a barrier between the West End and Downtown
- student vs. business parking
- lack of home ownership
- lack of property owner interest to change
- history of the UV District zoning changes and limitations

Controlling Issues and Challenges to Address in the West End Revitalization Plan

The planning team believes a number of issues must be addressed to allow the revitalization plan to be implemented in an efficient and effective manner. An overall coordination effort must be undertaken to assure each issue outlined below is considered and appropriately resolved for revitalization to occur. The project team has addressed these items in the preferred revitalization plan.

- roadway access, visibility and overall traffic absorption impacts
- property consolidation and acquisition
- Redevelopment Authority incorporation and action
- market absorption rates for new commercial and residential development
- current infrastructure and utility limitations in the West End
- relocation requirements for residents, businesses and religious institutions impacted by potential revitalization
- limited sending areas for transfer of development rights inside or outside the West End
- scale and density of revitalization projects envisioned by property stakeholders
- projects and plans already underway and improvements already made
- storm drainage and retention limitations
- must demonstrate a return on investment to property owners
- making the West End for all Borough residents to enjoy, not just students
- creating a marketable image/identity for the West End
- sensitively responding to surrounding neighborhoods

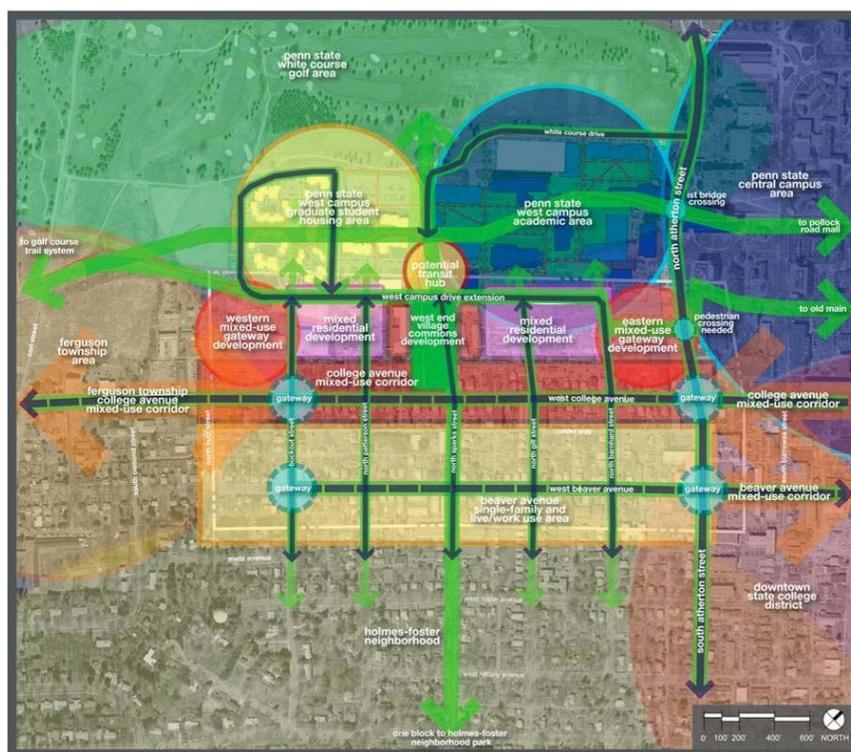
Preliminary Revitalization Concepts

A pair of preliminary revitalization concepts were developed by the planning team early in the planning process to help encourage community participants to think “outside the box” and expand the possibilities for what the West End could become in the future. A short description of the initial thoughts for each of the plans is outlined below. Many of the ideas have been “sifted down” to the preferred plan presented in West End Vision, Challenges, Goals, Supporting Actions section; however, some of the ideas presented below were dismissed as being either impossible, too grand/complicated, or inappropriate for State College Borough. Among them is the introduction of round-a-bouts at Buckhout and College and Beaver Streets. The plans are provided as background to show the process and range of thinking considered for the West End.

Concept Plan A (Figure 5)

Like a water drop falling into a pool of water, Concept Plan A attempts to create a new character and identity for the West End through the implementation of a major and centrally-focused revitalization effort. The “drop of water” is a new linear green that would link College Avenue and Penn State’s West Campus. New revitalization efforts would ripple throughout the West End, creating new waves of activity and energy in the community.

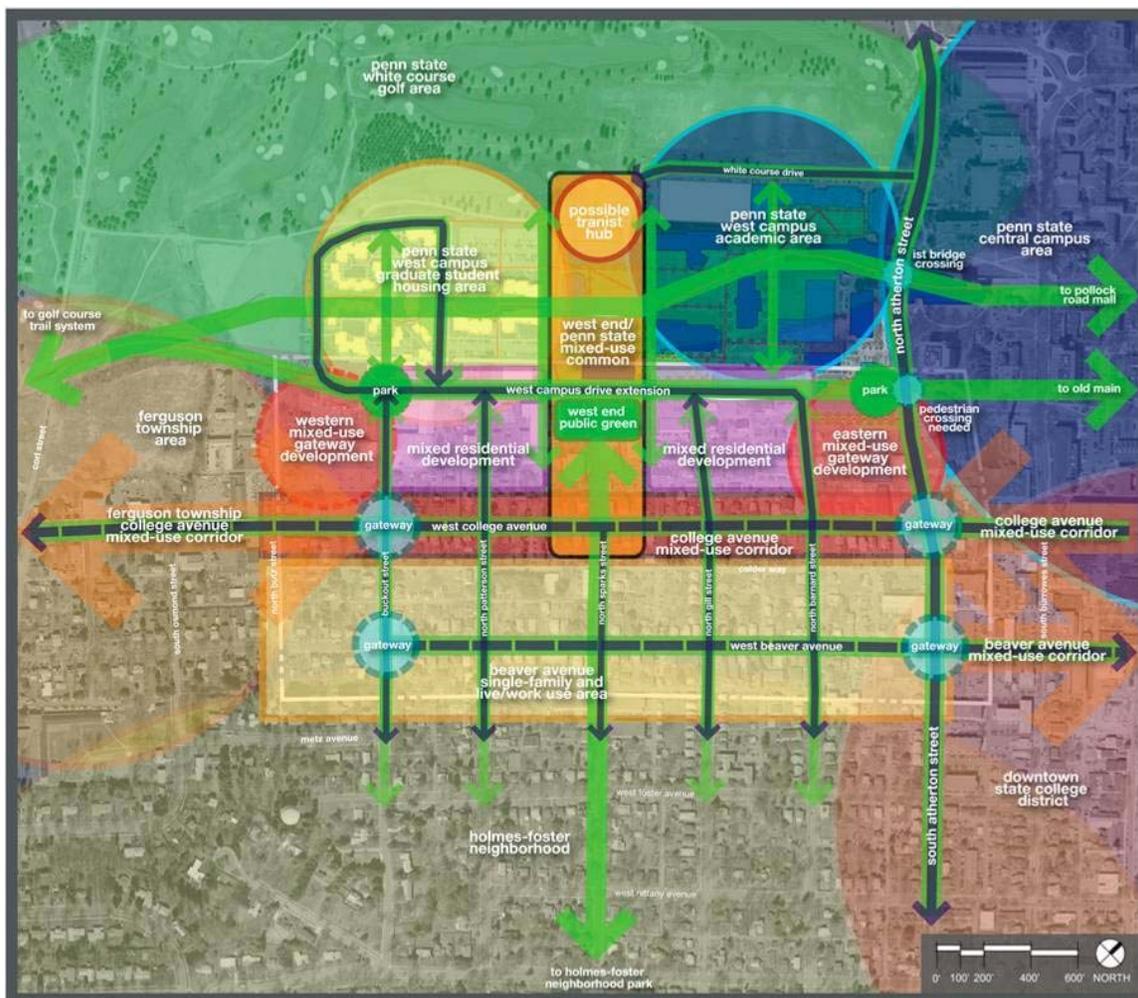
Figure 5
Initial Thoughts Framework Concept A



Concept Plan B (Figure 6)

This second approach focuses on creating a north-south activity and use zone that would “stitch” the West End and Penn State’s West Campus together. This “mixed-use common” would be a location within which community and university amenities and developments would build on one another, creating a vibrant and engaging atmosphere.

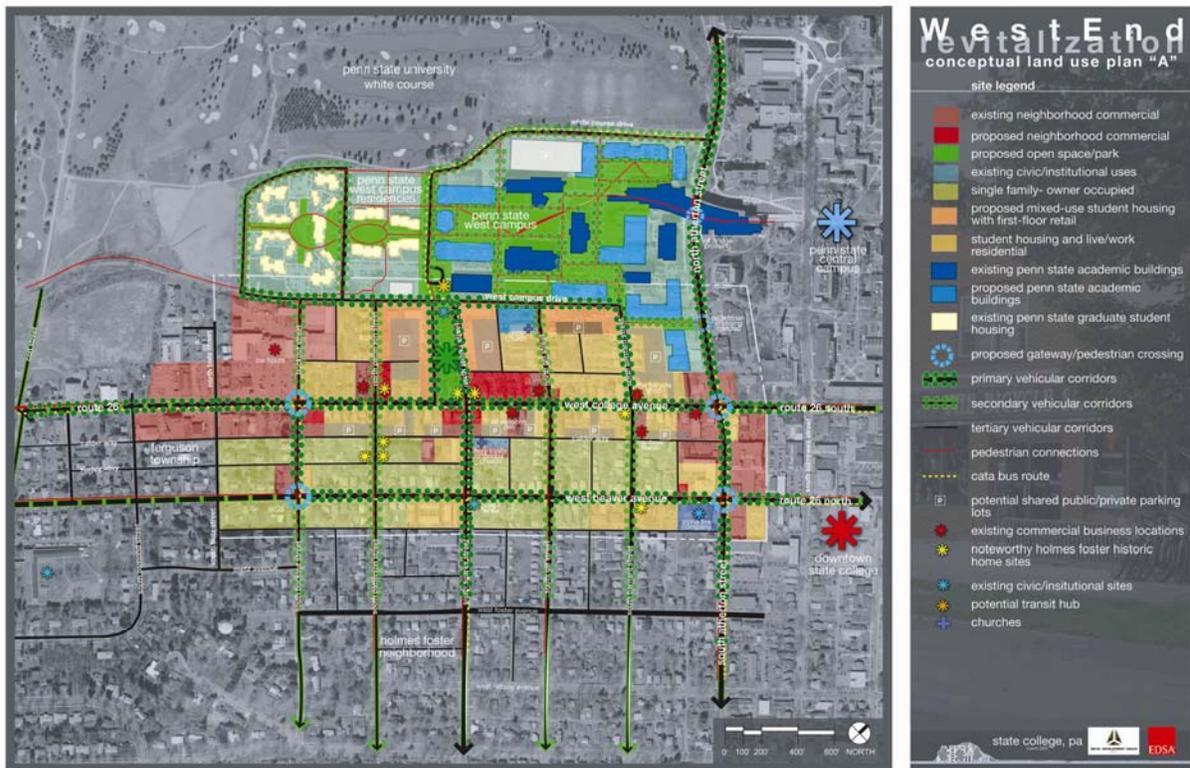
**Figure 6
Initial Thoughts Framework Concept B**



Conceptual Land Use Plans A (Figure 7)

Upon receiving community feedback on the Initial Thoughts Framework Concept Plans, the planning team specifically detailed how the overall vision of Concepts A and B would be accomplished on a property-by-property basis within the West End environs. Through detailed testing and refinement of the Concept Plans, the planning team identified several West End opportunities that could be realized under such difficult and complex land use conditions. Outlined below are the planning elements and opportunities envisioned in the Conceptual Land Use Plan A.

**Figure 7
Conceptual Land Use Plan A**



Land Use

East and West End Mixed-Use Gateways - Revitalization on the eastern and western ends would enable revitalization opportunities to create a new character, identity, and gateways into the study area.

College Avenue Mixed-Use Corridor - This mixed-use corridor would build and expand on the existing character along College Avenue. With great visibility and high pedestrian foot traffic, this location is ideal for new businesses that want to locate in the West End. This concept extends the character and uses found along College Avenue in the Downtown area through the West End.

Mixed Residential Development - A mix of new residential development is well-suited for the area between Penn State's West Campus and College Avenue. Residential uses here could include workforce housing, student apartments, condos, flats, etc.

Beaver Avenue Single-Family and Live/Work Area - Building on the existing qualities of the single-family neighborhoods will be important to strengthen and enhance the West End. Student rentals, when possible and feasible, should be converted back into single-family residences or into live/work units with professional offices. This land use would then allow for a sensitive transition back to the well-established Holmes-Foster neighborhood.

Urban Village Commons - This central green space could potentially link the West Campus with the Urban Village District. New retail and residential development could front onto this new park space, creating an energetic "common" for students and residents.

Penn State West Campus Academic Core - Infill development and expanded programs will continue to be located within the new West Campus. New development should be strategically placed and located to enhance connections between Penn State's West Campus and the West End and Main Campus.

Penn State West Campus Graduate Student Housing Area - The existing graduate housing is well-located. Efforts should be made to enhance connections between it and the West End.

Street Hierarchy

Primary Roadways - Regional and local traffic flows along the one-way pair system of PA Route 26 (College and Beaver Avenues) and U.S. Route 322/Atherton Street will remain as it functions currently.

Secondary Roadways - West Campus Drive may be extended to Barnard Street and all north/south roads in the West End should be extended to intersect this new roadway. This would create enhanced connections between the West End study area and West Campus. White Course Drive would only service West Campus, eliminating potential cut-through traffic between Atherton Street and College Avenue.

Parking - New shared parking areas are proposed in several locations within the West End. These new lots would increase the parking capacity of the area, while creating a more organized and aesthetically pleasing solution to parking needs. These lots would be made available to residents, students, and businesses.

Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Routes***Pedestrian Linkages***

- Improved pedestrian connections between West Campus and the Urban Village District are proposed.
- West Campus Drive would also function as a major East/West pedestrian corridor between the West End and Penn State's Main Campus core.
- Connect pedestrian routes with IST pedestrian movement and future extension of open space trails to the west of West Campus.
- Enhance and improve pedestrian crossing along Atherton Street.

Bicycle Linkages

- West Campus Drive would also function as a major east/west bicycle corridor between the West End and Penn State's Main Campus core.
- Connect proposed bike trail extension to the west of West Campus.

Transit Routes

- A central transit hub location along West Campus Drive could create synergy between the Penn State Main Campus and the West End.
- Locate PSU, local, and regional bus systems in one location that has access to a public parking garage.
- Study bus routes to strategically place new bus stops in the West End to increase ridership and interconnectivity with the surrounding community.

Gateways

Atherton Street and College Avenue - Several parcels on each corner of this gateway have been identified as potential revitalization sites. These can be used to create a new gateway between the West End, Penn State, and Downtown. Improving this major pedestrian crossing will be critical.

Atherton Street and Beaver Avenue - An aesthetic treatment at this gateway location can visually mark the arrival to downtown State College. The treatment should include an enhanced pedestrian crossing.

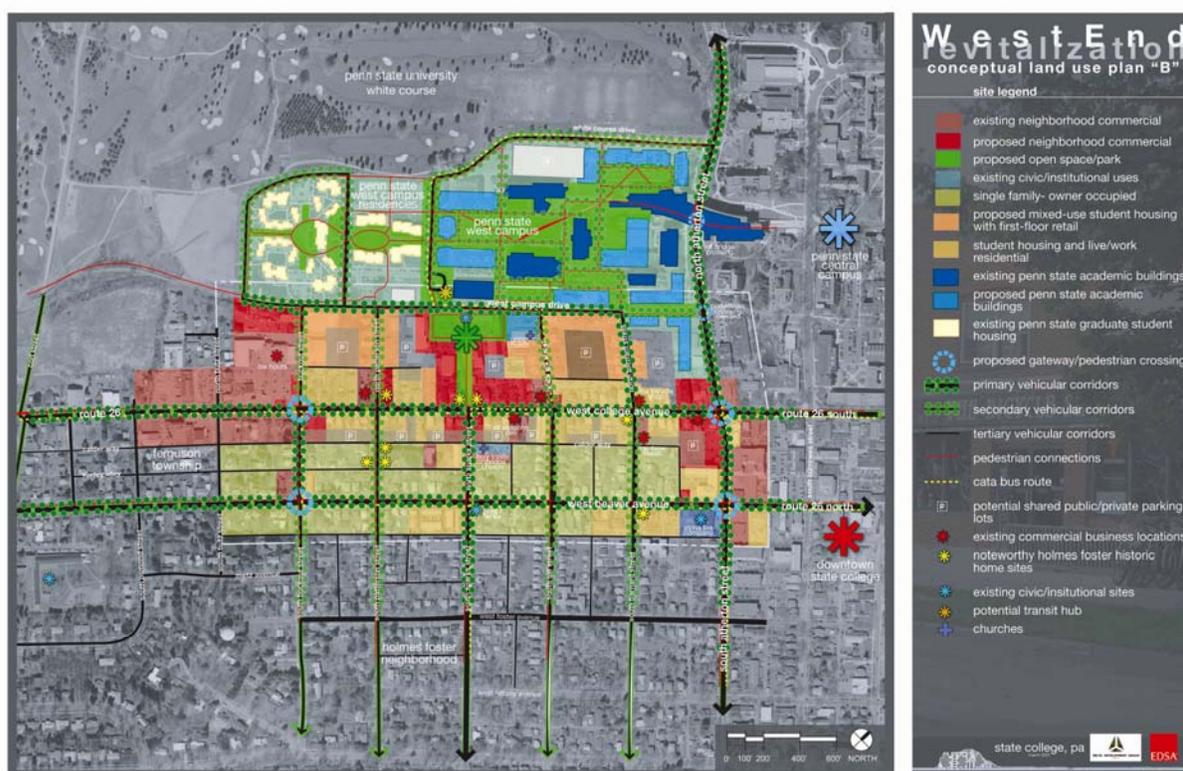
College Avenue at North Buckout Street - The existing open lawn and surface parking area is an excellent location for either infill development or an aesthetic gateway treatment.

Beaver Avenue at North Buckout Street - An aesthetic treatment at this location would help to highlight and celebrate the West End.

Conceptual Land Use Plan B (Figure 8)

Concept B shares many similar opportunities and ideas with Concept A, they are laid out in a slightly different manner, however, the most noteworthy difference between the two concepts was the response to the central portion of the West End Area and the West Campus. Outlined below are the distinctly different planning elements and opportunities illustrated in Conceptual Land Use Plan B.

**Figure 8
Conceptual Land Use Plan B**



Land Use

Urban Village/Penn State Mixed-Use Common - This “Mixed-Use Common” would be a location within which community and university amenities and developments would build on one another, creating a vibrant and engaging atmosphere. A central park space would be fronted by new residential and retail development.

Street Hierarchy

Secondary Roadways - This concept proposes that Sparks Street becomes a linear, pedestrian-only space that would connect the proposed central park space with College Avenue.

Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Routes

Pedestrian Linkages - New parks at the intersections of West Campus Drive at Buckout Street and Barnard Street would create pedestrian gateways into the West End.

Transit Routes - A central transit hub located long West Campus Drive could create synergy between the Penn State Campus and West End. The hub could be located on the northern edge of West Campus along White Course Drive at the proposed parking garage.

West End Vision, Challenges, Goals, Supporting Actions

By evaluating current conditions in the West End and listening to property owners, residents, municipal officials, and other interested members of the community, a vision of the West End's future emerged. It is important all stakeholders in the Revitalization Plan have a shared vision to guide the implementation phase. The vision statement responds to the wishes and needs of the residents and property owners in the West End. It describes an attractive, mixed-use development that has a unique identity and creates a sense of place, where people want to live, work, and play. The vision statement has guided the revitalization concepts in the Revitalization Plan. Following is the vision statement for the West End.



The planning team conducted a group walking tour of the West End to understand and document the existing conditions for later discussion in public meetings.



Public meetings were advertised, e-mailed and posted throughout the West End to get community input.



Public presentations were held to share and receive key opportunities, issues, and ideas for the West End.



Break-out groups were conducted to encourage additional public interaction.



Residents view and provide input on the content of the planning process exhibits illustrated in this report.

The New West End Vision Statement

The revitalized West End will be a mixed-use community, reflecting the interests and serving the needs of those who live and work there. It will be the place where the university and community can integrate to create a vibrant, diverse neighborhood of students, families, retail, and professional businesses.

The West End will provide the necessities and pleasures of daily life within walking distance of those who live and work in the area. A beautified streetscape and design scaled to people with emphasis on green space and pedestrian and bicycle transportation will create a sense of place that celebrates the character of the neighborhood.

The Urban Village is the western gateway to State College and yet is removed from the core downtown district. With a focus on small, locally owned retail businesses and supporting the existing artistic community in the area, development will complement the downtown by expanding the number and type of experiences available to Borough residents and visitors.

Keys to Developing a Successful West End Revitalization Plan

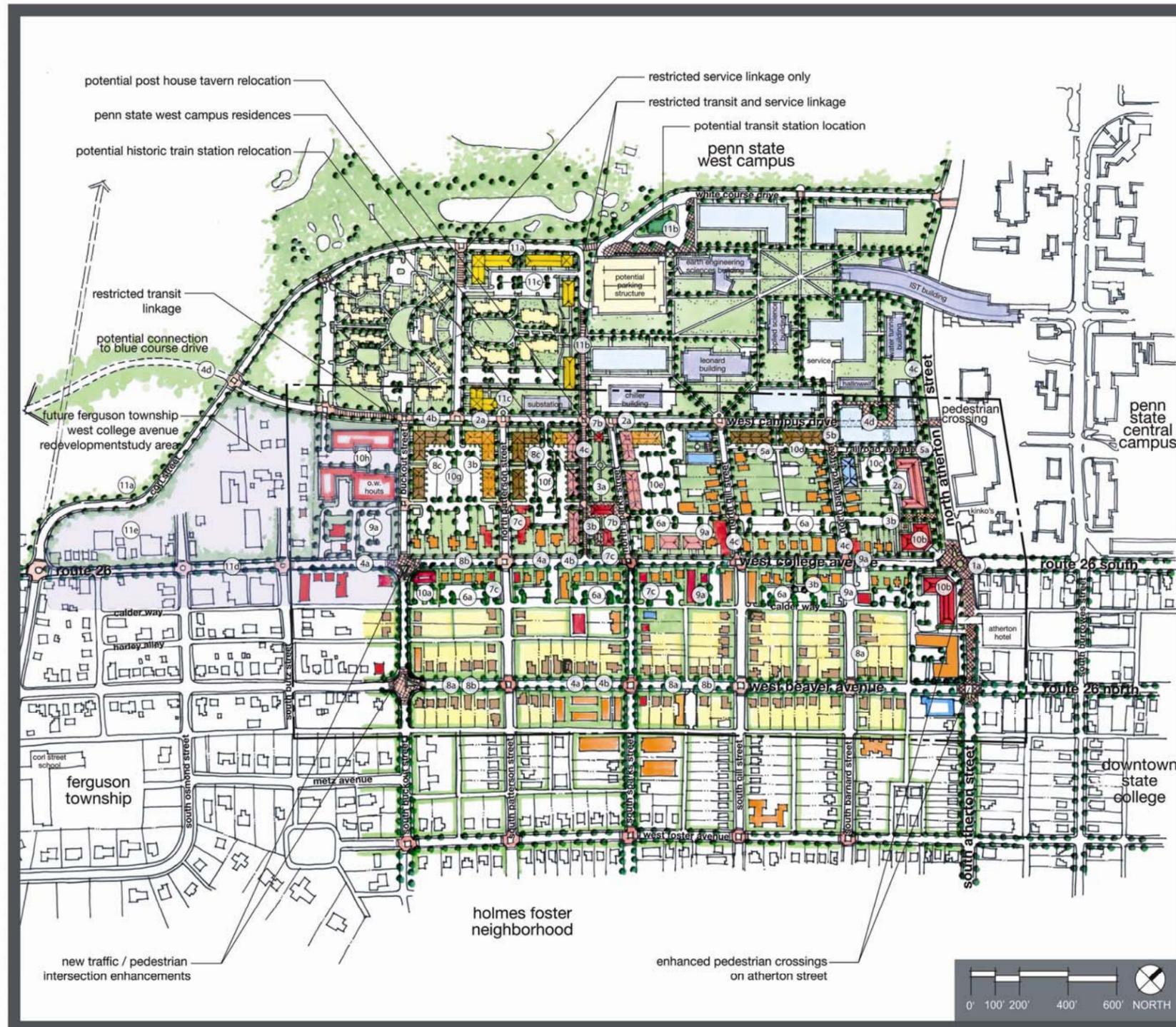
Developing a successful revitalization plan for the West End relies on satisfying a number of community issues and challenges that were raised and addressed during the planning process. In response to the community's identified issues, the following list of guiding principles and expectations were developed for the West End Revitalization Plan process.

- Create a plan that works/fits the situation and is not forced.
- Respect individual property owner and resident wishes.
- Build a plan that responds to the needs of everyone in this study area.
- Attract new and retain existing businesses.
- Broaden the focus from student housing.
- Leverage public investments to spark private investment on key underutilized sites.
- Identify real catalytic project(s), hubs, and linkages.
- Establish a specific vision plan first, then zone for use.
- Re-brand the West End for improved marketability.
- Reinforce the walkable community and linkages to PSU's West Campus.
- Establish shared public and/or private parking strategies.
- Build significant buy-in for the plan.

The proposed Revitalization Plan, supporting goals, and action initiatives presented in the next section have been continually measured against and shaped to conform to these guiding principles. The result is a new action-oriented revitalization plan for the West End that has significant buy-in from the community, the steering Committee, Borough leadership, and key property owners/developers.

The numbers on Figure 9 represent the location of where each of the actions described in the plan will occur.

Figure 9
Action Items Reference Plan



West End revitalization action items reference plan

- 1a Redefine the West End's and Borough Center's gateway image
- 1b Redefine the walkway, bikeway and streetscape hierarchy throughout the West End (Not Mapped)
- 2a Focus infrastructure and utility upgrades in areas of highest redevelopment potential
- 3a Create a new "Community Quadrangle" park commons north of College Avenue
- 3b Encourage additional West End private property pocket parks
- 4a Conduct a traffic calming study of the West End area to substantiate needed traffic calming improvements
- 4b Introduce Route 26 one-way loop, traffic-calming measures for safer pedestrian street crossings in the West End
- 4c Improve north-south pedestrian and bike linkages between the West End and West Campus
- 4d Establish a West Campus Drive pedestrian/bike trail linking the Main Campus with the West End, West Campus and White Course trails to the west
- 5a Remove the remnant portions of Railroad Avenue between North Barnard Street and North Sparks Street
- 5b Extend West Campus Drive to the east to link with North Gill and North Barnard Streets
- 6a Institute an overall parking and access management strategy for the West End
- 7a Establish a required development/design guidelines process and compatibility review process for the district's historic structures and new construction (Not Mapped)
- 7b Relocate threatened historic structures to designated sites in the West End
- 7c Preserve, adapt and re-use contributing structures to the Holmes-Foster Historic District in the West End, while encouraging new business locations that meet neighborhood needs
- 8a Reinforce single-family home ownership on Beaver Avenue and the side streets between College Avenue and Beaver Avenue
- 8b Encourage live-work residential infill along College and Beaver Avenues
- 8c Encourage workforce oriented housing to be developed on underutilized sites that are not currently used for rental income
- 9a Retain and build upon current commercial establishments by attracting new businesses
- 10a Focus sensitive scaled infill development on currently vacant sites
- 10b Encourage future higher density, mixed-use redevelopment of the eastern gateway sites
- 10c Encourage institutional and mixed-use redevelopment of the block defined by Barnard Street, West Campus Drive, Atherton Street and College Avenue
- 10d Encourage owner occupied workforce housing infill development on the block defined by Gill Street, West Campus Drive, Barnard Street and College Avenue
- 10e Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment redevelopment and owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Sparks Street, West Campus Drive, Gill Street and College Avenue
- 10f Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment redevelopment and infill owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Sparks Street and College Avenue
- 10g Encourage apartment redevelopment and owner occupied workforce housing infill on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street and College Avenue
- 10h Encourage commercial building revitalization and woodshop infill on the block defined by Butz Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street and College Avenue
- 11a Implement the Corf Street extension to the proposed future West Campus parking structure
- 11b Consider a new transit/transfer station and a north-south transit linkage between West Campus and the West End with future West Campus development
- 11c Consider infill of additional West Campus graduate student residential buildings
- 11e Pursue West College Avenue streetscape and gateway improvements with PennDOT
- 11d Conduct a West College Avenue corridor redevelopment study in Ferguson Township
- 12a Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for the West End to promote and advertise the community (Not Mapped)
- 12b Develop a West End logo to establish an identity and promote the new district name (Not Mapped)
- 13a Create a new zoning district code and development guidelines to support the preferred land use pattern and foster the redevelopment opportunities depicted in the West End Revitalization Plan (Not Mapped)
- 14a Strengthen code monitoring and enforcement of all properties to ensure equal and fair compliance for all State College Borough residents (Not Mapped)
- 15a Encourage the Redevelopment Authority and the Borough Planning Commission to declare the West End Neighborhood as a redevelopment area (Not Mapped)

state college, pa DELTA DEVELOPMENT GROUP EDSA

Opportunities, Challenges, Responding Goals, and Supporting Initiatives

Several revitalization themes, goals, and specific initiatives for the West End were proposed and formulated into a plan of action, based on the project team's review of background information, field reconnaissance, input from steering committee members, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and work sessions. The most common, overriding theme that arose was that West End should continue as a unique, mixed-use environment for all user groups and which complements the downtown commercial offerings.

Outlined in the pages that follow are a series of 15 West End Revitalization Plan goals established to address the opportunities, issues, and challenges raised by the Steering Committee, property stakeholders, and community participants in the planning process. Each of the goals are supported by a set of actions, design principles or specific projects that should be undertaken to achieve the vision and preferred Revitalization Plan. Through the successful implementation of these action steps, the West End will gain renewed vitality and marketability as a mixed-use neighborhood center that serves the West End, the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood, Penn State's West Campus, and the eastern edge of Ferguson Township.

Improving the West End's Visual Appearance

Challenge 1: The West End Village has not seen significant public infrastructure investment in over three decades, making it very tired looking and difficult to market.

Goal 1: To update and enhance the West End's infrastructure, utilities and public realm amenities to create a marketable image, stimulate private investment, and provide a quality setting for residents and businesses.

Action 1A: Redefine the image of the West End and Borough Center Gateway.

A key theme that arose during the community planning process was the need to focus on redefining the functional and aesthetic image of the Atherton Street corridor, from White Course Drive to Foster Avenue. This corridor serves as the primary gateway from the north and south for the Borough Center, the West End, as well as Penn State's Central and West Campuses. The current perception is that the Atherton Street corridor is a visual and functional barrier between the Borough Center/Central Campus and the West End/West Campus areas.

To begin to correct this issue and unify the two sides of Atherton Street, the following improvement items have been identified:

- Penn State's purchase of the Smith property and subsequent planning, design, and theming for the North Atherton Street frontage is an excellent model to be followed from White Course Drive to College Avenue. The emphasis on a very green, park-like walking environment is a welcome relief to North Atherton's harsh conditions.

- The central portion of Atherton Street, between College Avenue and Beaver Avenue, should be reconstructed to include a number of visual clues indicating that this is primarily a pedestrian/cyclist environment that vehicles are passing through, rather than the vehicles dominated environment pedestrians now pass through. This can be achieved through:
 - The use of durable and aesthetic concrete pavers across the entire street should be used to slow traffic. There is precedent for this in northern climate cities.
 - The integration of a one-block long, raised median with designated pedestrian crossings and “refuges” that discourage jaywalking, while providing a safer “refuge” for pedestrians on a four-lane roadway should be used. At a minimum, these medians can be introduced on the south side, crossing at Beaver Avenue, and the north side, crossing at College Avenue in the areas where left turn movements are not permitted, due to the one-way flows. Much wider striped pedestrian crossings with Type-2 ADA access ramps should also be implemented.
 - The intersection radii should be consistently tight on all corners of the intersection. The slip lane and traffic island at the Kinko’s corner on College Avenue are obstacles to pedestrian movement across Atherton, and do little to enhance traffic movement and stacking at an urban intersection that a conventional right turn lane could provide.
 - Well lit, efficient pedestrian lighting and street lighting should be used to indicate this is a walking district and an extension of the Borough Center streetscape theme.
 - Borough Center and West End banners should tell patrons they are passing through both areas.
- The southern portion of Atherton Street transitions back to a much greener, passive environment between Beaver and Foster Avenues, due to the number of historic residences and residential office structures that remain along the corridor. This area would be best suited for pedestrian lighting and banners, indicating the approaching area designations.



Current conditions at the College Avenue and Atherton Street intersection create a perceived barrier.



The roadway conditions along Atherton Street and College Avenue are depicted here. Slip lanes, small crosswalks, and general lack of special treatments discourage linkages from the Borough Center to the West End.





Intersections in the Borough core are much tighter with wider crosswalks, putting the focus on the pedestrian.



Proposed gateway treatment enhancements better connect the West End with the Borough Center.



Action 1B: Redefine the walkway, bikeway, and streetscape hierarchy throughout the West End.

Within the West End, there must be a balance between beauty and safety in designing streetscape environments that are effective and functional, while creating a recognizable sense of place. There are often conflicts between these two goals, but sensible designs that satisfy both can be implemented. To emphasize the long-awaited need for streetscape enhancements in the West End, it was pointed out in the community meetings that the Borough Center/College Avenue area is on its third set of pedestrian streetlights, while other areas continue to wait for this type of investment.

The current streetscape system within the West End is limited to one design theme palette, including five-foot wide concrete walkways, narrow two-to-five-foot lawn panels along the curb, utility pole-mounted, cobra-head street lighting at key intersections, and no site furnishings or signage (with the exception of regulatory signs along the corridor). This is typically classified as a third-level street treatment suggested within a streetscape master plan hierarchy for mixed-use districts, such as the West End. The first is a high-level, active retail/commercial streetscape environment intended to be the primary focus of an area, such as the area surrounding College Avenue and Sparks Street. The second is an address streetscape designed with a moderate-level streetscape treatment that carries the theme materials of the primary street, but may have fewer details and streetscape elements to reduce the cost of the improvements. This would be focused on West Campus Drive.

In preparation for anticipated revitalization activity in the West End resulting from this plan, recommendations have been made to indicate where streetscape improvements should be directed in the West End to render the biggest impact.

There are two basic streetscape approaches that need to be considered, based on revitalization and funding conditions in the West End. Existing streetscapes that should be upgraded by the Borough along existing built-out properties, and future streetscapes that should be designed and timed with private revitalization are forecasted in this plan. Under current conditions, the first streets that should receive new streetscape enhancements are College Avenue, Buckout

Street, Beaver Avenue, and Atherton Street. These streets form the transportation loop through the West End and are the most visible and used streets in the district. Suggested improvements include new pedestrian-scaled lighting and banners, the addition of contemporary bus stands where appropriate, street benches, bike bollards, trash receptacles at bus stops and commercial sites, and striped crosswalks at key pedestrian intersections. Future streets for new streetscape designs include North Sparks Street, North Patterson Street, North Gill Street, North Barnard Street and West Campus Drive, where new development has been proposed to front onto the street.



Typical streetscape conditions along the West End's primary roads are functional, but lack needed amenities.



Lighting, street furnishings, wayfinding signage, banners and landscape improvements are key ingredients from the Borough Center to be carried over into the West End along the primary streets and walkways.



Current conditions along Sparks St. between College Ave. and West Campus Dr. are pictured above.



Above are examples of proposed streetscape environment and elements envisioned for College Avenue and Sparks Street in association with proposed nearby revitalization.



Recent Gill Street improvements did not include streetscaping, such as lighting.



A second, more modest level of streetscape improvements to include pedestrian lighting, trash receptacles, signage, and walkway repairs are envisioned for side streets such as Barnard, Gill, Patterson and Buckout



Improving the West End's Infrastructure

Challenge 2: Equally important to streetscape beautification initiatives are the above-and below-ground utility/infrastructure upgrades typically required to foster revitalization in older neighborhoods, such as the West End.

Goal 2: To improve the West End's above-and below-ground utility infrastructure.

Action 2A: Provide focused infrastructure and utility upgrades in areas of highest revitalization potential.

One of the most visible differences in quality between the Borough Center and the West End is the presence of overhead utility lines and cobra-head street lights along several neighborhood streets. While it would be cost prohibitive to place all these utilities underground, now is the appropriate time to select key areas for utility relocation to the back alleys or below grade to create an improved image for new development.

Based on the revitalization potentials illustrated in the plan, the following areas were identified for utility relocation and improvement of underground storm sewer systems:

Borough of State College

- College Avenue from Atherton Street to the Ferguson Township line
- Sparks Street from Beaver Avenue to West Campus Drive
- West Campus Drive from Barnard Street to the Corl Street extension
- North Patterson, North Gill, and North Barnard Streets between College Avenue and West Campus Drive

**Note: Each of these initiatives would be timed with adjacent revitalization site or park activity.*

Ferguson Township

- College Avenue from the Ferguson Township Line to Corl Street at a minimum. Extension on to Blue Course drive would be preferred.

**Note: Each of these initiatives would be timed with adjacent revitalization site or park activity.*



Overhead utilities run along the alley to the west of Atherton Street.



Overhead utilities and lighting run along Sparks Street could be placed underground with new development.



Overhead utilities run along the Buckout Street corridor.

Residents and businesses also indicated that the storm sewer system along College Avenue and the side street portions leading up to West Campus Drive are either undersized, routinely blocked, or damaged; this causes temporary, but hazardous flooding in the West End. This problem will only worsen with revitalization if the specific problems are not identified and corrected to handle appropriate storm flow capacities.

It is important to note that the original utility system in this area was designed to handle a neighborhood composed of single-family homes with a modest supply of commercial and employment uses. In today’s rental apartment market, the West End may now have up to four times the original population, with an equally higher percentage of non-permeable surface area compared to 50 years ago. This has incrementally impacted the utility systems over many years and is becoming a problem. Without a commitment to improved, adequate public services and utilities, the area cannot and should not market to improved development uses. This must become a consideration for both the Borough’s Capital Improvement Program and the Revitalization Authority in creating partnerships with developers.

Providing Adequate Open Space for the West End

Challenge 3: The West End is void of any significant centralized park, plaza or open space resources for residents and patrons to enjoy.

Goal 3: To create a series of new park and open space amenities that promote environmental preservation in the West End, with linkages to surrounding public open spaces in the Holmes Foster/Highland Neighborhood and Penn State’s West Campus.

Action 3A: Create a new Community Quadrangle Park Commons, north of College Avenue.

Throughout the planning process, community participants voiced a need for additional open spaces and recreational amenities to be provided as revitalization occurs in the West End. The current development pattern in the area is dominated by medium-density residential and surface parking lots that have limited the amount of green space in the area. While there is an

abundance of open space on the nearby Penn State West Campus – the Corl Street School and the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood Park – these spaces are either limited to student/staff use or larger passive and active recreational use. The missing park program is an urban, mixed-use that would be a commongathering place that would offer something for everyone to enjoy.

To fill this void, a new, centrally located 1.5 to 2-acre community park is recommended along the Sparks Street corridor, between College Avenue and West Campus Drive. It is envisioned to be a gently sloping, “community quadrangle” extension of both the neighborhood and West Campus development patterns. The park would be a catalyst for new three-to-four-story mixed-use buildings to frame the park and take advantage of the new “value added” amenities the park would bring. This concept involves the cooperation of up to five key landholders along the Sparks Street corridor. Borough-owned parking lot plays a key role here. The lot is publicly owned and can be converted to park space or potentially “swapped” with nearby private lands through the new development authority to create a park space that will best serve the community’s needs and leverage private revitalization along its edges. Given the complexities of land ownership in the area, four different revitalization plan layouts have been created for the College Avenue and Sparks Street focus area.

Concept A is the optimum and most preferred layout with a highly visible ± 1.75 acre linear park stretching from West College Avenue to West Campus Drive. It would require the revitalization of the Borough parking lot, relocation of Best Event Rentals, revitalization of the townhome apartments on College Avenue, and adaptive re-use of the historic corner properties at Sparks Street for commercial/office use.

Figure 10
Park Development Concept A



Park Development Concept A features a +1.75 acre park stretching from West College Avenue to West Campus Drive.

Concept B features a ± 1 -acre park with a perimeter one-way street system at the north end of Sparks Street; however, it is the least visible configuration. It would require the cooperative revitalization of both the Borough parking lot and a portion of the Village Apartments to create the park and provide for new surrounding mixed-use buildings.

Concept C features a ± 1.3 -acre park between Best Event Rentals and West Campus Drive. It would only require the revitalization of the Borough parking lot site.

Concept D is the second most preferred layout, as it again features a ± 1.5 -acre linear park, stretching from West College Avenue to West Campus Drive along the east side of Sparks Street. It would require the cooperative revitalization of both a large portion of the Village Apartments site and the Borough parking lot to create the park and provide for new surrounding mixed-use buildings.



Park & Development Concept B



Park & Development Concept C



Park & Development Concept D

Each of the concepts illustrated above will add value to the West End’s living and business environment. The Borough’s Revitalization Authority will work with surrounding property owners to mitigate the best layout for both park use and surrounding development potential.



These are current conditions along Sparks Street between College Ave and West Campus Drive.



These are examples of proposed park and streetscape enhancements along Sparks Street





The Community Quadrangle will be a site for community-based events and a focal point for the West End.



The commons is envisioned as a linear park, stretching from College Avenue to West Campus Drive.



Pedestrian and bike police or security patrols should be encouraged in the West End.



A fountain feature within the community park would animate the space



The commons is envisioned as a linear park stretching from College Avenue to West Campus Drive



Pedestrian and bike police or security patrols should be encouraged in the West End

Action 3B: Provide Additional West End Private Property Pocket Parks

In addition to providing a new central, public park in the West End, there are also opportunities to create a series of smaller, privately maintained pocket parks associated with any new residential and mixed-use development in the area. This would have to become an enforceable, open space requirement under the new West End zoning code and design principles recommendations.

However, some of the current open space opportunities include cooperative park enhancement easements for privately held vacant lots and/or surface parking lots along the College Avenue corridor until revitalization occurs. There are also opportunities to create open spaces in the back alley areas of properties as more efficient, shared parking opportunities are explored in the West End. This is discussed further under Action 4C.



This is a typical vacant site along College Avenue that could serve as a pocket park location.

These are comparable images of the pocket park amenities envisioned for the West End. A combination of simpler open spaces to accommodate play, with more formal spaces for passive use, are needed for a balanced approach.

Providing a Pedestrian Focused and Friendly West End Environment

Challenge 4: The West End is largely dominated by car and truck-oriented roadway systems, with little attention given to the quality of the pedestrian, transit rider, or cyclist experience.

Goal 4: To redefine and enhance the street and walkway system hierarchy to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and movement throughout the West End, and shift the emphasis to pedestrians, bicycles, and transit.

Action 4A: Conduct a Traffic Calming Study of the West End Neighborhood area to substantiate the traffic calming improvements necessary to increase pedestrian movement and safety throughout the community.

The West End is bisected by College and Beaver Avenues and cut off from downtown State College by Atherton Street. These principal arterial roadways serve as the Borough's major through traffic routes and carry in excess of 28,000 vehicles per day. These roadways pose a significant challenge for safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle traffic throughout the West End, and limit its ability to provide efficient pedestrian connections with downtown State College and Penn State's Main and West Campus environments. Moreover, these roadways promote a vehicular-scale environment that contradicts the human-scale neighborhood environment important to the quality of life for neighborhood residents and businesses.

A traffic calming study of the West End should be performed to substantiate improvements necessary to increase pedestrian movement and safety throughout the community. The study area would be bounded by Atherton Street, and Beaver and College Avenues.

Action 4B: Introduce Route 26 one-way loop, traffic-calming measures for safer pedestrian street crossings to and throughout the West End.

A walking tour of the West End can be a very pleasant experience for residents and visitors; however, the Route 26 one-way, loop system creates many conflicts for pedestrians, due to the general lack of traffic calming. As a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) facility, the focus and role of Route 26 (College and Beaver Avenues) is clearly to move traffic during peak congestion periods. While traffic impacts are generally eased by such a facility, the physical impacts on the community are only heightened by additional pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. Along the “loop” are 12 key pedestrian crossings that link the neighborhood with the Borough Center and West Campus, but there are only three traffic signals that slow traffic in the area. Two of the signals are on the edge of the district at Atherton Street and one is at Beaver Avenue and Sparks Street. This spacing, coupled with the first signal in Ferguson Township located at Corl Street, allows traffic to reach much higher speeds than typically allowed in a neighborhood. The diverter islands on Buckout Street, at both College and Beaver Avenues, also contribute to higher speeds, because they are designed to encourage the flow through the area.

Given these conditions, the area clearly needs traffic-calming initiatives if the community’s desire to make the West End more pedestrian and cyclist friendly is realized. Traffic-calming recommendations for the Atherton Street portion of the loop have already been discussed in Action 1A; however, there are a few additional suggestions that arose in the community planning process that could be immediately implemented or discussed with PennDOT for further study. They include:

- Replacement of existing, subtle single-line crosswalk delineations with highly visible, wide, painted/striped crosswalks at every intersection on Beaver Avenue, College Avenue, and West Campus Drive throughout the West End. This approach is very effective in the Borough Center and should be continued into the West End.

Another item for consideration in the crosswalk areas is the use of integrated speed tables (not speed bumps or humps), where the entire intersection is lifted up to sidewalk level in key locations. The emphasis is placed on pedestrian travel, while slowing traffic with a modest physical obstacle. This technique is widely used in neighborhood instances, where traffic flow does not allow for a fully signalized intersection and stoppage of traffic. Another option is a combination of chokers, where the travel lanes are narrowed by flaring the sidewalk curbs into slow traffic and reduce the roadway crossing distance for pedestrians. This may be the most effective approach if implemented at the Sparks Street and Gill Street intersections on College and Beaver Avenues.

- Allow short portions of the College Avenue and Beaver Avenue right-side travel lanes to be delineated for on-street parallel parking between peak morning and evening travel times. Limitations can also be set for Saturday travel to allow for weekend “game day traffic impacts.” Although widely used in other U.S. cities, this concept would have to be studied further for community and PennDOT approval; however, it would be very effective for mid-day traffic-calming, and equally beneficial to attract commercial and professional office businesses along the Route 26 corridor.
- Installation of an additional pedestrian actuated, traffic signal at Sparks Street and College Avenue would complement the existing signal at Beaver Avenue and Sparks Street. The Sparks Street corridor has been identified as the highest priority, north-south linkage between the West End and West Campus to be improved. It is a logical location for an additional signal that would be timed with the existing Beaver Avenue signal. While this idea may have complications with immediate implementation and PennDOT endorsement, it should be considered further to help seriously slow traffic along the open, nine-block section of College Avenue between, Atherton and Corl Street.
- Redesign of the slip lanes and diverter islands at the Buckout Street and Beaver/College Avenue intersections would better accommodate and delineate pedestrian crossings and set a nicer first impression from the west. This can be accommodated by reducing the travel lanes, increasing the size of the islands, and realigning pedestrian crosswalks to cross the islands in a much more organized fashion. The expanded islands have the added benefit of allowing for gateway landscape treatments and signage at the Borough entries, while reducing pavement at the intersections.

Another option is the introduction of traffic circles at these two locations to calm traffic and better organize the intersections for traffic flow. Traffic circles have been used in Europe and many parts of the U.S. to optimize traffic flow, while successfully slowing traffic to accommodate pedestrian and cyclists in urban environments. It is important to note that while this concept was quickly dismissed because of property easement impacts, conflicts with O.W. Houts truck entrance, and general lack of community exposure to traffic circle use, the approach merits further PennDOT study. This is particularly true at the Buckout and Beaver Avenue intersection, at a minimum. This intersection is quite large and could likely accommodate a small traffic circle without impact to the neighboring four properties. It would greatly benefit the neighborhood and further reduce traffic speeds along Beaver Avenue, where additional home ownership is desired.

Full or partial implementation of any combination of these initiatives would help shift the West End focus toward a pedestrian-friendly environment first, with an optimized (not maximized) traffic system secondly.



Above are current auto dominant conditions along North Atherton Street, between College and Railroad Avenues



The IST Building crossing of Atherton Street has facilitated safe pedestrian flow north of the West End.



Above is an example of wider, bolder painted crossings needed at each intersection throughout the West End.



This is the existing College Avenue entry to the West End at the O.W. Houts commercial center.



This is the Buckout Street diverter island onto Beaver Street; notice the faint pedestrian crosswalk stripes.



Improved gateway diverter islands include special paving, landscaping, and signage in York, PA.



Above is an example of a highly visible, safe pedestrian crosswalk installation in Baltimore, MD.



Above is a high quality, pedestrian gateway crosswalk near the Naval Academy Campus - Annapolis, MD.

Action 4C: Improved north-south pedestrian and bike linkages between the West End and West Campus.

Throughout the West End, there are six primary north-south streets and walkways and alleys pedestrians use to connect with the West and Central Campuses. While many of the walkways can be described as functional in their current condition, they are more often too narrow and hazardous to walk on. These walkways terminate when they reach the West Campus edge, as illustrated in the photos below. Pedestrians make their own linkages between the West Campus walkway system and the West End walkways by using existing roadways and forming paths and cut-throughs that lead to the primary campus destinations.

For the West End and the West Campus to be better integrated, it is important for the university and the Borough to coordinate new improvements to the walkway and bikeway routes. They must establish clear and direct north-south linkages between the two areas. Under current conditions, the primary corridors to be improved should include:

- Patterson Street linkages with the graduate student housing walkway system and trail system to the west
- Sparks Street linkages between Beaver Avenue and White Course Drive through the central core of the West Campus
- Gill Street linkages between Beaver Avenue and the Academic campus quadrangles
- Atherton Street linkages between College Avenue and White Course Drive.

With future revitalization of the Smith properties, Atherton Street Gateway properties, Haugh properties and the storage portions of the O.W. Houts properties, there will be added opportunities for improved pedestrian linkages on:

- Atherton Street between College Avenue and White Course Drive
- North Barnard Street between Beaver Avenue and the IST Building crossing
- North Buckout Street between Beaver Avenue and the West Campus graduate student housing quadrangle.

West Campus Drive will play a key role in defining where the Borough walkways and Penn State walkways will come together and transition for each of these corridors. A vision for the West Campus Drive corridor linkages are discussed in the next section.



Existing north-south open space between academic and residential quads of Penn State's West Campus are pictured above.



It is easy to predict where additional pedestrian linkages are needed by simply watching users and observing areas where trails have been worn in the landscape.



West Campus offers an extensive walkway system that can be linked to the West End with little effort.



This is a comparable image of improved West Campus and West End edges.



Size, scale, and quality of walkway linkages envisioned for the West Campus and West End are pictured above.

Aside from driving and walking, the West End's large student-based population also relies heavily on bicycle travel during fair weather months. Current accommodations for bicycle travel are limited to a "share-the-road" approach, where key roadway linkages, such as Sparks Street, are signed for bicycle travel. This is an appropriate approach for the less traveled "side-street" portions of the West End, but is not consistently implemented on all north-south linkages to West Campus. While nothing restricts bicycle travel on these remaining streets, an expanded bikeway (and pedestrian) sign program can help to increase awareness of this pedestrian/cyclist-oriented neighborhood.

Equally important to the north-south linkages is the provision for east-west bike linkages between the Borough Center and the West End. Unlike the side streets, the traffic volumes and speeds on College Avenue, Buckout Street, and Beaver Avenue suggest that one of two approaches should be taken on these primary collector streets: designated, striped bike lanes on the roadway; or a widened, off-road shared use bike/pedestrian walk/trail system, where right-of way widths permit. Based on an initial site review, the first alternative appears to be more cost-effective and possible to implement under current street right-of-way conditions.



College and Beaver Avenues are currently one-way streets with two travel lanes and no bike lanes.



Designated bike lanes should be added along College and Beaver Avenues, as well as Buckout Street.



Walkway systems can also be designed to accommodate a mix of pedestrian and bicycle uses.

Action 4D: Establish a west Campus drive pedestrian and bike trail linking the Central Campus with the West End, West Campus and golf course trails to the west.

In addition to providing safer bikeway corridors along existing streets in the West End, it is important to establish new linkages between the Central Campus, West Campus, the West End and on into Ferguson Township. With the proposed revitalization of the West Campus Drive corridor, discussed in Action 5B, there is a parallel opportunity to create an off- or on-road bikeway trail that would connect the Central Campus to the multi-use trails along the University Golf Course to the west. The preferred design would be an 8' to 10' wide off-street, dedicated multi-use trail, if the West Campus Drive right-of-way and/or property development setbacks can accommodate such a facility. Like the road improvements, the bike trail would be a benefit to both the West End and West Campus circulation system and be implemented and maintained with the cooperative support of both State College Borough and Penn State University. This would be yet another highly visible example of how the University and Borough could work together to make the West End and West Campus more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, while contributing another valuable open space resource to the broader community.



Above are current conditions along West Campus Drive behind O.W. Houts, approaching the White Course Trail



Sample multi-use, bike pedestrian trail and trailhead images from Morgantown, West Virginia are pictured here. The north-south linkages are used by both community residents and students of West Virginia University.



Improving the West End’s Vehicular Traffic Circulation

Challenge 5: On-street vehicular circulation for the blocks north of College Avenue is confusing and difficult to navigate, due to dead-end configurations. Also, many of the internal block alley systems are congested by disorganized private parking.

Goal 5: Traffic and parking circulation improvements – The goal is to improve traffic circulation throughout the West End by providing more choices for access and encouraging a dispersed approach to traffic and parking in the West End.

Action 5A: Removal of remnant portions of Railroad Avenue between North Barnard Street and North Sparks Street.

The 2005 ERA Economic Development Strategy for the West End, referenced earlier in this report, recommended revitalization of the Railroad Avenue corridor for commercial and mixed-use development. On further review of this recommendation, the planning team concluded this initiative should not be endorsed because:

- The Railroad Avenue right-of-way is sized for an alley access service street, rather than a conventional two-way street with desired parking for mixed-use development.
- There is limited access/egress potential to Atherton Street from Railroad Avenue.
- The Railroad Avenue right-of-way does not consistently connect with all north-south side streets. In some cases, the alleyway has been lost or encroached upon by development, making it hard to recover and implement without “total buy-in” from adjacent property owners.

Instead, the planning team recommends that the emphasis should be on revitalizing the West Campus Drive as a common corridor between the West End Village and the West Campus, discussed in Action 4B. This would allow the Borough to remove the street designation on Railroad Avenue and allow these parcels to be added with the Borough parking lot as land resources. The Redevelopment Authority could use these to leverage revitalization of the area, specifically, the West Campus Drive and side streets frontage.



Railroad Avenue between N. Barnard and N. Gill Streets is lost to parking, residential and warehouse impacts.



Railroad Avenue reappears at N. Gill Street and runs along the edge of the Unity Church office and sanctuary.



Railroad Avenue feels like a private street through the Village Apartments, where it ends at N. Sparks Street.

Action 5B: West Campus Drive extension and linkage with Gill and Barnard Streets.

The West Campus Drive corridor is envisioned as a key academic and residential address street for reinvestment by both Penn State University and the Borough. Currently, the central portion of the corridor, from Gill Street to Patterson Street is maintained by the Borough, while the remaining eastern and western two-block sections are under Campus jurisdiction.

The strategy is for West Campus Drive to become a new, two-way connecting street with on-street parallel parking, where possible, stretching from North Barnard Street to the future Corl Street extension. A one-block portion of the street would be limited to a transit-access-only linkage to limit the potential for cut-through traffic. Gill and Barnard Streets would be extended to link with West Campus Drive, offering additional travel and access in areas currently constrained.

The revitalization focus here is envisioned as additional academic buildings to the northeast, potential additional graduate student residences to the northwest, and a mix of student apartments and homeowner-occupied, workforce housing on the south side. As mentioned in Action 3F, the West Campus Drive cross section would include a dedicated multi-use pedestrian/bike trail to one side to link the Penn State Campus and West End to the golf course trail system to the west.



Above are current conditions along West Campus Drive at the Patterson Street Intersection.



Above is West Campus Drive between N. Gill Street and N. Sparks Street. IT looks like a parking lot.



West Campus Drive is divided into two sections by barriers to eliminate through traffic via Atherton Street.



This is a comparable image of the proposed West Campus Drive street design and development approach.



These are comparable images of West Campus Drive improvements envisioned for a new residential and academic frontage street between the West End and West Campus.



Improving the West End's Parking and Access Management

Challenge 6: Parking poses one of the greatest challenges to the West End's revitalization effort and therefore, must be better managed and enforced to achieve the desired outcomes. The current parking situation is not properly managed and creates extreme inefficiencies for long-term parking. Moreover, it does not provide adequate short-term/high-turnover usage for business owners.

Goal 6: To implement a more effective parking and access management program for the West End and encourage on- and off-street parking strategies that support a vibrant, neighborhood-based mix of retail, service, and residential uses.

Action 6A: Overall parking and access management strategy for the West End.

The ability to provide adequate parking for new development is a key driver to determine if the sites in the West End can be better developed. Unfortunately, many of the parking requirements placed on properties by the current West End and parking code have led to the creation of an overabundance of parking, a secondary rental market for parking spaces, and higher apartment rents. As a result, the West End has become known as a resource of parking for areas where parking is in shorter supply or more expensive.

Under current conditions, parking in the West End has become a deterrent to revitalization because:

- Property owners may be content to develop surface parking lots that collect rent in excess of what a new development could yield in income after construction.
- Parking lot improvement requirements (buffers, paving, drainage, etc.) on a parcel-by-parcel basis are difficult to achieve, so property owners leave their lots in unimproved gravel or lawn condition, but continue to park, thus creates unsightly conditions for new neighboring development.
- Parking along alleys has become haphazard and constrained in many areas.
- There is no on-street parking along the College Avenue, Buckout Street, and Atherton Street corridors and only modest parking offered at the east end of Beaver Avenue. This hampers retail/commercial development along these primary streets, unless properties have easy access to off-street parking.
- Side street parking is a permit system rather than metered; this makes it difficult to use for local business patrons.

Provide a more effective parking management strategy for the West End that both supports existing residents' needs and fosters greater investment from the business community. To reduce the impacts of parking on the West End, the planning team recommends the following parking approaches are instituted through the joint cooperation of the Borough's Parking Department and new Borough Redevelopment Authority working with West End rental property owners:

- Off-street parking should be further managed and minimized through shared parking between adjacent properties, particularly in the evenings, weekends, and other off-peak periods. Develop improved public/private shared surface parking lots for the rear alleys surrounding College Avenue properties. The concept is for designated alleys to be included as drive lanes within larger well-designed, paved, and striped surface parking lots that contain tree islands, central island rain gardens for water filtration, and adequate, safe lighting for parking and walking in the alleys. Preliminary parking layouts for each of the blocks have been illustrated in the revitalization master plan, with public parking spaces accessed along the alleys and designated, private parking spaces are interior to the properties.
- If property owners resist the shared parking strategy, the Borough should limit property owners to accessing lots from the alley, rather than allowing them to park perpendicularly on the alley along the entire property line, as is currently done. The result would be an improved designated alley with individual, appropriately screened, parking lots, such as those found behind the professional offices on Burrowes Street.
- Study the potential to provide off-peak parallel parking along one side of Beaver Avenue to encourage professional office use of corner structures along Beaver Avenue.
- Increase vehicular access to businesses by providing designated on-street, metered parking for West College Avenue and West Beaver Avenue establishments that require short-term/high turnover usage. The meters could be operated by tokens provided by the Parking Department to the merchants and office leaders. Minimum parking requirements for businesses should be at least three parking spaces for every 1,000 sq. ft. of commercial or retail space, and one parking space for every four restaurant seats.
- Better manage off-street parking by requiring revitalization and new development to retrofit existing rear-unit parking areas into well-designed and efficient parking lots connected by and accessed from an alley or drive. Parking should not be permitted in the alley or drive. Such off-street parking systems must be pitched or curbed and drained to prevent the flow of excess water onto adjoining property or into streets and alleys without adequate drainage facilities. Such off-street parking systems should be located within 300 feet to the nearest point of the building the parking area is required to serve. Where such off-street parking is used jointly by two or more uses on separate lots, the total number of parking spaces should equal the sum of the required parking spaces for the various uses computed separately. Provide walkways from parking lots to buildings served and ensure adequate parking lot lighting for safety.
- Establish a West End public parking trail blazer signage system that will help direct visitors to public parking spaces without threat of being towed.
- Better manage residential parking requirements by establishing and enforcing a 1.5 - 2 parking spaces per residential and live/work unit policy. In many cases, the one space per bedroom parking requirement is greater than the need, creating excess parking and paving that otherwise could be open space. To counteract this effect, property owners should only develop the minimum parking needed to meet the financial requirement of

the project. This will gradually reduce the number of rental parking spaces in the West End with revitalization activity.

These improvements will greatly enhance the overall image and user-friendly aspects of the West End.



This is a typical view of disjointed, rear alley parking conditions behind residential apartment buildings.



Combining individual parking lots can result in more parking spaces and better locations for interior landscape.



Above is an example of a fully improved, well-organized, and fully screened parking lot in the West End.



Establishing designated/metered parking on side streets is critical to the success of corner businesses.



Preserving and Promoting the Unique Character and Historical Significance of the West End

Challenge 7: The West End has a unique character that is gradually being lost to inappropriate changes in building materials, construction techniques, space conversions, demolition, and bland architectural design. Appreciation of the area's heritage and history is diminishing to a point where immediate intervention must occur to protect what remains.

Goal 7: To celebrate the West End's cultural and architectural heritage through conservation and/or preservation and sensitive adaptive re-use of contributing structures to the Holmes Foster/Highland Historic District and railway heritage of the area.

Action 7A: Establish Required Development/Design Guidelines and Compatibility Review Process for the West End's historic structures and new construction. Create a Local Historic Architectural Review Board for the Holmes Foster/Highland Historic District and West End.

While the Borough's current voluntary guideline and advisory design review process is having some success with curtailing inappropriate architectural renovations and "out-of-context" new construction, it largely depends on the property owner/developer's interest in executing the design advise. The result in the West End is a range of: well done architectural adaptations, such as recent church expansion on Sparks Street; modest new apartment buildings that have been appropriately scaled to fit, but lack the architectural appeal of surrounding structures; and completely incompatible additions that detract from surrounding properties. While this inconsistency could be referred to as adding to the unique nature of the area, it is not doing so in an aesthetic or predictable way that would attract quality reinvestment. If the West End is left to status quo operating conditions, it will continue to deteriorate at a more noticeable rate.

For the best reinvestment to occur in the West End, an enforceable set of both historic and new construction design guideline standards must be established for the Holmes-Foster and West End neighborhoods. They must be administered by a recognized architectural review board (ARB). Construction must be required, rather than voluntarily implemented at the owner's discretion. While the existing Holmes-Foster Neighborhood National Historic District provides some protections against federally funded projects that could adversely impact the designated contributing structures, it does not protect against privately funded decisions to alter or remove historic structures.

The planning team understands this initiative was recently brought to the State College Borough Council and Planning Commission in the form of a local historic district proposal; it was not passed. However, we would be remiss if we did not strongly recommend this initiative for reconsideration. Although the argument will be made that such local district regulations will impede development progress and thus drop property values, design guidelines and design review processes have been found to result in attraction of development interest and higher property values. This process has worked very well for the Historic Architectural Review Board in both Gettysburg and York, Pennsylvania. These are two college towns facing similar historic neighborhood edge conditions along campuses. We encourage the Borough to reconsider this action in State College and return the character of the West End to what it once was.



Above is an example of a bad expansion and encroachment when this home was converted from residential to office prior to the voluntary guidelines process.



This is a porch conversion to living space that resulted from the current voluntary design guideline process.



Maintaining the true form, character, and space use of historic structures will raise the value of the property and the area.

Urban Design/Development Principles

The purpose of establishing urban design/development principles is to provide requirements and/or incentives to protect a specific resource or area and encourage development to a desired standard of aesthetic quality. Development guidelines for any part of a city consider all elements that contribute to a viable, safe, and economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable urban environment. Urban design guidelines and overlays do not change the zoning of underlying properties. Outlined below are the key urban design principle categories that should be included in a successful urban design and development guidelines document.

Traditional design principles to develop into guidelines:

- **Architecture** - Building Scale, Orientation and Siting – *Private Property Guidelines*
 - Scale and façade, placement, height, materials, façade enhancement
- **Open Space System** – *Public and Private Property Guidelines*
 - Landscape and buffer treatments, street trees, planters/hanging baskets, screening, buffers
- **Parking** – Surface and Structured Parking Areas – *Private Property Guidelines*
 - Location, entrance and visibility, scale and size, landscape and buffer requirements
- **Service Areas** – *Private Property Guidelines*
 - Service area screening treatments, utilities, trash, and recyclable enclosures
- **Streetscape** – *Public and Private Property Guidelines*
 - Sidewalks and pedestrian circulation, hierarchy of paving treatments
 - Lighting hierarchy, street lighting, pedestrian lighting, accent/aesthetic lighting, dark skies initiative
 - Family of site furnishings, durable design and quality construction, timeless design, and use of recycled or recyclable materials

- **Signage** – *Private Property Guidelines*
- **Transportation and Design Elements** – *Public and Private Property Guidelines*
 - Transit Shelters, Bicycle Parking, and Bike Lanes

Additional non-traditional design principles to develop into guidelines

- **Environmental Sensitivity and Stewardship** – *Public and Private Property Guidelines*
- **Green Building Standards** – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design in New Construction practices (LEED NC)
- **Green Streets Standards**- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design New Development practices (LEED ND)
- **Dark Skies Initiatives - Lighting**
- **On-site Water Management Re-use Systems**
- **Tree Canopy Preservation**

In the photographs below, the planning team identified some of the highest priority urban design principles that affect the overall neighborhood quality, due to improper site development practices that occur without development guideline enforcement.



Principle: *Improper siting, scale and connection of townhome rental units to original historic hospital structure is indicative here.*



Principle: *Porches are a key feature of the College Avenue environment that must be protected and maintained.*



Principle: *Enclosing porches should be discontinued for its potential impact to the historic character of the West End.*



Principle: Appropriate townhome scale lacks architectural fenestration and adequate rear yard.



Principle: Appropriate townhome scale exists; however, gated community approach does not fit streetscape.



Principle: Complimentary materials to the historic neighboring structures must be used on all infill buildings.



Principle: Discontinue overcrowding conditions for student apartments and increase open space requirements.



Principle: Where possible, provide parking below the residential units to decrease paving and screen parking.



Principle: Provide adequate room for walkways and landscape treatments between parking and buildings.



Principle: Avoid side walls and advertising signage along street frontage.



Principle: Discontinue the approval of "gated" complexes that turn their backs to the streets of the West End.



Principle: Businesses must be sited to address the street frontage with parking provided to the side or rear.

Action 7B: Relocation of Structures to Designated Sites in the West End

Over the course of the study, two key structures – the current/original bus station and the old Post House Tavern (the original Greyhound bus station) – were named for their historical contributions to the Borough. Both structures played a key role in the development and evolution of rail and bus transportation systems linking State College to other metropolitan areas. The university already held the bus station facility to the north. The university purchased the properties to facilitate the future development of an academic building between Railroad Avenue and West Campus Drive on the sites of the old train station and old Post House Tavern,

requiring their eventual removal. While the university has no immediate plans to build the academic building, they are currently studying the relocation possibilities for a new bus station to facilitate removal, when appropriate.

Realizing the lack of protections afforded and the inevitable removal of the two structures, local historians have rallied a call to facilitate the relocation, preservation, and adaptive re-use of the structures to an undetermined nearby location. The process will be expensive and still depends on the group’s ability to raise the appropriate funds. While the historical merit and ability to move the structures are reinforced and debated by many, the planning team thought it was important to establish a location for one or both of the structures to be accommodated.

Sites have been recommended within the new park concept for relocation of both the train station and Post House for re-use as unique, commercial uses or community facilities. Ideally, the Post House could become an intimate, coffee house/news stand and transit stop for West End residents, while the larger train station could be modified to be an indoor/outdoor restaurant with roll-up doors designed to allow patrons to spill into the park on nice days. By locating both buildings in the park, they keep their relative proximity to the old railway corridor (which will be a new trail) and thus, part of their heritage and interpretive storyline would remain intact.

For this initiative to come to fruition, it will require the strong will and conviction of both the Community and Borough leaders to contribute the funds necessary for making such a move possible. The result could be greater than the original locations and uses.



The old train station currently is being managed as an inter-modal bus station for the Borough.



The old Post House Tavern currently serves as a restaurant establishment on North Atherton Street.



Once relocated to the proposed park, the structures could take on a new life as unique commercial offerings.

Action 7C: Preserve and create adaptive re-use of contributing structures to the Holmes-Foster Historic District in the West End, while encouraging new business locations that meet neighborhood needs.

At the time the Holmes-Foster National Register Historic District was established, a relatively high proportion of West End buildings were included as contributing structures to local character. While the historic district designation stops short of providing any protections against property owners’ will to make changes, it does bring awareness to the neighborhood’s added value if the West End’s historic character can be preserved and maintained. Many of the

contributing structures in the West End have undergone major changes that have diminished their original single-family residential and institutional grandeur in favor of higher density rental apartments. Unfortunately, modern building codes for apartment rentals adapted to the historic buildings have forced some obvious “make-shift” solutions (i.e., fire escapes) that detract from the overall character of the area and continually degrade their “contribution” and overall integrity of the northern portion of the historic district.

A key initiative of the revitalization plan is to encourage the gradual transfer of apartment development rights from contributing historic structure properties to new medium-density, apartment revitalization sites north of Clay Lane. The historic properties would then revert back to a more conducive single-family residential or commercial/professional office use. These uses would better conform to the historical integrity of the structure, much like the approach and character followed on Burrows Street in the Borough Center. First and foremost, these efforts should focus on key structures highlighted in the Holmes-Foster historic walking tour brochure as having special architectural significance and/or a unique story. Based on a cursory review, some of the most noteworthy apartment properties to convert back and preserve include:

- the old hospital site on the Karch property
- the fraternity house on College Avenue at Patterson Street
- the music academy building on College Avenue
- key corner properties along the entire College Avenue corridor.

One debate item during the community planning process was to what extent this initiative should be enforced geographically. In its simplest form, it would cover all structures defined as contributing to the area; however, a more realistic approach would probably be to limit it to Clay Lane as the northern boundary. The predominately wood frame structures located north of Clay Lane on Barnard and Gill Streets have been largely compromised by inappropriate additions, connections between buildings, and window/siding replacements that have destroyed the original integrity of the building. While this area was not forecasted for immediate revitalization activity in the concept plan based on property owner wishes, this area will likely experience rebuilding pressure once revitalization efforts gain momentum. By contrast, the masonry buildings on North Patterson Street are considerably intact and are candidates for historic preservation; however, this block has equal potential for revitalization, because of its isolated nature from the rest of the area.



This is a good example of residential re-use for commercial office in the Borough.



This is a good example of residential re-use for commercial office in the West End.

The old hospital building could be adapted for commercial/office re-use.



This apartment building is also a candidate for adaptive re-use.

The fraternity house at the corner of College Avenue and Patterson Street is a candidate for sensitive re-use.

The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission-administered federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) program should be advocated as an incentive to encourage private investment in rehabilitating income producing, historic properties, such as office buildings, rental housing, hotels, bed and breakfasts, and retail stores within the Holmes-Foster/Highlands Historic District. This tax incentive opportunity could, in part, be a catalyst for strengthening the community’s historic preservation objectives and incentivizing the private sector’s will to invest further in the West End.

Diversifying the West End’s Housing Opportunities

Challenge 8: The West End has gradually become a homogeneous renter population that is continuing to spread into and displace owner-occupied families in the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood to the south.

Goal 8: To create a well-balanced mix of owner-occupied and rental housing units for all age and income types.

Action 8A: Reinforce single-family home ownership on Beaver Avenue and side streets between College Avenue and Beaver Avenue.

The West End is almost entirely composed of rental housing and supporting neighborhood businesses, most of which are marketed to, occupied by, and patronized by college students. A key initiative of the West End revitalization plan is to reverse the trend of an expanding renter-based neighborhood to a more heterogeneous, mixed-income neighborhood that offers ownership opportunities within historic homes or new lofts, townhomes, and condominiums. Although these areas are afforded some protections against excessive conversions to rentals by the R2 and R3H zoning districts, there is still pressure for additional rentals to be developed as homes come on the market. Many of the homes are too small to be effectively used for

apartments and should remain or revert back to home ownership. Unfortunately, property values are reported to now be inflated to the point that prospective homeowners are not willing to pay the high price for an older home and still have to invest in renovating the property. This leaves the property managers and landlords to purchase the properties and rent them as apartments and rooms.

This trend must be reversed by actively marketing the positive aspects of owning and renovating a historic home (tax advantages) and creating a revolving grant fund for homeowners to aid in the renovation and preservation of the West End structures. To facilitate this initiative, the new Borough Redevelopment Authority will have to get involved with the purchase and sale of individual homes along Beaver Avenue and the north-south side streets to create a revenue stream for the revolving grant fund.

Furthermore, this action must consider and be sensitive to existing historic structures within the neighborhood and the potential home ownership opportunities they provide. Currently, Pennsylvania does not have a financial incentive program for the historic preservation of homes. However, legislation has been introduced in the Pennsylvania General Assembly to address this issue. To that end, the Borough, in concert with its Historic Resources Commission and the general public, should encourage its legislative delegation to support the proposed Historic Preservation Incentive Grant Program legislation. This bill would provide grants to historic commercial and residential sites listed in historic districts, Main Street, and Elm Street communities. This legislation has been introduced under the current legislative session through House Bill 79 and Senate Bill 109, but no immediate action by the General Assembly is expected on these bills. At this time, this program could provide a possible \$15,000 incentive to assist with exterior renovation for residential properties in historic districts.

In addition, the Borough and its Historic Resources Commission should further explore the opportunities for establishing a revolving fund to purchase and rehabilitate historic homes in the Holmes-Foster/Highland Historic District, and sell them to prospective and qualified home-buyers. Finally, both the legislative and revolving loan fund measures should be addressed in the Historic Resources Commission's annual work program.



Many of the smaller homes in the West End are well-suited for conversion from apartments to single-family use.



The southern portion of the West End district is influenced heavily by the higher percentage of homeowner occupied residences on Beaver Street and side streets, such as South Gill Street.

Action 8B: Encourage live-work residential infill along College and Beaver Avenues.

One of the primary reasons the Borough leaders cited for studying the West End Revitalization Plan was to increase the tax base through the identification and establishment of additional “ratables” (tax-bearing commercial properties). Initial indications suggested the College Avenue corridor was the most likely location for additional commercial uses. However, the reality of the conditions suggest, with the exception of a few corner properties, that commercial along College Avenue would be limited to niche businesses that can adapt to historic building types, with rear access parking resources and the limited visibility/access offered from the one-way road system.

With many of the structures along College and Beaver Avenues falling into this category, the focus should be on establishing an incentive-based, “live-work” retail and office environment, where local business owners would live atop of their businesses. The commercial base would be focused on both walk-in and remote businesses focused on the arts, medicine, travel, media, computers, insurance, consulting, etc. The result would be a much improved residential/commercial corridor mix and character, such as that found along Burrowes Street in the Borough Center.



Many of the apartment houses along College and Beaver Avenues could be converted to live-work units.



Burrows Street is a local example of a successful mix of residences, businesses, and apartments.

Action 8C: Encourage workforce-oriented housing to be developed on underutilized sites that are not currently used for rental income.

Although the predominate market trend in the West End is to develop additional student oriented apartment rentals, limiting the revitalization activity to this homogeneous approach is not going to lead to the successful revitalization of the neighborhood. It is a well-documented fact that the key to a healthy neighborhood environment is a good balance of quality rental and home ownership opportunities in the area. The West End is known for its high concentration of student rental apartments, with little or no opportunities for single-family home ownership, because of the artificially high home prices driven by the potential for rental income.

Initiative 10 of this report discusses a variety of underutilized sites that have been identified for potential residential and mixed-use revitalization in the West End. The primary reason for encouraging select revitalization is to help reverse the trend of an expanding landlord and renter-based neighborhood to a more heterogeneous, mixed-income neighborhood that offers both ownership and quality rental opportunities in historic homes, lofts, condominiums, and modernized apartments. This is a very sizeable goal, considering the current rental marketplace pressures; however, the mix can be achieved if the Borough and property owners can agree that:

- Current rental sites continue to be redeveloped, as quality mixed-use rental properties become available with new commercial ground floor in select locations. This preserves the rights of current rental property owners and adds the incentive of creating slightly higher density, mixed-use development they otherwise could not do.
- At the same time, current non-rental sites would be reserved for a mix of moderately priced, attainable workforce housing intended to offer home ownership opportunities to young professionals, emptynesters, university faculty and staff, etc.



The Nittany Beverage site is a good candidate for workforce housing development.



Attainable workforce housing could take the form of condominiums, lofts, or townhomes, depending on the desired density to make development possible.



Increasing Neighborhood-Scale, Retail Commercial Activities

Challenge 9: There is a need to promote and foster retail commercial activities that serve the local area and have minimal impact on surrounding residential uses and existing downtown State College businesses. This is necessary to diversify the local tax base and provide the essential mix of uses that support a true sense of place for West End residents.

Goal 9: To encourage sensitive commercial growth along College Avenue and limited professional office growth along Beaver Avenue.

Action 9A: Retain and build on current commercial establishments by attracting new businesses.

The West End has a limited number of commercial businesses (ratables) that contribute to the tax base in an area that requires a disproportionate amount of public services including fire, police, trash, and utility services. Every effort should be made to retain the existing West End businesses and minimize the impacts of revitalization and construction on business patronage. If every initiative in the revitalization plan was implemented and realized, only six businesses would be relocated or lost to new development.

- Nittany Beverage would be relocated to its service area in Ferguson Township.
- Best Event Rentals would be relocated within the West End or the Borough.
- Arby's would be lost to new development.
- Titan Fitness and the deli would be relocated in the West End.
- The Imperial Motor Lodge would be lost to new development.
- The MiniMart would be lost to new development.

It is equally important to develop a strategic plan to attract and encourage the development of new businesses. Consideration should be given to dedicating a part-time retail coordinator as an extension of the Downtown Improvement District to recruit the types of specialty merchants who will make the West End a destination and coordinate business development and attraction throughout the Borough of State College. The Downtown Carlisle Association, for example, has hired a full-time retail coordinator to find merchants in other communities who might be interested to open a second location in Carlisle, provided they fit the existing mix. This best practice should be evaluated as a potential model for Borough of State College and the West End.



Above is Rainbow Music store on the south side of College Avenue at Gill Street.



Above is the Bicycle Shop on the north side of College Avenue and Gill Street.



Above is Gemini Auto business on the north side of College Avenue at Gill Street.



Above is the All Seasons Deli on the south side of College Avenue at Sparks Street.



Above is the O.W. Houts commercial center on the north side of College Avenue at Buckout Street.



Above is an interior design office in the alleyscape between College and Beaver Avenues.

Encouraging Optimal Revitalization of Sites within the West End

Challenge 10: There are a handful of small vacant lots or underutilized parking sites in the West End that could be better utilized as immediate short-term revitalization sites for infill commercial, mixed-use or residential use.

Goal 10: To promote the revitalization of abandoned, underutilized, and environmentally damaged properties.

Action 10A: Focus Sensitive Scaled Infill Development on Currently Vacant Sites.

To gain momentum and support for redeveloping the more difficult and complicated sites in the area, it will be important to identify some quick “wins” that show immediate revitalization progress in the West End. Such wins typically involve the revitalization of already vacant sites that can easily adapt to zoning, subdivision, and development guideline changes. These could be examples for how the new zoning and design review system will work in the West End. Unfortunately, there are very few vacant sites or buildings available in the West End for development or adaptive re-use. This a key reason for the West End's status quo

circumstances. Some of the candidate sites for immediate development observed during the walking tours are:

- the two O.W. Houts properties on the corner of College Avenue and Buckout Street
- the vacant corner at College Avenue and Sparks Street (reported to be proposed for residential infill)
- the vacant lot on the south side of College Avenue between South Gill and South Barnard Streets
- two to three miscellaneous vacant lots along Beaver Avenue.

The greater potential for change in the West End lies with adaptive re-use of existing historic/contributing structures and the revitalization of larger sites that require demolition and reconstruction, as outlined in revitalization Actions 10B through 10H herein.



The O.W. Houts sites at College Avenue and Buckout Street are well positioned for infill commercial development.



The burned and now vacant site at College Avenue and Sparks Street is being designed for infill housing.



This is an example of a small commercial building envisioned for the O.W. Houts site. It can be two stories.



A pocket park could be included on the Houts site to reinforce the West End gateway concept.



This is an example of small-scale, mixed-use building that could be infilled on the vacant site, instead of apartments.

Strategic Site Revitalization Opportunities Overview

It is important that the revitalization area becomes a productive place again, with an appropriate mix of uses and an optimal revitalization of sites to serve as a vibrant area. For the West End to reach its full potential as a mixed-use neighborhood, it will have to undergo significant change on a number of properties located North of College Avenue between North Atherton Street to the east and Butz Street to the west. Nine key properties were identified: the *Karch property*; *Reeder property*; *Smith property*; *Houts property*; *Myers properties*; *Chuba/Sun Corp properties*; *Borough property*; *Unity Church properties*; *VFW properties*; *Penn State University properties*; and *Haugh properties*. Pursue revitalization that increases the value and benefit of the subject properties without harming or undermining the vitality of businesses and residences that want to continue to exist in the Borough for years to come. A summary of the total site program illustrated in the preferred revitalization plan includes:

- +276 dwelling units in three stories at 1,000 square feet for each unit estimated
- +29,000 SF of first floor commercial
- +414 residential parking spaces required at 1.5 parking spaces unit estimated
- +87-116 commercial parking spaces required at 3-4 parking spaces per 1,000 SF commercial
- +480 total surface parking spaces provided, plus potential on-street parking created
- +501-530 total surface parking spaces required
- +480 total surface parking spaces provided, plus potential on-street parking created.

Action 10B: Encourage future higher density, mixed-use revitalization of the East End gateway sites.

The first revitalization area is focused on the eastern gateway sites defined by the Mini-Mart, College Apartments sites on the north side of College Avenue, and the Arby’s, Titan Fitness, and the Imperial Motor Lodge properties on the south side of College Avenue. The two north side sites are recommended for demolition and construction of a new six-story, mixed-use

building with underground parking, first floor retail, and upper floor office and/or residential uses. If timing is appropriate on the revitalization, it could be co-developed with the university's site (the old Smith property) to the north for shared underground parking development.

The three south side sites are also recommended for future demolition and construction of a new long-term stay, suite-style, gateway hotel that would be a potential expansion of the Atherton Hotel. The Atherton Hotel has expressed a desire to expand, with no potential for doing so on its existing site; however, the new hotel site could be linked to the Atherton Hotel by a second floor, climate controlled pedestrian bridge over Atherton Street, much like the IST bridge experience, but smaller. The hotel is envisioned to be six stories, with conferencing facilities on the first and second floors and four floors of guest suites above (100 -150 total additional rooms). A summary of the site program illustrated in the preferred revitalization plan includes:

- $\pm 60,000$ SF, six-story, mixed-use building on the northwest corner of Atherton Street and College Avenue
- $\pm 90,000$ SF, 100 -125 room hotel/conference facility on the southwest corner of Atherton Street and College Avenue
- short-term check-in surface parking area with underground parking structure below.

These two developments would redefine the West End gateway image and help to bridge Atherton Street with substantial new activities that could draw patrons into the West End as an extension of Borough Center offerings, much like the Fraser Street project. Outlined below are a series of images to help show the intended vision, scale, and quality for the gateway corners.



Above are current conditions at Arby's and the Imperial Motor Lodge site at the Atherton Street gateway.



Above are current conditions at Titas Fitness at the College Avenue portion of the Atherton Street gateway.



Above are current conditions at the Uni-Mart and the College Park Apartments (beyond) at the Atherton Street gateway.



This is an example of comparable gateway hotel development envisioned for the Atherton Street/Gateway sites.



This is an example of potential plaza courtyards envisioned for the Atherton Street/Gateway sites.



This represents potential mixed-use retail development with residential/office.

Action 10C: Encourage institutional and mixed-use revitalization of the block defined by Barnard Street, West Campus Drive, Atherton Street and College Avenue.

The second revitalization area is focused on the university properties along Railroad Avenue and North Atherton Street (formerly the Smith properties) and the three VFW properties on North Barnard Street. The university has acquired the Smith properties to facilitate the future development of an additional academic building north of Railroad Avenue on the site of the old Post House Tavern and current bus station (the old rail station discussed earlier). There is no immediate plan to develop the next academic building; however, the university and Borough are currently working together to find a suitable new location for the bus terminal before revitalization begins.

The second building illustrated south of Railroad Avenue would be a privately developed six-story mixed-use building on university property (the Best Event Rentals site) and potentially leased back to the university for office space use. The upper floor residential would be targeted for young professionals and empty-nesters who want an urban lifestyle in a most prestigious location. Clay Lane and Railroad Avenue potentially would be closed to traffic and converted to pedestrian courtyard spaces between Atherton Street and Coal Alley.

Figure 11
Development concept for the university-owned properties along Atherton Street



Courtesy of Penn State University Planning Department

In a work session with the VFW lodge, representatives indicated their current facility was too large and a new smaller facility would be in better keeping with their funding sources for maintenance and upkeep. The VFW currently holds three sites containing the lodge, an apartment house, and a surface parking lot members would like to redevelop for a smaller VFW building with two floors of residential apartments above as a revenue stream. A summary of the site program illustrated in the preferred revitalization plan includes:

- $\pm 100,000$ SF, six-story, mixed-use building on Atherton Street between Railroad Avenue and Clay Lane
- $\pm 200,000$ SF, five-six-story academic building for the engineering campus
- $\pm 18,000$ SF, three-story institutional/mixed-use building for the VFW and rental apartment above
- short-term check-in surface parking area with underground parking structure below
- Clay Lane and Railroad Avenue would both be closed to traffic and converted to pedestrian courtyard spaces between Atherton Street and Coal Alley.

These two developments have the potential to create a ripple reinvestment across the northern blocks if quality change can be seen early in this key block where the commercial district becomes the West End. Pictured below are a series of images to help show the need for the new vision, scale, and quality of development for this block.



Above are current conditions at the Railroad Avenue and North Barnard Street intersection.



Above are conditions along North Barnard Street at the State College VFW Hall and adjoining VFW apartment building.



Above are current conditions at the VFW-owned parking lot on North Barnard Street



Above are existing conditions along North Atherton Street between College Avenue and the IST Building.



These are examples of proposed new academic building on North Atherton Street and a proposed mixed-use building on North Atherton Street – Courtesy of Penn State University.



Action 10D: Encourage owner-occupied workforce housing infill development on the block defined by Gill Street, West Campus Drive, Barnard Street and College Avenue.

The third revitalization area focuses on the opportunity for revitalization of: the West Campus Drive frontage properties between North Barnard Street and North Gill Street owned by the Haugh Family and Unity Church; and the Borough-owned Railroad Avenue right-of-way in this area. The coordinated revitalization of these sites is essential to the overall success of the West Campus Drive linkage to North Gill Street and North Barnard Street, without which the connections simply cannot be made. The Haugh site at the corner of Railroad Avenue and North Barnard Streets consists of an old warehouse site, a small residence, and surface parking lot. The Unity Church site at the corner of Railroad Avenue and Gill Street maintains a small fellowship hall and offices called Destiny Hall.

The vision for these sites includes relocation of the Destiny Hall activities to the Unity Church site (described in Action 10E) and abandonment of the Borough’s Railroad Avenue right-of-way, allowing these parcels to be combined with the Haugh properties and offered for revitalization by the Borough’s Redevelopment Authority. The goal for the site is construction of two new three-to-four story buildings, offering owner-occupied, workforce housing in either a “stacked” townhome, condominium, or loft style development with rear loaded parking, and garages on the lower level. Some of the resident and visitor parking would be accommodated on the side

streets and West Campus Drive. A summary of the site program illustrated in the preferred revitalization plan includes:

- ±40 dwelling units in three stories at 1,000 SF each residence estimated
- ±60 parking spaces required at 1.5 to 2 parking spaces per residence estimated
- ±50 total surface parking spaces provided, plus potential on-street parking created.

Although the land assemblage required to foster revitalization of these small sites is complicated, the result will be far greater than if each of the parcels are left to individual, piecemeal development. Pictured below are images to help show the need for vision, scale, and quality of development envisioned for this block.



Above is an existing warehouse on the Haugh property along Railroad Avenue between Barnard and Gill Streets.



Workforce-oriented condominium or loft style residences are envisioned for this portion of West Campus Drive.



The Railroad Avenue right-of-way would be incorporated to provide alley access to rear loaded garages.

Action 10E: Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment revitalization and owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Sparks Street, West Campus Drive, Gill Street and College Avenue.

The fourth revitalization focus area includes a portion of the Meyer properties, the Simbeck parking property, and the Unity Church properties located between North Gill Street and North Sparks Street. The Meyer properties specifically include the West Side Village apartments and surface parking sites along College Avenue, North Sparks Street, and Railroad Avenue. These were developed using the old Acu-Weather offices and beverage distributor buildings. Although the West Side Village Apartments underwent reconstruction in the last 10 years, the planning team feels there is significantly greater development potential for the site. If it is coordinated with revitalization of the Borough-owned parking lot and the community park proposed for the Sparks Street corridor, there may be greater potential realized in the form of land swaps and phased construction facilitated through the Borough’s Redevelopment Authority.

The preferred plan for this area illustrates the potential for the back portion of the West Side Village Apartments to be razed and replaced with two to three, four-story, mixed-use apartment buildings, with ground floor retail along Sparks Street only. The building along West Campus Drive would be entirely residential, with ground floor, ADA-accessible units. Along College

Avenue, the vision is to remove the old church/AcuWeather office, an adjacent residential building, and two surface lots and redevelop two smaller-scaled, three-story, mixed-use apartment buildings with ground floor retail, thus adding “ratables” along the corridor. The block’s interior surface parking should be restructured to blend the Borough’s alleyways with private parcels, thus creating more efficient, better drained, and better landscaped shared parking lots. The shared parking lots would be predominantly private residential parking with some public parking spaces along the alleyways during business hours. This would revert to residential use in the evenings. The public parking spaces are important to the success of the ground-floor commercial uses proposed on Sparks Street and College Avenue. A portion of the resident parking would be secured parking, located in rear loaded garage spaces under the residences.

The Simbeck parking lot site and the Railroad Avenue right-of-way would be combined and added to the Unity Church site to accommodate a new Destiny Hall wing, connected to the church by a breezeway with a central courtyard. The church and Gemini Auto would continue to share parking spaces in a new alley loaded parking lot behind the church. Patrons would continue to access the church sanctuary through a new “Contemplation Courtyard” for outdoor fellowship. The resulting church “campus” would be a strong anchor use for the community and West Campus Drive as it connects with North Gill Street. A summary of the site program illustrated in the preferred revitalization plan includes:

- ±56 dwelling units in three stories at 1,000 SF for each unit (potential for an additional floor and 20 additional units and parking if needed)
- ±84 residential parking spaces required at 1.5 parking spaces/unit estimated
- ±17,000 SF of first floor commercial on the Meyer property
- ±51-68 parking spaces required at three to four parking spaces per 1,000 SF of commercial
- ±8,000 SF of newly constructed Destiny Hall for Unity Church campus
- ±25 surface parking spaces for church and Gemini Auto, plus on-street parking along West Campus Drive
- ±140 total surface parking spaces provided, plus potential on-street parking created.

The revitalization of these sites is important to the success of the College Avenue, the Sparks Street corridor, Community Quadrangle Park, and the West Campus Drive extension. Pictured below are a series of images to help show the need for the new vision, scale, and quality of development for this block.



Above is the view of the old church site on College Avenue, now used for West Side Village Apartment residences.



Above is the view of the West Side Village Apartments site between North Sparks Street and North Gill Street.



Above is the interior view of single-story West Side Village Apartments looking north toward West Campus chiller building.



Above is a sample mix of 2-3 story, mixed-use infill development envisioned for the College Avenue frontage.



Above is a sample mix of 4-5 story, mixed-use development envisioned for Sparks Street and West Campus Drive frontage.



Medium-density site bonuses would require one-level parking decks to be carefully sited with development.



Above is Unity Church at North Gill Street and Railroad Avenue.



Above is the existing Unity Church (left), Railroad Avenue (alley) and Gemini Auto parking lot site (right).



The Unity Church site could become a small campus of buildings surrounding a central courtyard.

Action 10F: Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment revitalization and infill owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Sparks Street, and College Avenue.

The fifth area focuses on development along the west side of the proposed Community Commons Park, including the Nittany Beverage (Reeder property), the Karch apartment property, Smith property (Best Event Rentals building) and Borough parking lot property. This area is seen by the planning team as the key site for catalytic revitalization that could shift the

West End marketplace from its student orientation to a stronger mixed-use neighborhood. The reason for this is the Borough's control of the public parking lot. This is a key property that can be leveraged by the new Borough Housing Authority to work with surrounding property owners to develop the best community park concept. It can have high-quality, medium-density, mixed-use and residential buildings surrounding the park.

In the preferred plan, the Borough property on the corner of Sparks Street and West Campus Drive has been primarily redeveloped as the upper portion of the community park. The western edge of the Borough site has been combined with the Nittany Beverage site and suggested for two, three-to-four-story, mixed-use buildings with ground floor commercial limited to the façades fronting onto the park. The development potential illustrated on the Borough site could be used to swap lands and development rights with the Smith property and/or the Karch property to accommodate the development of the lower portion of the proposed park.

The remainder of the Nittany Beverage site along Patterson Street and West Campus Drive is recommended for construction of two to three, new three-to-four-story buildings, offering owner-occupied, workforce housing in either a "stacked" townhome, condominium, or loft style development with rear-loaded parking and garages on the lower level. Some of the resident and visitor parking would be accommodated on the side street and West Campus Drive. It is recommended for owner occupied housing, because it is not currently used for apartments, unlike other sites where owners want to replace rentals with higher quality rentals.

The Smith warehouse property, located mid-block along Sparks Street, was originally envisioned to be relocated to another vacant location in the West End and the lands incorporated into the community park. Today, the warehouse is being renovated to accommodate the relocation of Best Event Rentals from its Atherton Street location that was sold to the university. At the time of this report, the building had undergone about 15-20 percent renovation, with an expected build-out and occupancy by May 2007. In the event the Borough Revitalization Authority cannot act quickly enough to help facilitate the relocation of Best Event Rentals, three additional concepts (B, C, D) were developed for the Sparks Street corridor that worked the park concept around the Smith property.

A second property, the Karch apartment property at the northwest corner of College Avenue and Sparks Street, also plays an integral role in the park's implementation. At the south end of the park, the Karch townhomes are suggested for demolition. The historic hospital building is recommended for renovation as a commercial office building located within the proposed park. The western-most townhome site would be redeveloped as a modest, three-to-four-story rental apartment building, with ground floor retail designed to address both the park and College Avenue. Although the Karch property would have apartments replaced for apartments, it is likely the Borough property development rights would have to be factored into the Karch revitalization to make the funding on the project work. A summary of the site program illustrated in the preferred revitalization plan includes:

- ± 90 dwelling units in three stories at 1,000 SF per unit. This would be equal to a 3-4 bedroom student apartment.
 - ± 76 units in three stories and +8,000 SF commercial on the Nittany Beverage/Borough property (requires relocation of Nittany Beverage carryout and distributor to Ferguson Township site)
 - ± 14 units in three stories and +4,000 SF commercial on the Karsch property
 - ± 1.5 acre park on the Borough, Smith and Karch properties (± 135 parking spaces required at 1.5 parking spaces/unit estimated)
- $\pm 36-48$ parking spaces required at three to four parking spaces per 1,000 SF of commercial
- ± 136 total surface parking spaces provided, plus potential on-street parking created.

This site has some of the greatest potential for revitalization, because there are three (possibly four) property owners who are considering working together to do the revitalization project as described. Pictured below are a series of images to help show the need for the new vision, scale, and quality of development for this block.



Above is the Nittany Beverage/Reeder family site along Patterson Street at West Campus Drive.



Above are townhome apartments on the Karsch property at College Avenue and Sparks Street.



Above is the Smith property warehouse under revitalization as a relocation site for Best Event Rentals.



Above are current conditions along Sparks Street, West Side Apartments to the left and Borough parking lot to the right.



Above are examples of residential over-ground floor commercial uses present in the West End at the Bicycle Shop, Gemini Auto, and All Seasons Deli.





This is an example of potential infill commercial/mixed-use character envisioned for the Sparks Street parcels.



This is an example of potential 3-4 story infill mixed-use development and parks envisioned for the Sparks Street – Princeton, NJ



This is an example of proposed buildings that should be built to front onto the neighborhood streets with parking to the rear.

Action 10G: Encourage apartment revitalization and owner-occupied workforce housing infill on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street, and College Avenue (with a focus on the O.W. Houts Properties and Sun Corp. [Patterson Street] properties combined).

The sixth revitalization area focuses on the long-term development potential of the four Sun Corporation/Chuba rental properties on Patterson Street, and the O.W. Houts woodshop and warehouse properties along the east side of North Buckout Street. In personal interviews, the property owners indicated no current plans or desire to redevelop the properties at this time, which has been illustrated in the Phase 1 Short-term West End Revitalization Plan.

However, the property owners did see value in setting a vision for the properties that could be included in the longer-term revitalization plan for the West End. As such, the Phase 2 plan shows the Sun Corporation properties being redeveloped with two to three, four-story apartment buildings with ground-floor, ADA-accessible units. No commercial development is envisioned for this site, due to the lack of direct visibility. The block’s interior surface parking would again be restructured to blend the Borough’s alleyways with private parcels. This would create more efficient, better drained, and better landscaped private residential parking lots. A portion of the resident parking would be secured parking located in rear loaded garage spaces under the residences.

To encourage a mix of housing in the West End, the O.W. Houts site is also recommended for construction of two to three, new three-to-four-story buildings, offering owner-occupied, workforce housing in either a “stacked” townhome, condominium, or loft style development, with rear loaded parking and garages on the lower level. Some of the resident and visitor parking would be accommodated on the side streets and West Campus Drive. The site is recommended for owner-occupied housing because, like the Reeder and Haugh properties, it is not currently used for apartments. A summary of the block’s site program illustrated in the preferred Phase 2 Revitalization Plan includes

- ±90 total dwelling units in three stories at 100 SF per unit
 - ±45 units in three stories on the O. W. Houts properties
 - ±45 units in three stories on the Sun Corporation properties
- ±135 parking spaces required at 1.5 parking spaces per unit estimated
- ±140 total surface parking spaces provided, plus potential on-street parking created.

While these sites are not immediately available for revitalization, they play a key future role in helping to provide additional workforce housing in the West End and better blending the neighborhood and campus residential blocks along west Campus Drive. Pictured below are a series of images to help show the need for new vision, scale, and quality of development for this block.



Above is the O.W. Houts woodshop and warehouse along Clay Lane between Buckout and Patterson Streets, and the Sun Corp properties along west side of North Patterson Street.



Above is potential future infill workforce housing lofts and /or apartments along Patterson and Buckout Streets.

Action 10H: Encourage commercial building revitalization and woodshop infill on the block defined by Butz Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street, and College Avenue.

The seventh revitalization area focuses on the O. W. Houts commercial properties west of Buckout Street. The O.W. Houts family store/emporium and millwork shop are historical neighborhood icons that served the West End, Ferguson Township, and the larger Centre Region for three generations. The family-owned business is currently branding to better secure its niche in the retail home goods marketplace.

The primary revitalization initiative identified for the O.W. Houts site is an overall clean-up, fix-up, and update of commercial facilities. Although the business is unique, its overall dated appearance does not contribute to the potential College Avenue/West End gateway image. The varied façade, deep setback, vintage signage, loading dock, and gas station in the front all contribute to the possibility that potential patrons would overlook the business. The O.W. Houts business could be more successful and make a more positive visual contribution to the West End, the West Campus, and Ferguson Township through the following key actions:

- Implement façade improvements, such as resurfacing, paint, and signage for the main commercial buildings with which customers come in contact.
- Restripe the parking lot islands with the aisles oriented perpendicularly to the storefront, and install landscaped parking islands to define parking lot aisles and spaces.
- Refurbish the vintage street signage and relocate it to the corner of Buckout Street and College Avenue, or install it in a new main entrance island created at the College Avenue entrance to the Mini-Mart.
- Install perimeter landscape edges to screen the surface parking from view on College Avenue and Buckout Street.
- Clean-up, redefine, and resurface the rear yard and parking lot area leading to the rear customer entrance.
- Demolish the existing ancillary structures in the rear of the property and construct a new 25,000 SF climate-controlled facility for lumber storage, warehousing, and a finished millworks shop.
- Install landscape screening along the West Campus Drive and Butz Street side of the property to adequately screen the new woodshop building and rear yard service area.
- Re-establish Buckout Street as a local street connection between College Avenue and West Campus Drive.

Pictured below are a series of images to help show the need for new vision, scale, and quality of development for this block.



Above is the O.W. Houts commercial center complex at College Avenue and Buckout Street.



Above is the rear portion of the O.W. Houts commercial center complex.



Above is a vacant site and gravel parking lot managed by the O.W. Houts family.



Creating a Seamless, Cohesive Urban Environment

Challenge 11: Historically, the West End area, Penn State’s West Campus environs and Ferguson Township have developed in a manner where each has backed onto the other, with little attention given to blending and linking the three areas.

Goal 11: To better integrate the West End environs with Penn State University’s West Campus setting and Ferguson Township’s gateway commercial corridor to create a seamless, cohesive urban environment that benefits all.

Action 11A: Corl Street extension to proposed future West Campus parking structure

The university’s current West Campus Master Plan includes the extension of Corl Street to the east, along the Golf Course to provide future west-side access to a proposed 1,200 space, multi-level parking structure located on the site of the current West Campus bus loop stop. The parking structure would also be accessed from the east by White Course Drive. It is important to note that the Corl Street and White Course Drive extensions would not be designed to connect. The concern is that this would result in cut-through traffic impacts on the campus and the surrounding communities. Only transit shuttles, emergency vehicles, and campus maintenance vehicles would be permitted access between the two roadways. These access limitations are also envisioned for portions of West Campus Drive and the graduate student housing streets to eliminate the potential for cut-through traffic on the West End neighborhood streets. The result will be much improved access to the West Campus, with no impact to the West End residents and businesses.



Above is existing Corl Street access from College Avenue/Route 26 in Ferguson Township.



The Corl Street extension could be designed as a boulevard roadway to better fit the surrounding environs.



The Corl Street extension would link to a new ±1,200 car parking structure similar to this one in Morgantown, WV.

Action 11B: Consider a new transit/transfer station and a north-south transit linkage between West Campus and the West End with future West Campus development

There is a need to identify a new transit station site in the Borough. Over the course of this study, the university and Borough have reviewed a variety of sites for their compatibility. No decisions have been rendered as yet. At the beginning of this Revitalization Plan process, the

planning team suggested that a transit hub should be considered somewhere between the West Campus and the West End to better serve the neighborhood. The Borough-owned public parking lot at Sparks Street and West Campus Drive was considered; however, this was downgraded to a campus loop shuttle stop because of the site's short-term open space and revitalization potential.

With the added development of a West Campus parking structure, the current campus loop shuttle stop will also have to be relocated on the West Campus, raising the question "Could both facilities be co-located on West Campus?" The answer is "yes," the two facilities could be co-located at the end of White Course Drive in a triangular space, created by the proposed parking structure and planned academic buildings. As illustrated in the Revitalization Plan, this site can accommodate five to six bus lay-by spaces, with a small transit office incorporated in the parking structure, and a shade structure connecting the garage, the engineering sciences building, and the proposed new academic building. The location is also well located for students arriving by interstate bus. Like the old station, it is an equally short walk from the proposed station to the IST building crossing over Atherton Street and onto the central campus residences. The same can be said for the walk for students living in the West End.

While this stop functions well for the interstate buses and campus loop riders going to the West Campus academic quad, it does not provide adequate access for graduate student residents and West End residents to use the campus loop shuttle. To remedy this problem, a designated transit corridor between White Course Drive and College/Beaver Avenues has been recommended in the preferred plan, with programmed stops at the West Campus graduate residences and the Community Commons Park. The route would traverse the open space, between the academic and residential quads, and continue on a straight course down a designated transit way on the west side of the park. The route could also travel down Sparks Street to Beaver Avenue and into the Borough Center. Another second routing option would offer an opportunity for a third stop at Sparks Street and Beaver Avenue; this is a major collecting point of students. Together, these initiatives would help to make the West End better integrated into the campus and downtown, from a transit perspective. Pictured below are a series of images to help show the need for new vision, scale, and quality of the transit development for this area.



Above is the existing campus transit loop stop on West Campus between the academic and residential quads.



With revitalization of the West Campus to accommodate a future parking structure, a new free-standing or architecturally integrated regional and local bus transfer facility could be developed as an extension of the parking facility.



This shows existing north-south, open space between academic and residential quads of Penn State's West Campus.



The transit corridor linkage is envisioned to have a designated transit-only travelway with improved streetscape and transit rider amenities.

Action 11C: Potential infill of additional residential buildings

The planning team has recommended five to six locations for sensitive, infill residential development around the graduate student residences in an effort to better blend and integrate the West Campus with the West End Neighborhood. Construction of the graduate residences in the 1990s established a strong axial arrangement of buildings that linked back to the academic quad and central campus beyond. The building cluster was surrounded by surface parking that buffers it from the neighborhood and the golf course.

In preparation for additional future graduate student housing needs, the plan suggests an infill building approach that would displace some surface parking, but preserve the integrity of the existing residences. The proposed buildings have been positioned to reinforce the Corl Street extension, the north-south pedestrian/bikeway and transit linkage, and the West Campus Drive and bike trail extension. It resulted in a more urban pattern to the residential quad. These recommendations are made with the understanding that the university is undergoing its own parallel study of student housing needs, which may or may not include additional West Campus housing at this time.



Above are existing conditions along the south edge of Penn State's West Campus graduate student residences.



The core of the graduate student housing is well structured, while the edges tend to be much less defined.



Additional campus infill housing is suggested to better blend the campus with the West End residential blocks.

Action 11E: West College Avenue streetscape and gateway improvements

West College Avenue serves as a gateway to both the West End area of State College and the east end of Ferguson Township. Although the roadway corridor links the two areas in common, there are dramatic differences in the travel lanes, street characteristics, land uses, tree canopy, etc. that result in a different perceived setting in each jurisdiction. There are trade-offs in each area. For instance, the West End enjoys tree-lined streets in a residential environment, but must deal with higher speed one-way traffic, while Ferguson Township enjoys the exposure of two-way travel and a lower aesthetic experience, due to the streetscape and land uses that frame the roadway.

As discussed earlier, the West College Avenue/Route 26 roadway and right-of-way is controlled by PennDOT, with input from the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and staff. Any proposals for its improvement must meet Penn DOT's goals for the corridor as a regional roadway collector. To date, the emphasis has been on improving traffic flow and access through the area. Little attention has been given to pedestrian, bicycle, or aesthetic improvements. The latest improvements include new signalization and the addition of turn lanes at the new Corl Street access to the West Campus. Community representatives are concerned that the corridor could undergo significant widening in the future, further compromising the quality of the street/sidewalk conditions that exist between the Ferguson Township line and Corl Street, as well as the overall image out to Blue Course Drive. For the purposes of this study, the planning team has focused on some preliminary initiatives for the shorter and more immediate portion of West College Avenue out to the improved Corl Street intersection. Ferguson Township representatives should work with Borough of State College representatives and PennDOT officials to:

- Clearly redefine the three-lane roadway cross-section with consistently defined curbs on both sides of the roadway.
- Determine locations for center lane medians to be installed between left turn access points.
- Parking lot access driveways should be narrowed, where feasible.

- Pedestrian walkways and or painted crosswalks should be installed across all parking lot access aisles and across College Avenue at key intersections.
- Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the roadway and be a minimum of five feet wide, with an equal or wider lawn panel to accommodate the installation of street trees.
- Decorative streetlights and banners should be installed at major intersections and the Buckout Street gateway to announce the West End.

The successful implementation of these five items will have the greatest effect on the required cost and change the image of the Ferguson Township corridor.



West College Avenue lacks a unified streetscape approach. It is missing curbs, has inconsistent walks, etc.



In many instances, walkways are terminated to provide for direct access and parking from the road.



Narrow walkways are located directly behind the curb and are a deterrent to pedestrian and bicycle traffic.



This is a good example of neighborhood streetscape conditions on Butz Street to be carried to West College Avenue.



The wider center line portions of streets typically can be recovered for islands to aid in pedestrian crossings.



This is an example of a limited access boulevard streetscape such as that envisioned for West College Avenue.

Action 11F: West College Avenue Corridor Revitalization Study

While streetscape beautification and traffic calming are immediate actions that should be taken on the corridor, the larger question Ferguson Township faces is what role the West College Avenue corridor should serve in the Township’s future growth? The current development pattern along the corridor is a mix of remnant residential, pedestrian, and auto-oriented retail, commercial service, and employment uses randomly intertwined. This results in conflicts between different user groups, e.g., residences adjacent to workshops and heavy equipment.

For the College Avenue corridor to reach its full potential, the beautification initiatives must be coupled with land-use, zoning, and development guideline decisions and policy that foster structured revitalization along the corridor, such as that proposed in the West End. A corridor vision plan should be prepared for the east end of Ferguson Township to put the corridor development in context with other pending developments proposed for the Township’s “Town Center” area. Some key items the plan should help to define include:

- existing structures that are viable for adaptive re-use
- revitalization potential of land parcels fronting on the golf course
- revitalization potential of highway-oriented parcels
- market program potential for the corridor that is not duplicated elsewhere in Ferguson Township
- state and local levels of capital improvement funding that would be needed to improve the corridor
- potential for residential revitalization of historically-commercial properties
- traffic impact analysis of proposed changes in land-use or roadways in the area.



Above is a typical service commercial land uses along the West College Avenue corridor in Ferguson Township.



Above are industrial suppliers and contractor services along the West College Avenue corridor.



Automotive-oriented businesses on the corridor have little or no room for outdoor amenities.



Above are current conditions along West College Avenue approaching Corl Street.



The Butz Street residences are surrounded by incompatible commercial/employment development absent of adequate buffers.



Older apartment complexes that overlook the golf course may have a higher revitalization value than the current land-use.



Successful revitalization along the Ferguson Township - College Avenue corridor will require a vision plan and zoning overlay to be created to guide revitalization along the corridor.

Creating a Cohesive Identity – A New Brand - For the West End

Challenge 12: The West End must be rebranded from its current image as a dull and unattractive community to achieve a new identity as a genuine mixed-use, urban destination and livable community.

Goal 12: To establish a positive identity of the West End in the minds of residents, the broader community, and potential investors by establishing its uniqueness and creating a market need/opportunity for new homeowners and businesses.

The West End is one of State College's oldest neighborhoods and has a proud history and an active citizenry determined to build on that character and historical significance. Its vibrancy and sense of place, however, has been dulled over time. Previous rezoning efforts have not accomplished the Borough's goal to reshape the area into a true mixed-used neighborhood. Creating a new identify, while promoting the neighborhood's unique character and historical significance is a critical step toward rebranding the West End and generating a renewed interest in it as a unique, mixed-use neighborhood. This will increase pride in the

neighborhood, help draw businesses and new residents, and improve the community’s perception.

Action 12A: West End marketing strategy – A comprehensive marketing strategy for the West End should be developed to promote and advertise the community.

Among recommended initiatives are:

- Press conferences
- press releases, letters to newspapers
- neighborhood tours (combined with the Holmes-Foster/Highlands historic tours)
- hosting breakfasts with local politicians and leaders
- distributing brochures about the neighborhood
- drafting annual reports of new projects and improvements in the area
- block parties are just a few of the recommended initiatives that should be undertaken.

Action 12B: West End logo - develop a West End logo to promote the neighborhood.

A logo would provide an identifying “trademark” to promote the neighborhood’s unique identity and historical significance. The logo would be used by community organizations, businesses, and others to indicate neighborhood pride and provide geographic location. The logo should be easily identifiable, communicate few words, and be easily replicated. Consider hosting a contest for the logo design and encourage local artists to submit work. Local residents can adjudicate submissions.



This is the current State College, PA publication logo.



This is the Downtown Improvement District logo.



This is the logo from the Lancaster, PA Downtown Plan

Action 12C: West End signage and wayfinding

Develop and install street light banners and gateway entry and wayfinding signs that incorporate the West End logo to publicly communicate the distinctiveness and delineation of the community. This will help instill a sense of neighborhood pride in residents and business owners, and would support the overall marketing and business development efforts for the West End.



This is a sample of vehicular-oriented directional wayfinding signage system in Charlottesville, VA.

These are sample pedestrian-oriented wayfinding kiosks from Hagerstown, MD and Morgantown, WV.

Banners can be used seasonally or designed to celebrate the West End branding logo.

Initiative: Implementing the desired future land use pattern through new regulations

Challenge 13: The West End is one of the oldest developed communities in State College Borough and contains some of the most historically significant buildings within the Holmes-Foster/Highlands Historic District. The neighborhood’s past and current zoning has created a unique and ever-changing pattern of industrial, commercial, and residential uses. In fact, a 20-year history of zoning changes have created uncertainty for property owners and developers. Today, the predominant land use in the neighborhood is multi-family residential, primarily occupied by Penn State students. Several of the older buildings, especially those located along West College Avenue, originally were built as rooming houses for Penn State students. They have remained as student housing to the current time. Many other student housing buildings have been converted to apartments from dwellings, formerly used as lower density residential dwellings.

Goal 13: To codify the vision established in the West End Revitalization Plan.

Action 13A: Create a new comprehensive zoning district to replace the existing Urban Village District to support the preferred land use pattern depicted in the Plan concept illustration and foster revitalization opportunities. The new zoning district should:

- Promote a variety of residential uses, such as single-family units (single-family detached, duplexes, townhouses, row houses, apartments, condominiums, lofts), multi-family units to accommodate student and senior housing. Provide residential units above first-floor retail space and live/work units.
- Promote retail commercial uses intended for small- to medium-sized shopping and service facilities to meet the needs of an immediate service area. These should have minimal impact on contiguous neighborhoods and downtown merchants.
- Include development and performance standards for new development.
- Include specific design guidelines for new and existing development.
- Include more effective parking management and design standards.
- Consider inclusionary housing standards to encourage attainable, workforce housing for young families, entry-level professionals, and retired persons.

New zoning considerations should also be considered by Ferguson Township to provide a uniform transition along West College Avenue.

Strengthen Property Code Monitoring and Enforcement

Challenge 14: The West End neighborhood's high proportion of rental properties poses significant challenges for property owners and code enforcement officers with respect to compliance with existing codes and regulations. In large measure, most properties within the West End Neighborhood are well maintained, but certain properties are visually unattractive to surrounding properties and residential neighborhoods. Regular monitoring of neighborhood for nuisances and code violations is needed to address these issues.

Goal 14: To promote orderly community development and improve economic vitality of the West End Neighborhood by improving its aesthetic appearance, health and safety.

Action 14A: Strengthen code monitoring and enforcement of all properties to ensure equal and fair compliance for all Borough of State College residents. This, in part, could be achieved by working closely with the Centre Region Council of Governments to regularly monitor the West End Neighborhood for nuisances and code violations.

Establishing the Leadership and Commitment for Plan Implementation

Challenge 15: The Borough of State College's Redevelopment Authority, as established under the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law (Act 385 of 1945), should be the key organization responsible for the Redevelopment Plan's implementation and maintenance. Pursuant to the Act, the Redevelopment Authority may exercise the powers necessary and convenient to carry out the purposes of the Act, including:

- Propose tax increment districts and the boundaries thereof.
- Cause project plans to be prepared and implement the provisions and effectuate the purposes of the plans.
- Issue tax increment bonds and notes.
- Deposit moneys into the tax increment fund of any tax increment district.
- Enter into any contracts or agreements, including agreements with bondholders, as necessary or convenient to implement the provisions and effectuate the purposes of project plans. The contracts or agreements may include conditions, restrictions, or covenants that run with the land or regulate its use.

In general, redevelopment authorities operate in situations where the private sector and/or local governments cannot effectively perform. The Authority operates very similarly to a small business, by obtaining funds for operating costs through the development and implementation of specific projects. The similarity ceases where the Authority only operates on blighted, deteriorated, or abandoned properties in cooperation with the local, county, state and federal governmental organization with jurisdiction. The Redevelopment Authority is also the mechanism for involving local leadership, citizens, institutions, and business as co-participants to make decisions affecting the West End. It includes merchants, property owners, and representatives of local government. The Redevelopment Authority has the potential to direct the resources and energies necessary to achieve successful implementation of the Revitalization Plan. The Redevelopment Authority can serve as a vehicle through which many individually owned parcels of land can be assembled for development or revitalization as an integrated whole. Although the private sector provides the largest dollar investment, local government should provide seed money.

Goal 15: To provide the leadership necessary to implement and maintain the West End Revitalization Plan

Action 15A: Capitalize the Redevelopment Authority.

Capitalizing the Redevelopment Authority will be a crucial first step once the articles of incorporation have been received from the Pennsylvania Department of State. To be successful, the Redevelopment Authority must have a source of funding to achieve its objectives under the West End Revitalization Plan and future revitalization initiatives within the Borough. This can be achieved in a variety of ways. Initially the appropriation of funds or allocation of existing funds can provide funding while the issuance of bonds and procurement of grants are other sources. Moreover, the Redevelopment Authority could generate its own funds through the lease or sale of properties that it has acquired. More importantly, the Redevelopment Authority should become financially self sufficient through its activities.

Action 15B: Consider the financial and staffing requirements for operating the Redevelopment Authority. One significant advantage that the Redevelopment Authority offers is the opportunity to de-politicize the revitalization process and free the Borough Council and Planning Department staff from both the micro-management of development decisions and likely conflict of interest situations that it would face under the land development process. To achieve these objectives, the Redevelopment Authority would need to become a new, independent entity separate from the Borough; meaning that the Redevelopment Authority would be delegated the authority to, among others: hire staff and retain other services; purchase, rent, or lease equipment, supplies, etc.; purchase, lease, option and hold property (or property rights); borrow funds; apply for and administer grants; and form partnerships with other entities as they deem appropriate.

Action 15C: Declare the West End as a revitalization area. The Redevelopment Authority and the Borough Planning Commission should certify the West End as a revitalization area so as to require revitalization to occur under the provisions and authorities of the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, Act 385 of 1945. A revitalization area can only be established by making a “finding of fact” based on any one or more of the seven criteria defined by the act:

1. inadequate planning of the area
2. excessive coverage of lands by buildings
3. unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded conditions of dwellings
4. lack of proper light, air, and open space
5. defective design and arrangement of buildings
6. faulty street and lot layout
7. economically and socially undesirable land uses.

Figure 12
Phase 1 Revitalization Plan



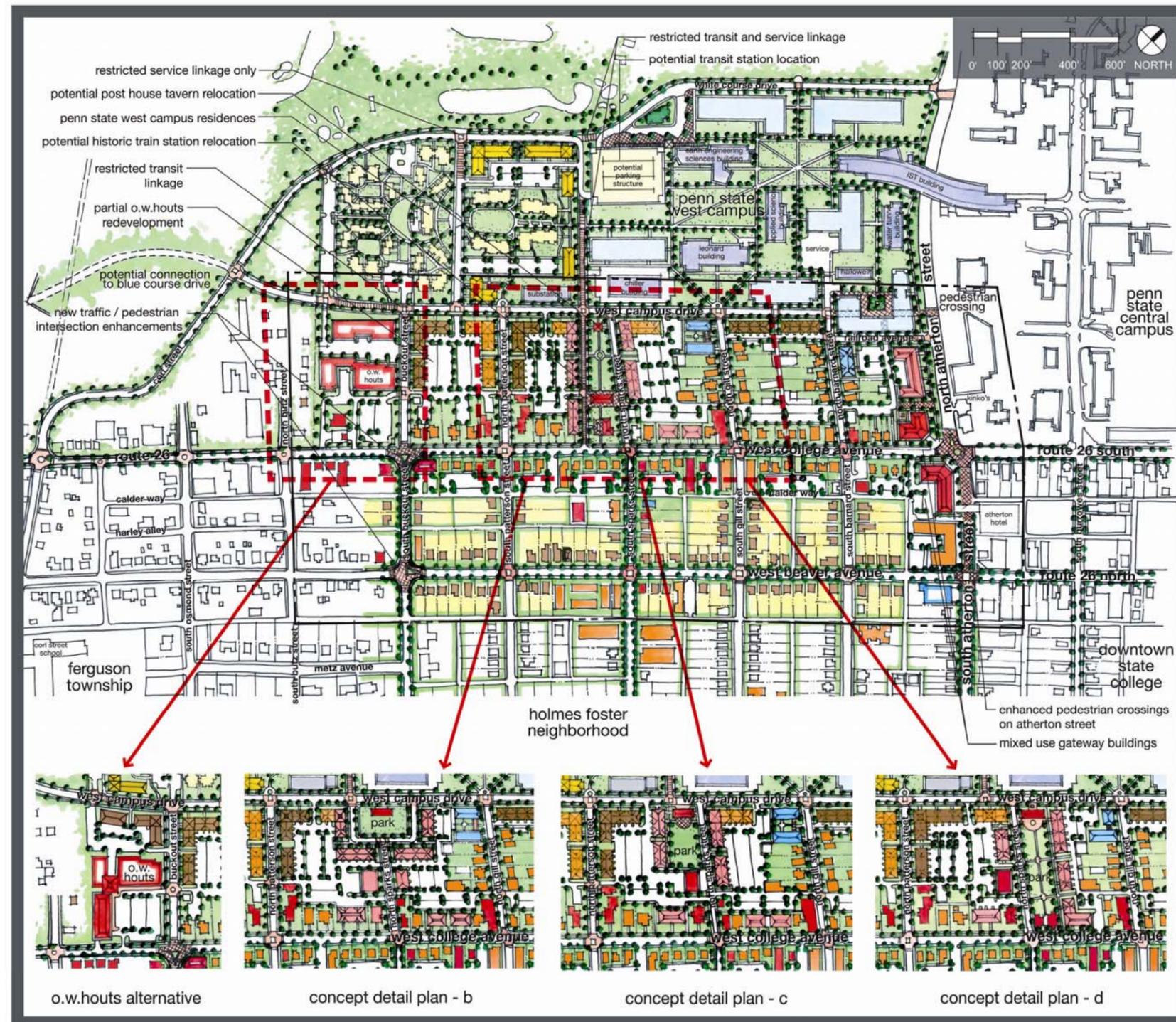
West End Revitalization Phase 1 Revitalization Plan

Legend

- west end village boundary
- single-family residences and very low density in-home apartments
- low density apartments and live-work residences
- infill apartments
- infill owner occupied 'work force' housing - townhomes/condos and/or lofts
- mixed-use - commercial/office with residential above
- small scale, commercial uses within existing structures
- larger scale, infill commercial/business or mixed-use development
- civic building uses
- surface parking
- existing penn state student residential
- potential future penn state student residential
- existing penn state academic buildings
- potential future penn state academic buildings
- potential future parking structure

state college, pa

Figure 13
Phase 2 Revitalization Plan



West End Revitalization phase 2 revitalization plan

legend

- west end village boundary
- single-family residences and very low density in-home apartments
- low density apartments and live-work residences
- infill apartments
- infill owner occupied 'work force' housing - townhomes/condos and/or lofts
- mixed-use - commercial/office with residential above
- small scale, commercial uses within existing structures
- larger scale, infill commercial/business or mixed-use development
- civic building uses
- surface parking
- existing penn state student residential
- potential future penn state student residential
- existing penn state academic buildings
- potential future penn state academic buildings
- potential future parking structure

state college, pa

Implementation Strategy

Introduction

The process of developing a vision and plan for the West End will remain simply an exercise if a comprehensive, realistic, and actionable implementation plan is not developed to transform the community's vision into reality. The State College Borough began the process of planning for the future of the West End with the market assessment completed in 2005. Through the current planning process, much has been accomplished with regard to building consensus among residents, businesses, property owners, and municipal officials about the future of the West End. The revitalization options for revitalization depicted in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Revitalization Plans (Figure 12 and Figure 13) are the culmination of the input derived in the planning process. While this has been a successful endeavor, a significant amount of work remains to be done.

Implementation strategies related to policy, organizational, infrastructure, and other improvements could begin now, setting the framework for the West End. Issues such as creating a unique identity, making beautification and streetscape improvements, creating gateways, managing parking, improving linkages with the Penn State West Campus, fostering economically viable real estate development, and implementing appropriate developing zoning and design guidelines must be addressed and resolved. The West End plan will help define and guide the revitalization process and act as the foundation for an implementation plan.

The following elements should be included in the implementation plan to ensure that it is effective in meeting the needs of the West End.

Broaden Community Base

Reinforcing and expanding community participation is an essential element of successful Plan implementation. A diverse community base provides credibility for the Plan and augments available resources. Several important "first steps" should take place immediately on the commencement of the implementation process.

- Conduct outreach to reinvigorate members of the planning process who may have become disengaged.
- Recruit additional participants who bring resources and expertise to match implementation action items.
- Establish the groundwork for creative community partnerships.

Establish an Implementation "Toolbox"

The planning and visioning process undertaken during the development of the Plan has identified a catalog of enhancements and changes stakeholders would like to see implemented to improve the West End. Using this catalog as a template, the implementation strategy

includes an inventory of existing resources available to implement each specific action described in the Plan. These resources include funding sources, government /private organizations, and other community and infrastructure development programs. The Borough will have to take action to assign costs (both human and financial) associated with the application of each resource, and establish primary oversight and management of each segment of the Plan.

Establish Priorities

The study recommends three phases in the implementation schedule:

- Phase I – actions completed in 1 to 2 years
- Phase II – actions completed in 3 to 5 years
- Phase III – actions completed in 6 to 10 years

Assign Responsibility

Lack of action is possibly the greatest threat to any community plan. Designating particular stakeholders and / or organizations to take the lead role in pursuing implementation of plan elements has several advantages.

- provides stakeholder control and engagement in the process
- establishes accountability for task implementation
- imparts process continuity from planning through implementation.

The recently formed State College Redevelopment Authority is a common thread among many of the actions described in the Plan. The Redevelopment Authority can play a major supportive role to provide the mechanism to advance negotiate deals with developers, and represent the interests of the Borough to implement the strategies outlined in the Plan.

As an initial step, the Borough will have to assess the staffing and financial capacities needed to operate the Redevelopment Authority. Both will be essential to take the West End revitalization actions forward. They will need to begin to capitalize it through bonds or other financial instruments and should assume the management role to advance the strategy for the West End District.

Under the *Urban Redevelopment Law 53 P.S. Section 1710*, the Authority should develop a revitalization proposal that identifies potential properties targeted for revitalization within the West End District. The revitalization plan should identify the following information:

- the boundaries of the area, with a map showing the existing uses of the real property therein;
- a land use plan of the area showing proposed uses following revitalization;
- standards of population densities, land coverage and building intensities in the proposed development;

- a preliminary site plan of the area;
- a statement of the proposed changes, if any, in zoning ordinances or maps;
- a statement of any proposed changes in street layouts, street levels, and proposed traffic regulation, including the separation or exclusion of vehicular traffic partially or totally from pedestrian traffic;
- a statement of the extent and effect of the re-housing of families which may be made necessary from the revitalization area plan, and the manner in which such re-housing may be accomplished;
- a statement of the estimated cost of acquisition of the revitalization area, and of all other costs necessary to prepare the area for revitalization; and
- a statement of such continuing controls as may be deemed necessary to effectuate the purpose of the revitalization act.

The Redevelopment Authority, working with the Borough, can identify parcels and negotiate the transfer of land currently owned by the Borough to the Redevelopment Authority. The Authority can act as the catalyst to partner with developers to assemble properties that can be redeveloped. In this capacity, the Authority assumes the management role and can support and extend the Borough's ability to advance the guiding principals for the transformation of the West End into a sustainable neighborhood that captures a diversity of housing and businesses to define the community character long sought from property owners and residents.

Celebrate and Communicate Successes

By establishing a system for providing information to area stakeholders, residents and the community at large regarding the progress of projects, can share in celebrating successes and build on momentum in the implementation process.

Implementation Strategy Matrix

	West End Revitalization Plan Implementation Matrix	Partners		Implementation Schedule (Years)		
		Public	Private/NP	1 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10
IMPROVING THE WEST END'S VISUAL APPEARANCE						
CHALLENGE 1	The West End has not seen significant public infrastructure investment in over three decades, making it very tired looking and difficult to market.					
Goal 1	To update and enhance the West End's infrastructure, utilities and public realm amenities to create a marketable image, stimulate private investment and provide a quality setting for residents and businesses.					
Action 1A	Redefine the West End's and Borough Center's gateway image.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X		
Action 1B	Redefine the walkway, bikeway and streetscape hierarchy throughout the West End.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X	X	X
IMPROVING THE WEST END'S INFRASTRUCTURE						
CHALLENGE 2	Equally important to streetscape beautification initiatives are the above and below ground utility/infrastructure upgrades that are typically required to foster redevelopment in older neighborhoods like the West End.					
Goal 2	To improve the West End Neighborhood's above and below ground infrastructure.					
Action 2A	Focus infrastructure and utility upgrades in areas of highest redevelopment potential.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X	X	
PROVIDING ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE FOR THE WEST END						
CHALLENGE 3	The West End is void of any significant centralized park, plaza or open space resources for residents and patrons to enjoy.					
Goal 3	To create a series of new park and open space amenities that promote environmental preservation in the West End, with linkages to surrounding public open spaces in the Holmes-Foster/Highland Neighborhood and Penn State's West Campus.					
Action 3A	Create a new "Community Quadrangle" park commons north of College Avenue.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X		
Action 3B	Encourage additional West End private property pocket parks.	Borough	X	X	X	X

PROVIDING A PEDESTRIAN-FOCUSED AND -FRIENDLY WEST END ENVIRONMENT					
CHALLENGE 4	The West End is largely dominated by auto and truck oriented roadway systems with little attention given to the quality of the pedestrian, transit rider or cyclist experience throughout the district.				
Goal 4	To redefine and enhance the street and walkway system hierarchy to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and movement throughout the West End.				
Action 4A	Conduct a traffic calming study of the West End area to substantiate needed traffic calming improvements.	Borough, PennDOT, MPO, University	X	X	
Action 4B	Introduce Route 26 one-way loop, traffic-calming measures for safer pedestrian street crossings in the West End.	Borough, PennDOT, MPO			X
Action 4C	Improve north-south pedestrian and bike linkages between the West End and West Campus.	Borough, University	X		X
Action 4D	Establish a West Campus Drive pedestrian and bike trail linking the Central Campus with the West End, West Campus, and golf course trails to the west.	Borough, University, MPO			X
IMPROVING THE WEST END'S VEHICULAR TRAFFIC CIRCULATION					
CHALLENGE 5	On-Street vehicular circulation for the blocks north of College Avenue is confusing and difficult to navigate due to dead end configurations. Also, many of the internal block alley systems are congested by disorganized private parking.				
Goal 5	To improve traffic circulation through the Village by providing more choices for access and encouraging a dispersed approach to traffic and parking in the West End.				
Action 5A	Remove the remnant portions of Railroad Avenue between North Barnard Street and North Sparks Street.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, University, PennDOT			X
Action 5B	Extend West Campus Drive to the east to link with North Gill and North Barnard Streets.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, University			X
IMPROVING THE WEST END'S PARKING AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT					
CHALLENGE 6	Parking poses one of the greatest challenges to the West End's revitalization effort and therefore, must be better managed and enforced to achieve the desired outcomes for the plan. The current parking situation is not properly managed and creates extreme inefficiencies for long-term parking and does not provide adequate short-term/high turnover usage for business owners.				
Goal 6	To implement a more effective parking and access management program for the West End and encourage on- and off-street parking strategies that support a vibrant, neighborhood-based mix of retail, service and residential uses.				
Action 6A	Institute an overall parking and access management strategy for the West End.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority		X	

PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WEST END						
CHALLENGE 7	The West End has a unique, eclectic character that is gradually being lost to inappropriate changes in building materials, construction techniques, space conversions, demolition and economical, yet bland, architectural design. The evidence and appreciation for the neighborhood's heritage and history is diminishing to a point where immediate intervention must occur to protect what remains.					
Goal 7	To celebrate West End's cultural and architectural heritage through conservation and/or preservation and sensitive adaptive reuse of contributing structures to the Holmes-Foster/Highland Historic District and railway heritage of the area.					
Action 7A	Establish a required development/design guidelines process and compatibility review process for the district's historic structures and new construction.	Borough	X	X		
Action 7B	Relocate historic structures to designated sites in the West End.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, University	X		X	
Action 7C	Preserve, adapt and re-use contributing structures to the Holmes-Foster/Highland Historic District in the West End, while encouraging new business locations that meet neighborhood needs.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X		
DIVERSIFYING THE WEST END'S HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES						
CHALLENGE 8	The West End has gradually become a homogeneous, renter population that is continuing to spread into and displace owner-occupied homes and families in the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood to the south.					
Goal 8	To create a well-balanced mix of owner-occupied and rental housing units for all age and income types.					
Action 8A	Reinforce single-family home ownership on Beaver Avenue and the side streets between College Avenue and Beaver Avenue.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, Ferguson Township	X		X	
Action 8B	Encourage live-work residential infill along College and Beaver Avenues.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X		X	
Action 8C	Encourage workforce-oriented housing to be developed on underutilized sites that are not currently used for rental income.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X		X	
INCREASING NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE, RETAIL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES						
CHALLENGE 9	The need to promote and foster retail commercial activities that serve the local area and have minimal impact on surrounding residential uses and existing Downtown State College businesses is necessary to diversify the local tax base and provide the essential mix of uses that support a true sense of place for West End residents.					
Goal 9	To encourage sensitive commercial growth along College Avenue and limited professional office growth along Beaver Avenue.					
Action 9A	Retain and build upon current commercial establishments by attracting new businesses.	Borough	X	X		

ENCOURAGING OPTIMAL REDEVELOPMENT OF SITES WITHIN THE WEST END					
CHALLENGE 10		There are a handful of small vacant lots or underutilized parking sites in the West End that could be better utilized as immediate short-term redevelopment sites for infill commercial, mixed-use or residential use.			
Goal 10		To promote the redevelopment of abandoned, underutilized and environmentally damaged properties.			
Action 10A	Focus sensitive scaled infill development on currently vacant sites.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X	
Action 10B	Encourage future higher density, mixed-use redevelopment of the eastern gateway sites.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X		X
Action 10C	Encourage institutional and mixed-use redevelopment of the block defined by Barnard Street, West Campus Drive, Atherton Street and College Avenue.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, University	X		X
Action 10D	Encourage owner occupied workforce housing infill development on the block defined by Gill Street.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X	
Action 10E	Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment redevelopment and owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Sparks Street, West Campus Drive, Gill Street and College Avenue.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X		X
Action 10F	Encourage a mix of commercial/apartment redevelopment and infill owner occupied workforce housing development on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Sparks Street and College Avenue.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X	X	
Action 10G	Encourage apartment redevelopment and owner occupied workforce housing infill on the block defined by Patterson Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street and College Avenue.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X		X
Action 10H	Encourage commercial building revitalization and woodshop infill on the block defined by Butz Street, West Campus Drive, Buckout Street and College Avenue.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, Ferguson Township	X		X
CREATING A SEAMLESS, COHESIVE URBAN ENVIRONMENT					
CHALLENGE 11		Historically, the West End, Penn State's West Campus, and Ferguson Township have developed in a manner where each has backed onto the other with little attention given to blending and linking the three areas together.			
Goal 11		To better integrate the West End's environs with Penn State University's West Campus and Ferguson Township's highway commercial corridor, to create a seamless, cohesive urban environment that benefits all.			
Action 11A	Implement the Corl Street extension to the proposed future West Campus parking structure.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, Penn State University, CATA	X	X	
Action 11B	Consider a new transit/transfer station and a north-south transit linkage between West Campus and the West End with future West Campus development.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, Penn State University, CATA			X
Action 11C	Consider infill of additional West Campus graduate student residential buildings.	University, Ferguson Township	X	X	
Action 11D	Pursue West College Avenue streetscape and gateway improvements with PennDOT.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority	X		X
Action 11E	Conduct a West College Avenue corridor redevelopment study in Ferguson Township.	Borough, Ferguson Township		X	

CREATING A COHESIVE IDENTITY – A NEW BRAND – FOR THE WEST END						
CHALLENGE 12 The West End must be rebranded from its current image as a dull and unattractive community to achieve a new identity as a genuine mixed use, urban destination and livable community.						
Goal 12 To establish a positive identity of the West End in the minds of the residents, the broader community, and potential investors by establishing its uniqueness, creating a market need and opportunities for new homeowners and businesses alike.						
Action 12A	Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for the West End to promote and advertise the community.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, Penn State University, Ferguson Township		X		
Action 12B	Develop a West End logo to establish an identity and promote the new district name.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, Penn State University, Ferguson Township		X		
Action 12C	Develop and install street light banners, gateway entry and way finding signs.	Borough, Redevelopment Authority, Penn State University, Ferguson Township	X	X		
IMPLEMENT THE DESIRED FUTURE LAND USE PATTERN THROUGH NEW REGULATIONS						
CHALLENGE 13 The West End's past and current zoning has created a unique and ever-changing pattern of industrial, commercial and residential uses, and much uncertainty for property owners and developers.						
Goal 13 To codify the vision established in the West End Revitalization Plan.						
Action 13A	Create a new comprehensive zoning district code and development guidelines to support the preferred land use pattern and foster the redevelopment opportunities depicted in the West End Revitalization Plan.	Borough		X		
STRENGTHEN PROPERTY CODE MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT						
CHALLENGE 14 The West End's high proportion of rental properties poses significant challenges for property owners and code enforcement officers with respect to compliance with existing codes and regulations.						
Goal 14 To promote orderly community development and improve economic vitality of the West End by improving its aesthetic appearance, health and safety.						
Action 14A	Strengthen code monitoring and enforcement of all properties to ensure equal and fair compliance for all State College Borough residents.	Borough, Centre Region Council of Governments (Centre Region Code Administration Agency)		X		
ESTABLISH THE LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION						
CHALLENGE 15 The Redevelopment Authority has the potential to direct the resources and energies necessary to achieve successful implementation of the revitalization strategy.						
Goal 15 To provide the leadership necessary to implement and maintain the West End Revitalization Plan.						
Action 15A	Capitalize the Redevelopment Authority.	Borough	X	X		
Action 15B	Consider the financial and staffing requirements for operating the Redevelopment Authority.	Borough		X		
Action 15C	Declare the West End as a redevelopment area so as to require redevelopment to occur under the provisions and authorities of the Urban Redevelopment Law.	Borough		X		

Public Funding Matrix

AGENCY	PROGRAM	USE	CHALLENGE	MATCHING FUNDS	AMOUNT
PennDOT	Transportation Enhancement Program	Preserve Historic Transportation Facilities Rails to Trails Bike and Pedestrian Facilities Streetscapes	2,4,5,6,11	20% Local 80% Federal	\$200,000 – \$1,500,00
DCED	Elm Street	Revitalization of residential and mixed use neighborhoods	1,2,7,9,11,12	10% Local	\$250,000 Maximum
DCED	Main Street	Downtown revitalization	1,2,7,12	\$1 – \$1 at local to state basis, priority shown to projects showing \$3 local match for \$1 in state funds	Main Street: \$115,000 over a 5-year period; Downtown Reinvestment and Anchor Building components: up to \$250,000 or not to exceed 30% of project costs
Office of the Budget	Revitalization Assistance Capital Program (RACP)	Acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic and historical improvement projects	8,10	50% Local 50% State	Determined by project
DCNR	Growing Greener II	Infrastructure improvement/creation Renovation Community Development	2,3,4	No required match level, but matching should be demonstrated, usually \$1 to \$1.	\$250,000-\$500,000
DCED	Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Brownfield revitalization, Environmental Assessment, Infrastructure improvements/creation	10	N/A	\$5,000,000 Maximum Guarantee
Federal Appropriations	Transit Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities	Provides funding for acquisition of buses for fleet service expansion and bus related facilities	11	80% Federal 16 2/3% State 3 1/3% Local	Varies
PA Housing Finance Agency	Home Ownership Program (HOP)	The development of single family for-sale homes in neighborhoods that have lost residents and investment and which have been unused or underutilized sites	8,10	HCP funding must be matched by the sponsoring organization on at least a one-to-one basis. 50% of the match requirement being provided by the municipality	Varies
PA Housing Finance Agency	Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI)	Promotes the development and renovation of existing structures and construction of new in-fill single family homes, for purchase, in urban neighborhoods and core communities.	8,10	Support based on a \$1 to \$1 basis by local applicants. A minimum of 50% must be contributed by local government	Varies

AGENCY	PROGRAM	USE	CHALLENGE	MATCHING FUNDS	AMOUNT
PennDOT	Safe Routes to School	The Program provides funds to the States to substantially improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely.	2,4	No local match permitted	Over \$4,400,000 allocated to Pennsylvania in 2007
DCNR	Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2)	Grant funding to counties, communities, and non-profit organizations for conservation planning and the acquisition of land for local parks, greenways, open space preservation and natural areas protection	3, 4	Projects carry an 80/20 cash match requirement. The only exception is acquisition projects, which carry a 50/50 match requirement, which can include soft match (e.g. donated funds, right-of-way).	Pennsylvania has received around \$1 million a year in allocated funding. These monies must be distributed according to the following formula: (1) 40% for diverse trail use, (2) 30% for motorized trail use, and (3) 30% for non-motorized trail use.
PHMC	Reinvestment Investment Tax Credit	This tax credit allows certain expenses incurred with the rehabilitation of older buildings to be eligible for either a 10% (for non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936) or 20% (for certified historic structures, including buildings built after 1936) tax credit rate.	7	N/A	The building must be income producing and rehabilitated according to the Secretary of Interior's <i>Standard for Rehabilitation</i> . The amount must be greater than the adjusted basis of the building, or be at least \$5,000, and the owner must continue to own the building for at least five years.
DCED	Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP)	Provides grant funds for the preparation of community comprehensive plans and the ordinances to implement	11	50% state 50% grantee	Varies
Veterans Administration	Loan Guarantee Program for Transitional Housing	This program is intended to promote the development and operation of multifamily transitional housing for homeless veterans.	10	Projects funded under a program guaranteed loan must include funds and/or the substantial provision of property or services by a state or local government or a nongovernmental entity or entities.	VA will guarantee 100 percent of the unpaid principal balance and accrued interest on the program funds disbursed by FFB.
DCED	Transportation Revitalization District (TRID)	Supports planning activities that will define and create a Transit Revitalization Investment District.	4,11	75% State 25% Local	\$75,000 Maximum
DCNR	Conservation Landscapes Initiatives (CLI)	Program designed by DCNR that identify initiatives to assist with their resource allocation, decision-making and broad thinking.	3,4	N/A	Varies

AGENCY	PROGRAM	USE	CHALLENGE	MATCHING FUNDS	AMOUNT
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Two components: Entitlement program which provides annual funding to designated municipalities. Competitive program is available to all non-federal entitlement municipalities.	8,10	Entitlement funding is set by formula.	Entitlement funding is set by formula; Competitive Program - \$500,000 maximum.
DCED	Neighborhood Assistance Program	Programs must serve clients who are low-income and residents of economically distressed neighborhoods specified by the neighborhood organization. Projects must fall under one of the following categories: Housing; education; health and social services; community development; job training; crime prevention; and community participation.	8,10	A cash commitment for one or more business sponsors for the project totaling not less than \$100,000 per year for a period not less than five years. In-kind contributions may not be used to meet this requirement.	Total tax credit for any single business is limited to \$350,000 annually.
PennDOT	Hometown Streets	Program used to encourage the reinvestment and revitalization of downtowns with streetscape improvements that are vital to establishing downtowns and commercial centers.	1,3,12	Reimbursable funding up to 80% of projects total cost, with a match of at least 20%.	Varies
Federal Highway Administration	Surface Transportation Program (STP)	Provides funding that may be used on any federal-aid highway including the NHS, bridge projects on any public road, transit capital projects, and intracity and intercity bus terminals and facilities. Program funds are accessed through the Transportation Improvements Program (TIP) and administered by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission	1,5	The Federal share is generally 80 percent, subject to the sliding scale adjustment. When the funds are used for Interstate projects to add high occupancy vehicle or auxiliary lanes, but not other lanes, the Federal share may be 90 percent, also subject to the sliding scale adjustment.	Apportioned funds are to be distributed based on the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25% based on total lane miles of Federal-aid highways - 40% based on vehicle miles traveled on lanes on Federal-aid highways - 35% based on estimated tax payments attributable to highway users in the States into the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund (often referred to as "contributions" to the Highway Account) Each State is to receive a minimum of 1/2% of the funds apportioned for STP.