

DOWNTOWN HAZLETON

Strategic Plan for Continued Revitalization





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strategic plan for continued
revitalization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan was completed with the cooperative efforts of a number of people, businesses, institutions, and organizations. They are recognized for their outstanding efforts, support, and cooperation in the development of this planning document.

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Dedication



In early January the Alliance sadly lost one of its Legacy Committee members and a passionate advocate of downtown Hazleton. Arthur J Whitaker Jr, age 82, passed away on January 2, 2015. Art began his career in the investment industry in 1960 by joining his father at the investment

firm of Brooks & Company, which was located in the Markle Building. This launched his lifelong career as an investment advisor, a job he enjoyed right up until his passing. In 1993, his son Alan joined him to continue the family tradition, which began in 1924. Together they established The Whitaker Investment Group, which is located in the Markle building. We extend our deepest sympathy to the Whitaker family, and dedicate this report in his memory.

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On the Cover:

The patina of Downtown Hazleton can be discovered in the diversity of form and function along Broad Street giving depth and character to the on-going revitalization efforts that continue in the core downtown.



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MISSION, PURPOSE, CORE VALUES, VISION and GOALS

MISSION

The mission of the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress is to provide sustainable leadership, direction, and support for the successful, efficient revitalization and long-term success of downtown Hazleton.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategic plan is to build consensus among partners, establish goals, and develop priorities for the implementation of activities that will continue to revitalize downtown Hazleton and make it a desirable place to work, live, and visit.

CORE VALUES

The plan's recommendations are based upon the core values that built the immigrant community over a century ago: hard work, family, food, faith, and community. These values are infused with a new attitude that embraces diversity and culture, encourages entrepreneurship and innovation, and celebrates its mining, industrial, and financial heritage.

VISION

Downtown Hazleton is a strong, competitive, and prosperous center for multicultural business growth, education, and entrepreneurship within Northeastern Pennsylvania that is enriched by unique retail shops and specialty services, casual and upscale dining and entertainment, and cultural institutions, events, and programs.

GOALS

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

We will elevate our local economy by cultivating new and existing businesses, supporting entrepreneurship, promoting higher-education expansion, expanding and enriching existing arts and cultural destinations, and expanding residential density.

MARKETING & PROMOTION

We will elevate our image and identity by developing a unique brand, establishing a full special events calendar, utilizing social media, generating positive media coverage, celebrating successes, and increasing community pride.

DESIGN

We will elevate the quality of our physical environment by creating public green spaces, investing in our historic building stock, and continuing to improve our transportation corridors, all for the purpose of improving the downtown experience and quality of life.

PLACEMAKING (CLEAN, SAFE, AND GREEN)

We will elevate our sense of place by helping to keep our downtown clean, and enhancing safety and security.

ORGANIZATION

We will elevate our organization by following the Main Street model, encouraging volunteer participation, cooperating with media outlets, building partnerships and maintaining open dialogue with institutional and non-profit partners, and engaging with the local real estate community.



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HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The following historical summary of downtown Hazleton was written by Charles F. McElwee and prepared in cooperation with, and courtesy of, the Greater Hazleton Historical Society & Museum.

Historical Summary

Hazleton always seemed larger in size, its perceived length and width incommensurate with its urban scale. Nothing could properly measure the self-contained pride that swelled the hilly locale's expanse. It is a pride that germinated in the wilderness, extended its roots in anthracite coal, formed its stem through industry and enterprise, and blossomed into a bouquet of many cultures that made Hazleton its familial garden. Over the course of two centuries, this pride evolved and prospered, scrambled and adapted. It's a pride with many forms and interpretations, a state of mind that lingers in the city's neighborhoods. Regardless of perspective, generations of Hazletonians associated the source of this pride with the city's core—the downtown.

Downtown Hazleton was born on an impenetrable plateau, high on Spring Mountain and deep within what was labeled St. Anthony's Wilderness. In the 18th century, Moravian missionaries navigated the rugged, swampy terrain, naming the mountaintop "Hasel Swamp" after the forest's abundant hazel bushes. In spite of the topography and weather, settlers continued to pass through the swamp. They followed an ancient Indian path, which became part of the Lehigh & Susquehanna Turnpike. By 1809, a stagecoach stop and tavern opened along the path, and a village grid slowly spread. The turnpike became locally known as Broad Street, and the wooded road offered a quick respite for wearied travelers. It was also prime territory for lumbering. Nobody suspected the hidden carbon resource that would transform this remote settlement.

When anthracite coal was discovered in 1826, the United States remained in the embryonic stages of its industrial development. Early settlers invested in coal extraction, building operations that surrounded the downtown. Increased demand required a labor force, and operators found their answer in European discord. This industry first brought large numbers of English, Welsh, and German immigrants to the coal fields surrounding Hazleton. In the 1840s, Irish immigrants escaping the Great Famine found work as mining laborers and settled in shanties along Mine Street. Germans also opened shops and built factories. Waves of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe made Hazleton their destination, arriving through the remainder of the 19th century and living within walking distance of the thriving downtown. Accepting lower wages, they slowly displaced the older nationalities in the coal fields. By 1910, the majority of anthracite miners were Poles, Slovaks, Italians, Lithuanians, and Russians.



Above: A bustling W. Broad Street in the 1940s.

Below: A group of Hazleton area miners from the early 20th century.



Historical Summary

Hazleton's founding families profited from the world's richest anthracite veins. The Pardees, Markles, Eckleys, and Coxes built grand mansions in or near the downtown. They endowed distinguished Northeastern universities, their names still adorning the academic buildings of these institutions. They built banks that resembled Greek and Roman temples—tributes to their wealth, ingenuity, and the permanence of their investment. Their coal mines fueled trains, heated homes, and played a critical role in the Civil War. Continued demand only made the Mountain City bigger. By the turn of the century, Hazleton was one of the country's fastest growing cities.

Other industries emerged in the downtown, from shirt factories to bakeries. A French silk magnate, Jean L. Duplan, acquiesced to intense community lobbying and built the world's largest silk mill off North Wyoming Street. But anthracite coal still dominated Hazleton's economy. It also divided the city's multiethnic labor force.

Mining operations engendered a culture of servility, which only intensified preexisting ethnic tensions. Each immigrant group overcame its struggles and sense of inferiority by building beautiful churches, cultural monuments to homelands that still surround the downtown.



Top: The Capitol Theatre, located between the Hotel Altamont and HNB Building, opened in 1926 and operated until 1963. The building continued to house downtown stores until it was destroyed by fire in 1982.

Middle: A view of Broad Street in the 1920s, looking east towards the historic Hotel Altamont

Bottom: Sidewalk sale along Broad Street in the 1970s.



Historical Summary

All ethnic groups, however divided they became, congregated downtown. Over 30 languages could be heard on Broad or Wyoming Street, adding flavor to a commercial district that could blend in Philadelphia or New York. The downtown also united these groups through the labor movement. It was in the Grand Theatre that John Mitchell presided over the United Mine Workers' vote on an industry-wide strike. The outcome resulted in one of the largest and most memorable strikes in U.S. history.

Downtown Hazleton was also defined by its many contrasts. Soot-covered miners walked alongside wealthy bankers; newspaper boys stood on street corners next to vagrants. Unfair labor practices abounded in a city known nationwide for its technological advancements and economic prosperity. It was the third city in the U.S. to enjoy a city-wide electric grid. When Thomas Edison visited the downtown, he marveled at its modern streetscape, and envisioned an electric trolley system for its main streets. The rail service, built on Belgian cobble streets, became a model for New York City.

The downtown also grew in density and diversity. In 1910, the Markle Bank building became Hazleton's first skyscraper. The white brick tower was Pennsylvania's first building constructed without a single piece of lumber. The Markle towered over booming department stores, boutiques, and retail shops operated by Jewish and Italian merchants.

Downtown Hazleton was also a regional center for entertainment. Over the course of several decades, eighth theatres operated within the downtown. The small city boasted a theatre scene unrivaled by other small Pennsylvania cities. Vaudeville acts from Broadway frequented the ornate stages. Standing before audiences of wide-ranging backgrounds, these acts could be made or broken in the Mountain City.

Theatres offered a source of distraction during World War I, when waves of second-generation European Americans fought overseas. The wartime demand for coal allowed Hazleton to enjoy unrivaled economic growth. As the Roaring Twenties dawned, Hazleton's cityscape developed. Broad Street transformed in 1922, when a special election was held to address the future of Pardee Square.

The square was situated on the downtown block on Broad Street between Church and Laurel Streets. Primeval trees dotted the property, concealing founding father Ario Pardee's mansion. City residents campaigned to turn Pardee Square into a park, with the mansion becoming either a community center or World War I memorial. Voters overwhelmingly voted against this proposal, and the square was leveled for commercial development.

Over the next decade, Parisian-trained architects constructed Hazleton's modern downtown. The Hotel Altamont, Masonic Temple, Bell Telephone Company building, Genetti's, Capitol Theatre, and Hazleton National Bank building replaced the square. The Leader Store added floors and Deisroth's built a new Art Deco building. The Traders Bank building was completed, awing passerby with its Gothic majesty. The Markle added a six-story addition to its fledgling operation. An electric sign, the largest in the state, flashed atop the building.

Downtown commerce endured the Great Depression and World War II. Matinees once again distracted the masses as fathers, sons, and brothers fought overseas. In the 1940s, the population approached 40,000, and the downtown bustled with energy. After the war, however, the demand for coal precipitously declined. When back-to-back hurricanes destroyed Hazleton's mines in the mid-1950s, the city faced an unemployment crisis. The Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce responded to this crisis by establishing CAN DO, an independent, non-profit organization that attracted manufacturing jobs and saved the city from complete economic collapse.

As the sixties dawned, the city explored how the downtown could remain the region's center of commercial activity. Hazleton embraced urban renewal projects and targeted the South Side, also known as the historic Irish neighborhood "Donegal Hill." The Downtown South project demolished 16 city blocks of residential and commercial buildings. The project's supporters believed that these designated "blighted" streets would transform into profitable development for the downtown. Among the landmarks lost were the Lehigh Valley Train Station, the Winfield Hotel, and the Liberty Band Hall. The project destroyed a main artery into Downtown Hazleton and displaced 184 families and 221 individuals.

Historical Summary

Instead of preventing blight, urban renewal caused the downtown's slow decline. Residences within walking distance of Broad and Wyoming were gone. The crowds that required police-enforced curfews faded away. Cars displaced pedestrians, and natives moved to new residential neighborhoods or found opportunities elsewhere. Downtown Hazleton followed the trend of many cities. Between the 1970s and 1990s, department stores closed, theatres dropped their curtains, and businesses ended leases.

In 1983, the Alliance to Revitalize Center City Hazleton (ARCH) was formed to restore what was lost. ARCH succeeded in improving the downtown streetscape. In addition, ARCH oversaw the conversion of the former Deisroth's and Kresge's department stores into the Broad Street Business Exchange. The project became a national model for other downtowns. But sadly, the shopping mall still reigned. By 2000, Hazleton's population was down to 23,000 and the downtown was a solemn reflection of its lively past. Hazleton now seemed smaller than how it was remembered.

But Downtown Hazleton is now experiencing a renaissance. Construction signals progress, and the downtown is witnessing levels of building activity unseen in decades. The Broad Street Corridor Project, completed in 2014, modernized the city's main thoroughfare by adding new sidewalks, trees, turning lanes, and ornamental street lights. Over the past decade, the Markle Building, now known as the Hayden Tower, was renovated by the Hayden family and Hazleton Development Company. The building has nearly full occupancy and people can now dine under the former banking room's coffered ceiling. The Pines Eatery & Spirits is a resurrected version of a beloved local restaurant, an elegant café and bistro in the heart of downtown

In 2013 the Hayden and DeAngelo families joined together to create the Downtown Hazleton Development (DHD) partnership, which is now jointly spearheading the downtown renewal. Currently undergoing renovation, the Traders Bank building is becoming the international headquarters for DBi Services, a global infrastructure company. The landmark's terracotta façade now shines like a new structure. The Hazleton National Bank building is also undergoing a restoration project and will result in new Class A commercial office space.

Each new business opening, preservation plan, and construction project is part of an alliance of local public-private stakeholders. In 2013, the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress (DHAP) was formed to oversee the direction and success of the center city's long-term revitalization. This plan is part of the cooperative effort to ensure a vibrant future for Downtown Hazleton.

From Second Fridays to historic walks, Hazletonian pride is resurfacing in the downtown. DHAP is embracing renewal with a façade improvement program and a plan to create a new arts and cultural center within the former Security Savings Bank. The downtown boasts unique foods and ethnic cuisine known statewide—whether it be cold pizza (pitz), pierogis, halupki, "Jimmy Dogs," or Victoria's chocolate sweets. Bakeries, cafes, and bodegas also line Broad and Wyoming Streets.

Below: 1920s view of the north side of Broad St. between Laurel and Wyoming. The Security Savings Bank building and the former Trevaskis art gallery and photography studio (now known as the Remember When building) are all that remain from this period.



Historical Summary

This plan testifies that there is a future for Downtown Hazleton. Its outcome will require the pride that shaped the city's history. It's the pride felt when 12,000 fans jammed Broad Street after Hazleton High School's 1938 state basketball championship. It burst with excitement when Kennedy visited the downtown during the final stretch of the 1960 presidential campaign. It impressed Charles Lindbergh, who spent a night at the Hotel Altamont after his plane was sidelined by fog. Theatre screens exhibited the pride during a Jack Palance movie, and Richard Harris, Sean Connery, and other stars felt the special energy while filming the "Molly Maguires." The pride shines beneath Harman-Geist's stadium lights during a football game. It's also embodied by Chicago Cubs Manager Joe Maddon, a proud native who has attested to "the Hazleton Way."

Downtown Hazleton remains an air-conditioned crossroads for many cultures. Although the highest city in Pennsylvania, immigrant groups continue to reach the mountain and open businesses in the downtown. A Philadelphia newspaper once observed that the city has "out-of-the-ordinary characteristics." It's this designation that always made Hazleton special. This strategic plan will ensure that Downtown Hazleton remains a unique regional destination, one that embodies the pride, hard work, commitment to family and community, big city attitude, and ethnic diversity that shaped its history. The downtown is rising--but on firm foundations--and with a new attitude that embraces its culture, encourages entrepreneurship and innovation, and celebrates its rich heritage.



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BACKGROUND and PROCESS

Background and Process

Development of Project Boundary

For the purposes of this plan, the downtown study area is a 130 acre area emanating from the intersection of Broad and Wyoming Streets.

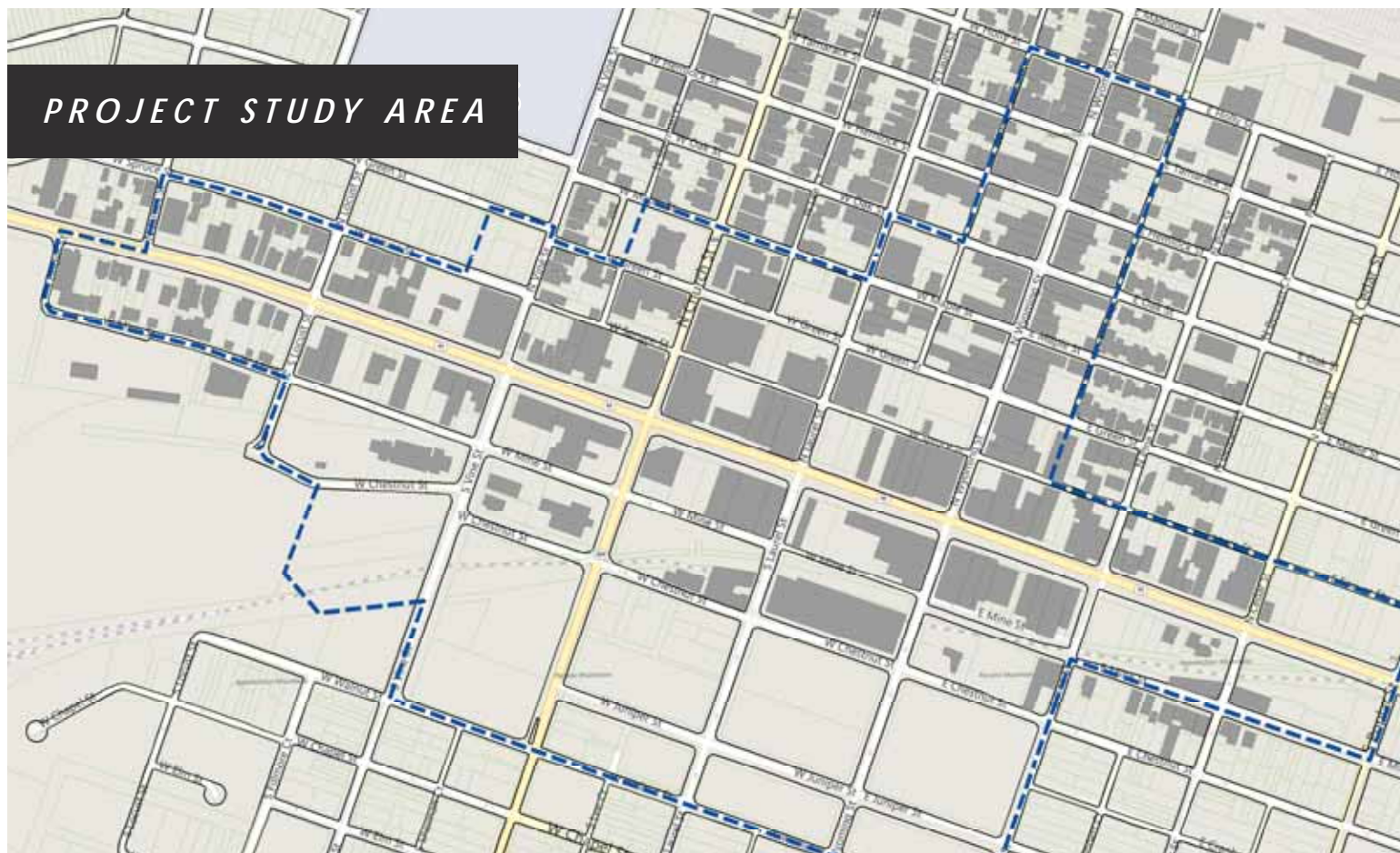
Currently, this area encompasses five (5) distinct zoning districts, as shown on the City of Hazleton Zoning Map:

- R-2 – Medium Density Residential
- R-3 – High Density Residential
- CC – Central Commercial District
- I-1 – Light Industrial
- OS – Open Space/Recreation

Additionally, many properties within the study area are subject to the Downtown Overlay District and subsequent guidance by the related Design Guidelines for appropriateness in this district.

Public Outreach and Stakeholder Inclusion

In Hazleton, planning for continued revitalization began with the outreach and targeted engagement of the current community. The process was both deliberate and intentional in the inclusion of key stakeholders and broad public input throughout.



Background and Process

Stakeholder Input

Working with the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress (DHAP), three information gathering meetings were held to solicit input and direction related to the planning project. The first outreach effort occurred during a May 15, 2014 special open house meeting promoting current and upcoming revitalization efforts in the community. Attendees were asked to complete a very early mission statement with adjectives describing the nature of the downtown in the future. This “mad-lib” style exercise and supporting images and word maps were on display and attendees were encouraged to complete the exercise throughout the event. The results of the input were gathered and appear in Appendix 1.



The second outreach meeting, on June 19, 2014, specifically focused on identifying keys to successful revitalization of downtown Hazleton. More than 30 attendees were divided into five groups, each of which focused on a key point of the Main Street/ Elm Street program. Each group developed a list of ideas and concepts that should be considered during the implementation of any revitalization projects to ensure measurable success. The specific keys to unlocking the inherent potential were captured and are contained in Appendix 2.

The final outreach meeting to gain input from the public, a broadly advertised and promoted public event, was held on July 8, 2014 at the former Altamont Hotel. That meeting was designed and executed to facilitate measurable input related to eighteen (18) essential physical elements of successful downtowns (heretofore known as the Character Preference exercise).

Character Preference

Describing how something should look or exist in the future can be a very nebulous and therefore anxiety-inducing request for non-planners. With this understanding, the Character Preference exercise for the Hazleton community was organized using 122 photographs exemplifying the following essential elements: awnings, benches, bicycle racks, building styles, community brand, districts, facades, flags & banners, landscape, lighting, murals, park and rec, paving, pedestrian crossings, public art, seating, signage, and trash receptacles.

Participants were given 21 individual tickets with which they were able to cast votes for individual preferences in each category, allowing them one vote for each category and three additional bonus votes for areas of particular interest. Simultaneously, an on-line version of the same exercise was posted for broad community input.

In total, 6,657 votes were cast. Within each category, there were one or two selections that comprised the majority of votes cast. The details of each preference provided the foundation for future design and planning decisions, to ensure that all solutions were firmly rooted in community sentiment and preference.

Background and Process

To ensure that every participant had an equal opportunity to express their thoughts related to public and private realm development within the community, an open suggestion box was provided and participants were asked to write their comments on individual index cards and deposit them in the box during the event as well.

By allowing small group discussions to occur concurrently with individual participation, a broad and inclusive response was achieved. More than 35 individual responses were written and recorded. The information gathered with this exercise provided further definition to the design concepts as well as provided the basis for future land use and development planning.

Attendance at the event topped 75. Sign-in sheets, agendas, minutes, and support graphics are included in Appendices 3-5.

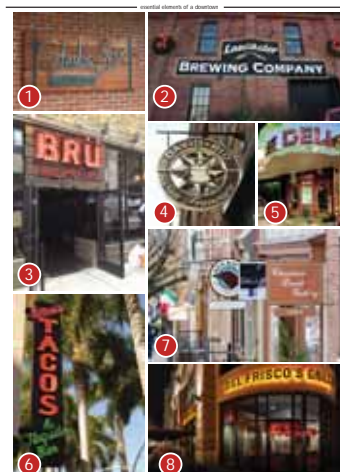
AWNINGS



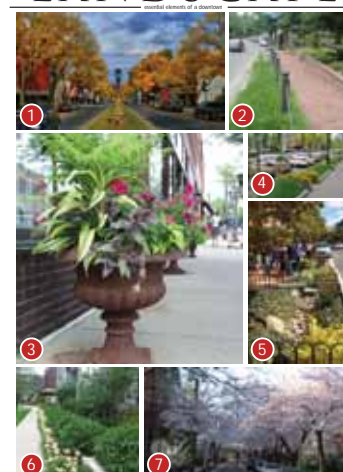
MURALS



SIGNAGE



LANDSCAPE



Background and Process

Stakeholder Meetings

In addition to the public outreach, the Alliance also hosted five stakeholder meetings with board and committee members to review progress of the planning study with the consultant team. Two additional meetings with downtown business owners, one geared specifically to Latino businesses, were held by the Alliance in partnership with the Hazleton Integration Project, Hazleton POWER!, and the Chamber of Commerce to understand the issues concerning this focus group. The final plan was publicly presented to the city council and members of the city planning commission on February 17th.

Real Estate Strategies, Inc. also conducted 12 interviews as noted below:

1. Krista Schneider, Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress
2. Aime Sheikh, ERA One Source Realty
3. Maggie Flartey-Kaminski, Century 21
4. Michael Pecora, MS Pecora Realtor
5. Al Guari, Mericle Real Estate
6. Robin Mahalic, Lehigh Valley Hospital Human Resources
7. Jim Kelshaw, Hazleton CAN-DO
8. Chuck Pierce, Assistant Director, Wilkes Small Business Development Center
9. George Leitner, Hazleton Development Co.
10. Larry Newman, Wilkes-Barre Diamond City Partnership and market analyst for HNB Bank Building project
11. Property manager at East Mountain Apartments, Wilkes-Barre, PA
12. Property manager at SDK Green Acres, Kingston, PA
13. Property manager at Hilltop House, Hazleton, PA
14. Property manager at Gateway Manor Apartments, Edwardsville, PA
15. Jeffrey Pyros, Manager, Luzerne Bank Building, Wilkes-Barre

Based upon the public, committee, and stakeholder meetings and surveys, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding the downtown's future are as follows:

Strengths

- Completed Broad St. corridor
- Central location



Background and Process

- Strong presence of financial of professional services
- Small “Mom & Pop” and legacy businesses
- Ethnic food diversity and restaurants
- Historical Society & Museum
- Library
- YMCA/YWCA
- PTPA
- Art League programs
- Markle Building/Hayden Tower renovation
- Broad St. Business Exchange renovation
- CANDO Renaissance Center
- LCCC and Lackawanna Colleges
- Partnerships among local organizations
- Entrepreneurial culture (especially among Latino community)
- Culture of hard working people
- Historic churches
- Convenient/close access of necessary services (banks, food markets, pharmacies, etc.)
- Transit center

Weaknesses

- Perception that the downtown is unsafe; fear of crime.
- Language and cultural barriers prevent business growth
- Perceived lack of convenient and safe parking
- High percentage of blighted and vacant buildings
- City EIT/mercantile taxes
- Perception that local government is unfriendly to business
- No anchor department store; lack of shopping/entertainment destinations (especially in the evening)
- Lack of green space and public gathering space for special events
- Poor condition of streets/streetscapes other than Broad St.

Opportunities

- DBi moving in to the downtown
- CANDO's interest in creating downtown incubator
- Planned renovation of HNB building; potential for new business growth
- Possible renovation of Altamont (as potential apartment building)
- Close proximity of walkable neighborhoods with low cost historic residential building stock
- City interest in creating park downtown
- PSU interest in expanding downtown
- Harman-Geist Stadium

- Wyoming Street (small walkable scale and variety of storefronts)
- Potential to take advantage of regional historic sites (i.e. Eckley, Lattimer, Coxe home, etc.)
- Security Savings bank building; potential for new arts/cultural center
- Low real estate costs
- Forecasted population increases

Threats

- Hospital moving out of the downtown area
- Deteriorating building stock
- Out of town landlords
- High cost of rehabilitation
- New/small business failure rate
- Declining city tax base
- Poor image of school district
- “Brain drain” at regional level
- Poor cleanliness of downtown (beyond Broad St.)
- Negative press. The media is too quick to focus on negatives and not positives.
- Negative political climate/infighting hurts images and scares away investors
- Lack of interest or ability to market goods and services to other cultures
- Lack of pride in heritage and community.

After the draft strategies and concept renderings were developed, they were posted to the internet as an online survey and the public was asked to vote on those they felt should be given priority. More than 960 people visited the survey site, and 1,048 votes were cast in total.

Those concepts and strategies receiving the highest number of votes were:

1. add shopping venues
2. painted murals
3. add specialty foods/restaurants
4. PSU downtown
5. safety and cleanliness
6. microbrewery
7. apartments and condos
8. city park at corner Broad/Laurel
9. Wyoming street improvements
10. facade program
11. bookstore
12. arts center
13. Harman-Geist Park
14. community gardens



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ECONOMIC and DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The following pages represent excerpts from a analysis of the real estate market context for the development of the Strategic Downtown Revitalization Plan. The report summarizes economic and demographic conditions impacting the Downtown Hazleton study area, the potential market support for retail, commercial and rental residential uses in the study area, and recommendations for improving the desirability of the study area as a location for businesses and real estate development.

The full memorandum prepared by Real Estate Strategies, Inc. can be found in Appendix 8.

Economic and Demographic Trends

Population and Household Trends

Table 1 summarizes population and household trends for the study area, the City of Hazleton and Luzerne County. All three geographies experienced population growth between the 2000 and 2010 Census. Esri, a firm that provides demographic estimates and projections, estimates that population growth has continued through 2014 and is projected to continue, albeit at a slower rate, over the next five years. In Hazleton, this population growth has taken place despite a loss in the number of households since 2000. This has resulted in an increase in the average household size in both the City and the downtown study area. For Luzerne County overall population and household trends have remained parallel.

While median income for the City overall is projected to grow at a rate slower than the County as a whole, households residing in the downtown study area are projected to experience household income growth at a rate above the County average.

Over the past two decades, Hazleton has seen an influx of immigrants, primarily from the Dominican Republic, attracted by increased blue collar employment opportunities in the CANDO industrial parks. The 2010 Census reported that 37.3 percent of the City's residents were Hispanic, while 51.3 percent of the study area population was Hispanic. The largest concentration of Hispanic population is in neighborhoods in and around the downtown study area. Many businesses on Wyoming Street as well as some of the establishments on Broad Street target the Hispanic community.

TABLE 1
SELECTED ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Luzerne County		City of Hazleton		Downtown Study Area	
<u>Total Population</u>						
2000 Census	319,204	% Change	23,342	% Change	1,058	% Change
2010 Census	320,918	0.5%	25,340	8.6%	1,270	20.0%
2014 Estimates	321,284	0.1%	25,727	1.5%	1,305	2.8%
2019 Projections	320,867	-0.1%	25,838	0.4%	1,316	0.8%
<u>Households</u>						
2000 Census	130,668		10,287		654	
2010 Census	131,932	1.0%	9,798	-4.8%	637	-2.6%
2014 Estimates	132,434	0.4%	9,801	0.0%	634	-0.5%
2019 Projections	132,213	-0.2%	9,767	-0.3%	630	-0.6%
<u>Household Size (Avg.)</u>						
2000 Census	2.34		2.23		1.60	
2010 Census	2.34	0.0%	2.54	13.9%	1.87	16.9%
2014 Estimates	2.34	0.0%	2.58	1.6%	1.94	3.7%
2019 Projections	2.34	0.0%	2.60	0.8%	1.97	1.5%
<u>Median Income</u>						
2000 Census	\$33,805		\$28,294		N/A	
2010 Census	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2014 Estimates	\$43,750	N/A	\$34,594	N/A	\$22,823	N/A
2019 Projections	\$51,423	17.5%	\$38,675	11.8%	\$27,135	18.9%
<u>Median Age</u>						
2000 Census	40.8		40.8		N/A	
2010 Census	42.5	4.2%	37.5	-8.1%	33.5	N/A
2014 Estimates	43.5	2.4%	37.7	0.5%	33.8	0.90%
2019 Projections	44.8	3.0%	38.0	0.8%	33.9	0.30%

Sources: Esri; RES

Above: It should be noted that the projections for 2019 study area conditions are without any intervention measures recommended in this plan, and that a significant percentage of households within the study area live within the low-income elderly housing apartments (thereby accounting for the low median/below poverty income).

Economic and Demographic Trends

Economic Trends

Downtown is a location where residents of the Greater Hazleton region can find things that are unique in the region (cultural amenities, higher education, housing types, historic buildings, places to dine, goods and services).

Downtown is a place where residents can find most basic neighborhood conveniences—two supermarkets, two pharmacies, several banks, multiple churches, a public library and a YMCA--within walking distance. Transit is available as well as opportunities for community college classes. This combination of basic services is missing in many downtowns trying to establish a residential base and is an important asset. Crime is an issue of concern, but moderate crime levels have not prevented either Wilkes-Barre or Scranton from promoting residential uses downtown. The perception that the situation in downtown Hazleton is worsening must be addressed. A reduction in the incidence of violent crime in the study area is a critical component of the downtown revitalization effort.

1. Increasing downtown employment is the first step to revitalization and is underway. Most tenants are small, so introduction of new/renovated Class A space to the office market should be strategically timed to avoid a surplus of available space. Amenities that cater to office workers also support residents during after work hours.
2. Retaining some element of the Lehigh Valley Hospital near the downtown will be important to downtown improvement efforts. Relocation to a suburban location will remove hundreds of workers and patients visiting for medical appointments from the immediate trade area for downtown businesses and restaurants.
3. Cultural offerings and community events downtown lead people from throughout the region to visit downtown and offer the opportunity to showcase positive changes taking place in the study area.
4. Facilities that offer services individuals cannot find elsewhere are ideal tenants for space in the downtown study area. Examples include:
 - Kitchen incubator
 - Business co-working or shared service space
 - Penn State or community college programs
 - Entrepreneurial support for small business
5. Wyoming Street will be bracketed by office uses.

An attractive physical environment along this corridor could draw workers to this street at lunch/after work. Redevelopment should begin at the block intersecting Broad Street and move northward.

6. The pedestrian environment needs to feel safe and attractive. Scattered vacancies and deteriorated buildings disrupt this. Revitalization activities should be concentrated to improve the physical environment of a continuous stretch of storefronts. It will be more effective to focus investments on one or two blocks at a time and build outward from strength.
7. Traffic on Broad Street is relatively heavy and the redesign of the street appears to have increased traffic speeds. The design and placement of signage for businesses should be easily readable to motorists driving in these conditions.

Retail Trends

The following advantages and challenges exist within the study area as a retail location.

Advantages

- Completed Broad Street improvements provide better pedestrian circulation, improved lighting and streetscape features that allow visibility of storefronts
- Growing workforce downtown
- Attractive historic building stock similar to buildings that have undergone successful adaptive reuse as apartments and condominiums in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre
- Several destination businesses remain in the downtown
- Cultural facilities attract audiences downtown
- High traffic counts on Broad Street and Church Street
- Residential neighborhoods close to downtown create built-in customer base
- Entrepreneurial energy in community
- Infrastructure capacity and availability
- Parking supply

Economic and Demographic Trends

Challenges

- Weak demographic trends.
- Vacant/deteriorated buildings interrupt the street front.
- Crime deters customers and magnifies the need for parking immediately adjacent to businesses.

The downtown study area serves the convenience retailing needs of residents in surrounding neighborhoods. Households living within one mile of the Broad and Wyoming Street commercial corridors can walk to stores and service providers located on these streets. Businesses in the corridor also draw customers arriving by car from a broader area and include several “destination” establishments (specialty retailers and restaurants) that draw customers from a distance (up to 10 miles or more). Retailers initially considering a location are typically interested in understanding trade area demographics for one- and three-mile radii. Because the Laurel Mall captures a significant portion of demand in the three-mile trade area, a two-mile trade area for neighborhood-serving retail is a more relevant indicator of potential demand for retail businesses in the downtown study area.

A “leakage” analysis estimates the amount of expenditure potential generated by trade area households that is not served by establishments within the trade area (i.e. spending that is leaking out of the area). An alternate way to look at leakage is simply the amount of money people are spending on goods and services outside the study area. For example, a person who lives on Church Street gets coffee on their way to work every morning. Instead of buying it in town, they drive through Sonic on I-81. That represents money that is leaking out of the core downtown, that could be captured.

The leakage analysis indicates an outflow of expenditure potential to areas outside the Downtown Hazleton trade area.

The leakage analysis shows support for:

1. **Limited service restaurants.** Examples include coffee shops, delicatessens, bakeries with eat-in tables, cafes, brew pubs etc.
2. **Unique clothing or shoe stores.** Because most households are price conscious, they tend to buy clothing from a multiple sources looking as they seek variety and the best price. It is difficult for small clothing stores to compete in small city downtown settings, unless they have a unique focus. This could be children’s clothing, clothing consignment store, wedding salon, screen printing business, shoes for hard to fit sizes, etc.
3. **Specialty sporting goods, hobby, or music stores.** Dance and music stores are already present in Hazleton, but would help to reinforce an arts focus to the downtown revitalization. Relocation or expansion of these stores to the study area should be explored.

Housing Trends

Changing preferences for downtown living are leading younger households and empty nesters to consider living in urban neighborhoods. These households are drawn to these areas because of proximity to their workplaces and to concentrated cultural and entertainment amenities. Scranton has been able to capitalize on this trend, but has the advantage of being a larger city, the county seat and home to several institutions of higher education, including a medical school. Wilkes-Barre also is a county seat and has two four-year colleges adjacent to downtown. In the Hazleton PMA there is modest growth of households in the 25-34 age range, however, currently the downtown offers limited amenities to attract this group. Individuals in this age range who are employed downtown or at the hospital complex may have some interest in living close to work, but find their choices limited. Similarly, the number of households in empty-nester age categories (55 to 74) is increasing, but there are few quality low-maintenance housing options available for them.

The demand analysis suggests a five-year absorption potential of up to 60 new or adaptive reuse market-rate rental units in the downtown study area.

Economic and Demographic Trends

Because Hazleton is a small market, downtown is an untested area for new, market-rate housing. Because the perception and reality of crime in the surrounding area will affect marketing, several strategies to lower the risk of slow absorption should be considered:

1. If secure parking is available, test market by introducing one or two floors of apartments in an existing office rehabilitation.
2. Develop larger building (e.g. The Altamont) as a mixed-use project.
3. Develop larger building as an 80/20 mixed income to broaden income range. This approach requires careful tenant selection and experienced property management.
4. Use upstairs apartments with lower rents as part of other arts and entrepreneurship initiatives downtown ("Artist in Residence").

Senior housing would also have market support downtown, but likely only if units were affordable. Layering of the LIHTC and historic tax credits can make rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic structures feasible for affordable housing.

The Altamont building is an attractive historic structure that appears to be one logical candidate for adaptive reuse as a multifamily residential building. The ability to provide secure parking is an advantage (a commercial real estate listing for the property indicates that there are 80 secure parking spaces). This building is strategically located in close proximity to major office buildings, City Hall and the public library. As a high-rise elevator building, this structure would be most appropriate for non-family tenants. The primary challenge is that the large number of units that would be created in this building could exceed available demand at this time.

To be able to successfully develop market rate rental housing on the scale of the Altamont, several intermediate steps would need to occur:

1. Continued growth in employment downtown
2. Introduction of amenities such as coffee houses that are open after working hours
3. Provision of more open spaces
4. A targeted drug interdiction/crime reduction effort in areas adjacent to the downtown study area

Employment Trends

The number of jobs located in the study area is an important indicator of potential demand for retail and residential uses. According the most recent "at place" employment data available from the Census Longitudinal Employment and Household Dynamics (LEHD) data series, nearly 1,900 jobs were based in the study area in 2011. These figures do not include individuals who are self-employed or whose sole compensation is partnership distributions. The Lehigh Valley Hospital complex is located at 700 E. Broad Street, 0.4 miles to the east of the study area boundary. The Lehigh Valley Hospital system has nearly 1,000 employees. Many of these employees are based at the hospital, a 24/7 employment center in close proximity to the downtown Hazleton. Because the hospital is located outside of the study area boundary, hospital employees are not included in the LEHD at place job estimate.

Establishments

A DHAP intern completed a walking survey of the study area including multi-tenant and government buildings during summer 2014. The survey identified 202 establishments, over half (55 percent) of which were in the service sector (including health services, personal services and professional services) Restaurants and retail stores make up approximately 30 percent of establishments. A review of business data from Esri indicate that most businesses in the study area have fewer than 10 employees.

Office Space Trends

The office market nationally is undergoing a difficult transition. The Great Recession weakened demand, and technology trends toward more flexible and collaborative office environments with open layouts have reduced the average square feet per office employee from 250 square feet, a standard ratio that was used for several decades, to 176 square feet in 2012, according to a CoreNet Global study. Companies responding to CoreNet's survey predicted that the average square feet per office worker would decrease to approximately 150 by 2017. Both the economic and space utilization factors have resulted in relatively high office vacancies and flat rents in many markets.

Economic and Demographic Trends

Three factors support Downtown Hazleton as an office location:

- It offers the only concentrated Class A downtown product in a 20 mile radius.
- Lifestyle (consumer behavior) data indicate that consumers in the surrounding communities prefer interacting with service provider face-to-face rather than using on-line options—thus professional and financial services benefit from a central location to maximize access to their regional customer base. Similarly, business support services benefit from a location central to both downtown employers and the region's industrial parks.
- The passage of the Affordable Care Act and increased demand for diagnostic and physician services generated by the aging of the Baby Boom generation are expanding the market for medical services and medical office space.

The slow level of office absorption suggests that steady introduction of Class A space to replace obsolete existing stock as well as alternative office uses such as incubators and co-working space for sole proprietors/contract workers are strategies for office uses in the study area. Small establishments can benefit from office space with common facilities and support services. A business incubator could graduate tenants into this type of space. An increased higher education presence downtown would be another office use that would be logical given the presence of Penn State and the community college branches in the area.

Current and Proposed Development Initiatives

A number of positive initiatives have recently taken place or are underway in the study area.

- Downtown Hazleton is served by a new intermodal transit station that connects City bus routes with intercity lines.
- The former multi-tenant Traders Bank office building is being renovated and converted into the world headquarters for DBi Services. This building will be connected to the Hayden Tower at the Markle Building by an upper-story covered walkway. A second elevated covered walkway will connect the Markle building to the city-owned parking garage on S. Wyoming Street. DBi will relocate 140 employees to downtown Hazleton. Salaries for these workers are reported to average \$75,000.

- DHD has acquired the Hazleton National Bank Building at Broad and Laurel Streets and is currently in the design phase of renovating the space into Class A offices. Approximately 160 workers could occupy the building once it reaches stabilized occupancy.
- DHD also owns the "Bingo Building" at 13-15 W. Broad Street, which offers 18,000 SF on three levels.
- DHD also owns the former KNBT Annex, a separate structure located at 19 S. Wyoming St. (to the rear of the Trader's Bank building). This building has approximately 10,000 SF of available Class A office space, and DHD is actively recruiting tenants for this building.
- CAN DO has purchased the Remember When Building on 21-23 W. Broad Street. The organization is evaluating the feasibility of this building for adaptive reuse as a culinary incubator, which would be managed by CANBE with educational and training assistance from other academic institutions.
- Penn State Hazleton is currently moving forward with plans to occupy the ground floor and a portion of the mezzanine of the Hazleton National Bank building, with the intent of moving its Continuing Education program downtown as of January 2016. There is also interest in developing an Entrepreneurial Program, which would include business classes and technical assistance for entrepreneurs. The concept of co working or business incubator space beyond the kitchen incubator has also been considered. Development of a four-year baccalaureate program is also an option, if approval and funding can be obtained.
- The Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress has acquired the Security Savings Bank building and is currently pursuing funds to renovate the building as a City Arts Center, which will house the existing Hazleton Art League.
- The vacant lot to the west of the Security Savings Bank building, the site of the former demolished Greco Building, is envisioned as a public space anchoring the downtown commercial district and enhancing the impact of the City Arts Center.



DOWNTOWN HAZLETON

strategic plan for continued
revitalization

FIVE - YEAR ACTION PLAN

Hazleton may be the highest incorporated city in Pennsylvania but its downtown is rising even higher with new investment and renewed focus on those values that built the immigrant community over a century ago: hard work, family, food, faith, and community. Business is growing--but on firm foundations—and with a new attitude that embraces diversity and culture, encourages entrepreneurship and innovation, and celebrates its mining, industrial, and financial heritage. Moving forward the downtown will elevate its role as a multicultural destination for business growth within Northeastern Pennsylvania, and especially as a regional center for banking, finance, insurance, and professional services.

Five - Year Action Plan

The Plan and Goals

To achieve the vision of the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress (DHAP), goals and action items were derived from the planning process. Input gathered from field reconnaissance, stakeholder interviews, board meetings, public outreach efforts, business interviews, and community collaboration formed the guiding principles of these goals and action items, with one very clear constant: the plan and its goals should respect the heritage and legacy of Hazleton while aiming to elevate the city in the future.

The individual goals are organized within broad categories defined by Pennsylvania's Keystone Communities program, which houses the Main Street® program, a 34-year old program focused on a Four-Point Approach® to downtown revitalization and preservation. The approach defines organization, promotion, economic development, and design as the four proven focus areas of nationwide downtown revitalization efforts. The following categories are built from the that Main Street® model developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and are consistently used across the country and fully endorsed in Pennsylvania.

For each of the following goals and action items, consider the boundary as indicated on page 11.



Stakeholders were instrumental in the planning process and participated at many levels. The image above was taken during a design charette for the former Security Savings Bank building and adjacent properties.

Economic Development Strategy

Goal: We will elevate our local economy by cultivating new and existing businesses, supporting entrepreneurship, promoting higher education expansion, expanding and enriching existing arts and cultural destinations, and expanding residential density.

1. Action: Move forward with plans to develop a city arts center in cooperation with the Hazleton Art League; pursue grant and donor funding for renovations.
2. Action: Work with partners to help conduct a feasibility study for developing a downtown incubator for small food-based and hospitality business startups with entrepreneurship and educational support.
3. Action: Promote existing economic incentive programs (i.e. KIZ and KOZ designations) and pursue additional state and local designations (i.e. Enterprise Zone and Neighborhood Assistance Program) that will provide financial incentives for businesses to relocate/develop downtown.
4. Action: Work to establish a bilingual business resource guide/booklet that will provide a checklist and necessary information and technical resources needed to help start-up businesses, as well as established businesses looking to expand (e.g. permits, codes, licensing, business planning, financing, design/rehabilitation, advertising, etc.).
5. Action: Continue to monitor the potential sale of the County-owned Broad Street Business Exchange Building to ensure prospective buyers are aware of revitalization goals and strategies.
6. Action: Evaluate potential support services or outsourcing opportunities that may be provided locally to large corporations in and around the downtown area by local businesses.
7. Action: Develop and maintain a searchable database of available property for sale and rent; actively market these properties via the web, social media, and also print media when possible.

Five - Year Action Plan

8. Action: Promote the rehabilitation and/or addition of new market-rate housing/apartments to the extent the market will support.
9. Action: Work to promote higher education expansion within the downtown.
10. Action: Work with partners to establish a business “mentorship” program to link new/start-up business owners with established/experienced business owners.
11. Action: Work with partners to provide opportunities for co-working space downtown.
12. Action: Work to actively attract those types of businesses that have market demand within the 10 mile trade area.
13. Action: Develop marketing materials for business recruitment.

Marketing/Promotion Strategy

Goal: We will elevate our image and identity by developing a unique brand, establishing a full special events calendar, utilizing social media, generating positive media coverage, celebrating successes, and increasing community pride.

1. Action: Establish a unique brand and tagline for the downtown.
2. Action: Continue to work with the local media to promote positive coverage.
3. Action: Continue working with partner organizations and local businesses to develop a full special events calendar with promotions that reinforce the new downtown brand (Farmer’s Market, 1st Fridays, Funfest, etc.).
4. Action: Develop coordinated marketing and tourism materials to reinforce new image (new website, logo, brochures, etc.).



Celebrating community is just one of the many outcomes of the annual FunFest activities in downtown Hazleton (bottom left). Building on these successes through promotional activities and general placemaking initiatives will enhance economic vitality, livability, and community pride for the residents of the city and region beyond. Top left: The Hazleton Art League's annual Art Youth Expo. Top right: Car show along Broad St. (Images on pages 28 and page 29 are courtesy of the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress)

Five - Year Action Plan

5. Action: Work to better cross-market businesses among cultures (i.e. work with Hispanic community groups and representatives to plan and market events and promotions).
6. Action: Build recognition, understanding, and appreciation of Hazleton's unique history and heritage. Explore themes regarding the region's mining and textile industries, ethnic heritage, food, religion, and finance.
7. Action: Work with the historical society/ museum and other partners to establish and promote interpretive tours of the downtown and surrounding attractions.
8. Action: Build heritage tourism-related businesses.
9. Action: Establish an official "visitor's center" with promotional material, walking tour maps/ guides, and signage.
10. Action: Maximize Luzerne County Convention and Tourism Bureau, Delaware & Lehigh NHA, and travel/tourism industries to ensure Downtown Hazleton is well represented in all materials.
11. Action: Better market the Broad Street Business Exchange as a good example of adaptive reuse.



Above: The \$30M enhancement of Broad Street combined with the investment in the Markle Building Citiscape addition, the rehabilitation of the Trader's Bank building (shown above), and the associated economic development, is setting the tone for continued reinvestment and growth in the core downtown.

Top right: Outdoor musical performance.

Bottom left: Downtown Hazleton Farmer's Market.

Five - Year Action Plan

Design Strategy

Goal: We will elevate the quality of our physical environment by creating public green spaces, investing in our historic building stock, and continuing to improve our transportation corridors, all for the purpose of improving the downtown experience and quality of life.

1. Action: Establish and administer a façade improvement program for downtown properties.
2. Action: Work to help fund/implement Wyoming Street streetscape improvement concepts; select standard streetscape elements for uniformity.
3. Action: Work with city to help fund/establish a city park on the former Greco lot.
4. Action: Work with city to help fund/establish a city park on Wyoming Street near Harman Geist stadium.
5. Institute a public mural program.
6. Action: Work with partners and other community groups to help establish community gardens where possible.
7. Action: Establish and improve gateways to downtown.
8. Action: Initiate a program for reducing the negative perception of vacant storefront windows (i.e. through the installation of temporary exhibits, artwork, etc.).
9. Action: Work with the city to establish a parking deck over the N. Wyoming St. Parking Lot.
10. Action: Improve lighting and the rear facades of buildings along Spruce Alley opposite N. Wyoming St. Parking Lot to improve pedestrian safety and walkability.
11. Action: Continue to provide design assistance to property and business owners interested in improving the physical appearance of the buildings.
12. Action: Amend and continue to monitor the Downtown Overlay District Ordinance to reinforce the design aesthetics voted to be most liked in the public surveys (i.e. signs, awnings, etc.)
13. Action: Install/improve informational and directional signage throughout the downtown.
14. Action: Work with PennDOT to install informational signage on I-80 and I-81.
15. Action: Work with PennDOT to sign and stripe a dedicated bike lane between Greater Hazleton Rail Trail (GHRT) and downtown.
16. Action: Establish planted boulevard on Broad St. between Laurel and Wyoming (with provisions for maintenance/management).

Below: Facade improvements have already been made to properties along the Board Street corridor which continue to build and strengthen a sense of progress in downtown.



Five - Year Action Plan

Clean, Safe, and Green (Placemaking) Strategy

Goal: We will elevate our sense of place by helping to keep our downtown clean, and enhancing safety and security.

1. Action: Work with partner organizations, local businesses, residents, the city, and volunteer groups to improve cleanliness and maintenance of roads, sidewalks, and other public infrastructure within the downtown.
2. Action: Establish a Safe and Clean Committee to pursue a volunteer "ambassador" program.
3. Action: Ensure that volunteers in any future ambassador program receive proper training, such as police communication protocols, recognizing suspicious activity, reporting, and interacting with business owners and patrons.
4. Maintain crime statistics and physical Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) improvements for the downtown area so that progress can be measured.
5. Action: Work with the city's Blighted Properties Committee and Hazleton Redevelopment Authority to strategically target properties for action (i.e. citation, acquisition, sale, demolition, etc.).
6. Action: Educate downtown business owners and residents about CPTED principles and encourage them to implement CPTED measures.
7. Action: Work with the city to increase police patrols downtown, or fund additional security through Business Improvement District (BID) or other funding sources.
8. Action: Ensure the nuisance business ordinance is actively enforced and close loopholes that allow nuisance businesses to receive permits.

Organizational Strategy

Goal: We will elevate our organization by following the Main Street model, encouraging volunteer participation, cooperating with media outlets, maintaining open dialogue with institutional and non-profit partners, and engaging with the local real estate community.

1. Action: Pursue Keystone Main Street Designation through PA DCED.
2. Action: Ensure staff and board receives necessary training to maintain accreditation.
3. Action: Evaluate the feasibility of Business Improvement District designation with downtown property owners and elected officials.
4. Action: Prepare a business plan to guide DHAP operations and ensure financial sustainability.
5. Action: Continue to pursue annual fund raising targets.
6. Action: Establish a parking advisory committee that will comprehensively identify ways to increase the amount of parking available to the public as well as to private businesses; include concepts of shared parking and improved connections.
7. Action: Actively recruit volunteers to serve on standing committees and assist with special events/projects.
8. Action: Recognize volunteer efforts/achievements and establish an award program.
9. Action: Reach out to local churches, schools, and other downtown organizations to increase awareness of our mission/goals.
10. Action: Meet with realtors to ensure they understand the vision and goals for downtown development.
11. Action: Clarify responsibilities and determine desired relationship between Chamber's Downtown Committee and DHAP committees.



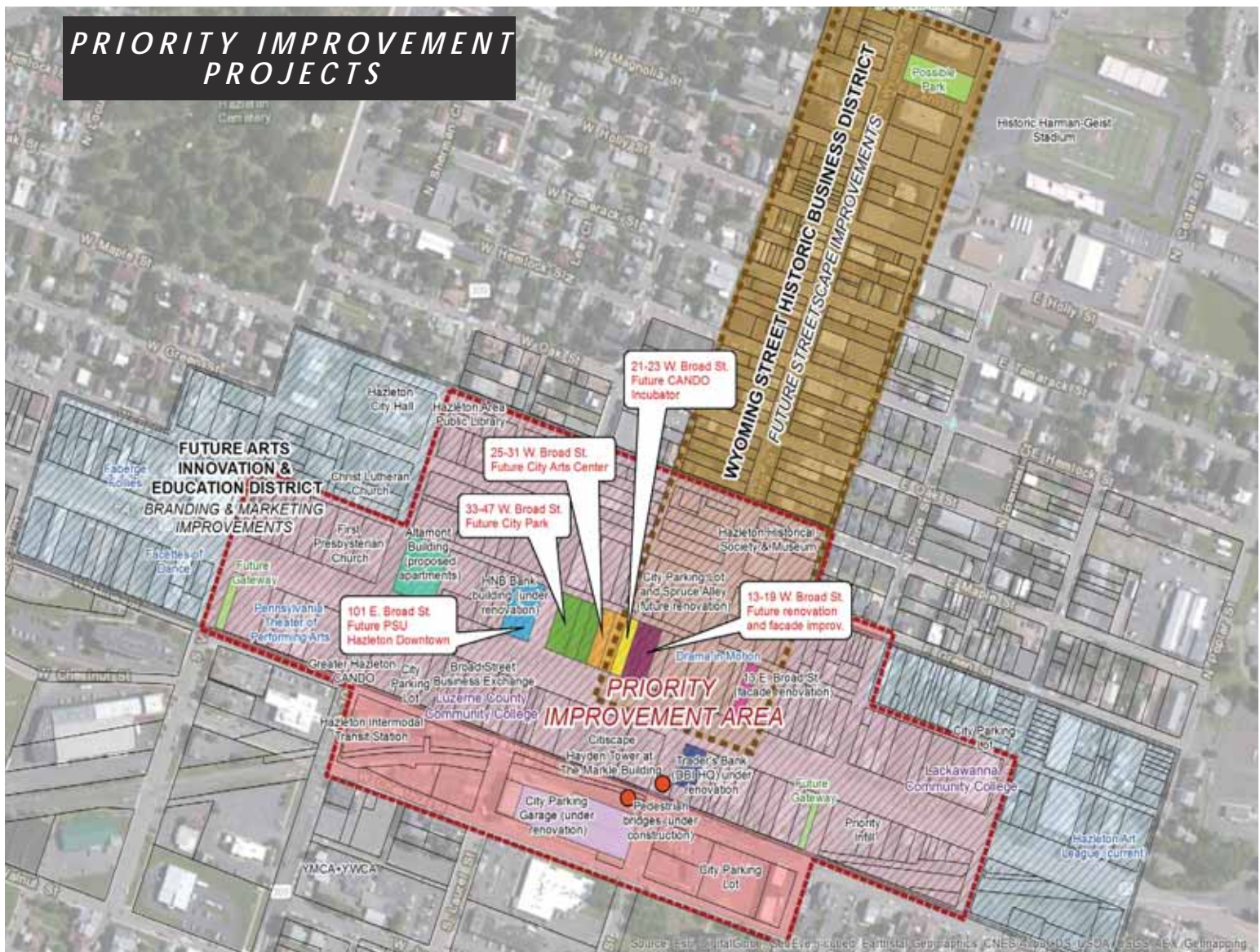
DOWNTOWN HAZLETON

strategic plan for continued
revitalization

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The following projects have risen to be priorities because of their strategic core location, current interest among key stakeholders, and potential to serve as a catalyst for further revitalization and investment. Each these projects has been targeted for priority action and are actively being advanced by the community toward implementation.

Priority Improvement Projects



The overall strategic plan focuses on several guiding urban planning and design strategies for revitalizing the core of the downtown. These are as follows:

- The overall strategic plan focuses on several guiding urban planning and design strategies for revitalizing the core of the downtown. These are as follows:
1. Build upon the redevelopment projects recently completed or in progress to create a concentrated and contiguous pedestrian-friendly core of activity and mixed use (see Priority Improvement Area depicted by the red dashed boundary above). These include the new Intermodal Station, the Hayden Tower at the Markle, HNB, and Trader's Bank buildings, the pedestrian bridges, cultural and educational institutions, public parking facilities, and several ongoing façade improvement projects, as well as several vacant lots and historic buildings that have been proposed for priority infill and adaptive reuse (see callouts above, which are described in further detail below).
 2. Rehabilitate Wyoming Street with new lighting, sidewalks, and design standards for signage and streetscape features. Recognize, celebrate, and market the history of small family-owned and immigrant businesses that characterize this business district (see area depicted by the brown dashed line above)

Priority Improvement Projects

3. Rebrand and market the core of the downtown as an Arts, Innovation and Education District (see area shaded in blue) as priority projects are implemented. This district already includes the Pennsylvania Theater for Performing Arts, the Hazleton Public Library, the Hazleton Historical Society and Museum, the YMCA/YWCA, branch locations of Luzerne and Lackawanna County Community Colleges, several ethnic churches, architecturally and historically significant buildings, three private dance/performing arts studios, and a variety of ethnic restaurants and food markets. This brand will become marketable as the arts center, park, incubator, and educational projects get underway.
4. Grow a broad continuum of housing in the downtown, preferably on upper floors. Support the redevelopment of the former Altamont Hotel as a mixed use apartment or mixed use residential and hotel facility, to the degree the market will support.
5. Maximize the efficiency of the existing parking system before creating new parking (i.e. through sharing, signing, and regulating). When necessary, explore and support structured parking within new development projects and particularly on the North Wyoming and Green Street parking lot. Add on-street parking where possible, and convert metered spaces to permit parking where retail demand has declined. Refer to map of existing parking areas.

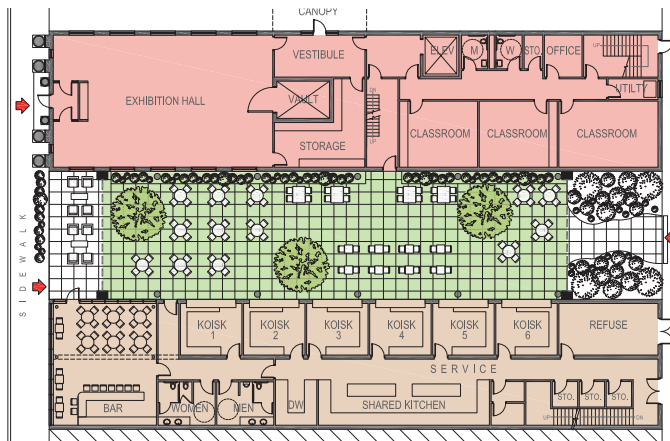


Priority Improvement Projects

Priority Development Projects

Given their strategic location in the core of the downtown and the interest and commitment of the property owners, several priority improvement projects have been identified for early implementation. These projects involve the rehabilitation of vacant properties located in between the recent and ongoing renovation of the historic bank buildings, and along the Broad Street Corridor, which was renovated by PennDOT in 2014 at the cost of approximately \$30M.

These projects call for the establishment of a city park, a city arts center, a culinary incubator, and a downtown educational center, as well as the rehabilitation of key building facades and renovation of additional leasable space for commercial and retail use in this core district. Upon implementation, these projects will serve as a catalyst for additional redevelopment in the core district and help make the downtown a destination for both area residents and visitors.



City Arts Center

Located at 31 West Broad Street, the historic use of this building was a bank. Originally constructed in 1909 as First National Bank, the building was built in the Classical Revival Style by Milligan & Weber. Later purchased by Security Savings & Loan, the building interior was modernized in the 1980s. The building continued to serve as a bank until 2005 when it was purchased by a private developer. Luzerne County later purchased the building in 2007 to serve as the County's southern annex, but this never materialized. The building has essentially remained vacant since 2005. The proposed use of this building is a City Arts Center, which will be managed and maintained by the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress. DHAP purchased this building and the adjacent lot (25 W. Broad St.) in December 2014 for this purpose.

Once renovated, the majority of the building will be leased by the Hazleton Art League (HAL). The HAL has been providing arts instruction to the Greater Hazleton Community for more than 65 years. This includes adult and youth instruction in drawing, painting, stained glass, fused glass, jewelry making, pottery, ceramics, and pysanky art. It also hosts and provides exhibition space for artists, musical performances, open studio time, and many other cultural programs, such as the annual Art Youth Expo (AYE), now in its fifth year. Located in a building that no longer serves their needs, the HAL has committed to leasing space within the City Arts Center once the building is ready for occupancy.



Priority Improvement Projects



View of historic lobby, ca. 1912.



View of former lobby space, 2014.



View of bank building, ca. 1912.



View of bank building, 2014.



Priority Improvement Projects

The HAL believes that this new central location and greater potential for cross-marketing its programs and events will result in opportunities to reach more people and offer more activities, attract new members--particularly youth and ethnically diverse groups--and energize their organization in the process. The remaining usable space will be leased for special events and to for-profit businesses specializing in dance and/or music instruction, marital arts, or other complementary businesses that will offer community and civic programs.

The conceptual design for this building was developed during a stakeholder design charrette in August 2014 as part of this planning study.

City Park

Downtown Hazleton does not have a central park or any dedicated urban public space. Based upon public input gathered on behalf of this strategic planning study, three city-owned parcels (33-47 West Broad Street) have been proposed for development as a new city park and plaza. These parcels comprise a key corner lot in the downtown (occupying the northeast corner of Broad and Laurel Streets), and are located adjacent to the proposed City Arts Center to the east.



The historic use of this corner parcel was a department store. The city initiated eminent domain action on this property in 2011 with the intent of constructing a mechanical parking garage. Eventually the city settled with the owner and purchased the property outright in 2013, and the department store was demolished. However, the funding allocated for construction of the new mechanical garage was never fully awarded, and the Luzerne LSA gaming grant funds that were received were reallocated to the renovation of the City's existing parking garage located on South Wyoming Street.

This park is seen as an anchor for the downtown, which will provide the green space that is necessary to raise the quality of life in the community. The design for the park calls for a small lawn area, trees, benches, and a paved plaza with fountain jets, as well as space for an interpretive/visitor orientation sign and a space for seasonal displays, such as the community Christmas tree. Most importantly, the park will serve as a venue for public events such as the seasonal downtown farmer's market, outdoor performances and exhibits, festivals, etc., as well as monthly events associated with the downtown's new First Friday initiative. Its adjacency will also allow special events held inside the future City Arts Center to open up to the park on its west side. Additional on street parking is also being planned for Laurel St., and along the Spruce Alley.



Priority Improvement Projects

Additionally, the park will serve as an important pedestrian connector and thoroughfare between the city's North Wyoming Street Parking Lot and the entrance to HNB Bank Building and the PSU downtown center, the Luzerne County Community College, and other key commercial properties fronting along Broad Street.

The conceptual design for the park was developed during a stakeholder design charrette in August 2014 as part of this planning study.

CAN BE Downtown Business Incubator

In 2014 CAN DO, Inc. purchased the building adjacent to east side of the Security Savings bank property (21-23 W. Broad St.). A feasibility study is currently underway to evaluate the potential adaptive reuse of this building and the adjacent vacant lot as a downtown business incubator that will provide facilities and programs to entrepreneurs interested in starting up a small-scale food and/or retail business. CAN BE (the Community Association for New Business Entrepreneurship) will manage the facility. CAN BE already operates a 15,000 square foot light-industrial incubator facility in the Valmont Industrial Park (The Greater Hazleton Business Innovation Center), which was established in 2005).

Providing assistance and incentives to entrepreneurs, and especially minorities, women, and immigrants, to grow jobs from within the community is a key objective of this facility, as is the promotion and development of ethnic foods. In addition to commercially licensed leasable kitchen space, the incubator is envisioned to include street-level storefronts or kiosks for retail sales or café space, as well as outdoor dining space that will be shared between the incubator and the Arts Center. Other educational partners in this program will likely include Penn State, the Wilkes University Small Business Development Center, and the Luzerne County Community College Culinary Arts Program, as well as the culinary programs of Lackawanna College and the Keystone Job Corps. The adjacency of the culinary incubator to the Arts Center will be key, as the shared commercial kitchen can be utilized by the Arts Center for special catered events.



Preliminary concept rendering showing culinary incubator and shared dining area to the east of the City Arts Center, Hemmler & Camayd Architects.

Priority Improvement Projects

The conceptual design for this building was developed during a stakeholder design charrette in August 2014 as part of this planning study.

Penn State Hazleton-Downtown

Approximately 6,000 square feet of the ground and mezzanine floors of the Hazleton National Bank building has been targeted for use as a new downtown educational center for the Pennsylvania State University, Hazleton Campus. Presently the Penn State Hazleton campus, which is located approximately four miles west of the city, does not offer off-campus classes or instruction. In order to reach a broader segment of the city's population, PSU Hazleton is committed to occupying space within this building to host continuing education and entrepreneurship classes downtown. In order to do so the lobby and a portion of the mezzanine floor must be renovated to accommodate this new use.

PSU Hazleton is also in the evaluation phase of adding a new four year baccalaureate anchor program that would occupy the entire mezzanine floor in the future, should the program be approved. PSU is currently in negotiations for renting this space and working with DHD, the owner of the building, and the architectural firm team of hemmler + camayd architects for fit-out, with the goal of occupying the space by the spring of 2016.

This important expansion of higher educational opportunities in the downtown will further support its rebranding as a center for education, building upon the presence of Luzerne County and Lackawanna Community Colleges.

Façade and Building Rehabilitation

Of the three remaining buildings located on this core block (13-19 West Broad St.), two are vacant and blighted. These have been targeted for façade renovation and interior rehabilitation so that the buildings can be put into productive use for commercial and retail occupancy, thereby creating a contiguous block occupied and attractive buildings.



Preliminary concept rendering showing retrofit of the HNB lobby as a new Penn State Hazleton downtown educational center, Hemmler & Camayd Architects.

Priority Improvement Projects

Parking

In April of 2014 the City of Hazleton conducted a "Downtown Parking Evaluation" of the City owned parking areas managed by the Hazleton Parking Authority in order to determine the amount of parking spaces available for rent, during and after the rehabilitation of the Mine Street Parking Garage. Please see parking area location map on page 34 for reference.

In order to project future demand, full occupancy of the historic bank buildings under renovation is assumed, as is new parking demand that will be generated from key projects that have been proposed within the Priority Improvement Area and are expected to be complete within five years.

Area	Total Available	Currently Leased/Utilized	Current Net Available	Projected Additional Demand
City Lots				
Mine Street Garage (after renovation)	231	84	147	100 DBi
Northside Plaza (N. Wyoming & Green)	80	30	50	120 HNB 20 PSU (PM) 10 Incubator
Chestnut Street Lot/Mine Street Strip East	89	56	33	
Mine Street Strip West	33	33	0	
North Laurel Street (after widening)	12	5	7	
CANDO Lot	39	39	0	
Spruce Alley (future park)	12	0	12	30 Arts Center (PM/weekends)
Chestnut and Laurel Streets (on street)	28	0	28	
Total	524	247	277	230 AM/40 PM



Priority Improvement Projects

The following inventory accounts for all available private and on-street city metered parking spaces within the downtown's Priority Improvement Area. As demand for parking increases with additional occupancy and new development, consideration should be given to shared parking lease agreements with private lot owners that have spaces available (such as the north Medical Arts parking lot on N. Laurel), or where reverse peak demand can allow shared parking in lots that are occupied during the day or on weekends, but are empty at night or on weekdays (such as the Christ Lutheran Church parking area).

Likewise, further consideration should be given to the addition of on-street parking, where possible, and to conversion of metered spaces to permit parking where the demand for meters is no longer supported by retail use (such as along W. Green St. between Church and Wyoming).

According to *The Parking Handbook for Small Communities* by John D. Edwards (1994), long-term parkers will walk further than short-term parkers. For communities in the 25,000 to 50,000 population range, the acceptable walking distance ranges up to two blocks for employee parking but remains one block for shoppers.

Private Lots	Total Available	Metered (on-street)	Total Available
Citiscap	65	W. Green (between Church & Laurel)	27
Northside Plaza (private)	17	W. Green (between Laurel & Wyoming)	9
Greco Lot (between Mine and Green)	15	W. Green (between Wyoming & Pine)	6
Greco Lot (Green & Laurel)	17	N. Pine (between Green & Broad)	5
Medical Arts	35	S. Wyoming (between Broad and Spruce)	10
Medical Arts North	50	N. Laurel (between Spruce and Maple)	4
Altamont	40	Maple (between Church and Pine)	50
Library	18	Broad (between Vine and Cedar)	86
Christ Lutheran	26		
WAVES	25		
220 W. Broad St.	23		
PNC	14		
KNBT (drive thru)	22		
Senior Center	7		
Lackawanna College	12		
Carmen's	28		
Tri-County	17		
Shop 2	10		
Hazle Drugs	7		
Standard Speaker	14		
Union Hall (future)	16		
Total	478		197

Priority Improvement Projects

Parking Management

It is recommended that 6-8 member Parking Advisory Committee be established to further analyze this information and explore ways to increase the efficiency of existing parking, such as shared parking agreement opportunities, creating new on-street parking or converting metered spaces to permit parking, new signage, and evaluation of options for the installation and operation of parking management systems, such as PANGO. An electronic payment system will give the city and private property owners greater ability and flexibility to provide permitted parking within private lots under shared use agreements.

At a minimum it is recommended that the parking advisory committee include city administrative officials (such as city parking representative and/or city engineer), city council representative, Chamber downtown committee representative, DHAP representative, and DHD representative (as leaseholder of city garage). Should an electronic parking management system be implemented, a representative of that company should also serve as an advisor to the committee.



Crime and the Perception of Crime

Over the course of this planning study one concern expressed over and over again is that the downtown is perceived to be unsafe. Fear of crime is cited as the primary reason why people don't come downtown. Statistically, the rate of violent crime in the City of Hazleton as a whole trended upward between 2008 and 2012 and then declined in 2013, the latest year for which data is available. The property crime rate for the City declined slightly between 2008 and 2011 then increased between 2011 and 2013. However, the property crime rate remains lower in Hazleton than in either Scranton or Wilkes-Barre. Crime data was obtained from the subscription service NeighborhoodScout.com and is based on FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) filed by 17,000 local law enforcement agencies and data from the US Department of Justice. The UCR provides a standardized method of crime reporting that eliminates the differences in crime classification and reporting between states. NeighborhoodScout has developed a series of algorithms to allocate the reported crime data to neighborhoods within a specific jurisdiction.



Priority Improvement Projects

Ambassador Program

In order to address this concern, the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress and the Chamber of Commerce have held meetings with the City, the Lackawanna College Police Academy, the Keystone Job Corps Security Training Program, and members of city crime watch organizations to explore options for addressing this concern through the development of a volunteer ambassador program.

Common in other “Main Street” communities, ambassadors typically are the “eyes and ears” of the downtown district. They regularly interact with business owners, help visitors locate shops or parking, help maintain and keep the downtown clean by providing litter removal, and work with the city police department on safety concerns by identifying and reporting illegal or suspicious activity. They typically wear a uniform shirt or jacket for easy identification.

In many cases, such as in Reading, PA, these ambassadors are paid staff members of a downtown organization or Business Improvement District. In other instances, they may be volunteers. In the case of Hazleton, opportunities exist for volunteers to be paired together with cadets from the Lackawanna College Police Academy, which is located within the downtown, as well as students from the Keystone Job Corps Security Program.

CPTED

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, or CPTED, is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design. Specifically altering aspects of the urban environment, whether they be storefront windows, streetscapes, vegetation, lighting, etc., in order to deter criminal activity and create opportunities for “eyes on the street” is the main goal of CPTED.



Priority Improvement Projects

Currently the Keystone Job Corps, in partnership with the City, Chamber and DHAP, is preparing to administer a survey of downtown business owners to determine opportunities for CPTED improvements, as well as on-site evaluations. Business owners that decide to have an evaluation of their property will be given a list of recommended improvements that they can make to better deter crime in their neighborhood.

These initiatives represent a good start to deterring crime and reducing the fear of crime. Additional recommendations are as follows:

- Build upon the initiatives being undertaken by partner organizations and formally establish a Safe & Clean Committee to oversee crime prevention and anti-litter initiatives.
- Ensure that volunteers in any future ambassador program receive proper training, such as police communication protocols, recognizing suspicious activity, reporting, and interacting with business owners and patrons.
- Maintain crime statistics and physical CPTED improvements for the downtown area so that progress can be measured.

Both the perception and reality of violent crime are potential impediments to successful revitalization in the study area. Crime data was obtained from the subscription service NeighborhoodScout.com and is based on FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) filed by 17,000 local law enforcement agencies and data from the US Department of Justice. The UCR provides a standardized method of crime reporting that eliminates the differences in crime classification and reporting between states.

The upward trend in crime rates in recent years has led to a perception that Hazleton overall, and the downtown by extension, is becoming more dangerous. While the 2013 decrease in the violent crime rate City-wide is a positive turn, it would be helpful to the downtown revitalization effort to track the number and types of incidents occurring in the study area. The data would be invaluable in two ways. First, it will allow effective targeting of police activity to reduce criminal activity in and around downtown. Second, the data can be used to ensure that current and prospective downtown residents and business owners have an accurate understanding of the incidence of crime, rather than relying on hearsay and misperceptions.

Branding and Marketing

Despite its many strengths, recent improvements, building rehabilitation, and an uptick in business growth, the image of the downtown remains generally poor. Throughout this study, much effort has been placed on identifying the downtown's core assets in order to understand how they can be rebranded and marketed. Although consideration was given to various strengths and opportunities (i.e. its coal heritage, arts and educational institutions, ethnic foods, etc.), the promoted image of the downtown should reinforce the vision: a multicultural destination for business growth within northeastern Pennsylvania and especially as a regional center for banking, finance, insurance, and professional services.

With this image in mind, it will be necessary to develop sound marketing strategies based upon a firm understanding of the rapidly evolving market – especially the challenges and opportunities associated with the growing Latino business community.

Priority Improvement Projects

Implementation Tools

Enriching the community, a simple statement that can embody the focus of this Strategic Revitalization Plan, has been the underlying focus of this entire effort. The key to successfully implementing the strategies outlined is largely the local organizational and leadership capacity. The work that the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress has set in motion represents a critical burst of momentum. Harnessing that momentum through the implementation phase will be instrumental in the achievement of a truly “elevated Hazleton”.

The road ahead is defined by the five unique goals, each focused on the long-term vitality and wellness of the community, which will make downtown Hazleton successful and sustainable for the future. The goals and strategies now become the focus of implementation activities for the community. The success of the plan will be measured in part by these metrics and in part by community sentiment. Appendix 11 lists these items with an estimated timeframe for implementation and an applicable representative to lead each effort.

The presence of a strong local leadership makes application for Main Street designation through the Keystone Communities program a crucial first step. Additionally, the following initiatives should be considered as implementation tools:

1. **Improvement Districts** – Depending on the business growth on Broad and Wyoming Streets, consideration may be given to either a Business or Downtown Improvement District. In each case, a special assessment (not a tax) would be levied on a particular geographic district whereby the proceeds generated by the assessment directly and exclusively provide services, improvements, or other benefits to the district. Improvement Districts require planning, public hearings, and wide spread business consensus.
2. **Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District** – In areas where existing tax base is low, TIF Districts can be an effective tool for redevelopment. Improved properties in the district generate higher taxes than the pre-development tax base. The increments generated can be reinvested in a variety of public improvements specifically contained in the TIF District. A TIF district requires participation by taxing bodies (county, local, and/or school district), although not all of them are required. They may choose to participate at varied levels to mitigate their tax impact.
3. **Public Grants** – Although they are very competitive and require local match money, public grants still represent a viable implementation strategy. Appendix 9 highlights a variety of grant opportunities for consideration. Grant cycles are generally on an annual rotation, but some have rolling application dates which should be monitored.
4. **In-Kind Support** - Local planning support, guidance, and advocacy should not be overlooked as a viable resource for redevelopment. The organization and its partner relationships offer a vast array of information that can positively impact the nature of a development project in the community.



DOWNTOWN HAZLETON

strategic plan for continued
revitalization

PRELIMINARY ENHANCEMENT OPTIONS

Preliminary Enhancement Options

Setting the Stage

The development of the overall plan focused on several guiding principles geared toward the strengthening of the core downtown and the enhancement of a traditional downtown sense of place. Among these principles were the following:

1. Expand the overall tax base within the core downtown and study area.
2. Continue to enhance Wyoming Street with signage, lighting, and streetscape enhancements.
3. Grow a broad continuum of housing in the downtown, preferably on upper floors.
4. Create more street-level activity and interactions to enhance walkability, pedestrian energy, and duration of visitor stays.
5. Provide guidance and support for development patterns in select areas.
6. Encourage the use of diverse construction materials, architectural styles, and built forms to continue the evolution of downtown and protect against homogeneity.
7. Support projecting signs on buildings to enhance the traditional retail district aesthetic.
8. When possible, explore and support structured parking within all redevelopment projects.
9. Emphasize opportunities for adaptive re-use of high quality architectural stock.
10. Provide support business for growing employment base, including dining, retail, and service.

The map on the following page graphically depicts several focus areas for economic development activities within the study area. Visualizations of a variety of preliminary enhancement options follow. While these recommended improvements are shown to be location-specific, the concepts behind them are intended to be transferable to other properties and locations throughout the downtown, where opportunities arise.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

Utilizing the results of the information gathering phases, including an area-wide photo inventory and field analysis, the following preliminary enhancement options were developed. Each design graphic embodies the character preferences expressed during the community meeting and depicts the enhancement in locations specifically noted during the planning process.

The intent of these graphics is not to portray the exact details and final design of the improvement, but rather reveal the inherent opportunities to further enhance the sense of place in Hazleton and interpret the community's voice in real-world settings.

The key map below indicates the location of the following 15 conceptual revitalization graphics.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

WYOMING GATEWAY

The view of downtown from the top of Wyoming Street offers a very unique gateway opportunity to not only the central business district, but also the very distinct Wyoming Street corridor. Setting the stage early for the entire corridor is important and can be achieved through some form of arched signage. Placing this type of welcoming and artful entrance to the mixed use environment that exists along Wyoming Street begins to shape a certain sense of place and establish an arrival experience rather than simply moving down any city street.

This gateway concept, combined with cohesive streetscape improvements on the balance of the corridor, can create a new public realm and unifying aesthetic within the downtown.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



HARMAN-GEIST MEMORIAL FIELD PLAZA

Public gathering space has the ability to increase property values and quality of life for those in the immediately adjacent homes and businesses. Additionally, public spaces can become icons in a neighborhood which provide identity or restore a sense of pride. The proposed plaza forecourt for Harman-Geist Memorial Field will be arranged on the existing access to the stadium. The paved lot adjacent to the former Sports Academy building is modified to provide a pedestrian access from Wyoming Street to the stadium and pass through a sports history plaza which could highlight area athletes and accomplishments and may include a sports themed sculptural element. The balance of the site is shown with streetscape enhancements including trees, paving, and furnishings



Preliminary Enhancement Options

WYOMING STREET FIELD

Should the former Sports Academy building not be reasonably salvageable, there is then a broader potential for activating the walkway to the stadium. A direct promenade from Wyoming Street will lead pedestrians into the stadium, while the space adjacent to the connection may accommodate a broad recreational field that can be programmed for a variety of active recreational uses. A small pocket park can still be accommodated in this scenario, which will provide an opportunity for gathering and a potential public art installation.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

COUGAR ATHLETICS PROMENADE

High school sports often act as a source of community unification. For the spectators that attend events at the Harman-Geist Memorial Field, the experience of arriving and leaving the complex should be as engaging as the event itself. Creating a pedestrian oriented space directly adjacent to the entrance extends the character and identity of the Cougars beyond the limits of the stadium. The image begins to allude to a high school focused identity on the banners. That connection could be expanded to reference regional rivalries, local high school stand-out athletes, and iconic mascots.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



COMMUNITY GARDEN

The concept of urban gardening has evolved from a hobby or community building activity to a broadly accepted urban planning movement. Cities across America are now supporting urban agriculture as a viable use in their urban fabric, back yards, neighborhood parks, raised planters, and most uniquely, vacant parcels. The concept of a community garden creates a space for community building and civic engagement, a space for cultural exchange and learning, and foremost, a sustainable fresh food source in the urban core. This vacant parcel at the southwest corner of W. Tamarack Street and N. Wyoming Street is shown with raised vegetable beds, enhanced crosswalks, decorative fencing, and an agriculture inspired mural.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

WYOMING STREETScape

Hazleton has long been a diverse and multi-cultural city and that trend is now evolving to welcome a new generation of citizens with Hispanic roots to the existing rich European heritage. As such, Wyoming Street has the potential to become the physical manifestation of that integration.

Currently, there is an eclectic mix of businesses along the corridor and there are opportunities for infill development and adaptive reuse. The recent enhancements to the Broad Street sidewalks serve to emphasize the need for upgrades on Wyoming to be consistent. The improvements shown begin to celebrate the cultural diversity with banners, planter options, and paving materials.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

WYOMING PARKING GARAGE

Large surface parking lots are often considered undesirable land uses within an urban context however; there is always a need for safe, efficient, and easily accessible parking spaces to support downtown living and business uses. The natural topography of the existing lot slopes from west to east along Green Street which would enable better access to a multi-level parking structure. An additional vertical level of parking in this location effectively doubles the parking capacity available for adjacent building redevelopment. The architectural style and patterning of the decks can also enhance the continuity of the streetscape and provide opportunities for signage and access to existing buildings.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



ADAPTIVE REUSE

The concept of incubator spaces of cooperative retail locations have been an effective method of economic development in communities throughout Pennsylvania. These spaces can be an effective means of reusing functionally obsolete downtown buildings where larger floor plans and voluminous spaces usually exist. Combining modest façade and signage enhancements can transform the physical space while the provision of small scale retail space enables entrepreneurial businesses to take seed and grow to anchor tenants throughout the core community.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



CAFE REDEVELOPMENT

Adaptive reuse of existing structures is a necessary strategy in community redevelopment when certain buildings become functionally obsolete. In this case, a residential structure and adjacent vacant parcel provide an opportunity to infill a commercial use to link the mixed use spaces along Laurel Street to the iconic Victoria's Candies retail store. Much of the enhancement is realized through façade renovations and new signage. The adjacent lot shows a dining terrace as a way to engage the pedestrians and increase activity along the streetscape. Additionally, high-visibility crosswalks put greater emphasis on walkability in the downtown.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



ARTS PARK

A destination open space or town square is often the heart of a community. Hazleton does not have a traditional town square space to serve that purpose, however, a space is emerging to accommodate such a use at the corner of North Laurel and West Broad Streets. The lot adjacent to the former Security Savings Bank (proposed to be an art center) is reimagined to be a central park that celebrates the arts but provides a much needed civic and social gathering space. The implementation of the features depicted is able to occur in phases and includes a diversity of spaces, both active and passive.



PROPOSED

Preliminary Enhancement Options

BROAD STREET MEDIAN

The completed streetscape and paving renovations to Broad Street provide an impressive framework and structure for a major urban corridor. Along this corridor from Laurel Street to Wyoming Street will be a concentration of redevelopment activity fronting the section of Broad Street that does not have dedicated turning lanes, but rather a painted median. The inclusion of a raised median with landscaping will serve to highlight this section of the corridor and add green space to the core downtown. Lighting and bollards can add additional visual interest in the space.



11



PROPOSED

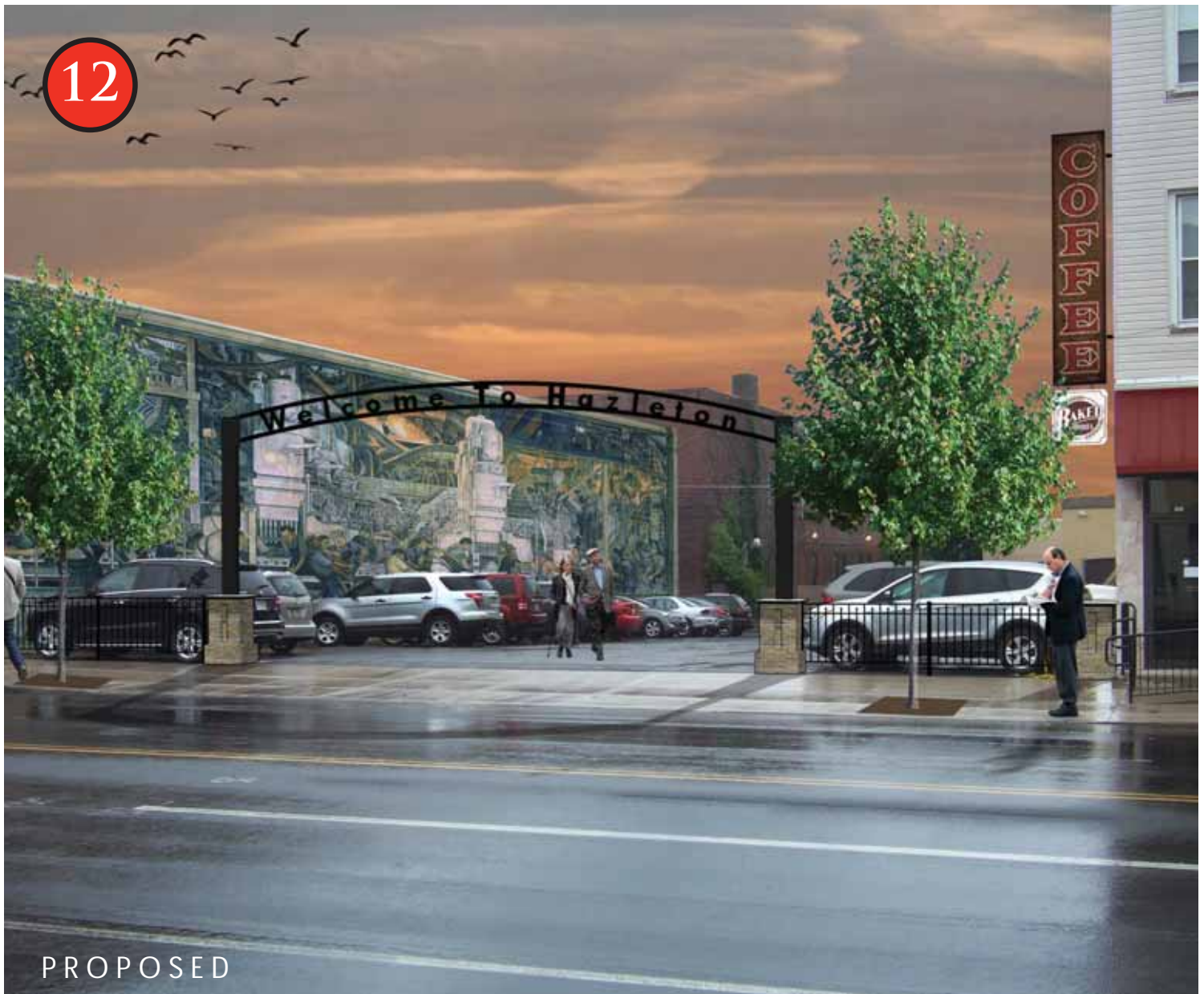
Preliminary Enhancement Options



PARKING AREA MURAL

Incorporating public art into a downtown is an effective means of adding year-round color and visual interest to public spaces.

The existing parking lot adjacent to Carmen's Bakery lends itself to the inclusion of a mural on the blank wall facing the lot. In addition to the mural, the configuration of the lot would permit the installation of walls, piers, and overhead signage. The addition of such elements will buffer the parking lot from the sidewalk and effectively extend the street wall across the parking area. The materials and colors used in the fence and piers should coordinate with adjacent buildings to enhance continuity and visual cohesiveness in the core downtown.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

PLAZA CONNECTION

Connections to and from Broad Street will be important to the long-term viability of the retail and dining enterprises along the corridor. In these situations, the walkway connections that link the parking areas to Broad Street can be considered quasi-public spaces that directly impact the perceptions of safety, security, and comfort. The spaces must be carefully considered as both pedestrian corridors and public open spaces. This space connecting East Mine Street to East Broad Street is shown with simple additions including decorative paving, low maintenance landscaping, and modest façade enhancements (awnings and signage). The aggregate effect of these minor elements is a transformed pedestrian corridor within the core downtown.



Preliminary Enhancement Options

INFILL OPEN SPACE

Creating opportunities for local businesses to grow and prosper is integral to any downtown planning project. Vacant parcels can be the key to these opportunities for growth.

Along S. Broad Street, this existing vacant lot is shown transformed into an outdoor gathering space with moveable tables and chairs. The existing Henry's Tavern property could benefit from this improvement through alterations to the façade to engage this space as shown in the sketch. Additionally, the inclusion of weathered painted wall signage (sometimes called "ghost signs") adds interest to an otherwise blank wall facing the open space.



Preliminary Enhancement Options



BREW PUB CONCEPT

Unique and stylized buildings make downtown environments appealing to visitors and residents. In the case of service stations and remnants of small scale gas stations, the remaining architectural forms actually offer great potential and nostalgia that inspire new adaptive reuse considerations.

In the case of the former Exxon station on the corner of E. Broad and S. Cedar Streets, the angled rooflines and glass doors could highlight the inner workings of a micro-brewery.

The existing pump canopy is shown covering an outside dining area, which engages the streetscape and enhances the arrival experience along Broad Street for those traveling west.





DOWNTOWN HAZLETON

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CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Conclusion

The Strategic Revitalization Plan is the result of intentional collaboration, broad public outreach, copious stakeholder input, creative vision for the future, and an appreciation for the history and present focus of Hazleton.

It is also a living document that must evolve as implementation occurs. Many of the strategies and action items in this plan document are already in progress which speaks to the appetite and energy for fresh perspectives and an aspirational blueprint for the core downtown.

Contributing Consultants

The following firms provided direct support and information during the process. Support information provided by each is included in the appendix.

- Chris Brown - Derck & Edson
- James Mares - Derck & Edson
- Mike Newman - Derck & Edson
- Andrew Polonus - Derck & Edson
- Richard Leonori - hemmler + camayd architects
- Alex Camayd - hemmler + camayd architects
- Beth Beckett - Real Estate Strategies, Inc.
- Jessica Hubbard - Real Estate Strategies, Inc.
- Coleen Terry - ECON Partners



