



DOWNTOWN HAZLETON ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGIC PLAN

AN ADDENDUM TO THE 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CONTINUED DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

DRAFT | November 2019

Photo Credit: Erin Clark for The Boston Globe (October 18, 2019). Chalk art by Mariluz Rodriguez.



Broad Street in Downtown Hazleton (photo by Delmonico Photography).

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The Hazleton Art League hosts an Art Youth Expo event each year to feature the talents of young creatives. It includes art exhibits, music, poetry, and other special events throughout downtown Hazleton.

Acknowledgements

The Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress would like to thank all those who participated in the development of this plan and shared important perspectives and ideas. As our community strives to improve its economy and reshape our identity, we must recognize that we are in a critical transitional and transformative period. It will be important for everyone to be conscious of our trajectory and the need to be purposeful in our partnerships and programming.

Arts & Culture Planning Committee

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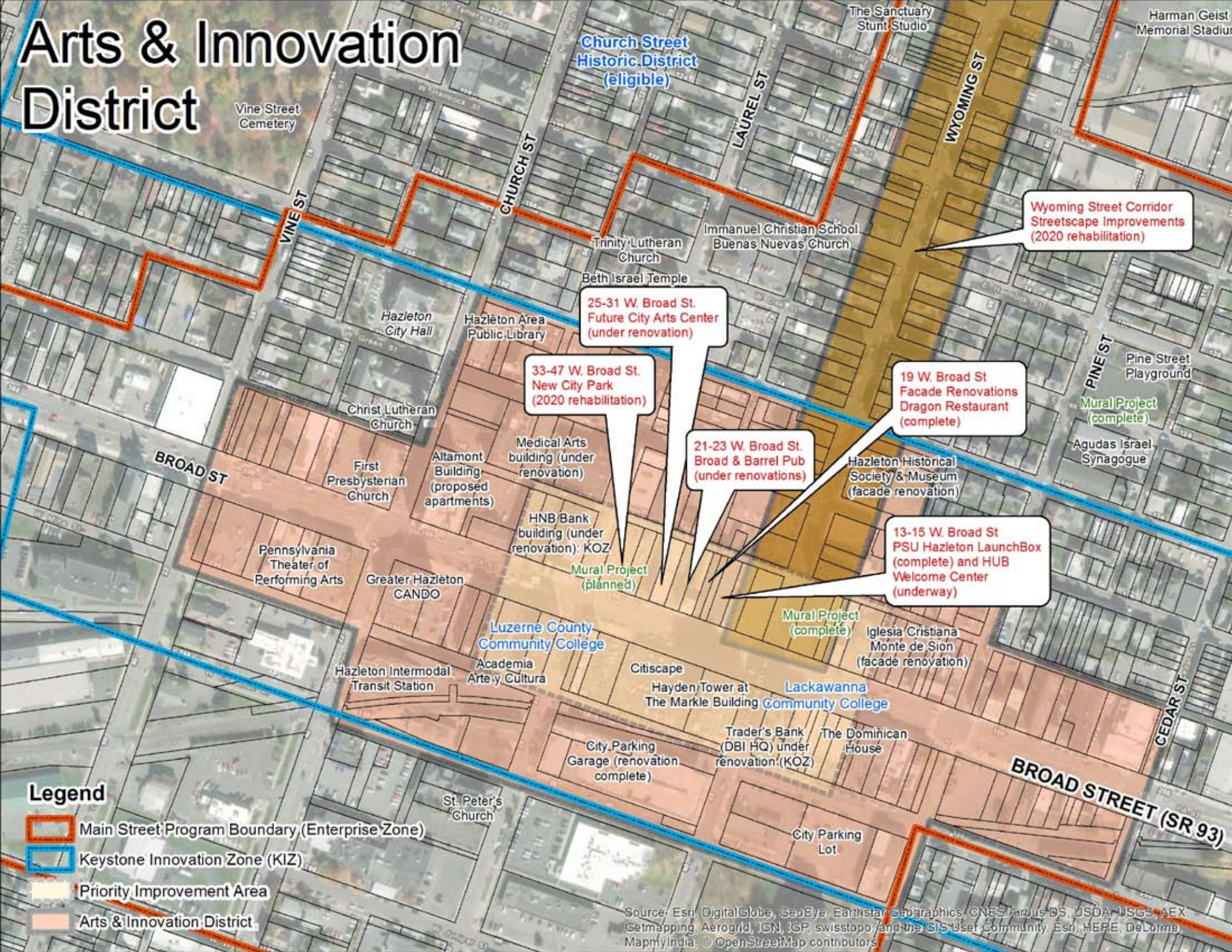
Branding & Identity Planning Committee

Much of this work built upon prior discussion and ideas generated in two previous Branding & Identity workshops. We would like to thank those community participants not already acknowledged at left, and also the contributions of the Pennsylvania Downtown Center, who helped us initiate the process:
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Arts & Innovation District



BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress (DHAP) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide sustainable leadership, direction, and support for the successful, efficient revitalization and long-term success of downtown Hazleton. The organization serves as the administrator of the city's designated Main Street Program, which is a statewide program designed to encourage the creation of partnerships between the public and private sectors that jointly support local initiatives to improve the economic vitality, social and economic diversity, and physical appearance and condition of downtowns and commercial districts throughout the Commonwealth.

Strategic Plan for Downtown Revitalization

In 2015 DHAP initiated a Strategic Plan to identify the specific goals and strategies necessary to revitalize downtown Hazleton. Key among them was the rehabilitating and rebranding core of the downtown to become a center for arts and innovation—a place for cultural expression, community engagement, and social change, as well as a catalyst for economic growth. In other words, “placemaking” initiatives.

Arts & Innovation District

Rebranding the downtown as an Arts & Innovation District required rehabilitating and repurposing several vacant and blighted properties. For the past several years DHAP has been working in close partnership with the Commonwealth of PA and the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Hazleton Art League (HAL), the City of Hazleton, Penn State Hazleton, CAN DO, DHD Realty, and other key partners to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse several properties to achieve this vision.

Central to this has been the purchase and \$3 million redevelopment of the former (ca. 1909) Security Savings Bank as a new city arts center, and the establishment of an adjacent half-acre, city-owned park. When complete the new 12,000 square foot arts center will provide studios and classrooms for painting, drawing, clay, glass, digital arts, and childrens programs, as well as a large exhibition hall and meeting room, and a commercially licensed kitchen. The park will serve as an outdoor venue for special events, and include a large brick plaza, landscaped central lawn, event stage, and seating areas. Both these projects are now underway and planned for completion in 2020. In addition, the \$1 million rehabilitation of a nearby blighted property donated to DHAP for reuse as a new Hazleton LaunchBox was completed this fall to support small business entrepreneurship and associated educational programming. A new welcome center is planned within the retail space located at the front of the building.



Top: Strategic downtown planning workshop, 2015; Hazleton Art League members review designs for the new Art Center, 2017; Hispanic community workshop hosted at Lackawanna College, 2018.



Concept rendering for new park and art center complex by Hemmler + Camayd Architects/Barry Isett & Associates. Facing page: New logo design by Missy Nensteil.

There are many cultural organizations, educational institutions, and businesses that provide the foundation for this rebranding and create a fertile context for increased cultural and economic vitality. These include the nearby Wyoming Street business district, several ethnic and specialty restaurants, satellite centers of both Lackawanna College and Luzerne County Community College, the Pennsylvania Theatre of Performing Arts, the Greater Hazleton Historical Society and Museum, the Hazleton Area Public Library, the Dominican House, several churches, nearly 300,000 square feet of renovated commercial property, strong fiber optic broadband infrastructure, and PA DCED Enterprise Zone (EZ) and Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ) designations, which allow qualified businesses to receive state tax credits for investments made towards job growth and business development.

Branding & Identity

Based upon the goals of the strategic plan and physical investments underway, DHAP began a Branding and Identity initiative in 2017 with the support of the PA Downtown Center to bolster the downtown's image. This resulted in several meetings with partner organizations and stakeholders to identify what our image is now, compared to what we want our message to be: that Downtown Hazleton is making a comeback by reinventing itself as a multicultural/multiethnic destination for business, entrepreneurship, food, and cultural experiences. And it is doing so with an attitude that embraces partnerships, diversity, education, innovation, and change.

This consensus resulted in a new tagline: Downtown Hazleton on the Rise!, and the development of a new logo, which was created by local graphic designer and committee member, Missy Nensteil.

Purpose of the Arts & Culture Plan

When the Strategic Downtown Revitalization Plan was completed in 2015 the focus was on creating the physical infrastructure needed to redefine the character and identity of the commercial core. What the plan lacked was detailed focus on the actual programs, partnerships, and specific strategies needed to nurture arts, cultural expression, social interaction, and innovation. The purpose of arts and culture plan is to fill in these critical gaps.

Partners

There are several existing organizations within the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods that currently provide arts and cultural programming, as well as educational institutions and businesses that have been identified as key partners in this planning effort. These include:

The **Hazleton Art League** (HAL) has been providing arts instruction to the Greater Hazleton community for more than 75 years. This includes adult and youth instruction in drawing, painting, photography, 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,

According to the Project for Public Spaces, placemaking is both an overarching idea and a hands-on approach for improving a neighborhood, city, or region. It inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.





Local musicians play at the Sage Exchange in downtown Hazelton as part of the Hazelton Art League's annual Art Youth Expo. Photo by Chris Adval Productions.
Facing page from top: Actors perform *The Drunken Chaparone* at the PTPA Theatre; Children work on writing exercises at the Hazelton Area Public Library; Visitors enjoy a tour of the Vine Street Cemetery organized by the Hazelton Historical Society & Museum.

and many other cultural programs, such as the annual Art Youth Expo (AYE) and Peace, Love & Chalk festival. Located in a building that no longer serves its needs and is physically difficult to access, the Hazleton Art League (HAL) will lease the Arts Center as its new home as soon as renovations are complete. The HAL believes that this new central location will provide greater accessibility and greater potential for marketing its programs and events, as well as greater opportunities to reach more people and offer more programs, attract new members – particularly youth and ethnically diverse groups – and energize their organization in the process.

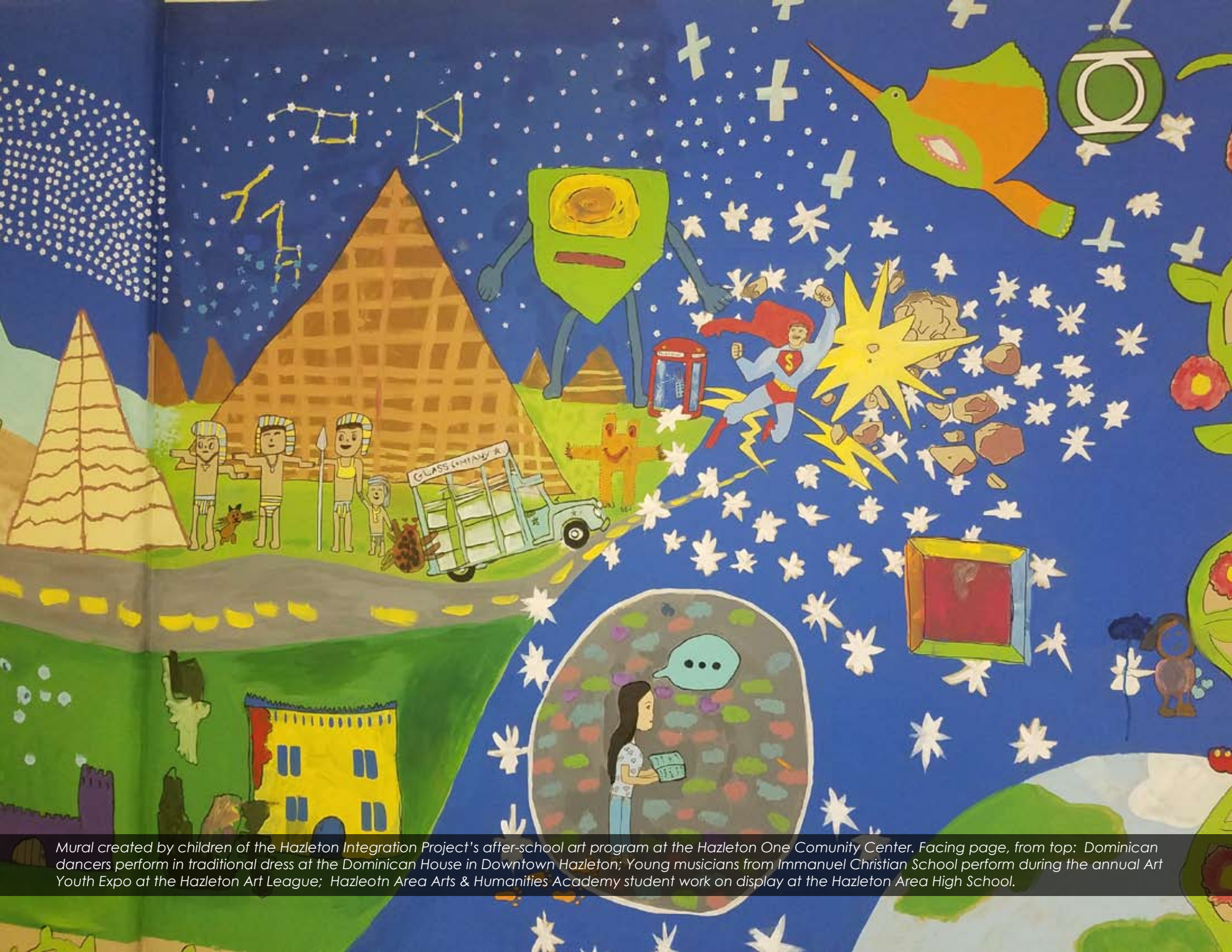
The **Pennsylvania Theatre of Performing Arts** (PTPA) is a non-profit theatre organization with a reputation for excellence in community theatre productions and theatrical education for children and teens. Its mission is to enrich the lives of people (adults, families, and students) within the Greater Hazleton and surrounding areas through quality and entertaining theatrical productions, children's educational workshops, and to keep the arts alive in this community. For more than two decades, the PTPA has provided a venue for talented actors, musicians, and dancers to entertain local audiences. Its entirely volunteer organization has mounted dozens of productions ranging from classic and contemporary Broadway musicals and plays to children's workshops and productions. The PTPA is housed within the J.J. Ferrara Center located at 212 W. Broad Street. It averages about six productions per year, in addition to two youth productions.

The **Hazleton Area Public Library's** (HAPL) beginnings date back to 1872 with the organization of the Hazleton Library Association. However, the library we know today on the corner of Church and Green Streets wasn't established until 1912 when the building was donated by John Markle, a former independent coal operator. The original Markle section is still in use as the children's library. An addition was added in 1969 and today the library has expanded to serve the entire Hazleton Area School District with branch locations in Freeland, Nuremburg, Conyngham, and McAdoo. Its collection now includes more than 160,000 books, along with other lending materials. Annual circulation has grown from 24,000 annually to more than 150,000 items checked out each year. The library hosts children's reading programs, writing workshops, and other special programs and events each week.

The **Greater Hazleton Historical Society & Museum** (GHHS), founded in 1980, is a non-profit organization that works to advocate and preserve the rich cultural, industrial, and architectural heritage of the City of Hazleton and its surrounding communities in southern Luzerne County. The Historical Society is dedicated to preserving Greater Hazleton's unique architecture, revitalizing Hazleton's downtown and residential neighborhoods, and interpreting the region's cultural past. Located at 55 N. Wyoming Street in downtown Hazleton in the former (ca. 1929) Pioneer Fire House #1, the Museum preserves an extensive collection of historical memorabilia and archives.

Founded in 2005, **The Dominican House of Hazleton** is a non-profit institution dedicated to helping the Hispanic Community with citizenship, computer literacy, and English (ESL) training. It also promotes the Hispanic culture in Hazleton and surrounding areas through children's programs (art and music) and various other cultural and folkloric workshops for children and adults. Annually the Dominican House organizes a Dominican parade and festival that features ethnic food, music, dance, and other cultural customs. The organization is located at 32 E. Broad Street in downtown Hazleton.





Mural created by children of the Hazleton Integration Project's after-school art program at the Hazleton One Community Center. Facing page, from top: Dominican dancers perform in traditional dress at the Dominican House in Downtown Hazleton; Young musicians from Immanuel Christian School perform during the annual Art Youth Expo at the Hazleton Art League; Hazleotn Area Arts & Humanities Academy student work on display at the Hazleton Area High School.

While not physically located downtown, the **Hazleton Integration Project (HIP)** often partners with other arts and cultural organizations on special events, including the annual Peace Love Chalk competition with the Hazleton Art League. The organization operates the Hazleton One Community Center, which hosts a variety of educational, athletic and cultural activities at little or no cost to participants. These include a bilingual Pre-K program and an After School Scholars project with enrollment of 80+ students from Kindergarten to grade 8. Additionally, the center features Spanish and English classes, citizenship classes, cultural discussions, cooking lessons, dance and drama classes, and most recently, a children's art summer program.

Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) offers two-year associate's degrees in advertising/graphic design, audio/video communications, computer graphics/new media, journalism and media writing, music recording technology, painting illustration, and photography, all through their Nanticoke campus. It also offers two-year degrees in English, professional writing, humanities, and theatre, as well as culinary arts at the Joseph A. Paglianite Culinary Institute. Its Hazleton (satellite) Center is located in downtown Hazleton, within which it serves about 800 students annually. General education courses, ESL courses, and as of 2018, Communication Arts courses, are all offered in this location.

Lackawanna College (LC) is a private, accredited two-year college serving Northeastern Pennsylvania. With a main campus situated in downtown Scranton, Lackawanna offers classes through five satellite centers including downtown Hazleton. The Hazleton center serves approximately 150 students annually. The main campus offers two-year degrees in communication arts and culinary arts. The communication arts degree may be started at the Hazleton center.

Founded in 1979, **Immanuel Christian School (ICS)** has been serving the greater Hazleton area for 40 years with Christ-centered pre-K through 12 grade classes. It recently relocated to 40 N. Hemlock Street in downtown Hazleton and enrolls approximately 150 students. It offers high quality instruction in music, fine arts, and drama, and its productions are showcased throughout the year in the school and the community.

Hazleton Area School District (HASD) Arts & Humanities Academy is a special academy within the Hazleton Area High School. It's special curriculum allows students to incorporate art into project based assignments in English and History classes, along with each student's studio of choice, including communication arts, dance, drama, music (instrument and vocal), visual arts, and humanities.

The Penn State LaunchBox supported by Pasco L. Schiavo, Esq. is a new facility in downtown Hazleton. Operated by Penn State Hazleton as part of the University Invent Penn State program, it provides resources to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in the community. It helps community members and students to launch their ideas into venture by offering free advice, training workshops, mentorships and networking. In 2020 it also plans to offer co-working space for small business startups in need of a physical working space and shared IT resources, 3D printing technology, and large format printing.





Visitors stop for food tastings at Sazon Latino Restaurant as part of a First Friday Restaurant & Bodega Tour (photo by Chris Adval Productions). Facing page from top: Students enrolled in LCCC's Communication Arts class tour a mural project in progress with artist Mary Veronica Sweeney; Performers put on a live stunt show at The Sanctuary; Vitilla Tournament on Wyoming Street organized by the Society of Hispanic Business Professionals and the Greater Hazleton Hispanic Business Association.

The 600 SF storefront space at the front of the building is planned to become the “**HUB**” **Welcome Center**, which will be jointly operated by DHAP in partnership with the Chamber and other organizations. When complete it will provide an opportunity to elevate the image of the downtown and brand the new Arts & Innovation District; provide information about existing businesses, community events, and cultural attractions; provide information about existing educational programs and entrepreneurship opportunities, including a space for art and culinary entrepreneurs to sell their products and interact with customers. It will also serve as an event space for food tastings, book signings, music, etc.

The Sanctuary Stunt Studio, established in 2010, is home for theatrical live-action art. It provides training in stunt performance, simulated combat, and live event production/technology. Located on Wyoming Street within the former Holy Trinity Slovak Church, The Sanctuary hosts live productions every month.

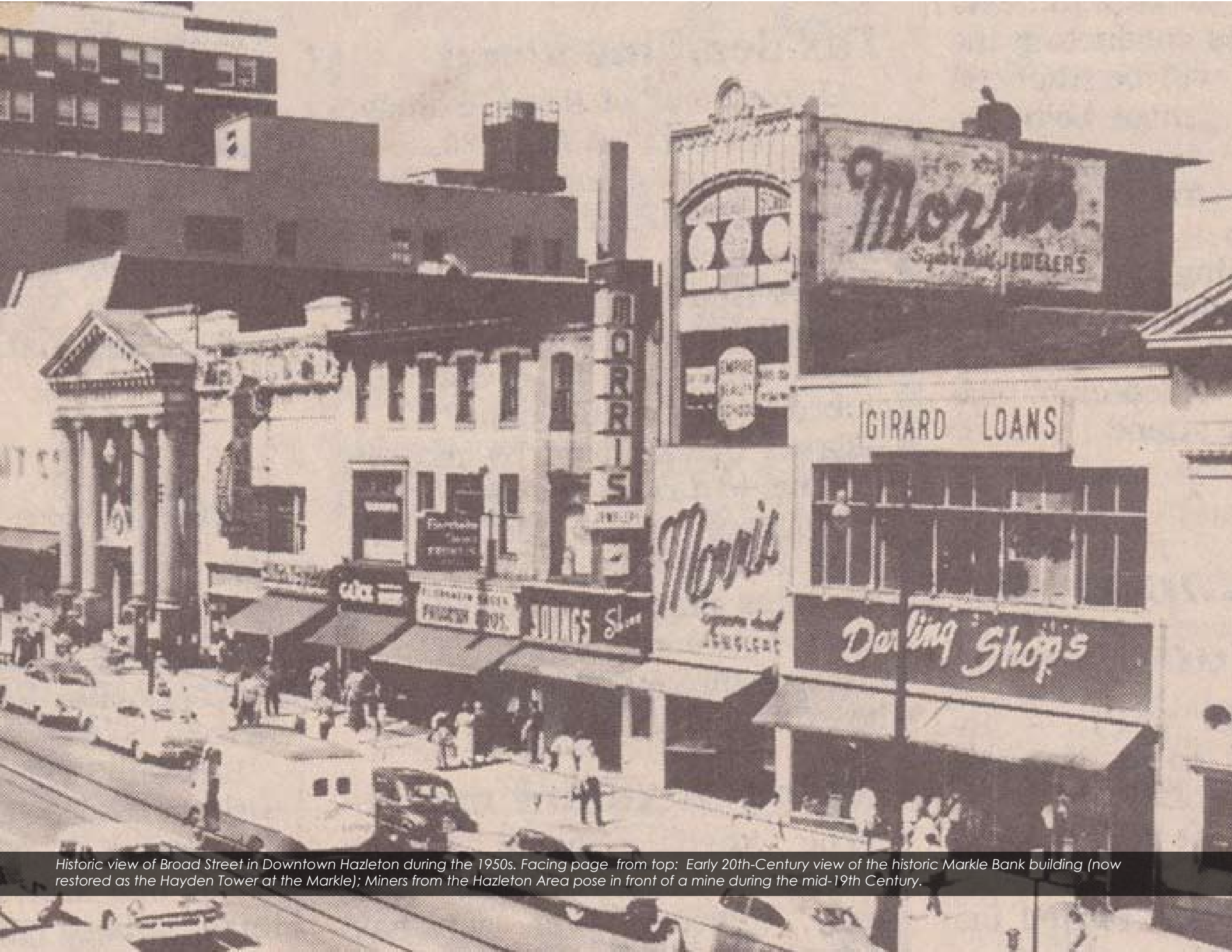
The **Society of Hispanic Professionals of the Hazleton Area** (SHPHA) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the integration of Hispanic professionals in the Hazleton area through the strengthening of social and economic activities; and encouraging and promoting education, culture, and entrepreneurship. The Society has organized several cultural events within the downtown, including a vitilla tournament, and often partners with DHAP on First Friday events.

Power City Arts is a new arts education program led by professional artist/educator and Hazleton native, Mary Veronica Sweeney. It draws upon partnerships with the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress, Luzerne County Community College, the Hazleton Area Arts & Humanities Academy, the Hazleton Art League, and the Hazleton Integration Project. The program seeks to provide talented yet disadvantaged high school and college students in the Hazleton Area with arts training and project-based learning opportunities that apply their creative skills to local place making initiatives.

Plan Methodology

Representatives of these various arts and cultural organizations, as well as business owners and community stakeholders met several times over the course of a year to develop this plan. These meetings were facilitated by the Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress. Community participants had the opportunity to craft a vision statement, identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, agree upon goals and identify specific strategies, review draft plan language, explore links between the plan strategies and the missions of their own organization, and offer their perspectives on the future of arts and culture in downtown Hazleton.





Historic view of Broad Street in Downtown Hazleton during the 1950s. Facing page from top: Early 20th-Century view of the historic Markle Bank building (now restored as the Hayden Tower at the Markle); Miners from the Hazleton Area pose in front of a mine during the mid-19th Century.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The City of Hazleton, located in southern Luzerne County, was founded in the early 1800s shortly after anthracite coal was discovered. European immigrants gradually settled in Hazleton and the surrounding patch towns to work the mines and the supporting industries. The city grew rapidly until the 1940s when its population peaked at 38,000. After World War II, however, the demand for coal began to decline, and the region has struggled since then to diversify the economic base and strengthen its job market.

Due in part to investments in industrial development, demand for an unskilled labor force, and affordable real estate, the City has attracted thousands of Hispanic immigrants looking for work. For the past 20 years the City of Hazleton has seen the highest rate of increase in Hispanic immigration in the state –the population rising from just 4.9% in 2000 to an estimated 54.2% in 2019. This demographic shift is accompanied by a decrease in the median age. Children under age 18 now comprise 25% of the population. By 2020 nearly half of the population will be under age 30. This is younger than Pennsylvania as a whole, whose median age is 41.

Due to low wages associated with unskilled labor, the city's median income of \$39,950 is well below the state median income of \$59,195, with nearly 54% of the City population considered to be low to moderate income. More than 23% of the population live in poverty, whereas the poverty rate among Hispanics is much higher at 40%.

Education levels generally lag behind other areas. About 75% of the region's residents have a high school diploma or higher, which is below the 89% rate for the Commonwealth. Only eleven percent (11%) of the region's residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is half the county and state attainment.

Because of the relatively low median income and educational attainment, and high levels of poverty, crime and blight, and changing demographics that many within the community fear, the image of the city has been very poor.

The City of Hazleton was designated an Act 47 Distressed Community in 2018 and lacks the tax base necessary to fund revitalization activities on its own. All of these key issues create a major challenge for the city to become an attractive place for business growth and investment and as a safe, attractive, and comfortable place to live, work, and visit.

Arts & Culture in Hazleton

While our goal may be to redefine Downtown Hazleton with new vibrant art and cultural institutions and experiences that will serve as catalysts for innovation and economic growth, barriers remain to engaging all members of the community in this opportunity. Primary among them is income as the city's working class/lower income population generally lacks exposure to and awareness of the arts and doesn't see arts as part of daily life.





Local artist and recent graduate of the Hazleton Arts & Humanities Academy, Mariluz Rodriguez , works on her project during the annual Peace Love and Chalk competition (Photo Credit: Erin Clark for The Boston Globe (October 18, 2019).

The lower income population also does not generally have the financial means to participate in fee-based programs and events. In addition, language barriers prevent the Spanish speaking community from participating in arts and cultural programs, unless information is translated and circulated in Spanish language media, or Hispanic groups take initiative on outreach and organization.

To better understand the challenges associated with these barriers, as well as the opportunities associated with our growing immigrant population and new investment associated with the emerging Arts & Innovation District, the committee identified the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats:

Strengths

- Many long-established institutions and organizations with experience in programming: Hazleton Art League, PTPA, Library, and Historical Society & Museum all have physical facilities, all concentrated in downtown.
- Many diverse cultures/ethnicities.
- Much local talent (although unrecognized).
- Many new organizations with energy (HIP, Power City Arts, DHAP, SHPHA, etc.).
- Education: Lackawanna College, LCCC, Immanuel Christian School, and new Penn State LaunchBox.

Weaknesses

- Working class/lower income demographic generally lacks exposure and accessibility to arts; also don't see arts as part of daily life.
- Economic status limits participation in fee-based programs and events.
- Language and cultural barriers associated with Hispanic immigrants.
- Still have to overcome negative perceptions associated with Hazleton (crime, drugs, blight).

Opportunities

- New organizations with energy and interest in celebrating culture of Hispanic community.
- Community is getting younger (approx. 30% of Hazleton/West Hazleton population is under age 18 and 45% under age 30.... younger than surrounding communities and state average).
- Greater need for after-school and summer programs to limit unstructured time.
- Partnerships between organization to leverage resources.
- New interest and emphasis (state/national) in STEAM programs (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math).
- Opportunity to incorporate technology into arts and culture to attract youth.
- Opportunity for students to participate in arts/cultural programs or organizations to fulfill community service or curriculum requirements.
- Aging population with rich cultural traditions to be passed down.
- Ethnic foods as art and culture; potential for culinary classes.
- New arts center, park, and other renovations (pub, LaunchBox, etc.) provide opportunities for new venues.
- New branding of Arts & Innovation District.

Threats

- Economic trends not necessarily improving.
- Population growth has slowed/plateaued (difficult to grow and sustain programs).
- Capacity of leadership (10% of population doing 90% of work); need to recruit new leaders to prevent burnout.
- Need to provide incentives for participation or increase culture of volunteerism/service to community.
- Competition from for-profit arts organizations.
- Cultural/language barriers.
- Integration must be intentional—organizations have to make concerted effort to break down barriers.
- Seduction of technology (how to compete)?



The historic (1909) Security Savings Bank building is currently under renovation to become the new Hayden Family Center for the Arts.

VISION & GOALS

Based upon the SWOT analysis and previous Branding & Identity workshop discussions, the committee developed a shared vision for how they would like downtown Hazleton to be perceived in the future, as well as overarching goals and implementation strategies believed necessary to advance this vision.

Make art and cultural programming more accessible and affordable to the community

- Arts and cultural organizations should continue and expand programs that offer multifaceted and non-traditional ("out of the box") opportunities for creative expression, social engagement, and education of the general public, such as "drop-in" crafts and one-day workshops vs. longer/in-depth classes (HAL), HAPL workshops (writing workshops, film workshops, crafts, STEAM programs), etc. Additional opportunities should be identified.
- Expand marketing of arts and cultural events/programs to reach and attract participation from a broader audience (geographically and demographically--especially Hispanic population and youth):
 - Spanish translation;
 - Print/Online;
 - Social media (esp. Instagram to reach youth);
 - Cross-market events with Discover NEPA and Luzerne County Convention and Visitor's Bureau.
- Develop a centralized "info" site/calendar where all arts and cultural events/programs can be accessed and advertised. Explore opportunity to partner with Discover NEPA.
- Pursue additional grants to make programs affordable (scholarships/camperships), and sponsorships.

Cultivate a new generation of artists and creatives by investing in youth programs

- Expand and strengthen youth arts and cultural programs already established with focused recruitment, marketing, and fundraising, such as:
 - PTPA monthly productions and youth workshops;
 - HAL monthly art exhibitions and special events, such as Art Youth Expo and Peace Love Chalk;
 - HIP Arts-based summer camp/after school programs;
 - First Friday programming (need for youth component).
- Identify gaps and develop new partnership programs that can serve growing summer/after-school needs that can leverage existing resources.
- Establish and/or leverage partnerships with Hispanic organizations and businesses (HIP, SHPHA, Academia de Arte y Cultura, La Casa Dominicana, etc.) to make existing programs more diverse and attractive to Hispanic youth.
- Recruit Hispanic creatives/youth to help design and plan events/productions.

Vision Statement

Downtown Hazleton will be defined by vibrant art and cultural institutions and experiences that help bridge generations, ethnicities, and perspectives. Expressions of arts and culture will celebrate our community's history, perseverance, and diversity, and provide multifaceted opportunities for creative expression, social engagement, and education.



View of Wyoming Street in Downtown Hazleton (Photo Credit: Hazleton Photos, 2018). Facing page (from top): photo rendering of the future "HUB" Welcome Center; Mural depicting Thomas Edison as part of the "Creative Voltage" mural on the corner of Wyoming and Spruce Streets; Dominican House volunteers prepare for Aguinaldos performances as part of the First Friday events.

- Develop productions/exhibits that appeal to Hispanic audiences (bilingual and/or topical).
- Involve the schools (art/music/drama teachers and administrators) more directly in events and programs; proper organization is key.
- Establish a program that allows a special venue to be dedicated to youth performances for kids (tie into First Fridays); consider folding into AYE.
- Establish a speaker series or special event/symposium to reach youth and engage/educate parents.

Brand the downtown as an Arts & Innovation District

- Develop a marketing plan and new marketing materials (website, brochures, etc.) to rebrand the downtown as an Arts & Innovation District. Incorporate the new "Downtown Hazleton: On the Rise!" logo and tagline in new print and social media.
- Coordinate marketing and business recruitment plans with art and cultural organizations.
- Fully utilize the resources of the new City Arts Center and Park complex and other venues (PTPA, library, museum, the Sanctuary, etc.) to market the district by hosting exhibitions, special events, poetry slams, or music events at various locations.
- Establish a "welcome center" within the district with centralized information for promoting the resources and the programs available; ensure info is bilingual.
- Work with Power City Arts to install public art and murals downtown to support branding.
- Install donated/painted pianos in public spaces; partner with nonprofits or businesses to maintain them.
- Install new banners with new logo within the district.
- Continue to explore feasibility of co-locating HASD Arts & Humanities Academy or components of its education programs downtown.
- Work with HASD, Immanuel Christian, and other schools as partners on public art initiatives and other programs.
- Work with the Greater Hazleton Civic Partnership/Rails to Trails to develop a better connection with the Downtown.

Utilize art and cultural programs/initiatives to celebrate and raise awareness of our community's history, perseverance, and diversity

- Develop a creative/cultural tourism strategy based on a coordinated narrative, which supports the new brand.
- Tell story of history of immigration/diversity in positive way. Highlight positive contributions of immigrants (1800s onward) to tie past to present.
- Develop self-guided "trails" focusing on art and culture, history, food, etc. to attract visitors and tie into LCCVB's "PA Trail Country" branding initiative.
- Work with the Greater Hazleton Historical Society & Museum to drive visitation, and invest in new exhibits and interpretive media.





The Penn State Hazleton LaunchBox hosts a Teen Entrepreneurship after-school program. Facing page (from top): architectural rendering of the future "HUB" Welcome Center; Textile artist Gina Duncan displays her hand crocheted items as part of the Downtown Hazleton Holiday Night Market; Visitors enjoy tasting ethnic foods at the Society for Hispanic Professional's "Christmas in the Caribbean" at Lackawanna College during a First Friday celebration.

- Celebrate culture through culinary diversity; continue to feature ethnic restaurants as part of tourism strategy.
- Develop a new culinary incubator program in partnership with the HAL, Hazleton LaunchBox, and other THInC partners to recognize and promote ethnic foods as business opportunities.
- Offer support to and partner with members of the Hispanic community as lead organizers of arts/cultural programs (to expand “ownership” of events), i.e. First Friday events, festivals, food, parades, etc.

Recruit “creative” entrepreneurs and nurture new creative businesses

- Extend downtown focus on innovation and education to the Arts.
- Work with the Penn State Hazleton LaunchBox, CAN BE, and other THInC partners to develop an Art Entrepreneurship program.
- Utilize and market the new Arts Center as a resource to entrepreneurs (maker space, digital arts lab, culinary incubator).
- Utilize the new HUB Welcome Center as a retail space available to art and culinary entrepreneurs.
- Explore opportunities for financial resources available to art entrepreneurs.
- Develop a recruitment plan to attract and educate local talent, especially youth and Hispanic creatives, about art entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Continue to coordinate and promote opportunities for creatives to sell their products downtown (art trails, holiday markets, First Friday events, etc.)

Supplement and expand art education offerings

- Work with educational institutions to identify opportunities to supplement school/college curricula (for student portfolio needs).
- Identify and support mentors that can help students with career placement/advice.
- Work with Power City Arts and other partners to develop an artist in residency program.
- Engage schools as partners in developing educational programs.
- Work with schools to identify student internship opportunities that will support the needs of local arts and cultural organizations.

Strengthen existing arts and cultural organizations

- Strengthen partnerships between and among organizations to leverage resources/programs.
- Secure funding for programs through coordinated fundraising initiatives and grantsmanship.
- Assist art and cultural organizations with recruitment of new board members to ensure sustainability (fundraising/finance, legal, marketing, etc.); make sure board members reflect diversity of the community.
- Convert strategic plan advisory group to a new DHAP Community Advisory Committee.





- Purpose will be to share information and increase the engagement of community members in planning downtown activities, projects, collaborative events, arts and networking events, etc.
- Expand membership as needed to ensure schools, churches, and other non-profit organizations are well represented.
- Invest in capacity building so that members will be better educated on best practices for non-profit management and fundraising.

CONCLUSION

It should be important to note that the goals and recommendations provided in this plan are derived from the hard work of the organizations, educators, and volunteers who have been providing arts and cultural programming to the community many years. The hope is that the discussion of ideas and articulation of a shared vision will not only bring to light the value of this work, but also facilitate partnerships, collaboration, and a renewed sense of purpose. While much progress has already been made towards many of these goals, focused energy and dedicated resources will be needed to carry this momentum forward.

The Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress would like to thank all those who participated in this planning process, as well as others who have invested both time and energy towards the downtown's broader revitalization initiatives. Only by working together can we make our community a better place!

The Power of Place

As can be inferred in the photo on the facing page, place has the power to shape communities. While still nothing more than a grass lawn, the new City Park adjacent to the future art center is already serving to support social interaction and redefine the downtown's cultural identity. For the past three years this park has hosted community festivals, cultural events, concerts, and the seasonal farmer's market. Most recently it hosted children's activities associated with the Chamber's annual Funfest celebration, which was featured in a recent Boston Globe article: How Latinos revived a once-dying Pennsylvania city. Photo Credit (facing page): Erin Clark for The Boston Globe (October 18, 2019).

