

# Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan



*March 2008*

prepared by:  
 **Gannett Fleming**



# *Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan*

*Prepared for  
The Borough of Pottstown*



*By  
Gannett Fleming, Inc.*

*Funding by the  
**Montgomery County Community Revitalization Program***

*and*

**PAID, Inc  
The Hill School  
Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation  
The Borough of Pottstown  
Pottstown Borough Authority**

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- PAID, Inc.
- The Hill School
- Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation
- The Borough of Pottstown
- Pottstown Borough Authority

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# Executive Summary

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The Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan provides a balanced program of projects and initiatives to guide community revitalization efforts in the Borough. It builds on the Pottstown Community and Economic Development Action and Implementation Strategy (2000) and continues many of its priorities. However, it brings expansion of the business and employment base to the forefront of Pottstown's revitalization strategy, in the belief that it represents the "engine" for revitalization that will make possible further success in other key areas.

## Vision Statement

The following vision statement, established by the Economic Development Advisory Board, has guided the preparation of this strategic plan update.

The people of Pottstown live, work and recreate in a community that celebrates its strong sense of place, traditional town character and rich diversity. Pottstown's vision is to be a more socially, culturally and economically vibrant community that establishes itself as the **primary hub of the region**.

Pottstown strives to achieve this vision by creating an environment that encourages all residents, existing businesses, and the Borough as a whole to thrive, and that attracts new residents, businesses and visitors. Key elements of this environment include

- **Excellent and accessible Schools** (primary, secondary, post-secondary)
- Expanding **employment opportunities**
- Crucial **business infrastructure** such as roads, utilities, and telecommunications systems
- Distinctive civic infrastructure such as **recreational, cultural, and natural amenities**
- **Public safety** (both actual and perceived)
- Effective **cooperation** and partnerships between all levels of government and the community, both locally and regionally

## Goals and Strategies

### **Goal 1: Strengthen Pottstown as a center for business and employment.**

*Promote the development of suitable sites for businesses in the Borough.*

- 1.1. Initiate redevelopment of key opportunity sites in the Borough.
- 1.2. Identify key potential business development/employment sites throughout the borough and prevent their rezoning for other uses.

# Executive Summary

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- 1.3. Assess existing Borough-owned properties and determine whether they should be sold or used for a Borough purpose.

### ***Establish a range of business assistance programs in the Borough.***

- 1.4. Institute a business retention and expansion program in the Borough.
- 1.5. Institute a business attraction and recruitment program in the Borough.

### ***Develop more business/customer-friendly permitting and planning processes and ordinances.***

- 1.6. Develop a clear, concise, streamlined planning and permitting process for businesses seeking to locate to or expand in the Borough.
- 1.7. Provide ongoing customer service training for Borough employees who work directly with the public.
- 1.8. Undertake a regular Customer Satisfaction Survey to track public perceptions about the quality of public services and the responsiveness of Borough employees.
- 1.9. Review the Borough zoning ordinance to identify opportunities to make provisions and requirements more clear and predictable.

### ***Expand Employment Opportunities for Pottstown Residents.***

- 1.10. Continue to develop the partnership between the Pottstown School District, other area school districts, and Montgomery County Community College to provide educational and career pathways that increase post-secondary degree attainment levels of residents, including high school students, adults, and area businesses and organizations.
- 1.11. Continue to support and expand early education and after-school tutoring programs in the Borough.
- 1.12. Hold regular meetings between the School Board and leaders of local business organizations to develop a partnership to improve the Borough's schools.

### ***Undertake further research to develop a detailed understanding of business and economic conditions in Pottstown and the region.***

- 1.13. Undertake a market sector/industry cluster analysis for Pottstown and the region.

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## **Goal 2: Enhance Pottstown’s identity as the urban hub of the region.**

### ***Strengthen and publicize amenities and resources that draw people to the Borough.***

- 2.1. Create a position to help coordinate and market the Borough’s and region’s educational, cultural and recreational institutions, facilities, programs and events.
- 2.2. Strengthen the partnership between cultural institutions in the Pottstown Borough and region.
- 2.3. Continue and expand the existing Borough marketing effort.

### ***Continue efforts to revitalize the Main Street commercial district along High Street as well as adjacent areas.***

- 2.4. Focus revitalization efforts on the 300 and 400 blocks of High Street.
- 2.5. To support the proposed development at High and Evans, look for opportunities to encourage redevelopment of nearby properties.
- 2.6. Institute a Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) program for the Borough to help defray building renovation costs and encourage redevelopment.
- 2.7. Build on existing efforts such as the Performing Arts Center to recruit arts and cultural organizations with a regional draw to the High Street area.
- 2.8. Undertake consistently-applied code enforcement efforts on High Street and throughout the Borough.

### ***Make improvements to the transportation network to promote the safe and efficient movement of people, vehicles and goods within and through the Borough.***

- 2.9. Continue to work with North Coventry Township to implement the recommendations of the *Reconnections* Plan. In particular, the recommended improvements to the Hanover Street Bridge and the Keim Street Bridge should be made.
- 2.10. Undertake a multi-modal transportation study in partnership with adjacent municipalities.
- 2.11. Work with adjacent municipalities to improve the functionality and appearance of the Borough’s gateway areas.
- 2.12. Develop a wayfinding system to provide clearer directions into and within the borough.

# Executive Summary

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- 2.13. Improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connections between High Street and Riverfront Park.
- 2.14. Undertake a parking study to determine parking supply and demand and assess the need for additional parking facilities.
- 2.15. Conduct an assessment of key organizations in the Borough and identify strategies to improve collaboration.

## **Goal 3: Improve the quality of life in Pottstown and its neighborhoods.**

### ***Encourage the revitalization of Pottstown's neighborhoods.***

- 3.1. Undertake planning activities that focus on the specific needs of Pottstown's neighborhoods.

### ***Provide a broad range of housing choices, including additional market-rate, owner-occupied housing, to help stabilize neighborhoods and meet the needs of current and future Pottstown residents.***

- 3.2. Form a non-profit Borough Housing Corporation to take the lead in housing development initiatives in Pottstown.
- 3.3. Provide financial incentives and other support to encourage rehabilitation and homeownership of residences in the Borough.
- 3.4. Encourage the development of market-rate urban-style housing (e.g., condominiums, townhouses) in the urban core.
- 3.5. Rewrite zoning requirements in the urban core to encourage good-quality urban-style housing.
- 3.6. Work with the local real estate industry to increase interest in promoting home sales in the Borough, especially single-family homes

### ***Develop recreational facilities and programs that benefit Borough residents and attract people from the surrounding region.***

- 3.7. Support and enhance recreational programming at the Ricketts Center.
- 3.8. Continue to implement the recommendations of the Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan and the Open Space Plan.
- 3.9. Develop safe pedestrian and bicycle linkages from Pottstown's neighborhoods to Riverfront and Memorial Parks.
- 3.10. Continue to develop seasonal activities and programs that draw residents and visitors to the Borough's recreational amenities.
- 3.11. Work with area municipalities to develop a regional network of recreational amenities.

### ***Enhance public safety in the Borough.***

- 3.12. Obtain new/refurbished equipment for the Fire Department (new/refurbished fire trucks; improved fire hydrant connections).
- 3.13. Provide enhanced street lighting throughout the Borough.
- 3.14. Obtain advanced safety monitoring systems for the Police Department (video cameras; Shot Spotter system).
- 3.15. Establish a Volunteers in Policing Program (VIPS) to enlist senior citizens to provide civilian support services to in the Borough.
- 3.16. Update rental property licensing requirements to include public safety requirements.

***Executive Summary***

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# Introduction

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This Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan represents an update of the Pottstown Community and Economic Development Action and Implementation Strategy, which was prepared in 2000 and has guided Borough revitalization efforts in the ensuing years. The Strategic Plan continues many of the priorities established in that earlier document, including a focus on business development, increasing employment, reinforcing Pottstown as the regional hub, strengthening the downtown, and enhancing the overall quality of life of residents. It attempts to provide a more focused list of mutually supportive strategies and action items, however, so as to encourage the Borough to concentrate its efforts on those initiatives that can make a noticeable difference in the Borough's revitalization.

## What is a Strategic Plan?

For the purposes of this project, a strategic plan refers to a document that defines a focused vision and goals for community revitalization and sets forth specific strategies and action steps to accomplish those ends. Unlike a comprehensive plan, it does not attempt to address the full range of characteristic community planning topic areas, or to the same level of detail. Instead, it considers the various aspects of the community from the vantage point of how they influence the effort to accomplish the vision and goals of the strategic plan.

The reason for this approach is not that the usual topic areas of a comprehensive plan are unimportant or unworthy of a more comprehensive treatment. The Borough certainly should continue to carry out the many programs and maintain the many facilities that meet community needs. But the value of the strategic planning approach is that it encourages a concentration of effort over a short-to-medium-term time frame on a more limited set of objectives that represent key leverage points to accomplish the desired community improvement.

## Pottstown Community and Economic Development Action and Implementation Strategy

Before proceeding with an overview of the Strategic Plan Update, it will be helpful to review the key elements of the 2000 Strategy and the associated implementation efforts.

The strategic objective of 2000 Strategy was to “improve the economic viability and quality of life in Pottstown by:

1. Preserving and increasing Pottstown's employment base and tax base;
2. Upgrading visibly deteriorated industrial, commercial, and residential areas of Pottstown; and
3. Preserving and increasing environmental, cultural and educational resources that establish a quality of life in Pottstown attractive to businesses and residents of all income levels.”

The vision statement of the 2000 Strategy included six related aspects:

1. Pottstown will have an expanding and diverse employment base.
2. Pottstown will be an attractive place to live for residents of all income levels.

3. Pottstown will have a strong downtown.
4. Pottstown will be the dynamic hub of the Tri-County Area.
5. Pottstown area governments will emphasize regional cooperation and consolidation.
6. Pottstown area residents and businesses will benefit from the community's distinctive amenities.

As these priorities suggest, the original strategic plan presented a balanced approach to community revitalization, addressing economic development, downtown development, neighborhood development, overall quality of life, and Pottstown's regional role and identity. As noted above, this Strategic Plan Update essentially continues this approach.

The 2000 Strategy proposed eleven priority initiatives to achieve this proposed vision.

1. Market the Borough.
2. Advocate for the Schuylkill Valley Metro.
3. Revitalize High Street.
4. Improve Borough-business communication.
5. Implement the Washington Street Action Plan.
6. Upgrade and market the Borough's Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ).
7. Reuse Mrs. Smith's Complex.
8. Establish an area commission to review government functions.
9. Reduce rental unit density and stabilize Pottstown's neighborhoods.
10. Improve Pottstown schools' image.
11. Implement John Potts Park.

The Borough Oversight/Implementation Committee was formed in 2001 to oversee implementation of the 2000 Strategy (it is now called the Economic Development Advisory Board). Since then, several projects and programs have been undertaken to carry out the priority initiatives. The most significant include the following:

### ***New Programs, Organizations and Personnel***

- A Borough Economic Development Director was hired in April 2000.
- The Homeownership Initiative, which provides incentives for owner-occupied housing, was initiated in 2003.
- The Main Street program was approved in May 2006. A Main Street Manager was hired in December 2006.
- The Pottstown Downtown Foundation was established.
- The School District has adopted new curriculums.

### ***Physical Improvements***

- The Town Center Plaza was completed in June 2002.
- The redesign of High Street travel and parking patterns was completed in June 2003.
- The KOZ has been expanded.
- A number of housing rehabilitation and infill development projects have been undertaken in the Washington Street neighborhood.
- The School District has undertaken a number of facility renovations.

- The underpass and walkway through the Montgomery County Community College Campus connecting High Street and College Drive was completed.

### ***Marketing***

- A new borough logo was introduced.
- The School District has hired community relations staff.

### ***Expanding Recreational Opportunities***

- A master plan for the development and connection of Memorial Park and Riverfront Park has been prepared.

## ***Regional Planning***

Pottstown and seven neighboring municipalities have organized the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee. The Committee prepared and adopted the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan in 2005.

Despite these accomplishments, progress towards key aspects of the 2000 Strategy vision statement has proven difficult to achieve. In particular, the condition of Pottstown's employment base has not noticeably improved; progress towards a strong downtown has been slow; and certain neighborhoods continue to struggle with problems of poverty, crime and unemployment.

Of course, these are difficult challenges, so this is not meant as a criticism of the 2000 Strategy. Seven years after preparation of the initial 2000 Strategy, however, the Borough has the opportunity to take a fresh look at the opportunities for and obstacles to community revitalization.

The balanced approach to community and economic revitalization expressed in the 2000 Strategy remains essentially sound. Implementation efforts appear, however, to have focused more on downtown and neighborhood revitalization and less on strengthening Pottstown as a business and employment center. Perhaps this is because it is easier to make initial progress in these areas. Streetscape and other physical improvements can be made, infill housing can be built, and people can see the results.

The Strategic Plan brings expansion of the business and employment base to the forefront of Pottstown's revitalization strategy, in the belief that it represents the "engine" for revitalization. Progress in this area will make possible further success in other key areas. Conversely, without meaningful progress in strengthening Pottstown's business and employment base, the ability to make further progress with Main Street and neighborhood revitalization will be limited.

## **Vision Statement and Goals**

The following vision statement, established by the Economic Development Advisory Board, has guided the preparation of this Strategic Plan.

The people of Pottstown live, work and recreate in a community that celebrates its strong sense of place, traditional town character and rich

diversity. Pottstown's vision is to be a more socially, culturally and economically vibrant community that establishes itself as the **primary hub of the region.**

Pottstown strives to achieve this vision by creating an environment that encourages all residents, existing businesses, and the Borough as a whole to thrive, and that attracts new residents, businesses and visitors. Key elements of this environment include

- **Excellent and accessible Schools** (primary, secondary, post-secondary,)
- Expanding **employment opportunities**
- Crucial **business infrastructure** such as roads, utilities, and telecommunications systems
- Distinctive civic infrastructure such as **recreational, cultural, and natural amenities**
- **Public safety** (both actual and perceived)
- Effective **cooperation** and partnerships between all levels of government and the community, both locally and regionally

This vision statement suggests three main areas of focus for the strategic planning effort:

- Pottstown as a place to do business
- Pottstown as a regional hub
- Pottstown as a place to live, work and raise families

The following goals were developed to address these areas of focus:

1. Strengthen Pottstown as a center for business and employment.
2. Enhance Pottstown's identity as the urban hub of the region.
3. Improve the quality of life in Pottstown and its neighborhoods.

## **Strategic Plan Organization**

The Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan contains the following sections:

- Goals and Strategies
- Summary of Opportunities and Challenges
- Action Plan

- Summary of Public Involvement
- Community Profile



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# ***GOALS AND STRATEGIES***



# Goals and Strategies

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## Goal 1: Strengthen Pottstown as a center for business and employment.

### *Promote the development of suitable sites for businesses in the Borough.*

- 1.1. Initiate redevelopment of key opportunity sites in the Borough.

#### Intended Result

New businesses will locate in the Borough.

#### Description

The Borough's principal development areas and opportunity sites are listed below.

#### ***Riverfront Industrial Area***

- Bethlehem Steel Site/Pottstown Industrial Center
- Mrs. Smith's Site
- KOZ Site
- 140 College Drive (the old PECO building, which currently houses the Schuylkill River Heritage Area offices)

#### ***Airport***

- Further development of airport facilities (e.g., additional hangers and other services, such as a restaurant)
- Circle of Progress Business Park
- Adjacent vacant land

#### ***High Street***

- 300 and 400 Blocks of High Street
- High and Evans Site

A particular redevelopment opportunity exists in the vicinity of Industrial Boulevard, where a number of vacant or underutilized properties are located. An effort should be made to establish a business/employment district with an enhanced identity through coordinated planning and development activities involving property owners, developers, Montgomery County and the Borough.

The Borough should pursue joint partnerships to establish this area as a premier business location in the region. As part of this effort, the Borough should put in place a program of development incentives and other inducements to encourage participation from property owners and interested developers. These could include tax incentives available through a Borough LERTA program, other incentive programs available through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Montgomery County, and roadway and other infrastructure improvements undertaken by the Borough.

The following planning and development activities should be undertaken in the proposed business employment district:

- Specific plans for development of key areas and properties

# Goals and Strategies

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- Environmental studies
- Detailed market analyses
- Site assemblage/partnering
- Off-site public infrastructure improvements
- Site inventories to identify parcel size, ownership, zoning, available utilities

- 1.2 Identify key potential business development/employment sites throughout the borough and prevent their rezoning for other uses.

Intended Result

The Borough will retain key sites for future business development activity and job creation.

Description

The zoning department will maintain a list of priority business development sites and prevent their rezoning for other uses.

- 1.3 Assess existing Borough-owned properties and determine whether they should be sold or used for a Borough purpose.

Intended Result

The Borough will dispose of properties that it no longer needs and will retain the remaining properties for future beneficial uses.

Description

Borough staff will review the list of Borough-owned properties and advise Borough Council as to which could properties be used to help carry out Borough plans and projects. The remaining properties should be put up for sale.

***Establish a range of business assistance programs in the Borough.***

- 1.4 Institute a business retention and expansion program in the Borough.

Intended Result

Existing businesses will be strengthened and will remain in the Borough.

Description

A business visitation program should be established to regularly survey key businesses in the Borough about their needs, concerns and plans and to identify appropriate response strategies as needed to address critical problems. Issues to address could include problems with permitting, infrastructure needs, and education and training needs of the area workforce.

- 1.5 Institute a business attraction and recruitment program in the Borough.

Intended Result

New businesses will locate in the Borough, creating additional employment opportunities for Borough residents.

## Description

The Borough's available sites, business assistance resources (including the KOZ, and education and training resources such as Montgomery County Community College), and amenities should be marketed to industry and economic development organizations in the region. Materials in various media describing these assets should be prepared and distributed and also made available on a website.

## ***Develop more business/customer-friendly permitting and planning processes and ordinances.***

- 1.6 Develop a clear, concise, streamlined planning and permitting process for businesses seeking to locate to or expand in the Borough.

## Intended Result

The Borough will develop a timely and predictable permitting and planning process that makes it a more business-friendly location.

## Description

Elements of a clear, concise, streamlined permitting process could include the following:

- Pre-submittal consultation concerning permitting requirements and construction plans
- Timely review of construction plans
- Coordinated, timely construction inspections

This process should be audited on a regular basis to assess progress and identify areas for improvement.

- 1.7 Provide ongoing customer service training for Borough employees who work directly with the public.

## Intended Result

The public will perceive Borough employees as helpful in solving problems and reasonable in enforcing regulations.

## Description

Borough employees who work in departments that have regular dealings with the public, such as the departments of finance, inspections and permits, and zoning, should receive ongoing customer service training to provide more courteous and effective service to the public.

- 1.8 Undertake an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey to track public perceptions about the quality of public services and the responsiveness of Borough employees.

## Intended Result

The Borough will be able to track public perceptions of Borough services and employees and identify areas for improvement.

## Description

The Borough should develop a survey form using similar surveys from other municipalities as examples. The surveys should be mailed out annually to every Borough residence, and the results should be posted on the Borough web page.

- 1.9 Review the Borough zoning ordinance to identify opportunities to make provisions and requirements more clear and predictable.

## Intended Result

The zoning code's provisions and requirements will be clearly defined, reducing the need for negotiations and the potential for delays in the Borough's permitting and approval process.

## Description

The Borough should retain the services of a consultant with experience in preparing zoning ordinances to review the Borough zoning code.

### ***Expand Employment Opportunities for Pottstown Residents.***

- 1.10 Continue to develop the partnership between the Pottstown School District, other area school districts, and Montgomery County Community College to provide educational and career pathways that increase post-secondary degree attainment levels of residents in high demand occupational areas that require both associate degree and bachelor degree completion. Expand opportunities for high school students as well as to adults, and to area businesses and organizations.

## Intended Result

High School students, adults, including the unemployed and incumbent workers, will develop and improve the skills and capacities necessary to enter and advance in high demand careers, taking advantage of career opportunities while helping meet the workforce needs of the region's employers.

## Description

The Pottstown School District, other area school districts, and Montgomery County Community College will continue to work with area businesses and industries to develop and provide educational and career pathways that increase post-secondary degree attainment levels, and develop critical workforce skills of residents including high school students and adults, including those unemployed and those seeking to advance in their current career, or begin a new career. Special emphasis will be give to high demand occupational areas that require post-secondary education, including associate degrees, bachelor degrees, and beyond, available through Montgomery County Community College's University Center. Apprenticeships, cooperative education, and internships should be available to high school and college students.

- 1.11 Continue to support and expand early education and after-school tutoring programs in the Borough.

Intended Result

Children in the Borough will have access to educational support programs, beginning at an early age and continuing through elementary and secondary school.

Description

The partners involved in the Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness (PEAK) initiative should continue their efforts to make quality early childhood education and related services more available to children and their families.

PEAK has identified several initiatives that it would like to undertake:

- A workforce development initiative to increase credential levels and compensation for community child care staff, involving career counseling, professional development, education incentives and salary supplements.
- Increasing quality at additional community early learning programs through providing funds for appropriate classroom supplies and mentoring by the PA Pre-K Coach.
- Extending PEAK's quality improvement and family outreach work to infant/toddler classrooms at community partner sites.
- A continued/expanded role for the Family Engagement Specialist in supporting families in their role as a child's first teacher.
- Continued funding for the PEAK Coordinator's salary to sustain the work in the community.

- 1.12 Hold regular meetings between the School Board and leaders of local business organizations to develop a partnership to improve the Borough's schools.

Intended Result

A partnership between the School District and the business community will be established that strengthens the Borough educational system and increases the work readiness of high school graduates.

Description

Business leaders in the Borough have a strong interest in the quality of the school system, as parents of school children, as employers of people with children, and as potential employers of graduates. The business community also possesses resources that could help support and strengthen the school system. These resources include political influence, financial and other material resources, and an understanding of what skills and training are needed in the workplace. A business community-school system partnership emerging out of regular meetings of the respective leaders could begin to identify opportunities to increase the resources available for education in the Borough and improve students' work skills.

# Goals and Strategies

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*Undertake further research to develop a detailed understanding of business and economic conditions in Pottstown and the region.*

- 1.13 Undertake a market sector/industry cluster analysis for Pottstown and the region.

Intended Result

The Borough and area economic development organizations will learn which are the region's growth industries and understand their requirements for continued success.

Description

An economic analysis firm should be retained to undertake a market sector/industry cluster analysis for the Pottstown Metro Region. This analysis should provide a detailed picture of the Borough's and the region's economic structure. It should identify existing and emerging industry clusters as well as the economic foundations crucial for their success. This information will provide greater focus for ongoing economic development efforts in the Borough and the region.

**Goal 2: Enhance Pottstown's identity as the urban hub of the region.**

*Strengthen and publicize amenities that draw people to the Borough.*

- 2.1. Create a position to help coordinate and market the Borough's and region's cultural and recreational institutions, facilities, programs and events.

Intended Result

The number of cultural and recreational activities and events in the Borough will be expanded and marketed throughout the region. Opportunities for joint marketing will be explored. As a result, Pottstown will become known as the cultural and recreational center of the region.

Description

Cultural and recreational organizations in the borough should collaborate to create and fill a coordinator position responsible for facilitating joint programming and marketing activities. The goal should be to create a full schedule of events and activities throughout the year. Opportunities should be sought to schedule several activities around the same time in order to create higher-profile events.

- 2.2. Strengthen the partnership between cultural institutions in the Pottstown Borough and region.

Intended Result

Cultural institutions in the Borough and surrounding region will coordinate program and facility development and marketing activities in order to establish and enhance Pottstown's identity as the cultural center of the region.

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## Description

Area cultural and arts organizations should undertake the following initiatives:

- Undertake a joint marketing program for the Borough's cultural amenities.
- Prepare a Cultural Resources Strategy to help direct the development of cultural amenities in the Borough.

- 2.3. Continue and expand the existing Borough marketing effort.

## Intended Result

Pottstown will establish a more positive image in the region.

## Description

The Borough should resume and expand efforts to market Pottstown, retaining the services of professional marketing firms as needed and working with the proposed marketing coordinator discussed above. The Pottstown School District and Montgomery County Community College in particular should be included as a partner in this effort.

### ***Continue efforts to revitalize the Main Street commercial district along High Street as well as adjacent areas.***

- 2.4. Focus revitalization efforts on the 300 and 400 blocks of High Street.

## Intended Result

New businesses and other uses compatible with the Main Street district will be brought to High Street.

## Description

Incentives may be necessary in some cases to encourage development along High Street. The Borough and other organizations should undertake the following steps:

- Identify key properties for possible acquisition. The purpose here would be to resell such properties to developers who commit to meeting development objectives established by the Borough.
- Identify potential physical improvements to support revitalization. These could include additional streetscape improvements, traffic improvements, or joint facilities such as parking structures.

- 2.5. To support the proposed development at High and Evans, look for opportunities to encourage redevelopment of nearby properties.

## Intended Result

New businesses and other tax-generating uses compatible with the Main Street district will be brought to High Street.

## Description

# Goals and Strategies

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The Borough and other organizations, working in partnership with private developers were possible, should undertake the following steps:

- Identify key properties for possible acquisition. Again, the purpose here would be to resell such properties to developers who commit to meeting development objectives established by the Borough.
- Identify potential physical improvements to support revitalization. Again, these could include additional streetscape improvements, traffic improvements, or joint facilities such as parking structures.

- 2.6. Institute a Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) program for the Borough to help defray building renovation costs and encourage redevelopment.

### Intended Result

New businesses will locate in and existing businesses will expand in the Borough. Additional redevelopment projects will be initiated.

### Description

The Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) program allows a company constructing a new facility or a major expansion to defer the increase in real estate taxes on the value of the construction over a period of ten years. Establishment of a LERTA program will require the approval of taxing authorities in the Borough, including the Borough itself and the Pottstown School District. It is not uncommon for such authorities to resist the idea of forgoing tax revenues. In this case however, all that is given up are hypothetical tax revenues; the investments on which they are based would not occur in the first place without the promise of abatement. Thus there is no reduction in either current or future tax revenues. As a first step, an education effort should be undertaken to inform decision makers about the true costs and benefits of such a program.

- 2.7. Build on existing efforts such as the Performing Arts Center and the Art Gallery at Montgomery County Community College to recruit arts and cultural organizations with a regional draw to the High Street area.

### Intended Result

A cluster of arts and cultural organizations will be established in the High Street area that draws more people to the Main Street district, thereby adding vitality to the area, helping to support local businesses, and supporting the overall downtown revitalization effort.

### Description

Incubator space should be developed on or near to High Street to foster small and fledgling arts organizations.

- 2.8. Undertake consistently-applied code enforcement efforts on High Street and throughout the Borough.

## Intended Result

Poorly maintained buildings will be renovated. Property owners will be discouraged from “sitting” on buildings without performing proper maintenance, in anticipation of future speculative opportunities.

## Description

The Borough will revise existing ordinances and increase code enforcement staff as necessary to expand code enforcement efforts along High Street and throughout the Borough.

### ***Make improvements to the transportation network to promote the safe and efficient movement of people, vehicles and goods within and through the Borough.***

- 2.9. Continue to work with North Coventry Township to implement the recommendations of the *Reconnections* Plan. In particular, the recommended improvements to the Hanover Street Bridge and the Keim Street Bridge should be made.

## Intended Result

Movement between North Coventry Township and Pottstown will be facilitated, and barriers will be removed.

## Description

The Borough should give priority to the projects recommended in the *Reconnections* Plan when seeking State funds for capital improvement projects. The Hanover Street Bridge is identified as the major connection between the two communities as well as a symbolic link and gateway to each municipality. Currently, pedestrian facilities on the bridge consist of 4 foot 6 inch walkways that give little sense of protection and safety to pedestrians. Proposed improvements include a decrease in vehicle lanes to 10 feet each and an increase in the width of both walkways to 8 feet. Additionally, a 3-foot wide drip irrigated planter is planned on each side of the bridge, separating vehicles from pedestrians. Other proposed enhancements to the bridge include ornamental pedestrian-scaled lighting fixtures, a large gateway arch or structure at the mid-point of the bridge, and a water cannon display.

Built in 1935, the Keim Street Bridge provides another important vehicle route between the two communities. The *Reconnections* Plan recommends that a new bridge design be pursued, perhaps in combination with a new alignment of both the bridge and Keim Street on the Pottstown side.

- 2.10. Undertake a multi-modal transportation study in partnership with adjacent municipalities.

# Goals and Strategies

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## Intended Result

The study will develop a comprehensive program of improvements to enhance mobility and access within the Borough, and between the Borough and neighboring municipalities.

## Description

A transportation planning firm should be hired to prepare a transportation study. This study should address the following elements:

- Highway interchanges and Borough entrances/gateway areas
- Truck/vehicular access
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections
- Trail networks
- Parking
- Traffic issues
- Connections with adjacent municipalities
- Wayfinding improvements

The results of this study should guide implementation of the following related transportation recommendations.

- 2.11. Work with adjacent municipalities to improve the functionality and appearance of the Borough's gateway areas.

## Intended Result

The entrances to the Borough will be attractive and convey a sense of Pottstown's unique character. Visitors will be able to easily find their way to downtown Pottstown.

## Description

Possible gateway improvements include:

- Gateway signs
- Clear, understandable routes from PA 100 and US 422 onto High Street, through wayfinding elements and/or modifications to the street network
- Landscaping
- Streetscaping

- 2.12. Develop a wayfinding system to provide clearer directions into and within the borough.

## Intended Result

Visitors will be able to find their way easily to key destinations in the Borough.

## Description

Among other things, this system could include the following:

- Borough gateway/entrance signs

- Directional signs within the Borough to key regional amenities and to parking facilities
- District signs

2.13. Improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connections between High Street and Riverfront Park.

Intended Result

The riverfront area will be less isolated from the center of the Borough. The Main Street district will benefit from improved connections to activities and amenities located at Riverfront Park. In conjunction with the *Bike Pottstown* community bike program, these improvements will facilitate movement of residents and visitors among key attractions in the Borough.

Description

The Borough should continue to pursue the recommendations of the Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master to enhance linkages between the two parks and the western edge of downtown. The Borough should also pursue completion of the proposed “Promenade” pedestrian and bike path extending from Hanover Street just south of the Norfolk Southern rail line across College Drive to Riverfront Park.

2.14. Undertake a parking study in the Borough, focusing on the downtown.

Intended Result

The study will determine parking supply and demand and assess the need for additional parking facilities.

Description

A Borough parking study was last conducted in 2003 and should be updated. The Borough will hire a consultant to conduct the study.

2.15. Conduct an assessment of key organizations in the Borough and identify strategies to improve collaboration.

Intended Result

The Borough and key community organizations and institutions will work together more effectively, with a clearer understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.

Description

An organizational management consultant should be retained to assess community organizations (both public and private), help clarify roles and responsibilities, and make recommendations for improvements to encourage more effective collaboration.

**Goal 3: Improve the quality of life in Pottstown and its neighborhoods.**

*Encourage the revitalization of Pottstown’s neighborhoods.*

# Goals and Strategies

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- 3.1. Undertake planning activities that focus on the specific needs of Pottstown's neighborhoods.

Intended Result

The planning activities will identify revitalization projects and activities that will improve quality of life in individual neighborhoods and the Borough as a whole.

Description

The Borough should prepare neighborhood plans to promote the revitalization of individual neighborhoods. These plans should identify key needs and opportunities and develop strategies and possible physical improvements to improve the quality of life for residents. The plans should also consider ways to achieve a balance between market-rate and affordable housing in order to help stabilize communities. The Washington Street neighborhood should be the focus of the initial neighborhood plan.

As an initial step in this process, the Borough should undertake a community-wide outreach effort to introduce the purpose and process of neighborhood planning and to identify Borough neighborhoods based on actual perceptions of Borough residents.

*Provide a broad range of housing choices, including additional market-rate, owner-occupied housing, to meet the needs of current and future Pottstown residents.*

- 3.2. Form a non-profit Borough Housing Corporation to take the lead in housing development initiatives in Pottstown.

Intended Result

The Borough Housing Corporation will undertake housing and other development activities that are consistent with the priorities of the Borough.

Description

A non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation should be formed to undertake housing development activities in the borough. This effort should involve leaders from Borough government, community institutions (including financial institutions), development organizations, and the broader community.

- 3.3. Provide financial incentives and other support to encourage rehabilitation and homeownership of residences in the Borough.

Intended Result

The quality of Pottstown's housing stock will improve, and the percentage of market-rate owner-occupied housing units will increase in the Borough.

Description

The Borough will continue to implement the **Home Ownership Initiative Program** and the **Multi-Unit Housing Conversion Program** and seek

additional funding to expand the programs. The former program seeks to attract additional homebuyers to the Core District through provision of funds for desired improvements, such as roof repairs, exterior painting, and kitchen and bathroom upgrades. (The latter program seeks to reduce rental density through provision of funds for repairs and conversion such as removal of extra kitchens, stairwells, and changes to room configurations associated with the permanent removal of units from multi-family buildings. In particular, the Borough will seek

- 3.4. Encourage the development of market-rate urban-style housing (e.g., condominiums, townhouses) in the urban core.

Intended Result

Pottstown will provide a full range of housing choices that increase home ownership, meet the needs of current and future Borough residents, and help stabilize communities.

Description

Suitable locations in the Borough for market-rate urban-style housing should be identified and marketed to potential developers. This could be a responsibility of the proposed Housing Development Corporation discussed above.

- 3.5. Rewrite zoning requirements in the urban core to encourage good-quality urban-style housing.

Intended Result

Developers will have additional incentives to build good-quality, market-rate urban-style housing in the Borough.

Description

The proposed rewriting of the Borough zoning code discussed above should include disincentives for poor quality housing (such as minimum unit square footage requirements) and incentives for desired housing types (such as density bonuses and reduced parking requirements).

- 3.6. Work with the local real estate industry to increase interest in promoting home sales in the Borough, especially single-family homes

***Develop recreational facilities and programs that benefit Borough residents and attract people from the surrounding region.***

- 3.7. Support and enhance recreational programming at the Ricketts Center.

Intended Result

Residents in nearby neighborhoods will have expanded recreational offerings.

Description

# Goals and Strategies

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The Borough and other recreational organizations should collaborate to develop an expanded program of recreational activities to offer at the Ricketts Center.

- 3.8. Continue to implement the recommendations of the Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan and the Open Space Plan.

Intended Result

Residents of Pottstown and the surrounding region will have expanded recreational opportunities. Pottstown's image will be enhanced as the region's recreational center.

Description

The Borough should make projects contained in the Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan and the Open Space Plan high priorities when seeking funding from the State and other sources.

- 3.9. Develop safe pedestrian and bicycle linkages from Pottstown's neighborhoods to Riverfront and Memorial Parks.

Intended Result

Pottstown residents will be able to safely walk and bicycle to the Borough's principal recreational and open space facilities.

Description

The Pottstown Borough Open Space Plan recommends a number of pedestrian and bicycle enhancements to create improved linkages within the community. These include connections between some of the Borough's larger institutions (e.g., Montgomery County Community College, The Hill School, etc.) and High Street, and Memorial and Riverfront Parks. The plan also recommends that sidewalks be maintained and upgraded and that a comprehensive linkage plan be developed to improve linkages throughout the Borough. According to the plan, this would require a study of the level of service that existing sidewalks and crossings provide and possible signage to encourage and direct pedestrian traffic.

The Borough should implement these recommendations of the Open Space Plan, with particular emphasis on linkages between neighborhoods and the major recreational destinations.

- 3.10. Continue to develop seasonal activities and programs that draw residents and visitors to the Borough's recreational amenities.

Intended Result

Residents of Pottstown and the surrounding region will have expanded recreational opportunities. Pottstown's image will be enhanced as the region's recreational center. The number of visitors to Pottstown will increase, providing additional support to the Borough's businesses.

Description

As improvements continue to be made to Memorial Park and Riverfront Park, the Borough should expand the number of activities and events offered to the public. This effort should be done in collaboration with the proposed cultural events/marketing coordinator discussed above and with area cultural organizations, to capitalize on possible synergies.

- 3.11. Work with area municipalities to develop a regional network of recreational amenities.

Intended Result

Residents of Pottstown and the surrounding region will have expanded recreational opportunities. Pottstown's image will be enhanced as the region's recreational center.

Description

The Borough should support construction of the Schuylkill River Trail between Pottstown and Phoenixville.

***Enhance public safety in the Borough.***

- 3.12. Obtain new and refurbished equipment for the Fire Department.

Intended Result

The Fire Department will have dependable modern equipment, improving operational effectiveness and coordination with neighboring fire companies.

Description

The Fire Department has determined that it needs to replace a ladder truck and a pumper truck with a single vehicle (a quint/aerial truck). It also needs to refurbish another pumper truck for use as a reserved apparatus. Finally, it would like to standardize fire hydrant connections throughout the Borough using a quarter-turn Storz connection. This connection is common to all fire companies in the area and would enable the Fire Department to achieve total interoperability among these companies, which would enhance overall fire safety.

- 3.13. Provide enhanced street lighting throughout the Borough.

Intended Result

Improved street lighting will enhance citizens' sense of security and discourage crime.

Description

Most streetlights in the Borough currently employ mercury bulbs (although some have been upgraded in piecemeal fashion). These bulbs would be replaced with sodium vapor bulbs with a higher lumen output.

- 3.14. Obtain advanced safety monitoring systems for the Police Department.

Intended Result

The Police Department will be able to respond more quickly to incidents as they occur throughout the Borough.

# Goals and Strategies

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## Description

Video cameras placed at up to 75 locations in the downtown and higher crime areas would be connected to a monitoring site in the Pottstown Police Department Communications Center. The timeliness and effectiveness of Police response to incidents in the vicinity of these cameras would be improved. The Shot Spotter system, which instantly detects and pinpoints the location of weapons firing events, would be set up to monitor an area within a one-half mile radius of the intersection of Washington and Walnut Streets.

- 3.15. Establish a Volunteers in Policing Program (VIPS) to enlist senior citizens to provide civilian support services in the Borough.

## Intended Result

Police officers are freed from non-essential duties, allowing them to focus on policing and enforcement.

## Description

The VIPS program would enlist volunteers to undertake a variety of tasks that supplement and support the operations of the Police Department, such as administrative duties, community liaison activities, citizen patrols, and research activities.

- 3.16. Update code requirements for rental properties to include public safety requirements.

## Intended Result

Crime will be deterred and overall safety enhanced at rental housing properties in the Borough.

## Description

Existing code requirements for rental properties would be expanded to include such requirements as deadbolt locks on apartment doors, functioning locks on all windows, and functioning exterior lighting.

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***OPPORTUNITIES  
AND  
CHALLENGES***



# *Opportunities & Challenges*

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This section presents a summary of the opportunities and challenges for community revitalization that face the Borough of Pottstown, drawn from the preceding Community Profile. These opportunities and challenges provide the context for developing meaningful and realistic strategies and action steps. They establish the boundaries of what is possible and essential to accomplish.

## **Opportunities**

- Business/Industrial Infrastructure
- Opportunity Sites
- Gateways
- Recreational Amenities
- Cultural, Educational and Institutional Amenities
- Community Organizations and Institutions
- Location at the Junction of Routes 422 and 100
- Main Street District and Distinctive Urban Character
- Regional Planning

### ***Business/Industrial Infrastructure***

One legacy of Pottstown’s industrial past is the presence in the Borough of an “industrial infrastructure” that, with some improvements, can still make Pottstown an attractive business location. This infrastructure includes water and sewer systems with plenty of capacity, a rail line, ready access to Routes 422 and 100, and nearby airports. It also includes the industrial operations that are already located in the Borough, as well as a skilled industrial workforce in the region and workforce development resources through Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Community College and the Pottstown School District.

Of course, it is unlikely, to say the least, that Pottstown can recreate its heavy industrial past. Yet the region is seeing some growth among various light industrial operations – businesses in the biotechnology and life sciences sectors, and technology-oriented businesses conducting assembly operations – as well as software development companies and financial services companies. The Borough has a reasonable chance of attracting smaller companies (20-80 employees) in these sectors.

### ***Opportunity Sites***

Pottstown is an older community that is largely developed, but there still are significant development/redevelopment opportunities at several sites within the Borough. These include vacant or underutilized properties in and around the

# Opportunities and Challenges

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Pottstown Industrial Center (including the Mrs. Smith’s site); the KOZ site on West High Street; the Circle of Progress Business Park and other properties around the airport; and various parcels and blocks along High Street. (“Opportunity Site” refers to a property where significant redevelopment may be possible, due to the property’s size, location, access to infrastructure, vacancy, ownership, and/or other factors.) In some cases, the Borough can encourage redevelopment of several nearby sites to establish revitalized business districts. A map of Development Areas and Opportunity Sites can be found on page 31.

## **Gateways**

Improvements to the Borough’s western gateway could help tie together Memorial Park, Riverfront Park, Pottsgrove Manor, and other amenities, providing a memorable entranceway to the community and a clearer route to the downtown.

## **Recreational Amenities**

Pottstown is fortunate to have a number of noteworthy recreational amenities that not only add to the community’s quality of life but also attract visitors from the surrounding region. These amenities include Memorial Park, Riverfront Park and the Schuylkill River Trail, Pottsgrove Manor, and the Carousel at Pottstown.

Plans already exist to further develop and integrate these facilities into a coherent recreation network that will provide a true regional destination. This network will eventually include opportunities for various types of active and passive recreation, open space, natural areas, wetlands, trails, and historical features. It will also connect to the regional recreational/open space network by means of the Schuylkill River Trail. The Borough has the opportunity to market these amenities and establish Pottstown as the recreational center of the region.



## **Cultural, Educational and Institutional Amenities**

Pottstown is home to several cultural amenities that are unique in the Metro Region. These include the Pottstown Symphony Orchestra, the soon-to-open Performing Arts Center, the Pottstown Public Library, and the Hill School and its performance facilities. A number of small cultural and arts organizations are located in the Borough as well. In addition, Montgomery County Community College has one of its two campuses in the Borough, and the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center is the only general hospital in the Metro Region. The opportunity exists to build on this nucleus to establish Pottstown as the region’s cultural, educational and institutional center.

## **Community Organizations and Institutions**

Pottstown is fortunate to have a number of organizations that make important contributions to the community’s vitality and quality of life, including the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce, Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID), the Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA), the Pottstown Downtown Foundation, the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation, the Pottstown Family YMCA, YWCA Tri-County Area, United Way of Western Montgomery County, and Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness (PEAK). These groups, as well as the other cultural and educational organizations discussed above, provide a wide array of potential partners to carry out the recommendations of this Strategic Plan Update.

## ***Location at the Junction of Routes 422 and 100***

Located at the crossroads of Route 422 and Route 100, the area's two principal highways, the Borough should be able to benefit from ongoing development in the region. This location reinforces Pottstown's role as the regional hub and makes it a natural location for all sorts of economic, cultural, and institutional activities.

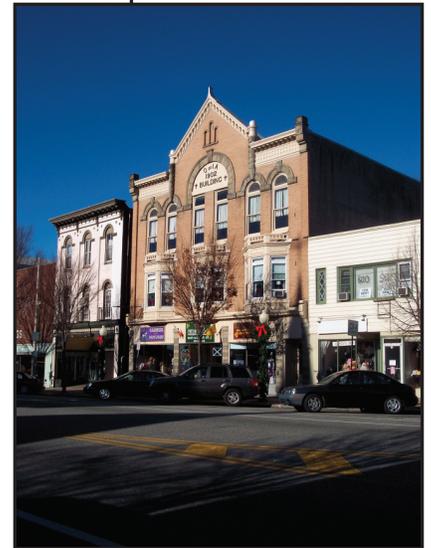
## ***Main Street District and Distinctive Urban Character***

High Street is a traditional main street commercial district with many appealing attributes: continuous storefronts lining ample sidewalks, interesting older architecture, street trees and street lamps, and on-street parking. This district, more than any other, establishes the Borough's identity and unique sense of place. It could become a location for distinctive urban-style entertainment venues and living situations.

The district also shows evidence of the continuing challenges facing its revitalization – vacant storefronts, buildings in need of upkeep and renovation, and uses that are incompatible with a healthy commercial area. Continued efforts to encourage main street revitalization, in conjunction with efforts to promote business development and reinforce the Borough as a regional hub, can help enhance Pottstown's appeal as a place to live and operate a business.

## ***Regional Planning***

Pottstown and seven other neighboring municipalities have organized the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee and have prepared the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan, thereby establishing the institutional and policy framework for ongoing regional cooperation.



***Opportunities and Challenges***

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[Please refer to the Development Areas and Opportunity Sites map in the map appendix.]

# *Opportunities and Challenges*

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## Challenges

- Borough Image
- Gateways
- Limited Available Industrial Space
- Location
- Local Taxes
- Competition from Surrounding Communities
- Difficult Development Process
- Insufficient Marketing
- Insufficient Coordination among Borough and Community Organizations
- Borough Income Levels
- Distressed Core Residential Neighborhoods

### ***Borough Image***

The problem with Pottstown's image in the region has come up frequently during the course of this planning process. It has many aspects: the Borough's history as a declining industrial town; the high proportion of rental and subsidized housing; the presence of many social service agencies and programs, and the visibility of their clients; distressed neighborhoods near the downtown core; the perception of a high crime rate; high property taxes; a public school system with a poor reputation; and the unattractive gateways to the Borough.

### ***Gateways***

The eastern and western gateways into the Borough are poorly signed and surrounded by areas of indistinct character, which convey little sense of arrival. The route into the downtown via the western gateway can be confusing to newcomers.

### ***Limited Available Industrial Space***

According to area real estate and economic development professionals, the Borough lacks available space with modern amenities in the 10,000-50,000 size range that industrial users in the region are typically looking for.

## ***Location***

Existing office space inventory and new office development activity in the region is centered in King of Prussia. This location benefits from proximity to Philadelphia and the junctions of several major highways. Despite the growth along the 422 corridor, communities west of King of Prussia have seen little office development. Heavy east-bound traffic on Route 422 contributes to the problem for these communities. Pottstown appears to be too far west to capture much of this development activity.

## ***Limited Housing Choices***

The Borough's housing stock is comparatively old. Many homes have attractive architecture, but they often lack modern features and amenities and are in need of rehabilitation as well. Families looking for newer homes on large lots will be drawn toward newer residential developments in the surrounding townships. At the same time, there is little upscale urban-style housing that could appeal to professionals or senior business managers.

## ***Local Taxes***

Pottstown's high tax rate (the second-highest among municipalities in Montgomery County) discourages home buyers, developers, and businesses from coming to the Borough.

## ***Competition from Surrounding Communities***

Nearby communities along the 422 corridor, with plentiful vacant land and convenient access to Route 422, have seen a substantial amount of growth in recent years. At first this new development was largely residential, but with infrastructure increasingly in place and the more recent appearance of large scale commercial centers, the area is becoming an attractive location for industry as well. The challenge for Pottstown will be to provide a good answer to the following question – “Why should I locate farther west along Route 422 when I can find good “greenfield” sites closer in?”

## ***Difficult Development Process***

The process for obtaining development permits and planning approval within the Borough can be unwieldy and slow. There is a perceived lack of clarity and specificity in the zoning code's provisions and requirements, which can result in delays in the development permitting and approval process as requirements that should be clearly defined are negotiated. The resulting increased costs in time and money may discourage potential developers.

## ***Insufficient Marketing***

Pottstown recently developed a new Borough logo as a first step in rebranding the community, but little follow-up activity has occurred since then. Some individual non-borough organizations conduct their own marketing efforts, but there are no joint marketing activities that highlight the Borough's many amenities, attractions and strengths.

### ***Insufficient Coordination among Community Organizations***

A comment heard frequently during this planning process was that key community organizations do not work together effectively. These organizations, identified above as potential partners in carrying out the recommendations of this Strategic Plan Update, too often seem to be going in their own separate directions, doing important work, but not taking advantage of opportunities for collective action.

### ***Borough Income Levels***

Income levels in the Borough are below those of Montgomery County and many nearby municipalities. Lower incomes mean a lower expenditure potential in the community, which helps to impede important Borough initiatives such as the commercial revitalization of the main street district on High Street.

### ***Distressed Core Residential Neighborhoods***

Residential areas in the vicinity of the Pottstown's downtown district generally have a higher incidence of poverty, crime, rental tenure, and substandard housing than other parts of the Borough. These conditions seriously diminish the quality of life for neighborhood residents. What's more, they undermine efforts at main street revitalization and contribute to Pottstown's poor image in the region.

***Opportunities and Challenges***

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# ***ACTION PLAN***



Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<p><b>Goal 1: Strengthen Pottstown as a Center for Business and Employment</b></p>					
<p><i>Promote the development of suitable sites for businesses in the borough.</i></p>					
<p><b>1.1:</b> Initiate development/redevelopment of key opportunity sites and areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pottstown Industrial Complex</li> <li>• Pottstown Municipal Airport</li> <li>• Keystone Opportunity Zone</li> <li>• 140 College Drive</li> <li>• Mrs. Smith’s site</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>	<p>To be determined based on further studies (e.g., market analyses, master plans)</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAID, Inc.</li> <li>• MC Redevelopment Authority</li> <li>• MC Industrial Development Authority</li> <li>• MC Economic and Workforce Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business in Our Sites Program</li> <li>• Capital Funding Budget</li> <li>• DCED                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industrial Sites Reuse Program</li> <li>- Infrastructure Development Program</li> </ul> </li> <li>• HUD – Brownfields Economic Development Initiative</li> <li>• LERTA</li> <li>• MC Community Revitalization Program</li> <li>• Tax Increment Financing (TIF)</li> <li>• Transportation and Community Development Initiative (DVRPC)</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.2:</b> Identify key business development/employment sites and prevent their rezoning for other uses.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>To be undertaken with existing staff resources</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pottstown Zoning Department</li> <li>• Pottstown Planning Commission</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>1.3:</b> Assess existing Borough-owned properties and determine whether they should be sold or used for a Borough purpose.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>To be undertaken with existing staff resources</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borough staff</li> <li>• Borough Council</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<i>Establish a range of business assistance programs in the borough.</i>					
<b>1.4:</b> Institute a business retention and expansion program in the Borough.	High	~\$200,000/year initially for both business retention/expansion and business recruitment programs	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>MCCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> <li>PA Business Retention and Expansion Program (BREP)</li> </ul>
<b>1.5:</b> Institute a business attraction and recruitment program in the Borough.	High	~\$200,000/year initially for both business retention/expansion and business recruitment programs	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> <li>MCCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> <li>DCED</li> </ul>
<i>Develop more business/customer-friendly permitting processes and ordinances.</i>					
<b>1.6:</b> Develop a clear, concise, streamlined planning and permitting process for businesses seeking to locate to or expand in the Borough.	High	To be undertaken with existing staff resources	Year 1	<p><i>Lead Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Inspections and Permits Department</li> <li>Pottstown Zoning Department</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Planning Commission</li> </ul>	N/A
<b>1.7:</b> Provide ongoing customer service training for Borough employees who work directly with the public.	Medium	\$5,200 for 20 employees (four 1/2-day training sessions)	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Finance Department</li> <li>Pottstown Inspections and Permits Department</li> <li>Pottstown Zoning Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borough of Pottstown</li> </ul>

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<b>1.8:</b> Undertake a regular Customer Satisfaction Survey to track public perceptions about the quality of public services and the responsiveness of Borough employees.	Medium	~\$15,000 to hire consultant to conduct survey	Years 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borough departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borough of Pottstown</li> </ul>
<b>1.9:</b> Review the Borough zoning ordinance to identify opportunities to make provisions and requirements more clear and predictable.	High	\$25,000-\$30,000 to hire consultant	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough Zoning Department</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough Inspections and Permits Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LUPTAP grant</li> <li>Ben Franklin grant</li> </ul>
<b>Expand Employment Opportunities for Pottstown Residents.</b>					
<b>1.10:</b> Continue to develop the partnership between the Pottstown School District, other area school districts, and Montgomery County Community College to provide educational and career pathways for high school students and adults.	Low	Salary and fringe benefits of high school apprenticeship program coordinator (~\$60,000 - \$80,000)	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montgomery County Community College</li> <li>Pottstown School District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce Leadership Grant (DCED)</li> </ul>
<b>1.11:</b> Continue to support and expand early education and after-school tutoring programs in the Borough.	Low	~\$125,000 annually; ~\$70,000 in one-time costs (materials and supplies)	Years 4-7	<p><i>Lead Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown School District</li> <li>PEAK</li> <li>Area non-profits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pennsylvania - Pre-K Counts</li> <li>United Way of SE PA</li> <li>Pottstown Area Health &amp; Wellness Foundation</li> <li>Montgomery County Foundation</li> <li>Arcadia Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>1.12:</b> Hold regular meetings between the School Board and leaders of local business organizations	Medium	N/A	Year 1	<p><i>Lead Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown School Board</li> <li>TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>PAID</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<i>Undertake further research to develop a detailed understanding of business and economic conditions in Pottstown and the region.</i>					
<b>1.13:</b> Undertake a market sector/industry cluster analysis for Pottstown and the region.	High	\$150,000 - \$200,000 to hire consultant	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> <li>Pottstown Metro Regional Planning Commission</li> <li>MC Economic and Workforce Development Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D CED</li> <li>Montgomery County</li> <li>Chester County</li> <li>PA Main Street Program</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: Enhance Pottstown's Role and Identity as the Urban Hub of the Region.</b>					
<i>Strengthen and publicize amenities and resources that draw people to the Borough.</i>					
<b>2.1:</b> Create a position to help coordinate and market the Borough's and region's cultural and recreational institutions, facilities, programs and events.	Medium	Salary and fringe benefits of marketing position (~\$75,000)	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural alliance group</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCCC</li> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> <li>Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department</li> <li>Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation</li> <li>Preservation Pottstown</li> <li>Schuylkill River Heritage Area</li> <li>TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participating entities</li> </ul>

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<b>2.2:</b> Strengthen the partnership between cultural institutions in the Pottstown Borough and region.	Low	\$25,000-\$50,000 to hire consultant to prepare cultural resources strategy	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing cultural organizations/cultural alliance organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participating entities</li> <li>First Industries Fund – Tourism</li> <li>Claneil Foundation</li> <li>William Penn Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>2.3:</b> Continue and expand the existing Borough marketing effort.	High	~\$250,000	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>Pottstown School District</li> <li>MCCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borough of Pottstown</li> <li>Pottstown School District</li> <li>First Industries Fund – Tourism</li> <li>Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation</li> <li>pCTV</li> </ul>
<i>Continue efforts to revitalize the Main Street commercial district along High Street as well as adjacent areas.</i>					
<b>2.4:</b> Focus revitalization efforts on the 300 and 400 blocks of High Street.	High	To be determined based on further studies (e.g., market analyses, master plans)	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PAID, Inc.</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> <li>MC Redevelopment Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Redevelopment Assistance Program</li> <li>LERTA</li> <li>MC Community Revitalization Program</li> <li>PA Main Street Program</li> <li>Urban Development Program (DCED)</li> </ul>
<b>2.5:</b> To support the proposed development at High and Evans, look for opportunities to encourage redevelopment of nearby properties.	High	To be determined based on further studies (e.g., market analyses, site/district master plans)	Year 1	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> <li>Private Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Redevelopment Assistance Program</li> <li>LERTA</li> <li>MC Community Revitalization Program</li> <li>PA Main Street Program</li> <li>Urban Development Program (DCED)</li> </ul>
<b>2.6:</b> Institute a LERTA program for the Borough to help defray building renovation costs and encourage redevelopment.	High	To be undertaken with existing staff resources	Year 1	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>Pottstown School District</li> <li>Pottstown Borough</li> <li>Montgomery County</li> </ul>	N/A

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<b>2.7:</b> Build on existing efforts such as the Performing Arts Center to recruit arts and cultural organizations with a regional draw to the High Street area.	Medium	To be determined based on further studies (e.g., market analyses, master plans)	Years 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural alliance organization</li> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>MCCC</li> </ul>	N/A
<b>2.8:</b> Undertake consistently-applied code enforcement efforts on High Street and throughout the Borough.	High	To be undertaken with existing staff resources	Years 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough Inspections and Permits Department</li> </ul>	N/A
<i>Make improvements to the transportation network to promote the safe and efficient movement of people, vehicles and goods within and through the Borough.</i>					
<b>2.9:</b> Continue to work with North Coventry Township to implement the recommendations of the <i>Reconnections</i> Plan.	Medium	To be determined based on further studies	Years 4-7	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Public Works Department</li> <li>MC Planning Commission/MC Transportation</li> </ul> <p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Public Works Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CMAQ</li> <li>PA Infrastructure Bank</li> <li>Transportation Enhancements Program (PennDOT)</li> <li>Transportation Improvements Program (TIP)</li> </ul>
<b>2.10:</b> Undertake a multi-modal transportation study in partnership with adjacent municipalities.	Low	~\$150,000	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Public Works Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LUPTAP grant</li> <li>Transportation and Community Development Initiative (DVRPC)</li> </ul>

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<b>2.11:</b> Work with adjacent municipalities to improve the functionality and appearance of the Borough's gateway areas.	Medium	Study and Design (for 2.11 and 2.12): \$50,000 Implementation: \$75,000 - \$100,000	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Public Works Department</li> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department</li> <li>Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Conservation Partnership Program (DCNR)</li> <li>Transportation Enhancements Program (PennDOT)</li> </ul>
<b>2.12:</b> Develop a wayfinding system to provide clearer directions into and within the borough.	Low	Study and Design (for 2.11 and 2.12): \$50,000 Implementation: ~\$250,000	Years 4-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough Public Works Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Conservation Partnership Program</li> <li>MC Community Revitalization Program</li> <li>Transportation and Community Development Initiative (DVRPC)</li> </ul>
<b>2.13:</b> Improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connections between High Street and Riverfront Park.	Low	To be determined based on further studies	Years 4-7	<i>Lead Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Public Works Department</li> <li>Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Valley Forge Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CMAQ</li> <li>Transportation and Community Development Initiative (DVRPC)</li> <li>Transportation Enhancements Program (PennDOT)</li> <li>Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>2.14:</b> Conduct an assessment of key organizations in the Borough and identify strategies to improve collaboration.	Low	\$7,000-\$10,000 to hire a consultant to conduct assessment	Years 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough</li> <li>Community organizations and institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough</li> <li>Community organizations and institutions</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<b>Goal 3: Improve the quality of life in Pottstown and its neighborhoods.</b>					
<i>Encourage the revitalization of Pottstown's neighborhoods.</i>					
<b>3.1:</b> Undertake planning activities that focus on the specific needs of Pottstown's neighborhoods.	Medium	\$25,000-\$40,000 to hire a consultant to prepare a neighborhood plan	Years 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Development Corporation (proposed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PA Elm Street Program</li> <li>LUPTAP grant</li> </ul>
<i>Provide a broad range of housing choices, including additional market-rate, owner-occupied housing, to help stabilize neighborhoods and meet the needs of current and future Pottstown residents.</i>					
<b>3.2:</b> Form a non-profit Borough Housing Corporation to take the lead in housing development initiatives in Pottstown.	Medium	Initial annual program costs: ~\$75,000	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> <li>PDIDA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDBG program</li> <li>HOME program</li> <li>Developers' fees from housing projects</li> <li>Private organizations (e.g., banks)</li> <li>Philadelphia Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>3.3:</b> Expand financial incentives and other support to encourage rehabilitation and home ownership of residences in the Borough.	High	~\$600,000 (a 50% increase over current HOI funds)	Year 1	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Inspections and Permits Department</li> <li>Pottstown Housing Development Corporation (proposed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MC Community Revitalization Program</li> <li>Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (PHFA)</li> <li>Private organizations (e.g., banks)</li> <li>HUD</li> </ul>
<b>3.4:</b> Identify suitable locations in the Borough for market-rate urban-style housing and market to potential developers.	Medium	To be undertaken with existing staff resources.	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Housing Development Corporation (proposed)</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>Pottstown Economic Development Director</li> <li>Private Developers</li> </ul>	N/A

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<b>3.5:</b> Rewrite zoning requirements in the urban core to encourage good-quality urban-style housing.	Medium	See strategy 1.9 above	Year 1	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough Inspections and Permits Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See strategy 1.9 above</li> </ul>
<b>3.6:</b> Work with the local real estate industry to increase interest in promoting home sales in the Borough, especially single-family homes.	Medium	To be undertaken with existing staff resources	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Housing Development Corporation (proposed)</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TriCounty Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	N/A
<i>Develop recreational facilities and programs that benefit Borough residents and attract people from the surrounding region.</i>					
<b>3.7:</b> Support and enhance recreational programming at the Ricketts Center.	Low	To be undertaken with existing staff resources	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough Parks and Recreation Department</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Area Police Athletic League</li> <li>Pottstown Family YMCA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough</li> <li>Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>3.8:</b> Continue to implement the recommendations of the Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan and the Open Space Plan.	Low	To be determined based on further studies	Years 2-3	<i>Lead Entity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department</li> </ul> <i>Supporting Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MCCC</li> <li>Schuylkill River Heritage Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation</li> <li>Montgomery County</li> <li>DCNR</li> </ul>
<b>3.9:</b> Develop safe pedestrian and bicycle linkages from Pottstown's neighborhoods to Riverfront and Memorial Parks.	Low	To be determined based on further studies	Years 4-7	<i>Lead Entities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Public Works Department</li> <li>Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation Enhancements Program (PennDOT)</li> </ul>

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<b>3.10:</b> Continue to develop seasonal activities and programs that draw residents and visitors to the Borough's recreational amenities.	Low	To be determined based on further planning	Years 2-3	<p><i>Lead Entity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDIDA</li> <li>TriCounty Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough</li> <li>Pottstown Health &amp; Wellness Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>3.11:</b> Work with area municipalities to develop a regional network of recreational amenities.	Low	To be undertaken with existing staff resources; additional costs to be determined by further planning initiatives	Years 4-7	<p><i>Lead Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department</li> </ul> <p><i>Supporting Entities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montgomery County</li> <li>Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee</li> <li>Schuylkill River Heritage Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough</li> <li>Pottstown Health &amp; Wellness Foundation</li> </ul>
<i>Enhance public safety in the borough.</i>					
<b>3.12:</b> Obtain new/refurbished equipment for the Fire Department.	Medium	\$2.2 million - \$3.2 million	Years 2-3	Fire Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CDBG</li> <li>Pottstown Borough Authority</li> </ul>
<b>3.13:</b> Provide enhanced street lighting throughout the Borough.	Medium	\$300,000	Years 2-3	Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCED</li> <li>HUD</li> <li>Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>3.14:</b> Obtain advanced safety monitoring systems for the Police Department.	Medium	\$520,000	Years 2-3	Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCED</li> <li>HUD</li> <li>Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>3.15:</b> Establish a Volunteers in Policing Program (VIPS) to provide civilian support services in the Borough.	Medium	\$80,000	Years 2-3	Police Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Area Health and Wellness</li> <li>DCED</li> <li>HUD</li> <li>Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation</li> </ul>

# Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Estimated Cost	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)/Organizations(s)	Proposed Funding Sources
<p><b>3.16</b> Update rental property licensing requirements to include public safety requirements.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>\$20,000</p>	<p>Years 2-3</p>	<p>Police Department</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LUPTAP</li> </ul>



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# ***PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT***



# Public Involvement

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Public involvement was obtained in a variety of ways throughout the course of the planning process. The consultant team worked under the ongoing guidance of the Borough Economic Development Advisory Board. A number of “key person” interviews were conducted with a broad spectrum of community leaders, both in person and by means of an email survey, to gain further insight into community issues and opportunities. Ideas were presented to and input was solicited from a Task Force of key community stakeholders. The broader public was engaged in a public open house. These public involvement activities are discussed below.

## Economic Development Advisory Board

Regular monthly meetings were held with the Borough Economic Development Advisory Board to obtain information and guidance on all aspects of the project. The meetings are briefly summarized below.

### *Meeting One –*

The consultants provided an overview of the strategic planning process. The discussion that followed touched on the following issues:

- The importance of working with the school district in the planning process.
- Difficulties arising from different visions of what kind of community the borough should become, i.e., village vs. city.
- The importance of involving the minority community in the planning process.
- The importance of viewing Pottstown as the economic center of the surrounding communities.

### *Meeting Two –*

The consultants facilitated a discussion to prepare a draft vision statement to guide the strategic plan preparation process.

### *Meeting Three –*

The advisory board reviewed the draft vision statement and made suggestions for revisions. Important ideas in the discussion included:

- Emphasize expanding opportunities and access, particularly in education
- Emphasize providing good infrastructure for businesses, and public safety

The consultants also provided a summary of existing conditions data, focusing on demographic conditions and business and employment conditions.

### *Meeting Four –*

The consultants and the advisory board reviewed and discussed the comments received from the Task Force Meeting held on September 18.

The consultants also led a discussion about economic base theory and its potential usefulness as a way to understand economic conditions and opportunities in Pottstown.

## ***Meeting Five –***

The consultants discussed some of the comments received in the key person interviews

The advisory board and the consultants then reviewed a draft set of goals and strategies to be presented at the upcoming public open house on October 25.

## ***Meetings Six and Seven –***

The consultants and the advisory board reviewed drafts of the Strategic Plan Update and made suggestions for revisions.

## ***Task Force***

A task force of key community stakeholders representing a diverse range of perspectives and interests was organized to provide input and guidance at key points in the planning process.

### **September 18 Task Force Meeting**

The purpose of this meeting was to obtain insight from knowledgeable and engaged local, regional and state leaders concerning conditions and opportunities in the Borough and suggestions for possible strategies to encourage community revitalization. Task force members were divided into three focus groups and were led through a strategic planning process, focusing in turn on three topic areas:

- Pottstown as a place to live and raise families.
- Pottstown as a place to do business.
- Pottstown as the regional hub

For each topic area, focus group members were asked to identify Pottstown's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and to suggest possible strategies for improvement.

### **January 17 Task Force Meeting**

The purpose of this meeting was to present the draft goals and strategies of the Economic Development Strategic Plan that were developed based in part on input from the task force and the broader public for review and comment. Task force members were given the chance to indicate those strategies they strongly agreed with and those they disagreed with by placing sticker dots on display boards listing the strategies.

## ***Public Meetings***

An open house was held on October 25 to solicit input from the broader public. Boards summarizing existing conditions in the community and presenting draft plan goals and strategies were on display. Meeting participants had the opportunity to add their comments concerning the various recommendations and to vote for their preferred recommendations using sticker dots.

A presentation of the draft plan was made on February 6<sup>th</sup> at a Pottstown Borough Council Committee of the Whole meeting, which was open to the public.

## ***Participants in the Economic Development Strategic Plan***

The following people and organizations participated in the strategic planning process.

### **Economic Development Advisory Board**

- Harry L. Price, Chairman
- Arthur L. Green, Councilor – Second Ward
- Steven MacLauchlan, Pottstown Memorial Hospital
- Robert Morgan, Morgan Moving and Storage, Ltd.
- Steven L. Nelson, Montgomery County Commissioners Office
- Fred Reim, Harleysville National Bank
- Richard C. Sammis, The Hill School
- Jo Ann Short, YMCAs of Pottstown and Upper Perkiomen Valley
- Terri C. Lampe, Economic Development Director, Borough of Pottstown

### **Task Force**

- Dale Mahle – President, Tri-County Chamber of Commerce/Executive Director, PAID
- Kay Dougherty – The Hill School/Pottstown Symphony
- John Armato – Director of Community Relations, Pottstown School District
- Brian O’Leary – Section Chief – Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Jim Ennis – Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Dr. Dean Foster – VP Montgomery County Community College
- Dr. Karen Stout – President Montgomery County Community College
- Dave Kraybill – Executive Director Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation
- Kathleen Lunn – Strategic Investment Officer, PA DCED
- John Reber – Director, Borough Parks and Recreation
- Steve Whitney – Main Street Manager PDIDA
- Rev. Vernon Ross – Pastor, Bethel AME Church
- Jerry Nugent – Executive Director, Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority
- State Senator John Rafferty (Dan Price)
- State Representative Thomas Quigley (Dan Price)
- Richard Stein – Director of Research, Economy League Greater Philadelphia
- David Yeager – President, Radnor Property Group
- Kurt Zwikl – Executive Director, Schuylkill River Heritage
- Sharon Weaver – National Penn Bank
- Peg Calvario – Owner, Pottstown Health Club
- Steve Toroney – Pottstown Borough Council
- Steve MacLauchlan – CEO, Pottstown Memorial Medical Center
- Judy Schwank – Chair, Berks County Commissioners/Chair State Planning Commission/President, 10,000 Friends
- David Krem – Superintendent, Pottstown School District
- Brad Fuller – Executive Director, Pottstown Area Seniors Center

# Public Involvement

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- Mark Flanders – Chief, Pottstown Police Department
- Raymond Lopez – Pottstown Borough Manager
- Rev. Everett Debnam, Pastor, Invictus Ministries
- Jason Bobst – Pottstown Assistant Borough Manager
- Jerry Gorski – Gorski Engineering, Inc.

## Key Interviews

- Robert Hawkey – President & CEO, NEAPCO, LLC
- Thomas Hylton – Chair, Pottstown Planning Commission
- Jay Bown – President, Industrial Investments, Inc.
- Marta Keisling – TriCounty Performing Arts Center
- Jim Arms – Carousel Board member
- Judith Memberg – Executive Director, Genesis Housing Corporation
- Andrea Primas – Executive Director, Pottstown YWCA
- Jim Konnick – The Cardinal Group, Inc.
- Andy Paravis – Chair, Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee
- Sharon Thomas – Mayor of Pottstown
- JoAnn Short – President/CEO, Pottstown YMCA
- Tom Sephakis – Chair, The SunnyBrook Foundation
- Jack Wolf – President, Pottstown Borough Council

## Surveys

The following people received email surveys to fill out.

- Todd Alderfer – National Penn Bank
- Ron Dinnocenti
- Ronald Downie – Pottstown Borough Authority Chairman
- David Garner, Pottstown Borough Authority Solicitor/ President Pottstown Borough Council
- Thomas Harwood
- Anne Jones
- John Koury – PAID solicitor
- David Leinbach – PAID
- Dennis Pfeiffer
- Mayer Pollock, II – Mayer Pollock Steel Corporation
- Don Read – Vice Chairman Pottstown Borough Authority, Chairman EAC
- David Schwab – Glasgow Manor Inc.
- Thomas Hylton – Chair, Pottstown Planning Commission
- Joan Wausnock – Carousel
- Gregg Weitzenkorn
- Richard Wells
- Matt Crouse – Continental Realty, Member PDIDA
- Warren Holohan – Chair, PDIDA
- Jerry Lastick – Lastick Furniture

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# ***COMMUNITY PROFILE***



# *Community Profile*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The community profile presents an inventory and analysis of conditions and trends for the following areas of the Borough of Pottstown.

- Socio-Economic Characteristics
- Economic Profile
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Land Use
- Housing
- Cultural and Recreational Amenities
- Public Safety

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

When compiling this strategic plan, an essential first step is to understand the significant trends affecting Pottstown social and economic climate. This includes understanding the demographic changes that have taken place over the past decade or two in Pottstown and its relationship to the surrounding area. Therefore, this assessment compares Pottstown Borough to the Pottstown Metropolitan Region (Metro Region) and Montgomery County.

Pottstown is centrally located in the Metro Region and is in Montgomery County. Pottstown Borough is the nucleus of the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, which comprises the following municipalities: Douglass, New Hanover, Lower Pottsgrove, Upper Pottsgrove, West Pottsgrove, and Pottstown in Montgomery County, and North Coventry and East Coventry in Chester County. To provide context, Pottstown Borough is compared to the Pottstown Metropolitan Region and Montgomery County to help deduce demographic trends that may strategically affect the future.

Table 1 includes a summary of significant demographic trends determined through analyzing Tables 2-18 in this section. These trends may have the greatest impact for the future for Pottstown and should be considered when making strategic decisions. Therefore, these findings should be given consideration when creating the goals, objectives, and recommendations for this plan.

**Table 1: Summary of Significant Demographic Trends**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Significant Trend(s)</b>	<b>Planning Implication(s)</b>
<b>Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pottstown Borough’s population remained the same from 1990 to 2000, while the Metro Region and the County’s population grew by greater than 10%.</li> <li>• Pottstown Borough’s population is projected to increase from 2000 to 2030 by just 0.6%, while the Metro Region is expected to grow significantly by 35.7%.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on avenues to attract new residents to the Borough to help stabilize future population decline.</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, under 5 years of age, have decreased in Pottstown Borough and in the Metro Region from 1990 to 2000, while those age 5-14 have shown a significant increase during those years.</li> <li>• The young adult population, 20-34, has decreased significantly from 1990 to 2000 in Pottstown Borough and the Metro Region (~20%).</li> <li>• The elderly population in Pottstown Borough decreased significantly by 24% in the 65-74 age group from 1990-2000, yet the population 75 and older increased by greater than 6%.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be reasons why there are significant shifts in age groups for the Pottstown population.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities to attract and keep young adults and professionals to the community, so that future</li> </ul>

# Community Profile

Variable	Significant Trend(s)	Planning Implication(s)
		<p>decline of young adults is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the elderly population is increasing, assess their support services including health care, transportation, education and social programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Racial Composition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough's population is more diverse than the Metro Region and Montgomery County as a whole, yet still 82% are white.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gauge the understanding and appreciation for diversity in the community.</li> </ul>
<b>Households</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of renter-occupied housing units and vacant housing units is significantly higher in Pottstown Borough than the surrounding region.</li> <li>The median housing price was significantly lower in Pottstown Borough in 1990 and 2000 when compared to the surrounding Metro Region and Montgomery County.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the housing and real estate market in the Borough as well as programs that can assist with reviving home-ownership and home improvement in the community.</li> </ul>
<b>Income</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pottstown Borough's population, 25 and older, greatest level of education obtained is significantly lower than Montgomery County's when comparing college graduates and graduate degrees. This large discrepancy may be correlated to the significantly lower median and per capita incomes in Pottstown Borough when compared to the Metro Region and the County.</li> <li>The poverty rate for Pottstown Borough is approximately 9%, while the Metro Region's is only 4% and the County's is 3%.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess relationship among local workplace opportunities, income levels, and education programs in the Borough.</li> <li>Focus on educational programs, support, and enrichment for the future.</li> <li>Search for avenues to reduce the poverty rate in</li> </ul>

Variable	Significant Trend(s)	Planning Implication(s)
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 9% and 4% of Pottstown Borough's residents have obtained a college degree or graduate degree, respectively, yet Montgomery County as a whole has 23% and 16% that have obtained a college degree or graduate degree, respectively.</li> <li>• Over half (55%) of the students in the Pottstown School District Enrollment were from low-income families for the 2005-2006 school year.</li> </ul>	<p>the Borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There may be social and economic obstacles limiting residents from achieving a higher level of education. Assess and seek to overcome these obstacles.</li> <li>• Strategize to assist low-income families or help to reduce the percentage of those with school age children.</li> </ul>

## Population Trends & Projections

Table 2 summarizes population changes from 1990 to 2000 in Pottstown, the Metro Region, and Montgomery County. While the Pottstown Metro region and Montgomery County's population grew by more than 10% from 1990 to 2000, Pottstown Borough's population remained the same. It did not increase or decrease.

**Table 2: 1990-2000 Population Trends**

	1990	2000	% Change
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	21,831	21,859	0%
<b>Pottstown Metro Region</b>	62,743	69,409	11%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	678,111	750,097	10.6%

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

Table 3 summarizes population projections from 2000 to 2030. The Pottstown Metro Region is expected to grow significantly in that period, by over 35%, and Montgomery County is also expected to grow by over 17%. In contrast, Pottstown Borough's population is projected to remain at current levels.

**Table 3: Population Projections**

	2000	2005	2030	% Change, 2000-2030
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	21,859	21,670	22,000	141 0.6%
<b>Pottstown Metro Region</b>	69,418	74,120	94,210	24,792 35.7%
<b>Montgomery County *</b>	748,987	776,340	878,440	129,453 17.3%

Sources: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission; Chester County Planning Commission

## Age Statistics

Tables 4 and 5 display the number of persons in each age cohort in 1990 and 2000. It compares Pottstown Borough, the Metro Region, and Montgomery County. Table 6 displays change in age cohorts from 1990 to 2000 by percentage.

**Table 4: Age Groups 1990**

	Under 5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
<b>Pottstown</b>	1,729	1,493	1,138	1,190	1,591	4,113	2,605	1,931	930	1,138	2,257	1,311	405
<b>Pottstown Metro</b>	4,857	4,671	4,015	3,967	3,951	11,064	9,356	6,496	2,805	2,657	5,229	2,577	741
<b>Montgomery County</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 1990  
 \*\* 1990 Age Cohorts were grouped differently in 1990 at the County level, so comparisons were not able to be made for Montgomery County.

**Table 5: Age Groups 2000**

	Under 5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
<b>Pottstown</b>	1,644	1,635	1,495	1,262	1,196	3,275	3,474	2,514	1,023	793	1,712	1,406	430
<b>Pottstown Metro</b>	4,719	5,265	5,408	4,388	3,142	8,980	12,294	9,609	3,470	2,657	4,899	3,531	1,047
<b>Montgomery County</b>	47,290	51,341	52,874	45,759	36,970	100,931	127,953	106,735	38,429	30,018	55,562	41,518	14,717

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

**Table 6: Percent Change from 1990-2000 per Age Cohort**

	Under 5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75-84	85+
<b>Pottstown</b>	-4.9%	9.5%	31.4%	6.0%	(24.8)%	(20.4)%	33.3%	30.1%	10%	(30.3)%	(24.1)%	7.2%	6.2%
<b>Pottstown Metro</b>	-2.8%	9.5%	34.9%	6.1%	(24.8)%	(18.8)%	31.4%	30.2%	23.7%	0%	(6.3)%	37%	41.3%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

\*\* 1990 Age Cohorts were grouped differently in 1990 at the County level, so comparisons were not able to be made for Montgomery County.

- Children, under 5 years of age, have decreased in Pottstown Borough and in the Metro Region from 1990 to 2000, while the youth age cohorts of 5-9 and 10-14 have shown a significant increase during those years.
- The young adult population has decreased significantly from 1990 to 2000 in Pottstown Borough and the Metro Region. Age group 20-24 decreased by 24% in for the Borough and Metro Region. Age group 25-34 decreased by 20% and 19% in the Borough and Metro Region, respectively, during that time period.
- The middle age population 35-54 grew significantly from 1990 to 2000 in both the Borough and the Metro Region, greater than 30%.
- The elderly population in Pottstown Borough decreased significantly by 24% in the 65-74 age group from 1990-2000, yet the population 75 and older increased by greater than 6%.
- The elderly population in the Metro Region also decreased for the age cohort of 65-74 during that time period, by 6%, while the elderly population 75 and older in the Metro Region increased significantly, by greater than 37%.

## ***Racial and Ethnic Composition***

Table 7 displays the breakdown of racial and ethnic composition among the population in Pottstown Borough and the surrounding municipalities in the Metro Region as well as Montgomery County. Key highlights are noted following the table.

**Table 7: Racial Composition**

<b>Location</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Indian or Alaskan</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Pottstown</b>	81.6%	15.5%	.2%	.7%	4.5%	2.0%
<b>Lower Pottsgrove</b>	90.4%	8.3%	.1%	.9%	1.2%	.3%
<b>Upper Pottsgrove</b>	96.0%	2.4%	.2%	.9%	1.0%	.3%
<b>West Pottsgrove</b>	90.8%	7.4%	.2%	.9%	2.2%	.9%
<b>Douglass</b>	98.3%	.8%	.1%	.7%	0.5%	.2%
<b>New Hanover</b>	98.8%	.3%	.05%	.8%	0.8%	.05%
<b>North Coventry</b>	96.2%	1.8%	.2%	.8%	0.9%	1.0%
<b>East Coventry</b>	98.4%	.9%	.1%	.2%	0.7%	.5%
<b>Metro Region</b>	93.8%	4.7%	.1%	.7%	0.2%	.7%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	87.5%	7.5%	.1%	4.1%	2.0%	.8%

Source: US Census QT-P3 – Race 2000

- While the Metro Region is 94% white, Pottstown Borough is more diverse, with its population being only 82% white.
- Pottstown Borough (15.5%) has a proportionally larger African American population than the Metro Region (4.7%) or Montgomery County (7.5%).
- Pottstown Borough has a proportionally larger Hispanic population (4.5%) than the Metro Region (0.2%) or Montgomery County (2.0%). Moreover, this population increased from 2.9% in 1990.

## Household Statistics

Tables 8-11 display significant housing data for Pottstown Borough, the Metro Region, and Montgomery County. Key highlights are noted following each table.

**Table 8: Number of Households 1990-2000**

Location	Number of Households 1990	Number of Households 2000	Percent Change
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	9,700	9,973	2.8%
<b>Metro Region</b>	24,661	27,870	13.0%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	254,995	286,098	12.2%

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

- While the number of households in Metro Region and Montgomery County increased greater than 12% from 1990 to 2000, Pottstown Borough's only increased by 3%.

**Table 9: Median Housing Price 1990-2000**

Location	1990	2000	% Change
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	\$81,000	\$87,600	8.1%
<b>Metro Region</b>	\$117,475	\$133,587	13.7%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	\$143,400	\$160,700	12.1%

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

- The median housing price was significantly lower in Pottstown Borough in 1990 and 2000 when compared to the surrounding Metro Region and Montgomery County.
- The median housing price increased by 8% from 1990 to 2000 in Pottstown Borough, while increasing by greater than 12% in both the Metro Region and Montgomery County during the same time period.

**Table 10: Renter v. Owner Occupied Household Units**

Location	Total Occupied Housing Units	Renter-Occupied Units	Owner-Occupied Units
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	9,146	4,004 – 43.8%	5,142 – 56.2%
<b>Metro Region</b>	26,670	6,556 – 24.6%	20,114 – 75.4%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	286,098	75,476 – 26.5%	210,233 – 73.5%

Source: US Census 2000

- Pottstown Borough has approximately 44% renter-occupied units. The Borough has significantly more renter-occupied units than the Metro Region and Montgomery County, where only about a quarter of housing units are renter-occupied.
- The Metro Region and Montgomery County have a much larger percentage of owner-occupied housing units, exceeding 73% in both cases, whereas Pottstown Borough’s housing stock is only 56% owner-occupied.

**Table 11: Vacant Housing**

Location	1990	2000	% Change
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	450	842	87.1%
<b>Metro Region</b>	209	341	63.2%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	10,861	11,336	4.4%

- The percentage of vacant housing in Pottstown Borough (87%) and the Metro Region (63%) grew significantly from 1990 to 2000, while the County’s only grew by 4%.

## ***Income Statistics***

Table 12 displays income statistics for Pottstown Borough, the Metro Region, and Montgomery County.

**Table 12. Income and Poverty Rates**

Location	2000 Median Household Income	2000 Per Capita Income	2000 Poverty Rate
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	35,785	19,078	8.7%
<b>Metro Region</b>	56,012	24,981	4.0%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	60,829	30,898	2.8%

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

- The median household income in Pottstown Borough is significantly lower than the Metro Region and the County.
- The per capita income for Pottstown Borough is significantly lower than the Metro Region and the County.
- The poverty rate for Pottstown Borough is approximately 9%, while the Metro Region’s is only 4% and the County’s is 3%.

## ***Education Statistics for Pottstown Borough and the Pottstown School District***

Table 13 displays the breakdown of the highest level of education received among the population in Pottstown Borough, the Metro Region, and Montgomery County. Tables 14-18 display significant findings about the Pottstown School District. Highlights follow each table.

**Table 13: Educational Attainment**

Educational Attainment	Pottstown Borough	Metro Region	Montgomery County
Pop 25 years & over	14,634	46,665	515,871
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	709 4.8%	2,054 4.4%	15,649 3.0%
9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> , no diploma	2,651 18.1%	5,892 12.6%	43,658 8.5%
High school grads	6,651 45.4%	19,207 41.1%	140,839 27.3%
Some college, no degree	2,107 14.4%	6,950 14.9%	85,342 16.5%
Associate degree	699 4.8%	2,850 6.1%	30,596 5.9%
Bachelor's degree	1,291 8.8%	6,512 14.0%	118,910 23.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	526 3.6%	3,181 6.8%	80,877 15.7%

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

- 45% of Pottstown Borough's 25 and older population obtained a high school diploma as the highest level of education achieved, followed by 41% in the Metro Region, and 27% in Montgomery County.
- Montgomery County, on a whole, has the largest percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree from college (23%) or a graduate professional degree (16%). These County percentages are significantly greater than Pottstown Borough.

**Table 14: Enrollment K5-Grade 12, 1995-2005**

	1995	2005	% Change
Pottstown	3,106	3,056	-1%
All Montgomery Schools	91,280	103,769	8.8%

Source: Pottstown Demographics, November 2006, Pottstown School District

- Enrollment in Kindergarten decreased by 1% in Pottstown Borough from 1995 to 2005, while increasing by 9% overall in all Montgomery County Schools.

**Table 15: Enrollment from Low-Income Families**

	1999-2000	2000-2005	2005-2006
Total District Enrollment	3,371	3,225	3,196
% Enrollment from Low-Income Families	47.5%	53.5%	54.9%

Source: Pottstown Demographics, November 2006, Pottstown School District

- Enrollment from low-income families in the Pottstown School District has increased since the 1999-2000 school year, which was 48%, to 55% during the 2005-2006 school year.

**Table 16: Mobility**

School District	2002-2003 School Year	2003-2004 School Year	2004-2005 School Year	2005-2006 School Year
Pottstown School District	24.4	23.7	23.5	24.8

Source: Pottstown Demographics, November 2006, Pottstown School District

- The mobility of school students from one school to another within the Pottstown Borough School District has remained at a high and relatively constant level from 2002-2006. Almost a quarter of students change schools within the school district each year.

**Table 17: Graduate Profile of Post High School Activity, 2005-2006**

	Total
Total Graduates	165
Community College	32
2-Year College	3
State or State-Related University in PA	21
Private 4 Year College in PA	27
Other Post-Secondary School in PA	12
2-Yr College outside PA	2
4-Yr College outside PA	4
Other	64

Source: Pottstown Demographics, November 2006, Pottstown School District

- With 165 total graduates for the 2005-2006 school year, 52 attended some type of 4-year college program, almost 32%.
- 32 graduates, or 19%, attended a community college.
- 17 of the 165 graduates attended some other type of 2-year college or other post-secondary school.
- 64 of the 165 total graduates were noted as doing something else.

**Table 18: Drop-out Rate**

School Year	High School Enrollment	No. of Drop-Outs	% of High School Enrollment
1994-1995	648	19	2.9%
1999-2000	803	53	6.6%
2004-2005	851	58	6.8%
2005-2006	849	40	4.7%

Source: Pottstown Demographics, November 2006, Pottstown School District

- Since 1995 to 2006, the drop-out rate has fluctuated between 3-7% in the Pottstown School District, while the most recent drop out rate for the 2005-2006 school year was 5%.

## ECONOMIC PROFILE

This section provides a profile of Pottstown’s economy, including its economic structure and performance as well as characteristics of its labor force.

Local economies do not function as enclosed entities, so the following analysis considers economic conditions and trends in the Pottstown Metro Region as much as possible. This region comprises the following communities (which collaborated to prepare the 2005 Pottstown Metro Regional Comprehensive Plan):

- Pottstown Borough
- Lower Pottsgrove Township
- Upper Pottsgrove Township
- West Pottsgrove Township
- Douglass Township
- New Hanover Township
- North Coventry Township
- East Coventry Township

Comparisons are also occasionally made to Montgomery County as a whole and to other municipalities outside of the metro region in order to provide context for conditions and trends in Pottstown.

Much of the economic data considered below comes from public sources such as the US Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. In addition, detailed data on businesses in the Pottstown Metro Region was obtained from the Dun and Bradstreet “Million Dollar Database,” which profiles over 14 million businesses throughout the country. Data was selected for businesses in three zip codes – 19464, 19465, and 19525 – which roughly approximate the boundaries of the Pottstown Metro Region.

Interviews were also conducted with economic development and real estate professionals to better understand factors influencing business location decisions in the region, and the opportunities and obstacles facing Pottstown as it tries to enhance its position as a location for businesses and employment.

### **Businesses**

There are 3,311 business establishments employing 25,435 people in the Pottstown metro region. Table 19 shows the number of employees and establishments by 2-digit NAICS code. Industry sectors with significant employment include:

- Retail trade
- Manufacturing
- Health care and social assistance
- Educational services
- Professional and technical services

- Finance and insurance
- Construction.

**Table 19**

Employment and Location Quotients by Industry, Pottstown Metro Region					
NAICS Code	Industry	Employment	% of Total Employment	Location Quotients	
				Pottstown Metro Region	Montgomery County
44-45	Retail trade	4,050	15.9%	1.19	0.93
31-33	Manufacturing	3,390	13.3%	1.09	0.95
62	Health care and social assistance	2,977	11.7%	0.92	1.05
72	Accommodation and food services	1,971	7.7%	0.80	0.63
61	Educational services	1,873	7.4%	3.84	1.34
54	Professional and technical services	1,746	6.9%	1.07	1.74
23	Construction	1,570	6.2%	0.94	0.83
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	1,218	4.8%	1.31	0.61
56	Administrative and waste services	1,192	4.7%	0.65	1.07
42	Wholesale trade	1,144	4.5%	0.88	0.99
81	Other services, except public administration	1,095	4.3%	1.14	0.85
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	691	2.7%	1.45	0.94
52	Finance and insurance	678	2.7%	0.51	1.59
92	Public Administration	589	2.3%	NA	NA
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	588	2.3%	1.40	0.80
51	Information	481	1.9%	0.72	1.10
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	153	0.6%	0.60	0.08
22	Utilities	28	0.1%	0.23	0.96
55	Management of companies and enterprises	1	0.0%	0.00	1.20
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0	0.0%	0.00	0.09
	Total Employment	25,435			

Source: Dun and Bradstreet (September 2007), Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Table 19 also shows location quotients for the industries listed. A location quotient is the ratio of a particular industry's local employment share to its national employment share. Location quotients indicate which industries have a comparatively larger or smaller presence in the local economy in comparison to the nation as a whole. A location quotient greater than 1 indicates that the industry has a greater share of local employment than of national employment, while a location quotient less than 1 indicates the reverse.

Industries with location quotients substantially greater than 1 include the following:

- Educational Services – 3.84
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing – 1.45
- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation – 1.40
- Transportation and Warehousing – 1.31

The location quotient for Educational Services is particularly high, no doubt reflecting the presence of Montgomery County Community College and several private secondary schools in addition to the public school system. Interestingly, the Pottstown Metro Region's location quotients for these industries are also significantly higher than those of Montgomery County, suggesting a difference in economic structure between the region and the county.

Pottstown Metro Region industries with location quotients substantially below 1 include the following:

- Utilities – 0.23
- Finance and Insurance – 0.51
- Administrative and Waste Services – 0.65
- Agriculture – 0.60
- Information – 0.72

Industries for which the Pottstown Metro Region's location quotients are significantly below those of Montgomery County include the following:

- Professional and Technical Services
- Finance and Insurance
- Administration and Waste Services
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Information
- Utilities

Table 20 shows the number of employees and establishments by 4-digit NAICS code, which provides a more disaggregated view of industries. Types of businesses with significant employment include

- Elementary and secondary schools
- General medical and surgical hospitals
- Department stores
- Restaurants
- Motor vehicle parts manufacturing

**Table 20**

<b>Employment and Number of Establishments by Type of Business, Pottstown Metro Region</b>			
<b>NAICS Code</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Employment Count</b>	<b>Number of Establishments</b>
6111	Elementary and Secondary Schools	1726	33
6221	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	984	5
4521	Department Stores	813	7
7221	Full-Service Restaurants	774	56
3363	Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing	699	3
7222	Limited-Service Eating Places	669	64
4451	Grocery Stores	593	31
4841	General Freight Trucking	577	20
4441	Building Material and Supplies Dealers	568	19
6211	Offices of Physicians	562	68
5416	Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	438	71
2382	Building Equipment Contractors	421	85
5413	Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	417	60
5617	Services to Buildings and Dwellings	417	87
5221	Depository Credit Intermediation	406	29

Source: Dun and Bradstreet (September 2007), Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Table 21 shows the number of employees and establishments for major types of manufacturing in the Pottstown Metro Region, again at the 4-digit NAICS level.

Types of manufacturing with significant amounts of employment include

- Motor vehicle parts manufacturing
- Machine shops; turned product; and screw, nut and bolt manufacturing
- Other fabricated metal product manufacturing
- Architectural and structural metals manufacturing
- Resin, synthetic rubber, and artificial synthetic fibers and filaments manufacturing

**Table 21**

<b>Employment by Major Types of Manufacturers, Pottstown Metro Region</b>			
<b>NAICS Code</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Employment Count</b>	<b>Number of Establishments</b>
3363	Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing	699	3
3327	Machine Shops; Turned Product; and Screw, Nut, and Bolt Manufacturing	250	16
3329	Other Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	193	8
3323	Architectural and Structural Metals Manufacturing	192	12
3252	Resin, Synthetic Rubber, and Artificial Synthetic Fibers and Filaments Manufacturing	180	1
3345	Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing	150	6
3251	Basic Chemical Manufacturing	149	3
3344	Semiconductor and Other Electronic Component Manufacturing	143	4
3339	Other General Purpose Machinery Manufacturing	133	9
3149	Other Textile Product Mills	112	3

Source: Dun and Bradstreet (September 2007), Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Table 22 shows the ten industries (3-digit NAICS code) with the largest employment in the Pottstown metro region and their location quotients, as well as the levels of employment change for those industries in Montgomery County as a whole between 2001 and 2006. (The countywide employment trend is shown as a possible indicator of the general health of those industries within Montgomery County and, perhaps, within the Pottstown Metro Region.)

These industries together added 9,815 jobs in Montgomery County between 2001 and 2006. Industries with location quotients significantly above 1 include Educational Services, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing, and Transportation Equipment Manufacturing. The former showed a county-wide gain of 1,942 jobs, but the latter two together lost 6,344 jobs. This is a sobering trend, given that the Pottstown metro region's manufacturing base is concentrated in these sectors.

Professional, technical, and scientific services alone added 11,501 jobs countywide. Other industries with significant employment gains include Ambulatory Health Care Services, Food Services and Drinking Places, and Administrative and Support Services.

**Table 22**

Employment Change in Major Industries, Pottstown Metro Region				
NAICS Code	Industry	Employment	Location Quotient	MC Employment Change 2001-2006
611	Educational Services	1,873	3.8	1,942
541	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,746	1.0	11,501
722	Food Services and Drinking Places	1,542	0.7	2,367
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	1,060	0.9	3,092
622	Hospitals	1,006	1.0	-454
561	Administrative and Support Services	1,004	0.6	1,553
238	Specialty Trade Contractors	942	0.9	-712
423	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	926	1.3	-2,097
452	General Merchandise Stores	873	1.3	747
332	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	747	2.1	-1,730
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	734	1.8	-4,614
Total Employment Change				11,595

Source: Dun and Bradstreet (September 2007), US Census Bureau, Gannett Fleming, Inc.

Table 23 below shows the private largest employers in the Pottstown Metro Area, as well as selected large employers in the tri-county area. The largest employer in Pottstown Borough is Pottstown Medical Center. Three large motor vehicle parts manufacturers are also located in the Borough. Outside of the Pottstown metro region, Colleagueville is the location for a concentration of pharmaceutical companies with close to 13,000 employees.

**Table 23**

Major Employers, Pottstown Metro Region and Surroundings		
Company Name	Type of Business	Employment
<b>Pottstown</b>		
Torque-Traction Manufacturing	Manufactures motor vehicle universal joints; mechanical power transmission equipment	400
Neapco LLC	Manufactures motor vehicle transmission housings or parts; mechanical power transmission equipment	295
Gudebrod Inc	Manufactures organic fiber & fiber products; dental equipment & supplies; fishing lines, nets & seines	180
Micro-Coax Inc	Manufactures microwave components; blowers & fans; radio & television communications equipment; nonferrous wiredrawing & insulating; power related transformers; electronic coils & transformers	140
Videotek Inc	Manufactures Custom Measurement Equipment	130
Haines & Kibblehouse Inc	Manufactures asphalt & asphalt products; highway & street paving contractor; wholesales paving materials; dimension stone mining	110

# Community Profile

<b>Major Employers, Pottstown Metro Region and Surroundings</b>		
<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Employment</b>
FlagZone LLC	Manufactures fabric flags	105
Boscov's Department Store LLC	Department Store	350
Sears, Roebuck & Co	Department Store Retail Auto/Home Supplies	300
Home Depot USA Inc	Home Improvement Retailer	200
Lowe's Home Centers Inc	Home Improvement Retailer	150
Giant Food Stores LLC	Retail Groceries	150
Wal-Mart Stores Inc	Department Store Retail Drugs/Sundries Photofinish Laboratory/Eating Place	125
Goodman Tank Lines Inc	Local Trucking Operator	130
Venezia Transport Service Inc	Trucking Operator-Nonlocal	220
Peerless Publications Inc	Publishes & prints newspapers	171
Hill School	Secondary School	180
Pottstown Memorial Medical Center	General Hospital	962
Manatawny Manor Inc	Residential Convalescent Home Skilled Nursing Home & Adult Day-Care	250
<b>Collegeville</b>		
Wyeth-Ayerst International Inc	Pharmaceutical R&D/Manufacturing/Wholesale Distribution	7,820
Smithkline Beecham Corp	Pharmaceutical Research & Development	5,000
GE Health	Pharmaceutical Research & Development	175
Quest Diagnostics Clinical	Clinical Laboratory	500
Iron Mountain Information MGT	Document And Office Records Storage	400
U T I Corp	Manufactures Steel Pipe/Tubes, Fabricated Pipe/Fittings, Aluminum Extruded Products, Copper Rolling/Drawing	350
Superior Tube Co	Manufactures steel pipe & tubes; fabricates pipes & fittings	300
Accellent Inc	Manufactures medical instruments; engineering services	200
David's Bridal Inc	Retail Women's Clothing	2,000
<b>Gilbertsville</b>		
Pottstown Medical Specialists	Management Consulting Services, Medical Doctor's Office	150
Waste Management of	Refuse System Local Trucking Operator	150

<b>Major Employers, Pottstown Metro Region and Surroundings</b>		
<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Type of Business</b>	<b>Employment</b>
PA		
Tozour Energy Systems Inc	Wholesale HVAC Equipment/Supp Refrigeration Service/Repair	140
<b>East Greenville</b>		
Knoll Inc	Manufactures wooden office panel systems; wholesales leather & leather goods & furs; office panel systems & partitions; retails luggage & leather goods	1,350
Brown Printing Co-East	Commercial lithographic printing; book binding service	600
<b>Royersford</b>		
Wetherill Associates Inc	Wholesale Auto Parts/Supplies	200
<b>Oaks</b>		
S E I Investments Distribution	Security Broker/Dealer	300
<b>Boyertown</b>		
Cabot Corp	Manufactures primary nonferrous metals; industrial organic chemicals; nonclay refractories	300
Federal-Mogul Corp	Manufactures motor vehicle lighting fixtures; gaskets & sealing devices; electric lamps; pistons & piston rings	300
Judson A Smith Co	Tube fabricator	198
A W Mercer Inc	Sheet metal fabricator; manufactures partitions & fixtures; heating equipment & supplies; noncurrent carrying wiring devices; metal stampings	130
National Penn Bankshares Inc	National Commercial Bank	250
E F Corp	Trucking Operator-Nonlocal	225
<b>Birdsboro</b>		
Teltron Technologies Inc	Manufactures cathode ray tubes	400
Advance Management Concepts	Contract Janitorial Service	265
Arkema Inc	Manufactures inorganic chemicals	140

Source: Dun and Bradstreet (September 2007), Gannett Fleming, Inc.

# Community Profile

Table 24 shows the change in the number of establishments by 2-digit NAICS category within Pottstown Borough, for the period 2001-2005. (This information is not available for the Pottstown Metro Region.)

**Table 24**

Pottstown Borough Establishment Data								
NAICS Code	Industry	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Percent Change '01-'05	Total Change '01-'05
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	12	13	17	18	17	41.7%	5
51	Information	17	20	23	22	23	35.3%	6
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	30	30	35	35	38	26.7%	8
56	Administrative and Support Services	53	53	59	59	63	18.9%	10
48	Transportation and warehousing	22	20	21	22	26	18.2%	4
72	Accommodation and food services	79	94	90	92	90	13.9%	11
81	Other services (except public administration)	131	140	138	145	148	13.0%	17
23	Construction	86	92	99	104	96	11.6%	10
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	95	100	103	99	103	8.4%	8
42	Wholesale trade	66	68	72	68	69	4.5%	3
62	Health care and social assistance	135	140	130	134	136	0.7%	1
21	Mining	0	0	0	0	1	--	1
11	Forestry, fishing, hunting, and agriculture	1	1	1	1	1	0.0%	0
52	Finance and insurance	53	55	58	59	53	0.0%	0
55	Management of companies and enterprises	8	8	10	11	8	0.0%	0
61	Educational services	17	15	15	16	17	0.0%	0
44	Retail trade	210	205	203	199	193	-8.1%	-17
31	Manufacturing	84	83	82	77	76	-9.5%	-8
22	Utilities	4	2	3	3	2	-50.0%	-2
99	Unclassified establishments	5	2	3	5	1	-80.0%	-4
95	Auxiliaries	2	1	0	0	0	-100.0%	-2
	Total Establishments	1,110	1,142	1,162	1,169	1,161	4.6%	51

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Pottstown Borough showed a net increase of 51 business establishments between 2001 and 2005, a gain of 4.5 percent. Twelve out of 21 industrial categories added businesses, four showed no gain, and five lost businesses.

Industries with the most establishments include:

- Retail trade
- Other services
- Health care and social assistance
- Professional, technical and scientific services
- Construction

Industries gaining the largest number of new establishments include:

- Other services
- Accommodation and food services
- Construction
- Real estate and rental and leasing
- Professional, technical and scientific services

The following industries gained establishments at the fastest rate:

- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Information
- Real estate and rental and leasing
- Administration, support, waste management, and remediation
- Transportation and warehousing

The following industries lost the most establishments:

- Retail trade
- Manufacturing

## Employment

After losing almost 1,700 jobs between 1990 and 2000, Pottstown Borough is forecast to add almost 1,000 new jobs between 2005 and 2035. This is a welcome turn-around but still represents a growth rate of less than half that of Montgomery County. The other boroughs shown in Table 25 as comparison communities likewise are expected to lag behind the county in job growth.

**Table 25**

### 2035 Employment Forecasts

Municipality Name	1990 Census	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	2035 Forecast	Total Change '05-'35	Percent Change '05-'35
Pottstown Borough	14,766	13,076	13,031	14,007	976	7.5%
Pottstown Metro Region	25,048	27,338	28,264	34,796	6,532	23.1%
Montgomery County	457,501	492,677	505,952	585,430	79,478	15.7%
<i>Regional Comparison Communities</i>						
Royersford Borough	1,326	1,483	1,526	1,577	51	3.3%
Collegeville Borough	2,707	2,980	3,181	3,335	154	4.8%
Limerick Township	5,238	5,841	6,389	11,389	5,000	78.3%
Upper Providence Township	3,781	8,949	9,919	17,919	8,000	80.7%
Lower Providence Township	10,366	10,191	11,019	13,123	2,104	19.1%
Norristown Borough	16,559	15,053	15,118	17,321	2,203	14.6%

Source: Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission

The Pottstown Metro Region is forecast to add over 6,500 new jobs by 2035, for a robust growth rate well above that of the county. Yet this pales in comparison to Limerick and Upper Providence Townships, which represent the core of the 422

corridor growth area. Employment in these communities is expected to grow by around 80 percent, for an increase of 13,000 new jobs. To put this in context, that figure is equivalent to the current Pottstown Borough work force.

Table 26 shows the distribution of employees among major occupational categories for Pottstown Borough, the Pottstown Metro Region, and Montgomery County. Pottstown Borough and Metro Region have higher proportions of workers in Production/ Transportation/Material Moving and Service Occupations than the county as a whole. Conversely, Montgomery County has a significantly higher percentage of workers in management, professional and related occupations.

**Table 26**

Employment by Occupation, Pottstown and Region						
	Pottstown Borough		Pottstown Metro Region		Montgomery County	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Management, professional, and related occupations	2,419	23.2%	11,271	32.2%	171,063	44.5%
Service occupations	1,820	17.5%	4,998	14.3%	40,413	10.5%
Sales and office occupations	3,102	29.8%	9,254	26.4%	108,422	28.2%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	14	0.1%	86	0.2%	405	0.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	973	9.3%	3,342	9.5%	26,380	6.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving	2,084	20.0%	6,100	17.4%	38,005	9.9%
Total Employment	10,412		35,051		384,688	
Source: US Census Bureau						

The Pottstown Borough economy exists as part of a larger regional economy. This can be clearly seen by considering where people who live in Pottstown work, as well as where people who work in Pottstown live. According to US Census Bureau data, just 18.4 percent of Pottstown residents worked in the borough in 2004. While many are employed in nearby communities, almost a quarter commute to jobs outside of Montgomery, Chester, or Berks counties.

Conversely, just 17.4 percent of employees of Pottstown businesses live in Pottstown. Again, most come from nearby communities but about a quarter come from outside of the Tri-County area.

### **Economic Development Organizations**

Pottstown has several organizations whose missions encompass various aspects of economic development. These organizations and their missions are discussed below.

#### ***TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce***

The TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce is a business advocacy organization that serves over 1,400 businesses in northern Chester, southeastern Berks, western Montgomery Counties, and the Route 422 Corridor. The vision of the Chamber is “effecting change to create a thriving region.” Its mission states “as the primary business advocate, the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce provides relevant

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membership services and proactive leadership to enhance economic opportunity and quality of life within our region.”

The Chamber has three committees that support its business advocacy efforts: a Regional Planning Committee, an Environmental Education Committee, and a Governmental Affairs Council. The Chamber also has a 501 (c) 3 foundation that provides funding to area schools for vocational career development.

The Chamber continues to advocate for the Schuylkill Valley Metro, working with other chambers along the proposed corridor.

### ***Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID)***

PAID, Inc. is an affiliate of the TriCounty Area Chamber whose mission is to promote commercial and industrial development in the Greater Pottstown Area. PAID, Inc. initiated the Pottstown Airport Business Campus and recently completed the sale of 32 lots at the park. In addition, they purchased 105 High Street, 107 High Street, 115 High Street, 152 High Street, and 245 High Street. These properties have been resold and new businesses have located in downtown Pottstown.

### ***Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA)***

PDIDA serves as an advocate to improve and strengthen both non-business and business aspects of Downtown Pottstown. To accomplish this goal, PDIDA focuses on enhancing Downtown Pottstown's image to businesses, consumers, and investors while supporting the rehabilitation of Downtown Pottstown's unique historic district and main shopping venues.

PDIDA is a special assessment district that provides extra services within the five-block Downtown Improvement District that supplement those of the Borough and property owners. Primary responsibilities include keeping the downtown clean, safe and well managed. This includes maintaining the flowers along High Street and managing the streetscapes (benches, trash cans, lighting). Additionally, PDIDA provides assistance with marketing the area, special events, business retention and recruitment and long term planning. PDIDA's mission is to create long-term sustainability for businesses and organizations in the downtown by fostering an environment that provides a competitive advantage and prosperous setting.

In 2006, PDIDA received Main Street Program Designation through the Department of Community and Economic Development and is applying the principles of that program to enhance its revitalization efforts and augment the services it provides.

PDIDA offers two programs to assist property owners or businesses with improving the appearance of the front of their buildings. The programs are only available when significant improvements are being made. Routine maintenance is not an eligible activity. New windows, signage, awnings, painting (when done as part of a larger improvement), handicap accessibility, lighting are just a few of the improvements that can be made using these programs.

*Façade Loan Program* - The Façade Loan Program offers a no-interest loan of up to 80% of the total project costs that is repayable over five years. This money is provided prior to the construction when all of the program requirements are met.

*Façade/Design Challenge Grant* - The Façade/Design Challenge Grant offers a grant of up to \$5,000.00 or 50% of the total rehabilitation cost, when matched with private investment dollars. This is a reimbursement program that provides the funding when the construction is complete when all conditions of the program are met.

### ***Pottstown Downtown Foundation***

The Pottstown Downtown Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 corporation that was established to provide a broader and more sustainable support structure for the Pottstown Downtown Improvement District. Recognizing the essential need to tap financial resources outside the designated boundaries of the downtown, the PDF seeks to secure a significantly larger pool of operating funds from which PDIDA may draw. As a not-for-profit corporation, contributions of time, money and resources from the private sector are tax deductible. The Foundation also pursues grant funding to assist in development projects and special events.

### **Interviews with Real Estate and Economic Development Professionals**

Interviews were conducted with several commercial real estate and economic development professionals to gain insights into current economic conditions in Montgomery County and the Pottstown Metro Region. The following discussion summarizes their comments.

Growth industries in Montgomery County in recent years include biotech, life sciences, software, financial/banking, and insurance. Manufacturing has generally been declining, but nevertheless a diverse array of manufacturing businesses have been active in the market for new space, including technology-related businesses, life-sciences companies, smaller pharmaceutical companies, auto parts manufacturers, and machine shops. This diversity has always been a strength of the region, according to one interviewee. Typical operations include light manufacturing, assembly, and distribution.

The typical company looking for space, particularly in the western part of Montgomery County, is a smaller company with 20-80 employees. The typical space being sought is a building with 10,000-50,000 square feet of so-called flex space. Flex buildings typically include, in addition to space for light manufacturing and assembly, some office and warehousing space. One real estate broker noted that the new product coming on the market east of Pottstown along the 422 corridor is a 120-foot to 130-foot deep building with 20-foot clear ceiling and 100-foot to 120-foot deep truck courts, to provide turning space for 75-foot long trucks. Interestingly, half of the users in the market for this type of space are looking to purchase. And the site location decision for these smaller companies is often made based on proximity to the owner's residence.

One real estate broker noted that most of the business relocation or expansion activity in the Pottstown Metro Region appears to be due to internal business growth, from businesses that are already in the general area. Another broker noted, however, that businesses are beginning to move west from the King of Prussia area due to extremely high (and rising) land prices (currently \$300,000-\$400,000 per acre). Another factor influencing this migration is the presence of a skilled manufacturing workforce in the western part of the county.

Interviewees suggested that the lack of suitable industrial space and buildable land is a major obstacle for Pottstown to overcome. Much of the existing space is antiquated or has other limitations:

- The Pottstown Industrial Complex is a “down and dirty” heavy manufacturing facility with outdated features like 50 foot ceilings. It is suitable in its current configuration for more traditional heavier manufacturing uses. The approach from Armand Hammer Boulevard is unattractive, however.
- The Tri-County Industrial Park (actually just outside of the Borough), a facility with 777,000 square feet under one roof and excellent access to US 422 via Armand Hammer Boulevard, grew to its current size through a number of additions over the years. Its large size might be suitable for a larger user except that support columns break up the otherwise uninterrupted expanse. The current plan is to divide the building into smaller spaces of 10,000 to 50,000 square feet. However, the site layout complicates providing suitable truck access to these new spaces. The presence across the street of the Occidental Chemical site, long burdened by environmental problems, has given the area something of a stigma.
- The KOZ along West High Street lies in a flood zone. The building sites have been built up above the flood level, but the access road still is within the flood zone. This condition has reportedly been a deal-breaking issue with at least one potential prospect (a company that was concerned about the risk to the high-value equipment it manufactures).



The situation for Pottstown is compounded by recent and ongoing development of new industrial space east of the Borough along the 422 corridor. At locations such as the Providence Business Center and the Linfield Corporate Center, infrastructure is in place and sites are ready for construction. The question for businesses then becomes, “why go further west to Pottstown?” More than one interviewee emphasized the importance of providing incentives such as KOZ designation, LERTA tax incentives, and fast-track approval of development permits to increase the appeal of the Borough as a business location.

None of the real estate and economic development professionals interviewed considered Pottstown and the surrounding Metro Region a promising location for new office development. To begin with, there aren’t a lot of office buildings or office users in the area. Most office users appear to be small companies; there aren’t a lot of large corporate users that require 25,000 square feet or more. The center of office space inventory and development activity in Montgomery County continues to be the King of Prussia area (“ground zero,” as one interviewee referred to it), which benefits from its proximity to Philadelphia and the major highway interchanges. Overbuilding in recent years has resulted in a lot of

## ***Community Profile***

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available space on the market, giving businesses plenty of options without having to look elsewhere. In fact, a new 200,000 square-foot building was recently developed right where 422, 202 and the Turnpike come together. There has been some development activity on the west side of King of Prussia, but even there the market has been soft. One interviewee noted that lease rates for office space in the Metro Region are “middling” at best, which discourages development of additional office space.

West of the US 422/PA 29 interchange, the office market becomes particularly tough. A couple of new office buildings, targeted to smaller users looking for 8,000-10,000 square feet, were recently developed in Limerick but have reportedly been slow to lease up. A lack of amenities in the area – plentiful shopping, restaurants, and other services – may be part of the problem. Significant residential development along the 422 corridor, however, has begun to attract large-scale commercial development. The planned development of a “lifestyle center” on the remaining corner of the 422/29 interchange, as well as the ~500,000 square-foot Philadelphia Outlet Center further west in Sanatoga, should help to address this deficiency (and increase the area’s appeal as an industrial location as well). One interviewee suggested that the latter project will help to “put the area on the map.”

Several interviewees also pointed to the terrible traffic along US 422 as a major impediment to office development. The Betzwood Bridge, where incoming traffic starts to back up, forms an “invisible wall” beyond which office users tend not to go.

## TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### *Introduction*

When strategizing for the future of Pottstown, it is critical to examine the role of the transportation system in the community. The transportation system is a key element of this plan because it affects mobility, accessibility, safety, economic development, and the overall quality of life for Pottstown residents. For the purpose of this strategic plan, the following transportation elements have been examined:

- Commuting Patterns
- Major Roadways
- Bridges
- Municipal Airports
- Public Transportation
- Commuter Rail & Freight
- Programmed Improvements for Pottstown (on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC))

Transportation infrastructure is a crucial component of a healthy community and economy. Based on this assessment and understanding of how the transportation elements affect one another, the following conclusions have been derived and should be considered when strategically planning for the future of Pottstown.

- While currently unsatisfactory, Pottstown's gateway areas are important parts of its transportation infrastructure and can support other Borough objectives, such as "rebranding" Pottstown's image and facilitating its role as the urban hub of the region. The Borough should continue efforts to improve its gateway areas by working to implement recommendations from previous planning efforts.
- Utilize better access management. Some heavily traveled roads have an excessive number of access points. This problem could be alleviated by reducing the number of access points and/or connecting adjacent parking areas whenever development or redevelopment occurs.
- Pottstown may want to examine opportunities for ITS systems to assist with more efficient movement of vehicles and their transit system. Consider synchronizing the traffic signals in the Borough and with adjacent municipalities along critical routes.
- Excessive noise may be an issue near major highways where development is dense. Consider evaluating noise reducing measures near residential areas and examine their costs and benefits as well their impacts on the aesthetics of the community.
- Consider traffic impact fees. Weigh the pros and cons of implementing them in the Borough.
- Assess land development procedures and design guidelines at PennDOT and in the Borough's ordinances. Update them to ensure quality context sensitive design for transportation elements. Roads and bridges should

blend into their environment, even if this affects the size of the road or bridge, or adds to its cost. New or improved roads or bridges should respect the surrounding landscape, particularly existing historic and natural areas in Pottstown Borough. This includes utilizing transit oriented development (TOD) development and redevelopment techniques.

- The elderly population is growing, so the demand for public transportation is increasing. The number of commuters who use public transportation has increased significantly from 1990 to 2000, by 169%.
- Support the conversion of an existing unused railroad trestle into a pedestrian bridge across the Schuylkill River to connect River Park and Riverfront Park.
- Consider utilizing more methods for traffic calming that will also improve the aesthetics and pedestrian accessibility in Pottstown, such as on-street parking, painted bike lanes or road shoulders, shade trees, landscaping, and pedestrian elements (e.g., pedestrian benches, stylized street lamps, waste receptacles, bollards, etc.).

## Commuting Patterns

Commuting data was gathered from Census 2000. Data in the following tables (Table #1 and Table # 2) is reported by where the majority of Pottstown residents are working and where the greatest percentage of residents are coming from that are employed in Pottstown. If 100 persons or more worked at the location/municipality, it is noted and considered to be a significant employment location.

**Table 1: Where the Majority of Pottstown Residents Work**

Employment Location	# of Pottstown Residents Employed at this Location
Amity Twp. Berks Co. PA	138
Colebrookdale Twp. Berks Co. PA	100
Douglass Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	132
East Whiteland Twp. Chester Co. PA	109
Limerick Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	242
Lower Pottsgrove Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	555
Lower Providence Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	174
Norristown bor. Montgomery Co. PA	191
North Coventry Twp. Chester Co. PA	302
Phoenixville bor. Chester Co. PA	156
Pottstown bor. Montgomery Co. PA	2888
Spring City bor. Chester Co. PA	124
Tredyffrin Twp. Chester Co. PA	259
Upper Merion Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	396
Upper Pottsgrove Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	191

Employment Location	# of Pottstown Residents Employed at this Location
Upper Providence Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	384
West Norriton Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	140
West Pottsgrove Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	270
Whitpain Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	107

Source: US Census Bureau, Gannett Fleming, Inc.

The greatest number of Pottstown residents work in Pottstown, followed by Lower Pottsgrove Township, Upper Marion Township, and Upper Providence Township. All are located in Montgomery County.

**Table 2: Where the Majority of Pottstown Employees Live**

Location of where Pottstown Employees Live	# of Workers from this Location
Philadelphia city Philadelphia Co. PA	333
Pottstown Borough	2888
Lower Pottsgrove Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	647
Douglass Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	513
Upper Pottsgrove Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	365
West Pottsgrove Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	353
Limerick Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	286
New Hanover Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	234
Lower Providence Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	119
Upper Providence Twp. Montgomery Co. PA	108
North Coventry Twp. Chester Co. PA	464
East Coventry Twp. Chester Co. PA	155
Amity Twp. Berks Co. PA	498
Colebrookdale Twp. Berks Co. PA	307
Exeter Twp. Berks Co. PA	271
Douglass Twp. Berks Co. PA	233
Boyertown bor. Berks Co. PA	213
Union Twp. Berks Co. PA	184
Reading city Berks Co. PA	131
Washington Twp. Berks Co. PA	122
Earl Twp. Berks Co. PA	105
Birdsboro bor. Berks Co. PA	104

Source: US Census Bureau, Gannett Fleming, Inc.

The largest number of Pottstown employees live in the Borough (2,888), followed by Lower Pottsgrove Township (647), Douglass Township (513), and Amity Township (498).

Table 3 displays travel time to work for the year 2000 according to the US Census. 1990 Census data were not provided for this variable.

**Table 3: Travel Time to Work (Census 90-00)**

Travel Time	% Year 1990	% Year 2000
Less than 10 minutes	NA – could not find this data for 1990	20.9
10 to 14 minutes		15.7
15 to 19 minutes		13.7
20 to 24 minutes		10.1
25 to 29 minutes		4.4
30 to 34 minutes		12.4
35 to 44 minutes		6.0
45 to 59 minutes		9.6
60 to 89 minutes		5.3
90 or more minutes		1.8

Source: US Census Bureau

- In 2000, the majority of residents (21%) have a commute time to work that is less than 10 minutes.
- 77% of Pottstown residents have a commute time to work that is less than 34 minutes.
- The mean travel time to work for Pottstown Borough in 2000 is 24.2 minutes.

Table #4 displays the type of transportation mode workers used in year 2000.

**Table 4: Means of Transportation to Work (Persons 16 and Over)**

Transportation Mode	Number of Persons	Percent
SOV – Drove Alone	7,776	75.4
Carpooled	1,408	13.7
Public Transportation	245	2.4
Bicycle	73	1
Walked	630	6.1
Worked at Home	109	1.1

Source: US Census Bureau

- 75% of workers drove alone to work.
- Almost 14% of workers carpooled.
- A fair amount of workers (6%) walked to work.
- In 1990 91 persons were reported using public transit as a means to commute to work. In 2000, that number increased to 245 persons, a 169% increase. Transit is a critical component for the work force in Pottstown.

## **Major Highways/Roadways**

This highways and roadways section addresses how the road system functions as an economic development and strategic mechanism for Pottstown. This includes analyzing two critical highway corridors, US 422 and PA 100. Both have been noted as being significant to the economy in Pottstown as well as the movement of people and goods.

- **US 422 (Pottstown Expressway) & Interchanges** – US 422 is classified as an “Expressway”. An expressway is defined as a divided multi-lane limited access highway. Traffic congestion has caused sections of US 422 to be congested. U.S. 422 has safety hazards such as inadequate acceleration and deceleration lanes at interchanges. To address this issue, future roadwork should increase the length of acceleration and deceleration lanes.
- **PA 100** – Certain segments of PA 100 are classified as an “Expressway” and others as “principal arterials”. These road types generally have two to four through-lanes, serve major centers, and carry a high proportion of cross-county traffic. PA100 north of High Street in Pottstown is often congested. A recent Route 100 Corridor Study found major issues along Route 100 to be traffic congestion, safety, inconsistent interchanges (signalized, non-signalized, and grade separated), transition zones at each end of the corridor, and increasing development pressures. The study also recommended that PA 100 should also undergo realignments designed to enhance safety particularly along the portion of the expressway in West Pottsgrove.

## **Bridges**

There are seven bridges listed in Pottstown, ranging in length from 57 feet (Charlotte Street Bridge) to 749 feet (Madison Bridge). Each was built more than 30 years ago, with the Franklin Street Bridge and South High Street Bridge both being over 85 years old. The Franklin Street Bridge has been listed as having some structural deficiency in the PennDOT Bridge Management System. The Keim Street Bridge is a key connection for economic development in the Borough. It serves as an important access way between Route 422 and the Pottstown Industrial Center. The bridge is a narrow, two-lane structure, however, and needs to be rebuilt to increase its capacity. The Hanover Street Bridge is an important gateway for both Pottstown Borough and North Coventry Township and presents an opportunity to celebrate each community in a distinctive manner.

## **Gateways**

Situated at the intersection of Routes 422 and 100, Pottstown has a strategic location in relation to the regional transportation network. Yet the actual connections to this network leave something to be desired. Four highway interchanges along Route 422 connect to roads leading directly into the Borough, at SR 100, Hanover Street, Keim Street, and Armand Hammer Boulevard. Only the first and last of these provide on and off highway access in both travel directions along Route 422. The Hanover Street interchange provides west-bound off access and east-bound on access. The Keim Street interchange provides east-bound off access and west-bound on access (although west-bound off access to and east-bound access from Keim Street can be achieved via a fifth interchange that connects to East Schuylkill Road in North Coventry Township).

These limitations do not appear to be causing serious access problems for businesses located along and near to Industrial Highway. More serious are issues with the gateways into downtown Pottstown, and the problems begin after leaving the highway. The issues with the eastern gateway along Armand Hammer



Boulevard are largely aesthetic: the area is characterized by a mixture of largely commercial and industrial buildings that lack a distinctive character and do not create a sense of arrival at a place of interest. The route into downtown Pottstown is not especially confusing but is not well-marked with signs to aid newcomers to the area.

The western gateway into downtown Pottstown suffers from both aesthetic and functional problems. There is no direct exit from Route 100 onto east-bound High Street, so travelers must exit onto King Street, proceed to Manatawney Street and thence to High Street. Moreover, it is easy to take the exit onto west-bound High Street from northbound Route 100 by mistake, given the proximity of the two exits, and end up heading out of town. This indirect route into town is not well-marked by signs and also passes through an area of indistinct character that provides no sense of arrival. The presence of the highway overpass and a rail bridge add to the visual confusion.

The 2003 Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan made several recommendations to address problems with the western gateway (this area also is important for providing vehicular, pedestrian, and greenway connections between the two parks, which are major recreational and natural amenities for both the Borough and the Metro Region). These recommendations include

- Creating an improved connection to High Street, by extending College Drive from the south to connect High Street and King Street (this would require the removal of the Colebrookdale rail spur)
- Expanding the Pottsgrove Manor facility on land freed up by the spur removal, to possibly include display and demonstration gardens and other landscaped areas
- Establishing gateway greening areas on parcels at the intersection of High Street and College Drive.

These improvements, and other projects in the area such as the Carousel at Pottstown, would help tie together several important Borough facilities and amenities within an improved gateway district and enable the entrance route into the downtown (now proceeding from King Street to College Drive to High Street) to evoke key elements of Pottstown's character – its history, its natural setting, and its quality of life.

## ***Public Transportation***

Transit is an important asset for the Borough. It helps connect workers with jobs and gives people who cannot drive a method of transporting themselves. Pottstown has a growing aging population, and transit is an important mode of travel for the elderly. Transit helps reduce traffic congestion by providing an alternative to driving, helping make the overall transportation network function more efficiently. Transit also helps to protect the environment.

- **PUT (Pottstown Urban Transit)**  
The Borough of Pottstown owns the largest municipally owned transit system in Montgomery County – Pottstown Urban Transit Inc. (PUT). PUT is responsible for the daily operation of a fleet of buses through a contract with the Borough of Pottstown. Bus service is available from

PUT six days a week during the day and on a limited schedule at night. PUT operates five routes with service available Monday through Saturday from 6:00am – 10:00pm. Curb-to-curb service is offered for those persons with disabilities. The Metro Regional Comprehensive Plan noted that there is a need to examine opportunities for expanding the PUT routes.

- **SEPTA (Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority)**  
The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA's) Bus Route 93 serves the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, connecting Pottstown to Norristown via Collegeville along the Ridge Pike/High Street corridor. The bus runs seven days a week, at approximately one-hour intervals. SEPTA's Route 93, which connects Pottstown to Norristown via Collegeville, is run at a schedule of one bus per hour for most of the day, with limited service of one bus every 35-45 minutes between 5:00 and 7:00am. It is questionable as to whether this service time and frequency is meeting the needs of riders.

There are a couple programs that could be explored as an incentive for Pottstown residents and workers to use more public transit. They include the following:

- **TransitChek**  
TransitChek is a benefit program that employers can offer to their employees who use transit as a mode of transport. The program provides tax-free vouchers that can be used to purchase passes, tokens, and tickets. The Borough could benefit from providing transit assistance by better connecting workers with jobs, and by reducing traffic congestion.
- **Smart Commute Program**  
The Smart Commute program provides larger mortgages for people living near SEPTA stops and could be valuable for Pottstown Borough's residents. To be eligible, participants are required to live within one half-mile of a rail station, or one-quarter mile of a bus stop. Eligible participants may receive mortgages 8 percent higher than they would otherwise be eligible for.

## ***TOD – Transit Oriented Development.***

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) techniques can be used when redeveloping and developing areas in Pottstown near the existing or proposed transit stops. What is TOD? It is a pattern of development designed to support transit services. TOD strategies often catalyze economic development and encourage pedestrian mobility, indirectly reducing the number of SOVs on the roadway network.

Characteristics of TOD development that Pottstown should consider include:

- A mix of land uses and development within a ½ mile of a transit stop.
- Linking a network of pedestrian, bicycle, roadway, and transit facilities.
- Buildings and uses that cater to the pedestrian.
- Appropriate building densities to support transit and adequate parking.
- High quality design and aesthetics.

## **TMA Devices**

Traffic management authorities and programs are becoming a very popular method for managing traffic and could be applied to Pottstown. The Greater Valley Forge TMA currently has traffic management programs, including:

- Working with businesses to establish commuter ridesharing programs.
- Working with both public and private organizations to develop park-and-ride lots.

Traffic signal preemption devices are being explored for installation on all SEPTA and PUT buses. These devices will allow buses to change signal lights to facilitate their efficient movement along roadways. In addition to signal preemption devices, global positioning systems could be explored for SEPTA and PUT vehicles and computerized information centers could be installed at major mass transit stops. The information centers would provide estimated times of arrival and departure for transit vehicles.

## **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)**

Currently, Pottstown and the surrounding region do not utilize ITS systems. However, the establishment of a closed loop traffic light system in the Borough is on the current TIP. Pottstown may want to explore other ITS programs and systems as they may be appropriate for the Borough. They are noted below:

- Coordinating traffic signals and timing.
- Video cameras to monitor speeding, congestion, and accidents.
- Emergency call boxes.
- Ramp metering.
- Real-time travel information broadcasted on TV and the radio – warnings for alternate routes.
- Utilize Bus Rapid Transit systems on existing bus routes using ITS technology.
- Global positioning systems could be installed on all SEPTA and PUT vehicles and computerized information centers could be installed at major mass transit stops.

## **Commuter Rail & Freight Transport**

Freight transportation, including trucking, rail, and air transport, can play a critical role in the Borough's economy now and in the future. Trucking is already a vital part of the economy in this region, specifically along PA 100 and US 422, which traverse Pottstown. Railroads have historically been an important shipping method in the Metro Region and should be considered for strategic economic improvements in Pottstown. Railroads are classified as "Class I", "Regional", or "Short Line". Class I are major railroads with multi-state operations. In the Pottstown Metropolitan Region, Norfolk Southern owns the Harrisburg Line, a Class I railroad along the Schuylkill River. Canadian Pacific (CP Rail) has operating rights on the Harrisburg Line. That rail line travels through Lower Pottsgrove, Pottstown, and West Pottsgrove. There is a Short Line railroad from Pottstown to Boyertown that travels through West Pottsgrove; it intersects with the Harrisburg Line at Colebrookdale Junction in Pottstown. Norfolk Southern also operates a rail yard (Stowe Yard) in Pottstown.

The short-line railroad from Pottstown to Boyertown (the Enola Branch) along the Manatawney Creek currently serves a business in and is owned by Berks County. According to the Metro Regional Plan, portions of the vacated right-of-way could be utilized for roadway improvements in Pottstown that would provide better access to PA 100.

The proposed Schuylkill Valley Metro passenger train service could prevent conflicts between passenger and freight trains that use the same tracks or group of tracks and should be explored further by Pottstown Borough.

## Airports

Pottstown Borough has two airports, Pottstown Municipal Airport and Pottstown Limerick Airport. Pottstown Municipal Airport is owned by the Borough. The airport is classified as a general service airport. The airport is listed as operating 62 aircraft per day on average, of which 79% is local general aviation, 16% is transient general aviation, and 4% is air taxi. The runway is 2,700 feet long. A report on economic impacts of aviation estimated that the airport has an economic impact of \$881,000. There are approximately 40 hangars operated by the municipal airport. This airport provides limited corporate service and charter service, and is utilized for recreational and personal aviation. Based on recent increases in air activity (a 175% increase in 2007), the Borough is currently planning to add an additional 40 hangars and is also considering other improvements to airport facilities (such as the addition of a restaurant). These improvements will help implement FAA plans for the airport.

The Pottstown Limerick Airport is a slightly larger yet privately owned. There are 102 aircraft operations per day on average, of which 63% is local general aviation, 20% is transient general aviation, and 17% is air taxi. The runway is nearly 3400 feet long.

A recommendation noted in the Metro Regional Comprehensive Plan for aviation is to consider making improvements to the Pottstown Municipal Airport by increasing its level of operations in order to enhance the economic benefit it brings to the Borough and the Region. Also, in 2001 the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) recommended the following improvements to Pottstown's airports in its publication "2025 Regional Airport System Plan for the Delaware Valley Region".

- Pottstown-Limerick: A runway extension to 4,400 feet and provision of 30 hangar spaces.
- Pottstown Municipal: Construction of 20 T-hangars, an apron extension and corporate hangars.



### Airport Classifications and Definitions by the FAA

**Commercial Service Airports** are publicly owned airports that have at least 2,500 passenger boardings each calendar year and receive scheduled passenger service

**Non-primary Commercial Service Airports** are Commercial Service Airports that have at least 2,500 and no more than 10,000 passenger boardings each year.

**Primary Airports** are Commercial Service Airports that have more than 10,000 passenger boardings each year. Hub categories for Primary Airports are defined as a percentage of total passenger boardings within the United States in the most current calendar year ending before the start of the current fiscal year.

**Cargo Service Airports** are airports that, in addition to any other air transportation services that may be available, are served by aircraft providing air transportation of only cargo with a total annual landed weight of more than 100 million pounds. An airport may be both a commercial service and a cargo service airport.

**Reliever Airports** are airports designated by the FAA to relieve congestion at Commercial Service Airports and to provide improved general aviation access to the overall community. These may be publicly or privately-owned.

The remaining airports, while not specifically defined in Title 49 USC, are commonly described as **General Aviation Airports**. This airport type is the largest single group of airports in the U.S. system. The category also includes privately owned, public use airports that enplane 2500 or more passengers annually and receive scheduled airline service.

## ***Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities***

Pottstown has a strong existing network of pedestrian facilities, which should be maintained and enhanced. In Pottstown, 6.1% of the workforce walks to work, and 73 persons in Pottstown reported that they bike to work, according to Census 2000. Pottstown Borough already has some existing bike lanes where the Borough may want to explore additional regional connections.

*Bike Pottstown*, a community bike program, has recently been established in the Borough. A partnership of thirteen public and non-profit agencies and organizations, *Bike Pottstown* soon will place bicycles in Memorial Park at the proposed miniature golf course for use by the public in order to facilitate mobility and strengthen connections within the area encompassing the downtown, Memorial Park, and Riverfront Park. Eventually the program will be organized as a non-profit organization.

Techniques such as traffic calming might be utilized in the Borough to slow traffic and reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. Examples of traffic calming techniques include decorative paving to enhance the visibility of crosswalks, speed bumps, establishing bulb-outs to protect pedestrians crossing a street, allowing on-street parking which narrows the driving area, or using environmental or aesthetic enhancements. All of these examples help alert a driver that the road serves pedestrians and cyclists as well as motor vehicles. These devices can also create a sense that the roadway is narrower than it is, which slows traffic to a safer speed. Roads improved for pedestrians and bikes are generally safer for automobiles too.

Other ways traffic calming in Pottstown can be achieved is by utilizing on-street parking, painted bike lanes or road shoulders. The streetscape could be made more interesting with shade trees, landscaping, and pedestrian elements (e.g., pedestrian benches, stylized street lamps, waste receptacles, bollards, etc.), and building

façade design improvements. The design, layout, and orientation of buildings and parking lots affect pedestrian mobility, perception, and aesthetics.

Encouraging bicycling and walking as an alternative to commuting in an automobile is another way of managing traffic volume in the Borough. The goal is to connect bicycling and pedestrian routes that parallel major commuting roads to major employment centers. Planning for bicycle and pedestrian access is important to undertake whenever roads are reconstructed in the Borough.

Generally, central business district sidewalks in the Borough should have at least an 8-foot area for pedestrians that is free of any obstructions, such as street trees, mailboxes, benches, light poles, signs, people window shopping, or doors swinging open. Ideally, the distance from the curb to the building wall will usually be 12 feet or more. The Borough may want to consider proposing additional shared lanes, wider curb lanes, and additional bike lanes.

## **Trails**

The Schuylkill River Trail is proposed in the area as a regional trail which will enter Lower Pottsgrove from Limerick Township and traverses Pottstown and West Pottsgrove before entering Douglass Township in Berks County. The West County Trail in Montgomery County extends north from Pottstown and West Pottsgrove into Upper Pottsgrove, Douglass, and New Hanover. From there it crosses into Upper Frederick Township, and then splits into trails connecting to Green Lane and Schwenksville, respectively. A current project on the TIP is to convert the existing unused railroad trestle into a pedestrian bridge across the Schuylkill River to connect River Park and Riverfront Park.

## **Projects on DVRPC’s current Transportation Improvement Program**

Table #5 displays the transportation projects that are on the existing TIP at DVRPC. Designated federal monies are allocated toward implementing these projects for the years noted in the table. Future projects will be added to the TIP when it is updated every two years. For a project to be noted on the TIP, it must be included on DVRPC’s Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The Borough must participate in DVRPC’s planning process to ensure that their transportation needs are heard and documented so that projects are developed, supported, and funded at the regional level.

**Table 5: Programmed Improvements/Projects for Pottstown Borough, noted on the DVRPC’s TIP  
(Transportation Improvement Program – FY 2007)**

COUNTY	PROJECT	TIP Program Costs (\$000)					
		'07	'08	'09	'10	FY 07-10	LATER
<b>Chester</b>	<b>Schuylkill River Trail (Q20)</b> Located along Route 29 to Hanover Street. Project includes environmental	0	0	200	0	200	4000

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	studies, preliminary and final design, and construction of a 12.7 mile trail. This segment is part of a 14.6 mile multi-use trail between Phoenixville Borough in Chester County and the Montgomery/Berks County border. It is a public biking and hiking trail and will connect to the trail terminus at the Oaks.						
<b>Montgomery</b>	<b>High Street Bridge</b> Located over Manatawny Creek. The project includes replacing the bridge over Manatawny Creek, east of PA 100.	200	300	0	0	500	2500
<b>Montgomery</b>	<b>US 422, Berks to Schuylkill River (Rd&amp;Bridge-M2A)</b> Located west of the City Line and east of Schuylkill River. Project includes reconstructing 1.7 miles of expressway from just west of the Berks and Montgomery County line to just east of the Schuylkill River Bridge. Project will also include reconstructing the bridge carrying SR 0422 over the Schuylkill River.	1550	170 0	0	0	3250	47200
<b>Montgomery</b>	<b>Pottstown Area Signal System Upgrade</b> Located in Montgomery and Chester Counties. The project is included in PennDOT's Strategic Safety Plan and includes modernizing equipment at 45 locations, interconnecting 45 controllers and 3 master controllers, installing 8 count locations, and rewiring 38 signals.	1340	0	0	0	1340	4000
<b>Montgomery &amp; Chester</b>	<b>Capital/Operating Assist., Pottstown Urban Transit</b> The project is with Pottstown Urban Transit	1596	173 0	183 8	183 8	7002	0

	(PUT). The project covers the operating subsidies for the Pottstown Urban Transit System. The appropriation is typically used for operating, equipment purchases, and capital projects.							
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*Sources: 2000 & 1990 Census, DVRPC's website, Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan, Schuylkill Valley Metro Coalition*

**Utilities**

**Sewer**

The Pottstown Sewer Authority provides sewer service to Pottstown Borough and the Pottsgroves. According to the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan, the sewer authority (together with the smaller sewer authorities that serve Douglass and Hanover Townships) is projected to have adequate sewer capacity to serve the Region's needs at least until 2025. These municipalities have a large sewer capacity surplus (nearly 11 million gallons per day), and are projected to have a large surplus in 2025 (nearly 9 million gallons per day). Much of this surplus is attributable to abandoned or underutilized industrial areas in Pottstown.

The Borough's public works department maintains a collection system of 70 miles of public sewer pipe. The capacity of Pottstown's wastewater treatment plant was upgraded to 15.6 million gallons a day in 1992. The plant treats waste generated by 15,000 area homes, businesses, and industrial sites in its service area. The plant treats an average of six million gallons of sewage a day, but flows can reach as high as 40 million gallons during heavy rain.

**Water**

Pottstown Borough's source of water is the Schuylkill River. The water treatment plant is located in West Pottsgrove Township and serves 11,500 customers throughout the Borough and three surrounding Townships. It provides an average of five million gallons of treated water to area homes and businesses, through a distribution system of 155 miles of pipe and equipment. Approximately 12 million gallons of water can be stored for daily use.

**Communication Facilities**

Verizon provides wired telephone service through most of the Metro Region and DSL internet service in Pottstown and the central part of the Metro Region. Wireless telephone service is available from numerous companies,

**Electric and Gas Services**

Pottstown Borough, as well as West Pottsgrove, North and East Coventry, and the southwestern parts of Lower and Upper Pottsgrove, receive electric and gas services from PECO. Douglass, New Hanover, and the northeastern parts of Upper and Lower Pottsgrove receive electric power from Metropolitan Edison and gas service from UGI Corporation. Nearby power generating facilities include the

Limerick Nuclear Power Station in Limerick Township and the Stowe Power Production Plant in West Pottsgrove. Limerick Nuclear Power Station’s two reactors will be approximately 40 years old in 2025 and at the end of their projected useful life. The Stowe Power Production Plant is a turbine power plant fueled by gases from the Pottstown Landfill.

## LAND USE

This section provides an overview of how the existing land use, zoning regulations, and policies correspond with the goals and strategies outlined in the strategic plan update. Questions that have been raised while developing this section are as follows: Are existing regulations consistent with the goals for revitalizing Pottstown, or do changes need to be made? Are there opportunities that can be achieved, yet may be hindered by existing policies? How can existing physical and urban design assets be enhanced or linked together? Are there other avenues to provide incentives to revitalize Pottstown?

The Pottstown Task Force reviewed and revised the strategic goals for this plan update. Below are the guiding goals for land use and revitalization, setting the framework for the analysis of this section.

- Strengthen Pottstown as a location for businesses
- Reinforce Pottstown as the urban hub of the Region
- Develop additional recreational opportunities in Pottstown
- Improve the appearance of the Borough
- Improve access into and within the Borough
- Strengthen the downtown as a place for retail, cultural, entertainment, and other supportive activities

## EXISTING LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN

The Pottstown Strategic Plan must incorporate the existing land use pattern and urban design into its strategy for redevelopment and revitalization for the future. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the existing land uses and patterns of development to help determine how they might affect future change.

The existing land use map of Pottstown displays the following land use categories shown in Table 1. Maps of existing land use and vacant land are shown on page 107 and page 109, respectively.

**Table 1: Existing Land Use Categories**

Land Use Category	Description
<b>Commercial</b>	Includes a variety of retail and commercial businesses such as stores, restaurants, gas stations, garages, and shopping centers.
<b>Government/Institutional</b>	Includes government buildings, schools, medical facilities, and other non-profit businesses.
<b>Industrial</b>	Includes industrial and manufacturing uses as well as junkyards.

Land Use Category	Description
<b>Office</b>	Buildings that are used for office purposes exclusively. Office is sometimes included in mixed-use buildings.
<b>Open Space</b>	Includes public and private open space in the study area such as parks and passive recreation areas.
<b>Residential</b>	A single family dwelling unit.
<b>Multi-family Residential</b>	Two or more dwelling units in the same building e.g. converted single family homes to apartments, townhouses, condominiums.
<b>Recreational</b>	Includes active recreation areas such as playgrounds and ball fields.
<b>Utilities</b>	Includes public utilities and related facilities such as water and electricity.
<b>Vacant</b>	Vacant land or buildings.
<b>Agricultural/Woodlands</b>	No land in this study area is classified as this category.

Table 2 indicates the number of acres of land in each land use category.

**Table 2: Land Use Breakdown by Acreage**

Land Use Category	Number of Acres/Land Use Category
Single Family Detached	620
Institutional	317
Industrial	307
Undeveloped	231
Retail	181
Twin/Duplex	180
Utilities	107
Multi-Family	98
Public Open Space	93
Private Open Space	70
Mixed Use	56
Single Family Attached	48
Office	44
Agricultural	1
Mobile Home Park	0
County Residence	0
Roads/Water	0
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>2,355</b>

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan

# Community Profile

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Commercial and industrial land uses are generally concentrated along the southern and western edges of the Borough. The High Street corridor is characterized by smaller, independently-owned stores and restaurants. Several major institutional uses are located along this corridor as well. This section of town has the most distinctive character of any in the Borough. It is a classic main street business district, characterized by two- and three-story buildings with ground level storefronts and office space on higher floors, attractive traditional architectural styles, ample sidewalks, street trees and other streetscape improvements, on-street parking, and a pleasing human scale and pedestrian character. In fact, this urban character sets Pottstown apart from the surrounding municipalities and provides the physical basis for its role as the urban center of the surrounding region.

The eastern end of High Street takes on a more strip-commercial character as it leaves the Borough, with fast-food restaurants and auto-oriented businesses. The Route 100 corridor is a highway commercial area characterized by strip commercial centers, larger shopping centers and larger chain stores and restaurants.



The Pottstown Industrial Center and other industrial properties are located south of the High Street corridor along the river. This area was the original industrial core of Pottstown and comprises the former Bethlehem Steel site. A functioning rail line and rail spur run through the area. Businesses here are more traditional manufacturing and heavy industrial operations. The Borough's KOZ industrial site continues west of Route 100 along High Street.

Industrial uses concentrated around the airport, the Borough's other main industrial center, generally consist of light manufacturing/assembly/distribution operations located in business parks,

Two prominent natural features in the Borough are Manatawney Creek and the Schuylkill River. With the development of Memorial Park along the former and Riverfront Park along the latter, these areas have become the Borough's principal recreational corridors and greenways.

The Borough's residential areas include some neighborhood-oriented institutional uses (i.e., schools and churches) and businesses but are generally separated from more intensive industrial and commercial uses. Exceptions to this are the residential areas south of High Street that abut industrial uses and residential areas west of Route 100 that abut Pottstown Center.

The Schuylkill River corridor was the Borough's initial industrial corridor and continues to be an important location for businesses. It has also become the Borough's principal natural and recreational corridor. The potential for conflicts among incompatible land uses exists but can be minimized through careful planning.

Most Borough land is built out, so the land use pattern is essentially set. Development and redevelopment opportunities do exist in the industrial areas along the river and around the airport, along the High Street corridor, and in certain core residential neighborhoods. It is unlikely, however, that new projects will fundamentally alter the existing land use pattern.

[Please refer to the Land Use map in the map appendix.]

***Community Profile***

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[Please refer to the Vacant Land map in the map appendix.]

***Community Profile***

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## Urban Design Features & Opportunity Sites

In addition to the broad land use categories discussed above, Pottstown has the following urban design features that contribute to its unique town character. When strategizing for future redevelopment, these characteristics and opportunities should be considered.

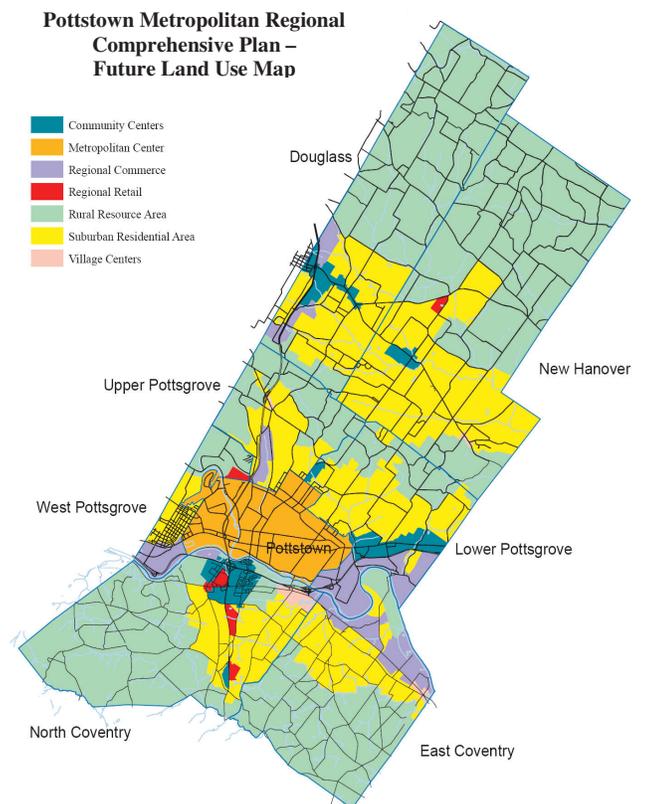
- A grid street pattern that is walkable with sidewalks, street trees, and lanterns
- A mixed-use development pattern along High Street that lends itself to walkability, including a mix of land uses in close proximity to one another as well as mixed-use buildings.
- An urban fabric with consistent set-backs, building heights, and community design.
- Architectural features consistent with the area, e.g. porches, roof pitch, building materials, etc.
- Additional recreational amenities including:
  - Memorial Park
  - Riverfront Park
  - The Pottstown High School & related recreational facilities
- The following are noted as opportunity development sites:
  - The riverfront industrial area
  - The Pottstown Airport and the adjacent business/industrial park
  - The High Street corridor (the main street/hub of Pottstown)

## Pottstown Borough as the Regional Hub

The concept of Pottstown as the urban hub of the region was proposed in the original strategic plan for Pottstown. The recent Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan (2005) provides further support for this idea. The Borough is considered to be the “center/core” of the eight municipalities in the Metro Region and the hub of the region’s economic activity. Pottstown Borough lends itself to being the “center” because it has a traditional urban character with a diverse mix of residential, industrial, office, and commercial uses. The layout and design of the Borough follows a traditional grid pattern, supported by a walkable street network, several major regional roadways, two highways, and The Schuylkill River. The Plan gives priority for new development to the Pottstown Metropolitan Center (as well as to the region’s smaller walkable towns and villages). New development is intended to be primarily infill and enhance the urban character of the existing Borough.

The Metro Regional Comprehensive Plan proposes the following characteristics for Pottstown as the Metropolitan Center:

- **Metropolitan Center Objective:** This designation is intended to encourage the



revitalization of the Borough of Pottstown as the historic, urban, mixed-use core of the region.

- **Metropolitan Center Use Options:** a mixture of uses: residential, commercial, office, industrial, institutional, shopping centers, recreational, utilities, airport related, and other similar uses. Redevelopment of existing underutilized properties is a priority. Urban-style housing is to be encouraged in the downtown. More flexible development regulations and development incentives should be established.
- **Metropolitan Center Density & Intensity:** Any mix of densities and uses shall be permitted that are compatible with and enhance the Borough of Pottstown’s historic, urban environment.

## Zoning

Now that the existing land use patterns and urban design characteristics have been assessed and opportunities for the future have been proposed, the Borough must consider what is possible based on a regulatory standpoint. Therefore, Pottstown Borough must carefully assess its zoning ordinance and land use regulations to determine if they are consistent with the goals and strategies of this strategic plan. Pottstown Borough’s zoning ordinance was last updated in 2004. The Borough’s Zoning Map, on page 115, is organized by title and color for each zoning district. The intent of each zoning district is described in Table 3.

**Table 3: Existing Zoning Districts**

<b>Zoning Districts &amp; Definitions of District Categories</b>	
<b>Conservation Districts</b>	
The traditional neighborhoods outside the Historic Districts, and similar adjacent neighborhoods, are hereby incorporated into a Conservation District with the following purposes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve the architectural integrity of traditional areas</li> <li>• Ensure new buildings are compatible with existing traditional areas</li> <li>• Find viable uses for old buildings that are no longer suitable for their original use</li> </ul>	
<b>Neighborhood Residential</b>	Intent: To maintain and enhance historic neighborhoods consisting single family housing with only a few non-residential uses.
<b>Traditional Town Neighborhood</b>	Intent: To preserve and enhance historic neighborhoods that are predominantly residential, but also have a small number of stores and offices mixed in with the housing.
<b>Downtown</b>	Intent: To preserve and enhance Pottstown's historic central business district with a wide range of retail, business, professional, governmental, and urban residential uses.
<b>Gateway Districts:</b>	
Intent: Pottstown's gateway districts form the major entryways to downtown Pottstown and its historic neighborhoods. They do much to establish the initial impression of Pottstown.	
<b>Neighborhood Business</b>	Intent: To enhance small areas for businesses that predominantly serve the surrounding neighborhood while eliminating any undesirable impacts that these businesses might cause to those neighborhoods.
<b>Downtown Gateway</b>	Intent: To promote the redevelopment of existing vacant industrial sites at the entryway to the downtown, creating a pleasant mixture of stores, homes, and offices that will complement the downtown to the north, the historic residential neighborhood to the east, and the Schuylkill River and Greenway to the south.

<b>Gateway East &amp; West</b>	Intent: To improve the aesthetics of the eastern and western commercial entryways to Pottstown, making them more attractive and compatible with the nearby historic residential areas.
<b>Park</b>	Intent: To preserve Pottstown's last remaining natural areas, to promote active and passive recreation, and to improve access to the Schuylkill River and the Manatawny Creek.
<b>Other Districts</b>	
<b>Flex Office</b>	Intent: To establish and improve areas for modern, efficient offices and industries that provides a wide variety of employment opportunities and enhances the community. To provide a variety of job-producing manufacturing industries in Pottstown's Keystone Opportunity Zone, located along Keystone Boulevard.
<b>Highway Business</b>	Intent: To preserve and enhance general commercial areas where customers reach individual businesses primarily by automobile.
<b>Heavy Manufacturing</b>	Intent: To establish and preserve areas for necessary industrial and related uses of such a nature that they require isolation from many other kinds of land uses, and to make provision for commercial uses that are located most appropriately near industrial uses or that are necessary to service the immediate needs of people in these areas.

These zoning districts generally are consistent with the existing and proposed future land uses for Pottstown. Perhaps the key concern with Pottstown's zoning, however, is a perceived lack of clarity and specificity in the zoning code's provisions and requirements. This concern has been voiced not only by private citizens and business owners but also by the Borough's own code enforcement personnel. This situation can result in delays in the development permitting and approval process as requirements that should be clearly defined are negotiated. The resulting increased costs in time and money may discourage potential developers from considering projects in Pottstown, particularly when more accommodating communities and "greenfield" sites may be found nearby.

The Borough may want to consider rewriting the zoning code to address these problems. It may also want to consider including the following options in the revised code.

- Develop a Riverfront Recreational Zoning Overlay with economic incentives
- Develop a Downtown Enhancement Overlay Zoning District with aesthetic and economic incentives.
- Provide greater flexibility to mix uses within districts and structures as long as design principles are followed (a form of performance zoning).
- Provide greater incentives to eliminate non-conforming buildings/uses.
- Expedite Planning and Zoning Review.
  - Process some plan amendments with zoning applications concurrently

- Expedite zoning application acceptance and processing to provide incentives for revitalization efforts
- Offer pre-submission conferences, review, and recommendations
- Provide additional Flexible & Incentive Zoning Provisions.
  - Offer reductions in the commercial-parking requirement
  - Increase the allowable building heights in certain districts as an incentive
  - Improve the landscaping, signage, and screening requirements
- Expedite Planning and Zoning Review.
  - Process some plan amendments with zoning applications concurrently
  - Expedite zoning application acceptance and processing to provide incentives for revitalization efforts
  - Offer pre-submission conferences, review, and recommendations

[Please refer to the Zoning map in the map appendix.]

***Community Profile***

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## HOUSING

### *Introduction*

Housing information was collected via the 1900 and 2000 Census, annual county housing statistics, and conversations with local real estate experts. This section includes a strategic review of the following:

- Rental and owner occupied housing in the Borough
- Age of housing stock and number of households
- Median house price and value
- Vacant Housing
- Realtor's perspective of Pottstown's Housing Market

Below are key points noted from this housing section that will be important when thinking about housing's strategic role in the Borough's future.

- The Borough has significantly more rental units than the Metro Region and Montgomery County, where only a quarter of housing units are rentals. The high number of renters is accompanied by a low median contract rent as compared to neighboring communities. Median contract rent in Pottstown was \$470 in 2000. No other community had median rents below \$500.
- Overall, Pottstown's housing stock is old compared to neighboring communities. Although the housing stock is well constructed, many homes are in need of update and minor repair.
- The number of households in the surrounding communities is increasing at a much greater pace than they are in Pottstown (growth of 3%).
- Pottstown's median house value is still behind many nearby communities. However, the 37% increase during the past couple years is above many of its municipal neighbors.
- Vacant housing in Pottstown Borough grew significantly from 1990 to 2000, by 87%.
- According to interviews with area realtors,
  - Pottstown has many appealing qualities as a place to live: tree-lined, walkable streets; an attractive main street with a mixture of uses; and plentiful community amenities (recreational facilities, Schuylkill River, religious institutions).
  - Pottstown has to overcome the following obstacles: a poor perception in the region of the community and the schools; an old housing stock lacking in modern amenities; a high percentage of rental housing; and problems with loitering and limited business hours along High Street.
  - Pottstown has the following opportunities to encourage housing development: promote more urban-style housing (townhouses, condos); continue to enhance existing amenities and the main street district; market Pottstown's advantages more aggressively to improve the image of the Borough.

## Overview of renter and owner occupied housing in the Borough

Assessing home ownership and rental rates, provides context regarding how transient a community is and provides information regarding the desire for residents to purchase a home in a particular community. In general, communities which have a high owner-occupancy rate tend to have low turn-over and committed residents who maintain their properties. Below is an assessment of Pottstown Borough's residential occupancy rates.

**Table 1: Renter v. Owner Occupied Household Units**

Location	Total Occupied Housing Units	Renter-Occupied Units	Owner-Occupied Units
Pottstown Borough	9,146	4,004 – 43.8%	5,142 – 56.2%
Metro Region	26,670	6,556 – 24.6%	20,114 – 75.4%
Montgomery County	286,098	75,476 – 26.5%	210,233 – 73.5%

Source: US Census 2000

- Pottstown Borough has approximately 44% rental units and 56% owner occupied units. The Borough has significantly more rental units than the Metro Region and Montgomery County, where only a quarter of housing units are rentals.
- The Metro Region and Montgomery County have a much larger percentage of owner occupied housing units, greater than 73%, where Pottstown Borough's housing stock is only 56% owner occupied.
- As of the 2000 Census, there were slightly less than 10,000 housing units in Pottstown (9,973), with an occupancy rate of 92%. There were slightly more owner-occupied housing units (5,142 units, or 56%) than renter-occupied units (4,004 units, or 44%).
- Pottstown's 2000 owner-occupancy rate was on the lower end of the spectrum when compared to nearby communities, on par with Phoenixville (56%), Royersford (52%), and Spring City (56%), but well below Collegeville, Upper Providence, and Trappe, all of which had owner-occupancy rates well above 70%.

Three census block groups had a renter-to-owner ratio of greater than 2:1. These areas are shown in the map on page 119.

The high number of renters is accompanied by a low median contract rent as compared to neighboring communities. Median contract rent in Pottstown was \$470 in 2000. No other community had median rents below \$500, with several, including Phoenixville and Royersford, more than \$100 more than Pottstown rents.

Occupancy rates were fairly steady across the borough, though the census block group bounded by High, Beech, Manatawny, and Washington Streets had a vacancy rate of 17%. This was also a census group with high rental concentrations.

[Please refer to the Housing Tenure map in the map appendix.]

***Community Profile***

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## Age of housing stock and number of households in Pottstown

Pottstown's housing stock is fairly old. Single-family homes are the predominant housing type in Pottstown; 65% of housing units are single-family.

**Table 2: Age of Pottstown's Housing Stock compared to Municipal Neighbors**

	Collegeville	Phoenixville	Pottstown	Royersford	Spring City	Trappe	Upper Providence Township
<b>Median year structure built</b>	1974	1954	1943	1950	before 1940	1983	1965
<b>% Homes Built 1990-2000</b>	25%	7%	4%	5%	1%	42%	11%
<b># Homes Built 1990-2000</b>	354	494	357	110	21	570	492

Source: US Census Bureau

- The 2000 Census reported a median build year for existing homes of 1943. Among its neighboring communities, only Spring City has an older housing stock. And while communities such as Phoenixville and Royersford have a median year of built structures in the early 1950s, they have a higher percentage of homes built since 1990. Phoenixville actually had 150 more homes built during the 1990s than did Pottstown despite being only two-thirds the size.
- Pottstown has had very limited housing construction since 2000, with only 15 units built between 2000 and 2004. The total number of housing units built since 2000 has increased by 106, to 10,079 units (a 1.1% increase from 2000). All units were single-family, either detached (25 units) or attached (81 units).

**Table 3: Number of Households 1990-2000**

Location	Number of Households 1990	Number of Households 2000	Percent Change
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	9,086	9,146	0.7%
<b>Metro Region</b>	23,544	26,670	13.3%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	254,995	286,098	12.2%

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

- While the number of households in Metro Region and Montgomery County increased greater than 12% from 1990 to 2000, Pottstown Borough's only increased by 0.7%.

## Average Housing Prices in Pottstown

The Pottstown housing market has fared well in the last few years, even during the general housing downturn seen throughout the country. Tables 4-6 examine median housing prices during the past few years.

**Table 4: Median Housing Price 1990-2000**

Location	1990	2000	% Change
Pottstown Borough	\$81,000	\$87,600	8.1%
Metro Region	\$117,475	\$133,587	13.7%
Montgomery County	\$143,400	\$160,700	12.1%

Source: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan & US Census 2000

- The median housing price was significantly lower in Pottstown Borough in 1990 and 2000 when compared to the surrounding Metro Region and Montgomery County.
- The median housing price increased by 8% from 1990 to 2000 in Pottstown Borough, while increasing by greater than 12% in both the Metro Region and Montgomery County.

The Pottstown housing market has fared well in the last few years, even during the general housing downturn seen throughout the country. As shown in the table below, the median housing price has increased each year, now up to \$133,600, 46% more than 2004. Additionally, while unit sales dropped between 2005 and 2006, unit sales are close to 2004 levels.

**Table 5: Median Housing Price, Pottstown Borough, 2004-2006**

Median Price	Units	Median Price	Units	Median Price	Units
Year 2004		Year 2005		Year 2006	
\$91,650	615	\$112,000	681	\$133,600	593

Source: Montgomery County Median Prices for Housing Reports (2004-2006)

Pottstown's median housing price is still behind many other nearby communities, despite the encouraging increase in value. However, the 46% increase is above some of the nearby communities, as shown in the table below.

**Table 6: Median House Price, Nearby Communities, 2004-2006**

	2006	2004	% Change
Pottstown	\$133,600	\$91,650	46%
West Pottsgrove	\$142,500	\$119,500	19%
Lower Pottsgrove	\$230,000	\$185,000	24%
Limerick	\$285,000	\$226,750	26%
Upper Providence	\$393,243	\$288,773	36%

Source: Montgomery County Median Prices for Housing Reports (2004-2006)

These positive housing characteristics compared to communities with newer and more expensive housing stock are consistent with the housing downturn that has primarily affected sales of newer, larger homes.

Despite low housing costs in Pottstown, more citizens are housing cost-burdened than in nearby communities. Cost-burdened households are defined as those households where housing costs account for 30% or more of household income. Consistent with general housing patterns, more renters were cost-burdened (39.5%) than home owners (25.4%).

## Vacant Housing

**Table 7: Vacant Housing**

Location	1990	2000	% Change
<b>Pottstown Borough</b>	450	842	87.1%
<b>Metro Region</b>	209	341	63.2%
<b>Montgomery County</b>	10,861	11,336	4.4%

Source: US Census Bureau

- Vacant housing in Pottstown Borough grew significantly from 1990 to 2000, by 87%, and the Metro Region also grew by 63% s from 1990 to 2000, while the County’s only grew by 4%.

## Realtors’ Perspectives on Pottstown’s Housing Market

Several realtors who service the Pottstown housing market were interviewed regarding their perspective of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities facing Pottstown’s housing market. Below are key points noted from the interviews.

Strengths of the Pottstown housing market and surrounding area include:

- Affordable housing and opportunities to renovate.
- Pottstown has a distinctive character that sets it apart from surrounding municipalities – it’s a walkable, mixed-use community with a main street and sidewalks.
- The Borough is a traditional American community with tree-lined streets.
- Churches on every corner – family values.
- Pottstown is a great place to live, work, and play.
- Pottstown has plenty of recreational amenities and the unique features like riverfront.
- Housing under \$250,000 is selling much more since it is affordable, as compared to the surrounding housing market that is much pricier.
- Renovated homes increase their value quickly: one realtor bought a home in the area six years ago for \$126,000, and it is now worth \$250,000 based on the improvements that have been made and the market.

Challenges of the Pottstown housing market and surrounding area include:

- The poor perception of the area and the school districts.
- The lack of promotion of what Pottstown has to offer on a regional scale, including housing, activities, and special events.
- The lack of rail/train service and transit connections to the City of Philadelphia and the distance from City center.

- An increasing number of rental units and comparatively low rates of homeownership.
- Enhancing the appearance of the Borough.
- The business district closes at 5 pm, limiting opportunities to make it thrive.
- Loitering along High Street inhibits people from shopping and walking the downtown and hurts the image of the Borough.
- An excessive number of group homes with special needs clients in the community, following the closure of Pennhurst State School and the mainstreaming of their patients in the 1980s.
- A limited amount of new single-family housing in the Borough.
- The older housing stock, which has historic character but often lacks modern amenities.
- High property taxes.
- Improving the blocks between Hanover and Warren Streets (East/West) and Queen and Beach Streets (North/South).

Opportunities facing Pottstown Borough include:

- Opportunities to develop more market-rate urban-style housing, including townhouses and condos, and reducing the number of vacant buildings.
- Improving the existing amenities and the mainstreet district. Provide more restaurants and shops that will attract people and create a bustling town.
- Keeping businesses open later to attract people to the downtown at least one night a week, perhaps an event like Friday's at 5.
- Marketing and improving the perception of Pottstown. Target a larger regional market for housing.
- Focusing on internet marketing of Pottstown and the housing market. The internet has changed the way people look for homes.
- Increasing home-ownership.
- Providing incentive programs to attract major employers to the area and encourage more home ownership. Types of businesses that may flourish include: pharmaceuticals, health-related businesses, banking, financing.
- Programs that should be considered include tax abatement programs, home ownership grants (Pottstown has one, but should expand it to the whole community), and home improvement grants.
- Utilizing the KOZ area in Pottstown. Market and promote it on a national/international scale.
- Enhancing the overall aesthetics and appearance.
- Creatively utilizing vacant buildings – be creative.
- Expanding transit opportunities for Pottstown residents, specifically to get to downtown Philadelphia. Consider bringing back the old train that used to serve Pottstown.

*Sources: 1990 & 2000 Census, Metro Regional Comprehensive Plan, Realtor Interviews, Montgomery County Annual Housing Statistics*

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# CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Pottstown is fortunate to have a number of cultural, recreational and institutional resources and amenities that not only enhance the quality of life of borough residents but also enrich the surrounding region. What's more, they draw people from the region into the Borough, where they help support Pottstown's stores, restaurants and other businesses. These amenities are discussed below.

### Pottstown Public Library

The Pottstown Public Library, located at 500 High Street in Downtown Pottstown, is the only public library in the Region. It serves not only borough residents but also over 50,000 people throughout the tri-county area. All members of the general public can obtain a library card from the library. The Library houses over 70,000 volumes, with collections ranging from fiction and nonfiction, materials for young adults, large print books, local history, and special collections.

### Theaters

Pottstown is the home for several significant theaters for the Metro Region, including the Hill School's Center For The Arts, the riverfront amphitheater in Pottstown, and several school auditoriums. The Hill School's auditorium is the regular performance venue for the Pottstown Symphony. Pottstown High School's auditorium is also used for concerts.

Despite the availability of these amenities, many individuals and families in the Tri-County Region have limited or no access to performing arts opportunities, due to distance from programs and facilities or to financial constraints. In a 2002 survey conducted by the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission to assess existing services and perceived needs in the region, fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents said that their municipality is not adequately served by public recreation, defined to include a Cultural Arts Center. Interest in the Metro Region in such a facility appeared to be high, and the Commission recommendations included establishing a regional performing arts center in downtown Pottstown.

A feasibility study and informal focus group meetings conducted in 2004 and 2005 by Village Productions, a non-profit performing arts organization founded in Pottstown in 2001, found further evidence of public support for a performing arts center. Over ninety percent of the study participants responded favorably toward a Performing Arts Center (a level of support that was consistent both within the Borough and among the surrounding communities). Focus group participants, including both residents and performing artists in the area, cited the lack of space in the Tri-County Region to hold intimate performances, and voiced strong support for the TriPAC Project.

Encouraged by these findings, Village Productions has been working with area leadership to develop a Performing Arts Center in downtown Pottstown. The Tri-County Performing Arts Center (TriPAC) will provide space for educational activities, internally produced events, presentation of visiting artists' work, and

rentals. Planned offerings include concerts and theater events, children's and adults' programming in theater, music, and dance, individual and group lessons, workshops, master classes, apprentice and intern programs, and visiting artists.

The TriPAC site is an existing building at 245 High Street. The building will be renovated to create flexible performance and educational space for the three main areas of the performing arts: theater, dance, and music. A 3-phase construction period is anticipated (each phase lasting approximately 1 year), with access to the lobby and main stage after the first year. The main floor of the TriPAC will include a main stage "black box" theater space (approximately 150–180 seats), a lobby area, retail and concession space, and a box office.

The second floor will include 3 contiguous rehearsal rooms with flexible room dividers that convert to a second stage area, or reception and performance areas, as needed. Also included on this floor will be several individual instructional studios, administrative offices, and a restroom, conference room, and warming kitchen.

The lower level of the TriPAC will include individual instructional studios, the main restrooms for the performing arts center, costume shop, prop room, scene shop, green room, and variously sized dressing rooms to accommodate multiple simultaneous performances within the facility.



## Museums

Historic Pottsgrove Manor, a Montgomery County Historic Site, is the most significant museum in the Pottstown Metro Region and an important historic site. Located on a 4.5-acre tract, Pottsgrove Manor is a Georgian-style house built in 1752 for John Potts, the founder of Pottstown. John Potts was an ironmaster, merchant, judge, and member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Visitors can tour the house and see educational demonstrations in the "Hands-on Room". Seasonal events are also held throughout the year. The house has been restored to show examples of architecture, interiors, and furnishing associated with wealthy English gentry of the mid-eighteenth century.

Unfortunately, Pottsgrove Manor is physically and visually isolated, particularly from the downtown, by the Colebrookdale railroad spur embankment and the major roads that surround it. The site is difficult to access by walking or biking.

The Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan (2003) proposes expanding the Pottsgrove Manor site to the east to permit the creation of demonstration gardens, display gardens, and other appropriate landscape and site interpretations consistent with the facility's mission. This expansion would be made possible by removal of the Colebrookdale spur bridge over High Street, which would also eliminate the visual barrier and make possible improved access to the site.

## Carousel at Pottstown

The Carousel at Pottstown was incorporated in 2000 and received 501 (c) 3 status from the IRS as a non-profit charitable organization. The organization is working to restore to use an historic all-wood grand carousel, one of fewer than 150 such carousels remaining in North America.

[Please refer to the Regional Amenities map in the map appendix.]

***Community Profile***

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The vision of the Carousel at Pottstown is to help catalyze Pottstown's downtown revitalization and to return revenue to the community through profits from the operating carousel. Several other communities across the country have incorporated carousels into their downtown revitalization efforts, including Mansfield, Ohio; Holyoke, Massachusetts; and Missoula, Montana. Some of these carousels reportedly attract several hundred thousand visitors a year. The hope is that a like increase in visitors to the Borough will support existing businesses and attract additional businesses to the community and reinforce ongoing revitalization efforts in the downtown.

The carousel is a 1905 mechanism built by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company (PTC) with original rounding boards being re-created by local students, artists, and artisans that will hold 50 new and antique carved, solid wood figures. It is the second oldest PTC carousel in existence.

The Borough of Pottstown acquired the old Metal Weld Building at 16 West King Street and in 2005 agreed to lease the building to the Carousel at Pottstown for \$1 per year for 25 years. The carousel is currently stored at this site; artistic work is conducted at the Carousel of Pottstown headquarters at 309 High Street.

### Cultural Attractions

The Pottstown Symphony, which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary, is one the Pottstown Metro Region's principal cultural attractions. Other noteworthy attractions include the Pottstown Farmer's Market, Zern's Farmer's Market in Gilbertsville, and various events in downtown Pottstown, including car shows, historic tours, music, art shows at Smith Family Plaza, culinary festivals, and the soap box derby. In addition to hosting the Pottstown Symphony, the Hill School offers shows featuring touring cultural events and symphonies. In East Coventry children's plays are performed at a pavilion in Towpath Park.

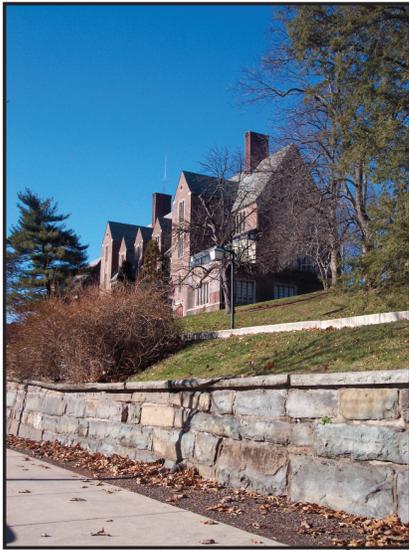
### Montgomery County Community College (MCCC)

There is one college in the region: Montgomery County Community College, whose West Campus in Pottstown opened in 1996. The West Campus is a valuable resource for the Borough and the region, as well as an important physical presence on College Drive, where it is strategically situated between the downtown and Riverfront Park. It has an enrollment of approximately 2,000 full-credit students and over 1,800 non-credit students. One of the Region's objectives is to make the Community College accessible to residents of North and East Coventry Townships. One of the community college's goals is to provide non-credit courses and training for educational enrichment, career advancement and job retraining.

In 2006, MCCC opened a new facility in the former Vaughan Knitting Mill, an important historic structure located at 16 High Street. The expansion added 26,000 square feet of space to the West Campus' existing 90,000 square feet, enabling the College to expand its service to students, businesses and the community.

The Verizon Foundation Center for Excellence in Workforce Education and Training provides expanded offerings in workforce education, while two new art studios and a gallery make the College a premiere arts center and cultural resource for the area. Students at all levels also have increased opportunities for transfer via the newly-established University Center.





## The Hill School

The Hill School, founded in 1851, is one of the oldest independent co-educational secondary schools in the country. The Hill School makes many of its facilities available to residents of Pottstown, including its numerous playing fields, field house, ice hockey rink and Center For The Arts. There are approximately 100 day students, 23 of whom live in the Pottstown School District, in a student body of about 490. The school provides approximately \$4 million per year in scholarship aid spread across about 190 students.

## Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness (PEAK)

The Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness (PEAK) initiative was created in an effort to coordinate quality early childhood education and related services and make them more available to children and their families. The PEAK initiative is funded through the Pennsylvania-Pre-K Counts grant and focuses on building partnerships with the early learning programs in the Pottstown community. The goals of PEAK are:

- Every three and four year old child has access to high quality child care, early childhood education, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.
- Every parent of young children has access to the high quality skill building and resources needed to prepare them to be their child's first "teacher" and to prepare their children for success in school.
- Every child has access to health and wellness services to ensure that they are prepared to maximize their potential in school.

To achieve these goals Pottstown School District is working through partnerships with the Montgomery County Head Start, Montgomery Early Learning Centers, YMCA of Pottstown and Upper Perkiomen Valley and YWCA Tri-County Area. The PEAK collaboration also includes the Montgomery County Childcare Consortium, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit, Pottstown Family Center, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, Pottstown Public Library, United Way of Western Montgomery County, and United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

## Pottstown Memorial Medical Center

The Pottstown Memorial Medical Center (PMMC), a for-profit hospital in Pottstown Borough, is the only general hospital in the region. The PMMC has 221 licensed beds and 225 physicians (134 active and 91 courtesy). It offers a full range of medical services:

- 24-Hour Emergency Room
- Cardiac Catheterization
- Clinical Laboratory
- Critical Care
- EEG
- Endoscopy
- Hemodialysis
- Home Health
- Interventional Radiology
- Nuclear Medicine
- Nutritional Services
- Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Occupational Health & Rehabilitation
- Orthopedics
- Outpatient Surgery
- Pathology
- Pediatrics

## Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation

The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation is a non-profit community organization created as the result of the sale of the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center to Community Health Systems. With net assets of \$74 million, the Foundation serves the residents of Pottstown borough and those within a 10-mile radius of the borough.

The Foundation's purpose is to provide opportunities for residents of its service area to embrace a healthier lifestyle. It seeks to assure increased access to health and wellness education and services. It provides these services directly through its own programs as well as through grants to non-profit health and wellness providers to develop and enhance programs that support the Foundation's purpose.

As part of its strategic plan, the Foundation has established four long-term goals:

1. Reduce behavioral risks by empowering people to make healthier lifestyle choices and sponsoring school-age health and wellness education programs.
2. Improve access to medical services by providing information and advice as well as enhancing transportation and/or the convenience of these services.
3. Enhance formal and informal supports, such as not-for-profit groups, caregivers, family units, religious groups and other community organizations.
4. Improve the physical and social environment by strengthening the community's recreational infrastructure and encouraging an atmosphere of individual safety and non-violence in the community.

## Events

Pottstown hosts a number of noteworthy events that draw people from around the region. Many of these share a theme of vigorous outdoor activity.

### ***Annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration***

This year will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration in the Borough. It is estimated that over 30,000 people attend the event each year, and that over 100,000 people view the fireworks from various parking lots, porches and roofs throughout the Borough and the region, making it the largest special event held within Pottstown. In addition to the fireworks, other notable events and activities include a Hot Air Balloon extravaganza, a variety of musical entertainment, the Borough's largest community parade, and the Preservation Pottstown 5K Run. Memorial Park, the site of the event, is filled with vendors, crafters, rides, games of chance, and community organizations raising funds for their causes.

## ***Schuylkill River Festival***

Each year the Montgomery County Community College and various partners put on the Schuylkill River Festival at Riverfront Park in Pottstown. A wide range of activities and attractions are offered, many of which celebrate the Schuylkill River's natural heritage and history. These include music (both local and professional performers), art shows, kayaking, balloon rides, environmental workshops, geo-caching, a bike raffle, various children's activities, food and beverages, arts and crafts vendors, educational row, and a college open house. People are encouraged to bring their bikes and ride the Schuylkill River Trail. Shuttle buses loop around Pottstown area parking lots to provide convenient access for visitors.

## ***Pottstown Volleyball Rumble***

The Pottstown Rumble Grass Volleyball Tournament is a 2-day event held each summer in June. The first tournament was held in 1991 as a one-day event hosting just under 200 players on 40 nets. The event has since grown into a two-day tournament with 90-plus nets and over 1,200 players. The Pottstown Rumble is one of the biggest grass doubles tournaments in the nation and has the reputation of having the toughest competition. Other tournament activities and attractions include a fireworks display on the opening morning, food and clothing vendors, an on-site massage therapist, and music throughout the weekend.

## ***Pottstown Soapbox Derby***

The annual Pottstown Soapbox Derby is held each June on Wilson Street in the Borough. The event hosts racers in three divisions – stock, super stock, and masters. Winners advance to the world championships in Akron, Ohio. The Pottstown Soapbox Derby Challenge Race gives special needs children the opportunity to experience soap box derby racing.

## ***Trilogy Park National Bicycle Race***

Trilogy Park is a BMX (bicycle motocross), inline, and skateboard park located at Memorial Park in Pottstown. It is one of five certified BMX parks in Pennsylvania. Trilogy Park is host to the Keystone National BMX, one of twenty-eight national races of the National Bicycle League.



## **Regional Parks**

Pottstown has two important regional park facilities: Memorial Park, and Riverfront Park. These parks are probably the most significant recreational facilities in the Pottstown Metro Region.

Memorial Park is a 78-acre facility located on West King Street along the west bank of Manatawney Creek. The park contains a wide range of primarily active recreational facilities, including the following:

- 
- Baseball Field (illuminated)
  - Softball Field
  - Football Field
  - Basketball Court
  - Soccer Fields
  - Tennis Court
  - Volleyball
  - Hockey Court
  - Picnic Pavilion
  - Bandstand
  - Playground
  - Open Space
  - Restroom
  - Parking

Riverfront Park is a 39-acre facility located along the Schuylkill River next to the Montgomery County Community College. It serves as a principal access point to one of the Metro Region's premier natural features - the Schuylkill River - and to a major regional recreational facility - the Schuylkill River Trail. It provides opportunities for environmental education and outdoor activities like hiking, bicycling and canoeing. Current facilities include the following:

- Walking Trail
- Amphitheater
- Open Space
- Parking

The Riverfront and Memorial Parks Master Plan (2003) lays out an ambitious program for improvements to each park that will contribute to the livability of the Pottstown Metro Region and the ultimate redevelopment of Pottstown. These improvements will take a number of years to carry out, but once complete the Borough will have truly outstanding recreational resources.

### ***Recommended Improvements – Memorial Park***

The Master Plan recommends the following improvements to Memorial Park.

- Entryway improvements
- A loop trail system
- A great lawn, providing space for free play and seating for the band stage area
- Establishment of the Colebrookdale Trail (a 12-mile trail that would extend along Manatawney Creek and eventually to Boyertown)
- Reestablishment of vegetation along stream banks
- Wetlands restoration area
- Expanded children's playground with water play area (spray park)
- A creek access area

### ***Recommended Improvements – Riverfront Park***

Recommended improvements for Riverfront Park include the following:

- Expansion of the Schuylkill River Center (an addition of up to three stories and 12,000 square feet)
- A new pavilion to serve as a seasonal dining facility, environmental education classroom, river outfitter shop, bike/canoe/roller blade rental facility, and/or location for community events

- Picnic Grove/Pavilion with an informal arrangement of picnic tables and benches in the area
- A Native Plants Arboretum with interpretive and educational signage
- Improvements to the existing amphitheater
- A River Walk trail along the river's edge
- A wood chip trail system connecting the River Center and the River Walk
- A preservation area for vegetative management and habitat restoration
- A boat landing at the River Center area, to include a small dock facility and a universally accessible fishing pier.

The Master Plan also recommends exploring, as part of an improved western gateway to the Borough, the extension of College Drive to connect High Street and King Street. This new roadway connection would provide better access to both parks and an improved greenway link between them.

### Regional Trails

A number of regional trails pass through the Pottstown Metro Region. The most prominent such trail is the Schuylkill River Trail, which enters Lower Pottsgrove from Limerick Township, and traverses Pottstown and West Pottsgrove before entering Douglass Township in Berks County. This multi-use trail will eventually extend from Philadelphia to Schuylkill County along the entire length of the river. Several sections of the trail are already complete, including a 22-mile stretch linking Philadelphia and Valley Forge, and a 20-mile stretch linking Pottstown and Reading. A 14.6-segment from Phoenixville to Pottstown is in the development stages. In Pottstown, the trail passes through Riverfront Park, where a trailhead can be found.

Another regional trail, the West County Trail, extends north from Pottstown and West Pottsgrove into Upper Pottsgrove, Douglass, and New Hanover. From there it crosses into Upper Frederick Township, and then splits into trails connecting to Green Lane and Schwenksville, respectively.

### Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area

Pottstown is part of the Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area. (A National Heritage Area is a place designated by the United States Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape.) This area celebrates the rich culture and history of the Schuylkill River watershed as one of America's most significant cultural and industrial regions. The boundaries of the Heritage Area cover the Schuylkill River watershed in Schuylkill, Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties.



### Schuylkill River Greenway Association

The Schuylkill River Heritage Area is managed by the non-profit Schuylkill River Greenway Association. Founded in 1974 as an organization focused on the preservation of the riverfront in Berks and Schuylkill Counties, the organization has grown in its mission and geographic scope over the years. The Greenway Association is governed by a Board of Directors representing all five counties within the Heritage Area. The Heritage Area has a small staff that works to administer the programs and projects identified in its management plan.

The management plan establishes goals in five areas:

*Resource Conservation and Enhancement:* Conserve and enhance the Schuylkill River Valley's significant historical, cultural, and natural resources.

*Education and Interpretation:* Foster awareness and appreciation of the Schuylkill River Valley's heritage resources and the stories they have to tell.

*Recreation:* Increase outdoor recreational opportunities related to the Schuylkill River Valley's natural and cultural heritage.

*Community Revitalization:* Strengthen the Schuylkill River Valley's historic communities through sustainable community development related to heritage resources.

*Heritage Tourism:* Increase heritage tourism and associated economic benefits for the Schuylkill River Valley region and its communities.

The Heritage Area offices are located in the Schuylkill River Center in the Borough of Pottstown. The Schuylkill River Center is the centerpiece of the 39-acre, municipally-owned Riverfront Park in Pottstown. The building was built in 1911 as a switching station for the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO). Abandoned for much of the 1990s, it was purchased by the Borough in 1997 and converted to offices in 2000 with the assistance of the State, County, and local governments and the Montgomery County Lands Trust. The Heritage Area relocated to the Center from Wyomissing in 2002.

### Schuylkill Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center (proposed)

The Borough plans eventually to give the Schuylkill River Center building to Montgomery County Community College, which will rehabilitate the structure and locate the Schuylkill Riverfront Academic and Heritage Center there. Under current plans, the center will provide space for four college classrooms, a science lab and an Interpretive Center with educational, historic and tourist information about the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. The Riverfront Center will also allow for joint programming between the College and the Schuylkill River Heritage Area, with non-credit courses that promote awareness of the river as a historical, cultural and natural resource. Such courses will run the gamut from historical perspectives of the region, to lessons in kayaking and bicycle maintenance.

The College's credit curriculum also will be expanded in the areas of environmental science, museum studies and education. Cultural arts programming and an annual academic symposium will also be held at the new center, and an outdoor amphitheatre will support cultural events and live performances.

The goal is to become a regional center for education about the river and to establish the site as a hub for culture, recreation, conservation and education.



## PUBLIC SAFETY

### Police Department and Crime

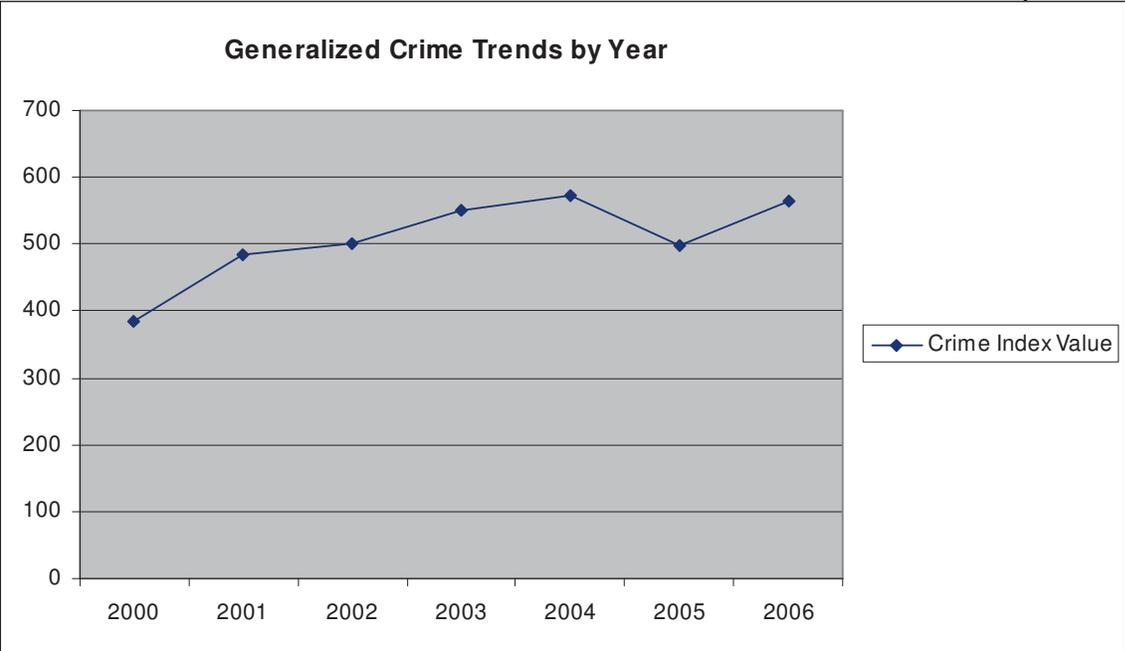
Crime statistics were collected primarily from Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Statistics database, though other supplementary sources were occasionally used.

Pottstown, like other urbanized areas, faces problems of crime, both real and perceived. The problems of perception are magnified by increased criminal offense rates this decade, and offense rates that are higher than much of the rest of the region.

Major crime offenses this decade have seen a generally steady increase across the board. Crime by offense, both total offenses and offenses per 100,000 people, is shown below.

Crime in Pottstown by Year								
Offense	Count	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Murders	Total # Offenses	1	2	1	1	1	2	2
	per 100,000 people	4.6	9.1	4.6	4.6	4.6	9.2	9.3
Rapes	Total # Offenses	8	20	13	26	28	23	19
	per 100,000 people	36.8	91.4	59.2	118.8	128.1	106	88.1
Robberies	Total # Offenses	44	48	60	50	56	43	70
	per 100,000 people	202.4	219.5	273.3	228.5	256.1	198.1	324.5
Assaults	Total # Offenses	93	124	125	145	130	96	115
	per 100,000 people	427.7	567	569.3	662.8	594.6	442.3	533
Burglaries	Total # Offenses	134	146	185	175	152	123	220
	per 100,000 people	616.3	667.6	842.6	799.9	695.2	566.7	1020
Thefts	Total # Offenses	706	758	865	853	1,002	916	910
	per 100,000 people	3247	3466	3940	3899	4583	4220	4219
Auto thefts	Total # Offenses	72	79	87	94	89	102	87
	per 100,000 people	331.1	361.2	396.3	429.7	407	469.9	403.3
Arson	Total # Offenses	4	9	11	14	9	14	26
	per 100,000 people	18.4	41.2	50.1	64	41.2	64.5	120.5

City-data.com produces a Crime Index that aggregates and generalizes all offenses. The listed US average using this index is between 325 and 330. Pottstown has been above the US average each year this index has been compiled. As seen below, this crime index increased steadily from 2000 to 2004, with a drop-off in 2005. The index rose again in 2006.



These numbers are well above the available data for nearby communities such as Phoenixville, Collegeville, Royersford, and Spring City (data is incomplete, so will not be provided here). Unfortunately, this index is not available for counties.

Since 2006, Pennsylvania has required all municipal and county governments to participate in the Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System, which allows for easy data collection and analysis. In particular, it is helpful for comparing any community to its county or other counties. As shown in the table below, Pottstown had much higher offense rates per 100,000 people than Montgomery, Chester, and Berks Counties in 2005 and 2006. In fact, Pottstown accounted for 8.2% of all Montgomery County crimes in 2005 and 8.4% of all county crimes in 2006, despite accounting for less than 3% of the estimated county population in these years.

Offense Rates per 100,000 persons, 2005-2006								
	2005				2006			
	POTTSTOWN BORO	MONTGOMERY	CHESTER	BERKS	POTTSTOWN BORO	MONTGOMERY	CHESTER	BERKS
Criminal Homicide	9.2	2.3	3.0	6.1	9.3	2.2	2.1	2.9
Sex Offenses	271.8	54.9	53.6	101.6	282.8	56.5	47.4	70.7
Robbery	198.1	84.1	37.1	114.0	324.5	80.4	46.4	135.5
Assaults	2,017.9	455.5	398.8	791.2	2,095.5	505.0	405.9	810.4
Property Offenses	8,757.9	3,338.3	2,658.4	4,236.3	10,129.8	3,478.2	2,841.8	4,178.1
Arson	64.5	15.8	13.5	21.5	120.5	16.1	17.5	21.5
Drug Violations	1,759.9	340.6	296.4	329.4	1,650.4	372.6	260.1	343.1
Alcohol Crimes	1,658.5	744.4	689.6	441.7	1,404.7	758.8	661.8	479.8
TOTAL	14,737.9	5,035.9	4,150.2	6,041.8	16,017.6	5,269.8	4,283.1	6,042.0

### *Pottstown Police Department*

The Pottstown Police Department follows what is known as Community-Oriented Policing. This approach combines the two principal policing strategies: Response-to-Incidents Policing and Problem-Oriented Policing. The former emphasizes quick reaction to community needs and occurrences of crime and disorder. The latter emphasizes a proactive problem-solving approach that has the long-term benefit of crime prevention.

This combined approach reflects the department's belief that a comprehensive policing approach requires both strategies, implemented in a balanced and complementary manner. The response to some incidents is time critical while the response to others can be deferred. Some responses must be made in person while others can more effectively be handled over the phone. Some crimes can be classified as isolated incidents while others are part of a pattern originating from deeper problems in our community. Some problems can be addressed solely by the police while others require the coordinated efforts of the police and other entities along with the community.

As part of this policing approach, some police officers are assigned to the core area of the Borough as part of the Community Response Unit. As such, they respond to incidents but also help organize various community activities such as neighborhood cleanups and other community events. They try to be visible in the community.

### *Public Safety Issues*

A representative of the Pottstown Police Department was interviewed to gain insight into issues of public safety in the Borough. The following discussion summarizes that interview.

Pottstown is large enough that it deals with “city” issues. Over the past five years, so-called “Part One” crimes – a category of more serious crimes used by the FBI in preparing the Uniform Crime Report – have shown a steady increase (although not a dramatic increase). These crimes include homicide, burglary, robbery, rape, vehicle theft, aggravated assault, and larceny. The most common types of offenses in the Borough are crimes of opportunity – assaults, thefts, burglaries, etc. The root problem, however, is illegal drugs; the main motivation for these crimes is to raise money to purchase drugs.

The area with the highest crime rate is the core area of the Borough, generally bounded by Adams Street, York Street, Lincoln Avenue, and Industrial Highway. This happens to be the area with the highest percentage of rental units. The dramatic increase in the proportion of rental housing in Pottstown in recent years has been “the downfall of the community.” It has increased transiency and undermined the stability of neighborhoods, helping to create conditions in which crime can increase. Indeed, the increase in Borough crime can be directly tied to the increase in subdivided residences, a trend that was well underway by the late 1970s.

A related problem is that of absentee landlords, often associated with Section 8 Housing, and poorly maintained housing units. Code enforcement in these cases is difficult. The local legal system has tended to be sympathetic to landlords charged with violations, and the process of enforcement often becomes a spectacle.

The keys to improving public safety include the following:

- Providing more stable communities
- Reducing transiency

### Fire Safety

Fire protection in the Borough is provided by four volunteer fire companies, with each station having career firefighters for faster response to emergencies. Each station is responsible for its own operation and maintenance. The Borough gives each station a yearly contribution for operational expenses. Pottstown's Fire Companies have a specialized Fire Police unit to assist on the scene of fires, accidents, and other incidents. The four companies are under the operational command of the Borough Fire Chief / Fire Marshal.

### ***Fire Safety Issues***

The Pottstown Fire Chief was interviewed to gain insight into issues of fire safety in the Borough. The following discussion summarizes that interview.

The Borough should continue to maintain the fire department apparatus fleet. It just replaced one ladder truck and should replace the second ladder truck, which is about 30 years old. This would require an outlay of about a half-million dollars. Keeping the fleet up-to-date helps the Borough maintain its ISO Public Protection Classification (currently Class 4).

The Borough currently does not have an ongoing fire safety program involving regular fire inspections, due to a lack of personnel (the Fire Chief is the only inspector). Inspections occur only by request or upon a change of occupancy.

## ***Community Profile***

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The Fire Chief noted that the Borough has a good water system and hydrant system. However, it lacks universal couplings on all of the hydrants. These couplings would enable virtually all surrounding fire departments to connect to the Borough's hydrants, thus improving "interoperability" and helping with the Borough's ISO classification.

The Fire Chief noted that over fifty percent of their calls are to rental housing units. Problems frequently associated with these units include poorly maintained heating systems, inoperable smoke detectors, expired fire extinguishers, and the build-up of trash.