

FALL 2015

TRANSFORM

UNIFY

THRIVE

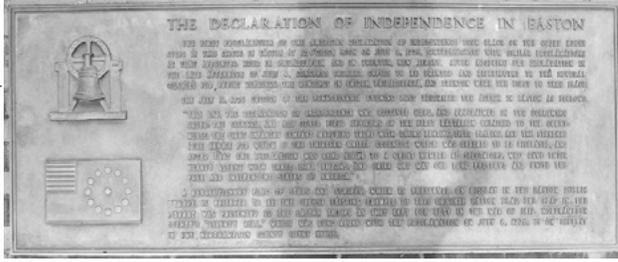
**EASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2035
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



1776

The Declaration of Independence reading at Easton's Center Square on July 8, 1776 signifies that the city was an important focus in its region even in the 18th century

Declaration of Independence



1800s

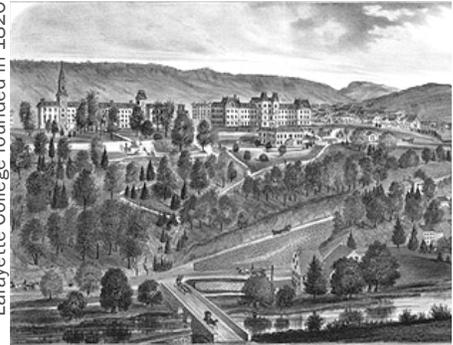
Easton emerged as The Commercial Center for Steel Industry for the region and developed extensive railroad, canal and bridge systems.

Lafayette College, a world class liberal arts institute became one of the first institutes for higher education in the region

Lehigh Line's multiple railroad tracks



Lafayette College founded in 1826



1900s

Herman Simon established the R&H Simon Company in 1883 and fast became one of the most famous manufacturer of specialty silks.

Later Onondaga Silk Company created rare and unique fashion textiles and prints that were used by many fashionable couturiers and designers.

R&H Simon Company



Fashion prints of Onondaga Silk Mill



2000s

Recent projects in Easton have witnessed a renewed urban focus, rebirth of civic engagement, community spirit, and creative activity that has generated excitement across the entire Lehigh Valley region. These projects have shaped the path forward and will catalyze Easton's transformation into a vibrant place to live-work-play for its residents and visitors

Sigal Museum



Williams Visual Arts Center



Movies at the Mill event



New Intermodal Station



Advancing Onward

THE NEXT 20

Situated at the dramatic confluence of Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, Easton has been a critical destination through our country's history. From being a transportation hub for the entire Lehigh Valley and beyond through its extensive canal and railroad system, to being known for its high quality silk manufacturing, and world class learning and cultural assets such as Lafayette College and The State Theater, Easton has always enjoyed a distinct and competitive identity in the Region. The City has continually innovated and often evolved as the **trendsetter** – at the forefront, embracing creative solutions to its urban problems in all time periods.

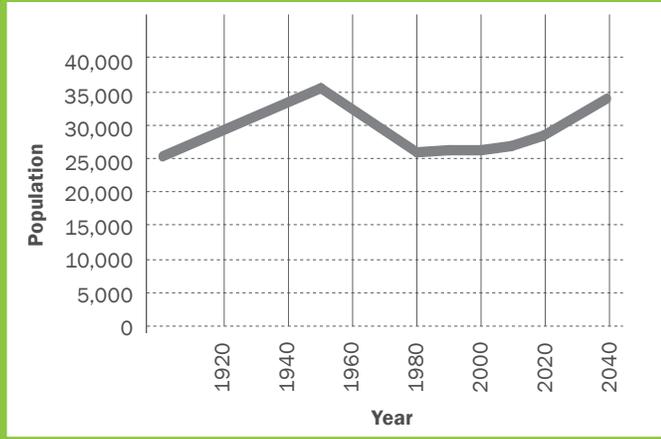
The last decade has witnessed the commitment of Eastonians to revive their City from years of industrial decline and subsequent sprawl that diverted population and growth to the suburbs. Some of the strategies and projects include public investments such as the 2.4 mile long Karl Stirner Arts Trail along the Bushkill Creek, a new intermodal transportation parking facility on South 3rd Street, public private partnerships that have resulted in projects such as the Simon Silk Mill Development, strengthened relationships with institutions such as Lafayette College, gradual addition of new bike and pedestrian friendly infrastructure, and programs such as the Easton Ambassadors.

Consequently, today there has been a renewed urban focus, rebirth of civic engagement, community spirit, and creative activity that has generated excitement across the region, drawing nearly a million visitors to the City every year. This new influx of energy has attracted hundreds of millions in new investment, spurring the redevelopment of major downtown buildings that have been vacant or underutilized for decades, into full occupancy mixed retail and residential uses. This urban renaissance has now poised Easton to bring its population back to its historic peak of 35,000 in the next two decades.

As the City moves ahead and prepares to embrace this growth, the Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 provides a planning and urban design framework that will help define Easton's identity within the region. The framework is a shared vision that embodies the aspirations of Eastonians, established through direct feedback and outreach in over 40 meetings, four design and planning charrettes, several presentations, focus groups and interviews, and an online survey. Three themes that are reinforced by a set of 14 strategies and 50 supporting initiatives phased over a period of 20 years, constitute this framework and will guide Easton's transformation into a vibrant place to live-work-play for its residents and visitors.

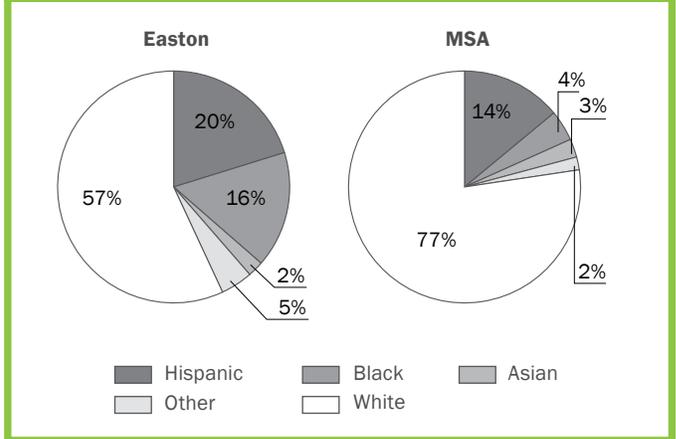
TECHNICAL DATA ANALYSIS

Easton's growing population will create a larger home market, attracting investors, businesses, workers and innovative activity



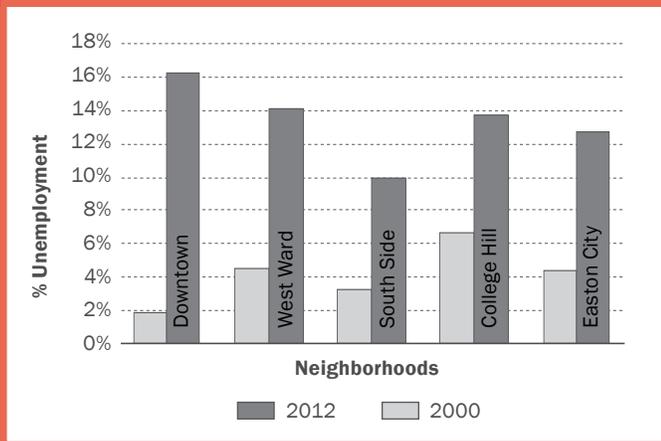
POPULATION: Easton's population has been growing at 2X rate as the previous 20 years and by 2040, it is projected to reach its peak of 35,000. This trend will add younger people, energize the economy, create a larger home market attracting new products, investors, businesses and more workers, and bring greater innovative activity to the City.

Easton's diversity can provide new dimensions to cultural expression and innovation, fueling the City's creative economy



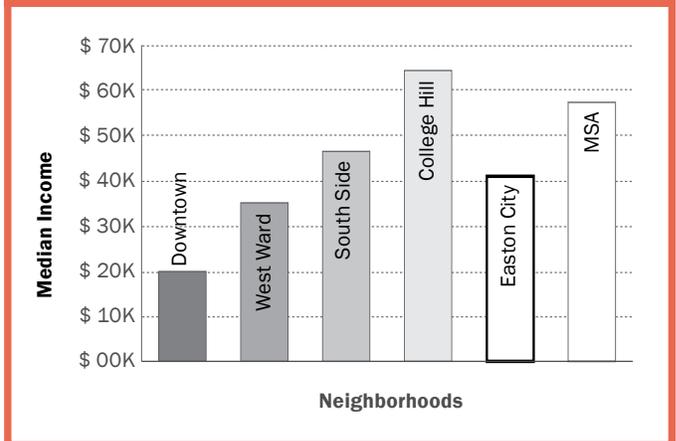
DIVERSITY: Easton is significantly more diverse compared to the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Easton's strong ethnic diversity along with its growing art community and progressive relations with Lafayette College, can provide new dimensions to cultural expression, foster competitiveness and drive innovation, to fuel the City's creative economy.

High unemployment rates that have been increasing over the last decade, can limit Easton's future growth and development



EMPLOYMENT: In 2012, unemployment in Easton was about 12.7%, having increased in all four neighborhoods since 2000. This will require focus on skill development opportunities, contemporary industrial development and connecting workforce centers closely with Easton's labor pool.

Downtown and West Ward, fast emerging as Easton's creative centers have the lowest income levels

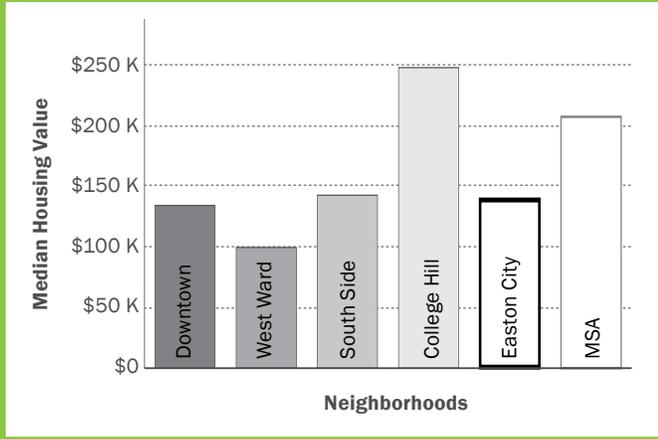


MEDIAN INCOME: Although College Hill's median income is higher than that of the region, Downtown and West Ward lag behind. Together they have the smallest share of college grads but attract the bulk of tourists. Targeting skill and business development around tourism can bring higher paying jobs here.

Key
■ Opportunities
■ Challenges

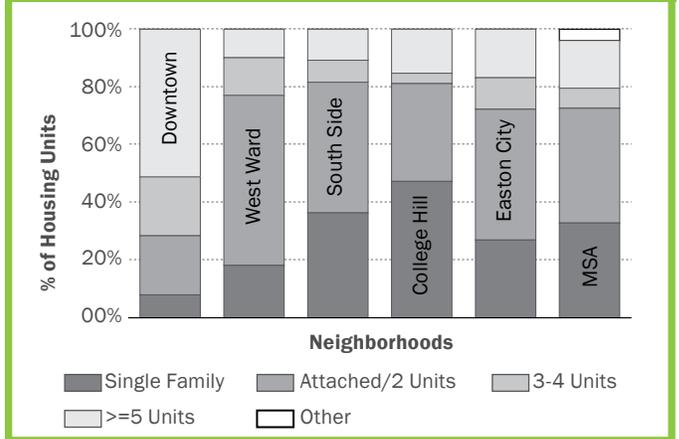
CRITICAL URBAN AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

A wide range of median housing values, lower than those in the LV region overall, make Easton affordable and attractive for investments



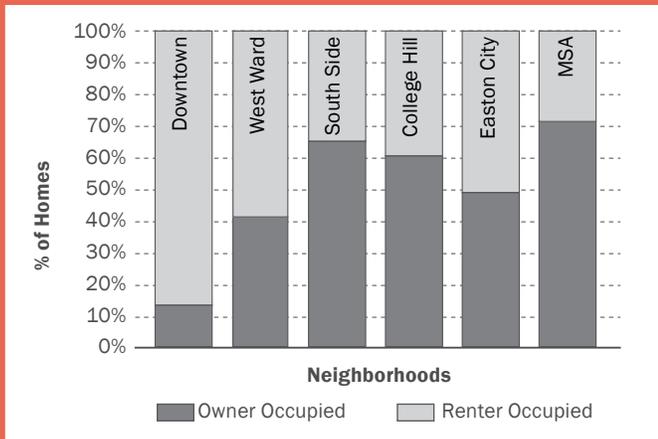
HOUSING VALUES: Lower median housing values coupled with a compact urban form, shorter commutes to work, convenient access to natural amenities and a strong community focus make Easton an attractive place to live.

Diverse housing types in each neighborhood provide the option for suburban as well as dense city lifestyles



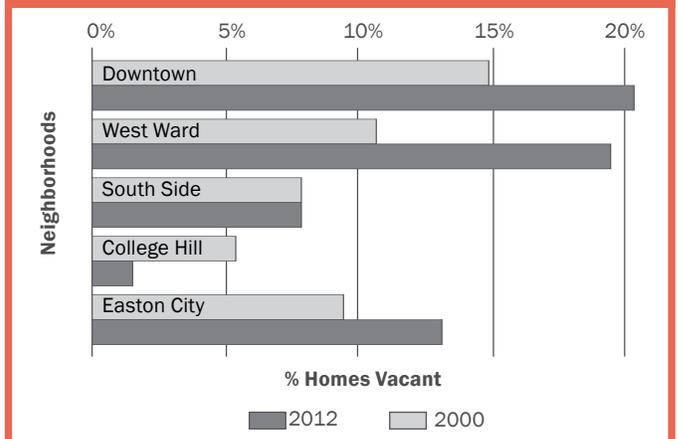
HOUSING TYPE: South Side and College Hill have high concentrations of single family units offering suburban lifestyles. West Ward and Downtown offer city lifestyles - 2 unit and apartment homes in a mixed use environment.

Low homeownership and high rental turnovers limit a sense of community and participation in public amenity / realm improvements



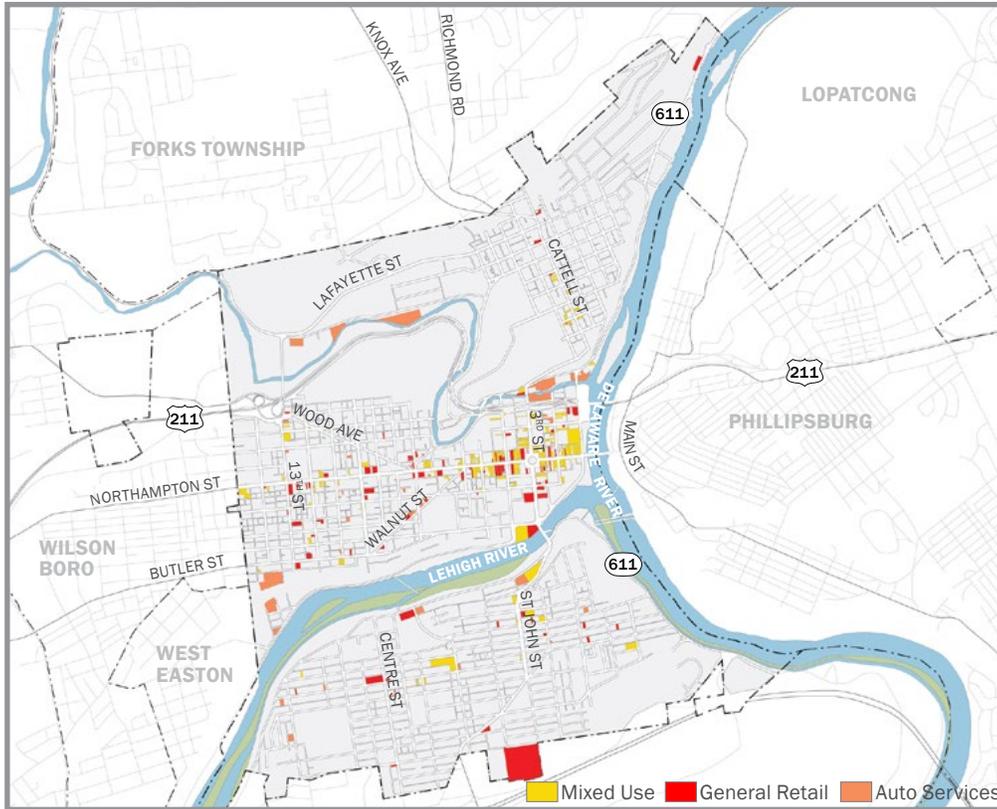
HOMEOWNERSHIP: Compared to the MSA, Easton has low homeownership rates with Downtown just below 15%. Strategies that market to young and small scale investors; façade grants, forgivable loans, a potential 'young faculty homeownership program', can incentivize interested homeowners to invest in Easton.

Large number of blighted properties and high vacancy rates increase the perception of crime and limit tourism



VACANCY: In 2012, residential vacancy in Downtown climbed to 20% and almost doubled in the West Ward, partially because of absentee landlords. Rigorous tenant ownership programs, gap financing, development bonuses and where necessary, escalating fees on vacant properties help speed up revitalization.

TECHNICAL DATA ANALYSIS

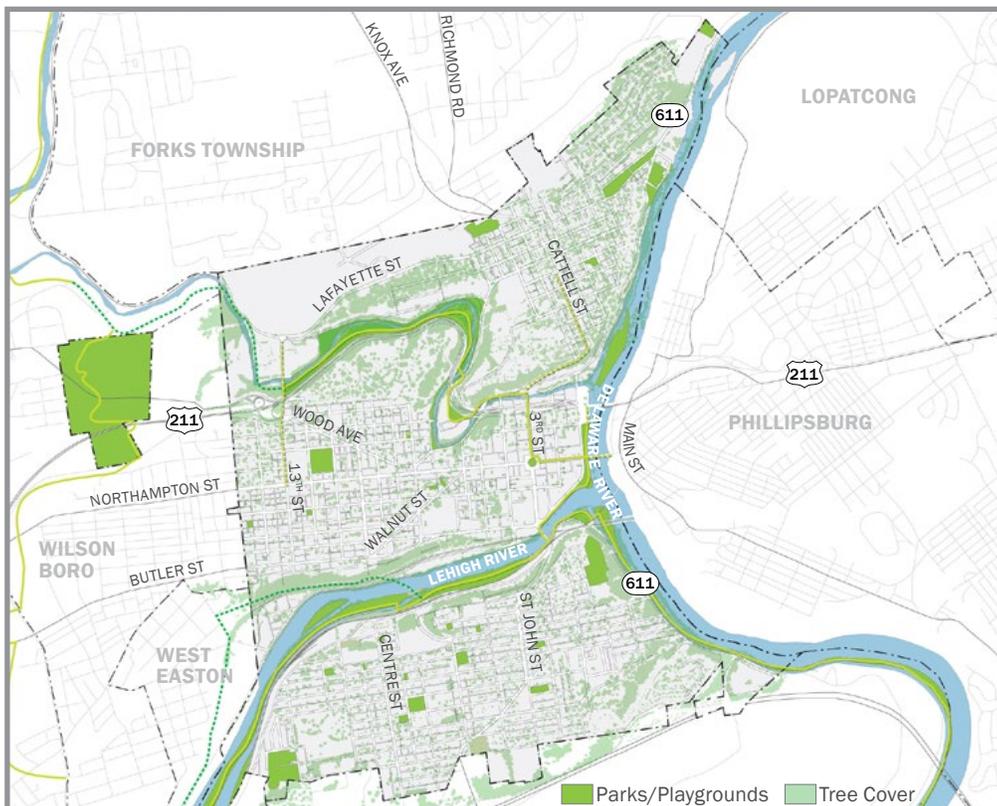


PRIMARY BUSINESS TYPES AND LOCATIONS

Of the 3,000 registered businesses in Easton, 46% are related to real estate and the remaining are dominated by retail, professional and personal services, primarily concentrated in Downtown and along the major spines; Northampton, Cattell and St John St. There is still a large unmet demand for commercial and entertainment businesses.

Downtown is re-emerging as a mixed use business and commercial core for Easton

Limited neighborhood - scale commercial and entertainment amenities in west ward and south side



PUBLIC AND RECREATION AMENITIES

In addition to being situated within close proximity of the regional D&L Trails, Easton has a number of neighborhood-scale open spaces distributed throughout the City. These together with its waterfront parks and dense tree cover, provide many recreational options and enrich the residents' quality of life.

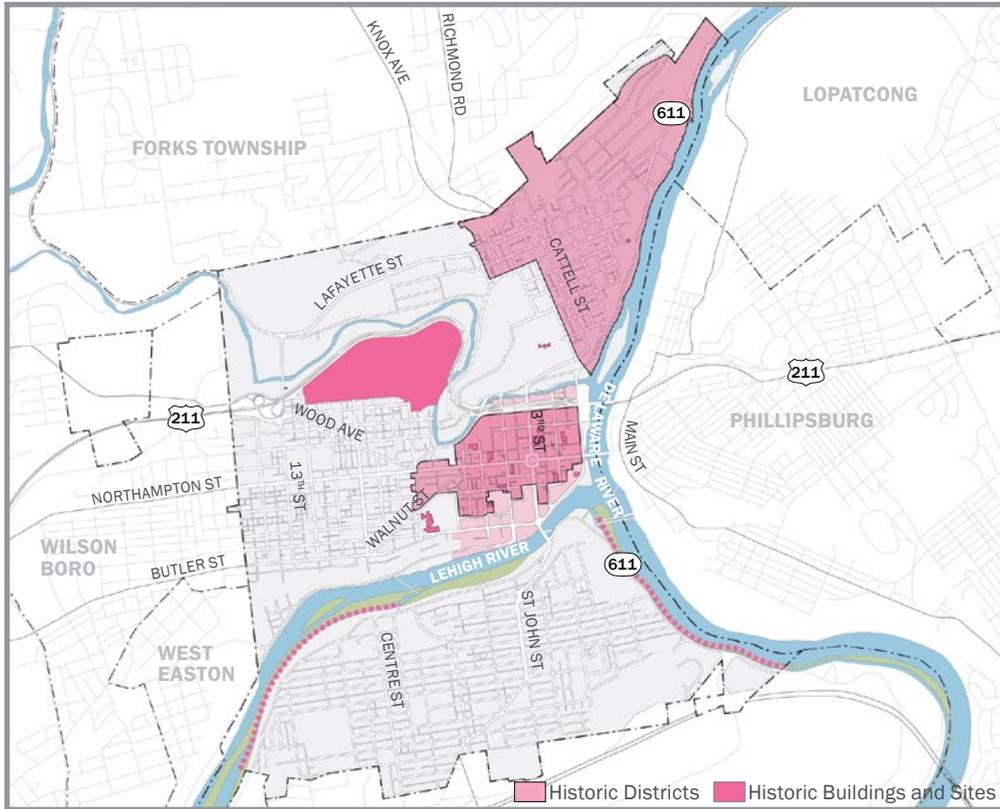
A diverse public realm system within a compact urban form is a highly valued quality of life asset

Pedestrian and bike access to the larger regional and waterfront parks is limited

Data Analysis Key

Opportunities Challenges

CRITICAL URBAN AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

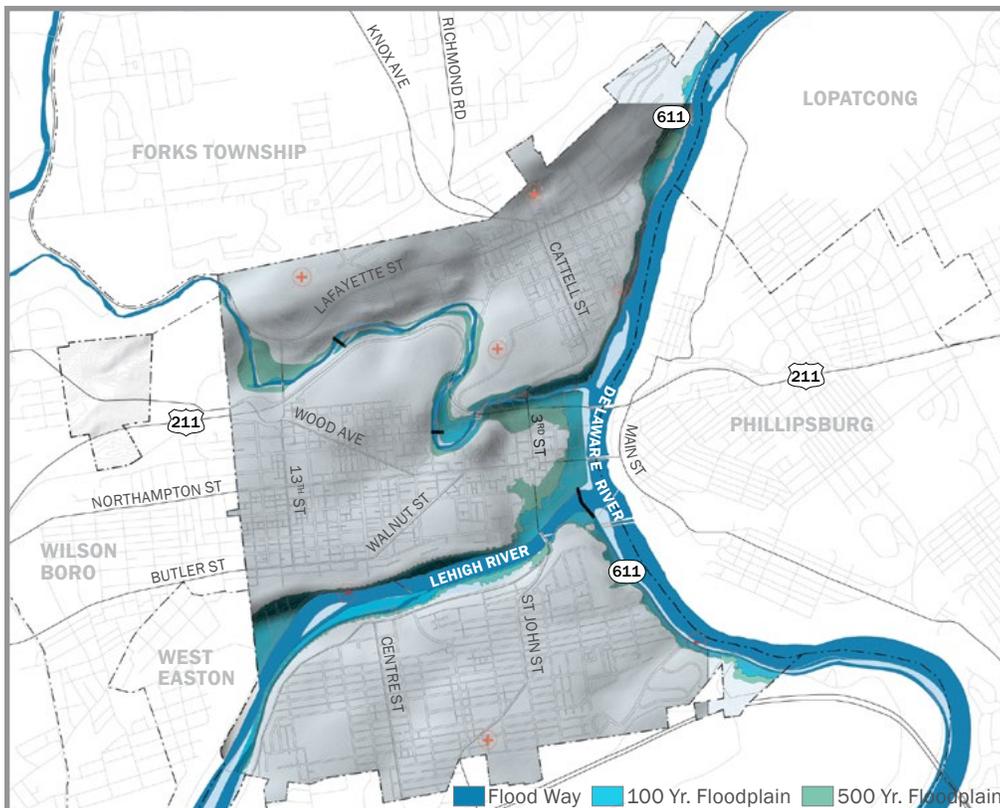


ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Downtown, College Hill and West Ward have several historic and architecturally significant properties. As these are adapted for contemporary use, introducing special 'rehab codes' can prevent cheap conversions preserving un-protected historic fabric, and speed up revitalization in some parts of the City.

Well preserved architectural fabric and historic sites enhance quality of life and are an asset for tourism

Renovation of sites within the historic districts is constrained by preservation laws and is expensive

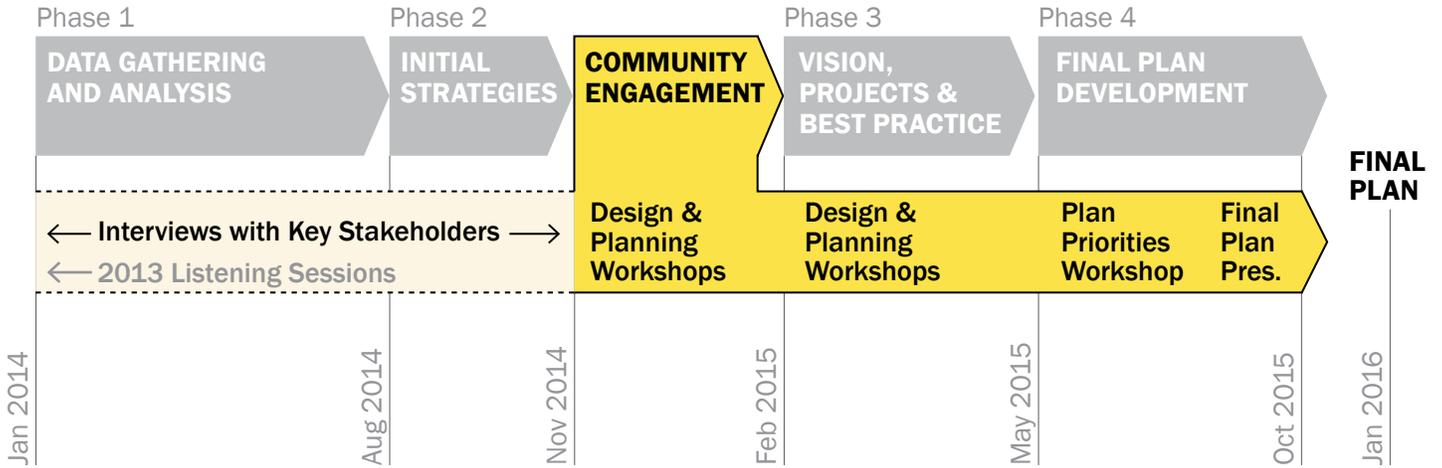


TOPOGRAPHY AND FLOOD PLAIN

Easton's undulating topography and location at the confluence of three rivers make for a very scenic setting but also increase flooding risks. Any development in high risk areas, be it recreational or built form, should be governed by special waterfront district laws that define use and building types.

Steep grade changes limit waterfront access and make development expensive. 500 yr flood plain engulfs valuable historic assets and real estate, making preservation expensive and conventional building methods unsuitable

PLANNING PROCESS AND OUTREACH



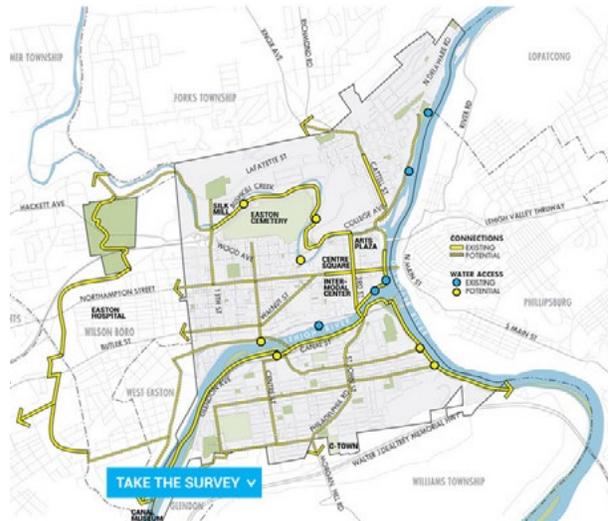
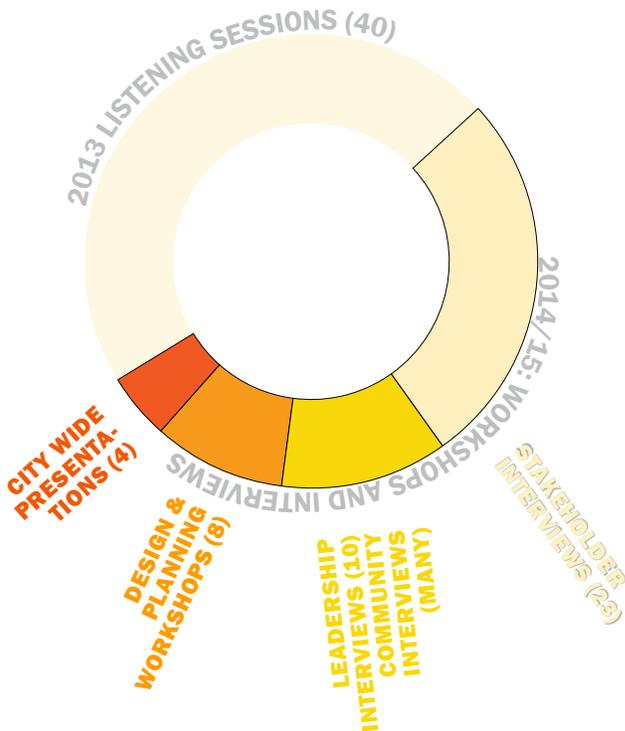
COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING PROCESS

The four distinct phases of the comprehensive plan rewrite illustrated above, advanced parallel to an in-depth community engagement, establishing the development of the Final Plan in a community based planning process. Outreach included many innovative techniques crafted to engage Easton's diverse community and constituencies with the following

objectives:

1. Define community aspirations and vision
2. Shape the aspirations and vision through tangible projects and best practices relevant to Easton's context and community
3. Engage potential implementation partners
4. Create a blueprint for implementation and monitoring

OUTREACH TECHNIQUES



Place Based Web Survey: An online, place based survey gave respondents the opportunity to interact with a live map and draw specific spatial / physical localities, providing 'place-based' input.

VOICES

DESIGN & PLANNING WORKSHOPS



COMMUNITY VOICES



...Easton is doing a great job right now to attract people who are going to continue to enrich the City and help us move forward. We need to go back to that idea that people living here want to walk to work..."

- Amy Boccadoro, West Ward Resident
- Phillip Hart, College Hill Resident Neighborhood Association



...because we're in a very transient neighborhood, partly because of low income, it's hard for neighbors to get to know each other. When neighbors get together and work in a garden, the kids can play together, people get to know each other and feel like there is somebody they can count on..."

- Sophia Feller, Urban Agriculturist and West Ward Resident

LEADERSHIP VOICES



...Easton is the fastest growing municipality of all the 62 municipalities in the Lehigh Valley in age group 25 to 35. We're hip! I'm happy about that. When you walk around our City, it's a small City with a big City feel..."

- Salvatore J. Panto, Jr., Mayor of Easton



...we're really at a pivotal moment both broad societally and in particular for the City. I think we are poised to capitalize on a shifting movement toward an increasing urban life..."

- Charles Elliott, Chair, Easton Planning Commission

1:

TRANSFORM

- 1.1 Establish area around Centre Square as Easton's premiere business district
- 1.2 Develop the Delaware waterfront as an integral part of Easton's downtown
- 1.3 Manage and reduce vacancy, underutilization and blight throughout the City, and
- 1.4 Discourage irresponsible development and renovation, and prevent deterioration of historic buildings

2:

UNIFY

- 2.1 Re-envision public right of ways for multimodal travel and sustainable infrastructure
- 2.2 Adapt and reuse critical sites at the seam of neighborhoods
- 2.3 Integrate Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and Bushkill Creek with upland communities through a connected system of pedestrian, bike and open space networks
- 2.4 Improve access to and create new parks and open spaces
- 2.5 Manage parking and promote sustainable transportation

3:

THRIVE

- 3.1 Attract new businesses through a 'business ready' environment
- 3.2 Promote strong and well balanced neighborhood centers
- 3.3 Connect residents with employment and workforce training centers
- 3.4 Diversify and strengthen existing touristic attractions
- 3.5 Promote closer regional ties

Crafting Strategies

VISION & FRAMEWORK

The Easton Comprehensive Plan 2035 is a planning and urban design framework that embodies the aspirations of Eastonians, and sets forth a collective vision and action plan to develop the City into a vibrant place to live-work-play for its residents and visitors. Three themes that are reinforced by a set of 14 strategies and 50 supporting initiatives phased over a period of 20 years, will work synergistically to inform this vision.

1: TRANSFORM

Building on the City’s rich architectural heritage, ongoing revitalization efforts in the West Ward, and Downtown’s recent resurgence as Easton’s retail center, the plan recommends a series of actionable strategies to define Easton’s identity as its region’s cultural and economic hub.

2: UNIFY

Capitalizing on Easton’s scenic setting at the fork of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and on strategic opportunity sites at the seams of its four neighborhoods, site specific urban development, transportation infrastructure and public realm projects integrate urban and natural landscapes, create a public realm network with urban amenities, and provide integrated solutions for sustainable development and climate resiliency.

3: THRIVE

Neighborhood-scale investment in urban conveniences, citywide scale investments in infrastructure, and closer partnerships with key stakeholders lay the groundwork for increasing livability, attracting new businesses, and building a strong economy.

1: TRANSFORM

Building on the City's rich architectural heritage, ongoing revitalization efforts in the West Ward, and Downtown's recent resurgence as Easton's retail center, the plan recommends a series of actionable strategies to define Easton's identity as its region's cultural and economic hub.

NORTHAMPTON STREET: GOING CURBLESS TO TRANSFORM NORTHAMPTON BETWEEN CENTRE SQUARE AND DELAWARE RIVER INTO A CULTURAL AMENITY

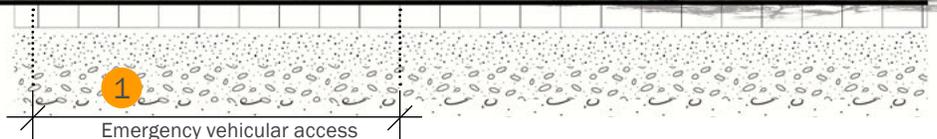
EXISTING

Image of Northampton Street between Centre Square and Northampton Bridge. This section of Northampton Street can play a key role in integrating the waterfront with Downtown by acting as a plaza like extension of Centre Square which can host events and programs, as well as provide pedestrian retail and restaurant frontage



PROPOSED

Rendering of Northampton Street between Centre Square and Northampton Bridge. The concept features active storefronts and a curbless street favoring use of space for events and uninhibited pedestrian connection to the Delaware Waterfront. The right of way (ROW) accommodates for emergency vehicle movement



2

1

Emergency vehicular access

Curbless and leveled ROW with pedestrian friendly paving and temporary planters to demarcate emergency vehicular access

TRANSFORM

ESTABLISH AREA AROUND CENTER SQUARE AS EASTON'S PREMIERE BUSINESS DISTRICT

Encourage active uses and storefronts that enhance Downtown's image as a place to visit and do business

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Retrofit existing vacant office spaces like empty spaces in the Wells Fargo building, building opposite Sette Luna and others to accommodate remote offices for larger corporations and, where possible, create mixed-use opportunities

Policy Guidelines

- Limit uses that are inward looking and do not engage with the street. Discourage uses such as pawnshops that threaten the vibrancy of Downtown and its image as Easton's premiere business district
- Work with property owners, brokers, and businesses to identify obstacles in building code and other difficulties with retail space in Centre Square, and develop financial incentives and support for desired tenants
- Discourage speculation through fines and fees on vacant properties

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Develop a program to support pop up retail in vacant spaces to encourage new businesses and showcase empty storefronts. Identify and attract retailers, such as restaurants, bars, grocery stores, and local services that generate high foot traffic
- Recruit a recreation/entertainment tenant (e.g. bowling, arcade, sports bar, movie theater) in Downtown to encourage recreational opportunities for all age groups

Install effective signage at the highway exits and entrances to the City, and within the Downtown area, to steer people towards Centre Square and inform them about Easton's main business district's diverse offerings

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Install highway traffic signs that clearly indicate the off ramps on Route 22 and PA Route 611, and direct traffic to Downtown
- Design and install a consistent signage to demarcate the Downtown business district and provide information on locations and walking distances for major attractions and amenities
- Create an inviting and welcoming gateway including lighting, landscape, inviting pedestrian access and visible street signage to direct traffic and pedestrians to Centre Square and downtown parking facilities

Update existing guidelines to encourage business in Downtown and on Northampton Street, to create a visually engaging and inviting environment for their customers

Policy Guidelines

- Review and update existing guidelines and identify issues that limit street engagement
- Develop a compilation of urban design guidelines and best practices that includes recommendations for façade design, signage and street level engagement for Easton's business district

DEVELOP THE DELAWARE WATERFRONT AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF EASTON'S DOWNTOWN

Create a Waterfront District master plan for underutilized parcels along Larry Holmes Drive

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Identify development sites and conduct a market potential study for housing, tourism and mixed use development along Delaware and Lehigh Rivers

PRIORITY PROJECTS AND ACTIONS



Sette Luna, a refurbished building that engages the street and hosts a business owned by native Eastonians



Non-retail services on Centre Square that do not contribute to a vibrant commercial environment and street life

- Conduct preliminary urban design analysis to determine environmental and infrastructure challenges and development potential
- Create an urban design master plan that outlines the community vision, sustainable development guidelines, site-by-site development program, and public-private partnership mechanisms

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Engage in a public planning process for the vision of a new Waterfront District for Easton

MANAGE AND REDUCE VACANCY, UNDERUTILIZATION AND BLIGHT THROUGHOUT THE CITY

Prioritize the development of vacant lots and rehabilitation/revitalization of vacant buildings throughout the City

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Create and maintain and neighborhood-scale inventory of vacant buildings and lots
- Prioritize acquisition of and refurbish abandoned, vacant and tax defaulting properties at important nodes such as Northampton Street and Centre Square so as to make them marketable for mixed use
- Finalize and implement a comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the West Ward neighborhood including

- Systematic assessment of blighted and vacant properties
- Creation of an acquisition fund
- Potential land banking program
- Development of strategic disposition strategies

Policy Guidelines

- Identify specific challenges to renovation / redevelopment (e.g. zoning, contamination, etc) and create programs and incentives (e.g. grants, tax incentives) to target these challenges on vacant buildings and lots
- Identify areas with high concentration of blighted properties to create revitalization zones and target State and Federal funding for revitalization
- Use rigorous tenant ownership programs, gap financing, development bonuses and other public incentives to attract small scale developers and interested homeowners
- Where necessary escalate fines and fee on vacant and abandoned lots to encourage reuse and discourage speculation

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Partner with Lafayette College to assess possibility of developing homeownership programs for post-docs and young professors in revitalization zones
- Work with property owners and neighborhood residents to host programs such as the *better block project*, *artistic board up* and *beaux arts ball* generate interest and raise funds for revitalization and improvements

2: UNIFY

Capitalizing on Easton's scenic setting at the fork of Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, and on strategic opportunity sites at the seams of the its four neighborhoods, site specific urban development, transportation infrastructure and public realm projects integrate urban and natural landscapes, create a public realm network with urban amenities and provide integrated solutions for sustainable development, stormwater management and climate resiliency.

13TH STREET CORRIDOR: UNIFYING MULTIMODAL TRAVEL, UTILITIES AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

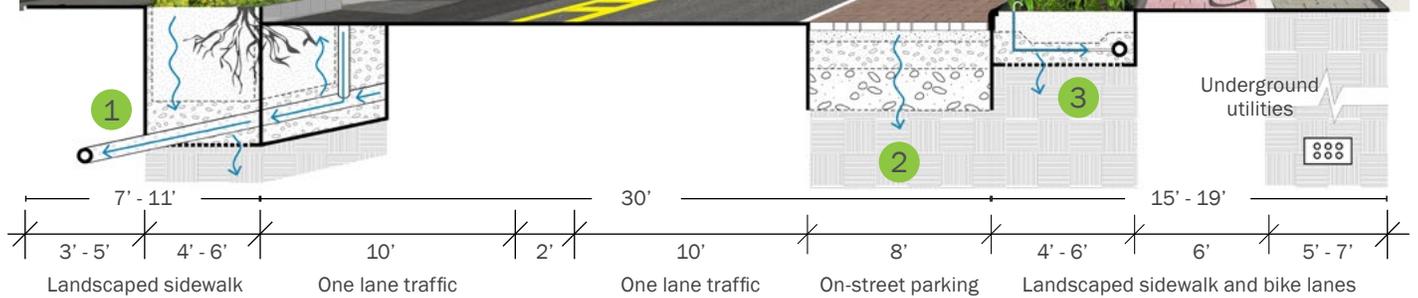
EXISTING

Image showing existing Right of Way (ROW) of 13th Street featuring traffic centric distribution of space which favors speeding and discourages pedestrian and bicyclists (Total ROW ranges from 52Ft to 60Ft)



PROPOSED

Rendering of 13th Street showing redistributed ROW accommodating all modes of travel, utilities and stormwater management



Stormwater management systems

- 1 Tree trench system that collects run-off for irrigation and infiltration, redirecting overflows to CSOs
- 2 Permeable on-street parking that infiltrates water into the ground reducing run-off
- 3 Rain garden that infiltrates water and restores natural habitat

RE-ENVISION PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAYS FOR MULTIMODAL TRAVEL AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Create guidelines for the balanced use of public right of way to ensure safe and efficient travel by all modes of transportation, landscaping and storm water management

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Prepare a set of complete streets guide with standards for readapting existing streets to accommodate all modes of transportation
- Conduct a city-wide study to classify streets based on the new classification system and based on this information, create a city-wide plan of multimodal transportation network
- As streets are reconstructed, redesign and rebuild them based on the complete streets guide and where streets are not being rebuilt in the near future, improve quality of sidewalk and add bike racks where necessary
- Create a pedestrian (and business) friendly environment by concealing overhead utilities under street ROWs
- As a priority, re-envision and redesign Butler, Ferry, Lehigh, Wood, Washington and Northampton Streets. If needed, reassess on-street parking on these streets and potentially provide parking for residential buildings from the rear entrances

Policy Guidelines

- Adopt a system of classification based on type of urban function the street serves versus the volume of traffic it carries; e.g., residential street, market street, community collector, etc.
- Adopt guidelines for handicap accessibility for street infrastructure and access to public buildings from streets

Create friendly and safe environments for pedestrian and bicyclists, and reduce chances of accidents

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Maximize pedestrian and bicyclist comfort; use proper lighting, signage, crosswalk marking, pedestrian curb extensions etc.
- Employ traffic calming methods to slow traffic and increase safety for all users
- Identify and redesign intersections that have high accident rates; e.g. Berwick and Iron Streets intersection
- Provide cross walks and traffic stop signs / pedestrian crossing signs at the end of all step streets
- Redesign the I-22 and 13th Street intersection to accommodate increased traffic from the Simon Silk Mill

Policy Guidelines

- Promote urban character by eliminating front set-backs and requiring buildings to ‘build to street edge’ on wide and pedestrian heavy streets



Easton’s Best Practice Example: Upgraded streetscape on South 3rd Street with curb bump outs for safer pedestrian crossings, and new street planting with infiltration system for stormwater management

FERRY STREET: CREATING A PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

EXISTING

Image showing existing street conditions on a typical neighborhood-scale residential street; Ferry at North 9th. The Right of Way (ROW) is distributed to focus on motorized transportation and parking with little room for safe pedestrian and bicycle movement



PROPOSED

Redistributed ROW to accommodate bicyclists and wide sidewalks for pedestrian movement. Dedicated landscape area provides for neighborhood character, stormwater management systems and clean atmosphere in residential areas



ADAPT AND REUSE CRITICAL SITES AT THE SEAM OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Redevelop the Black Diamond Site to accommodate mixed use development with residential units

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Work with the Lehigh Valley Land Recycling Initiative to facilitate the environmental investigation work and provide the report as an incentive to the developer

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Conduct a visioning session for the design and development program of the site
- Work with the owner to accept potential developers as partners
- In consultation with potential developers, implement site specific rezoning or planned unit development zoning that encourages a mix of uses at a scale appropriate for the surrounding South Side neighborhood and represents the community vision for this area

Create a secondary gateway at the intersection of Wood Ave. and Northampton St.

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Create development scenarios for mixed use medium density development in coordination with private property owners and the community
- Identify any planning / technical obstacles in development of these sites and provide incentives to overcome these obstacles
- Create a welcoming environment through public investments and generate interest in the area through temporary events and programming

Policy Guidelines

- If needed, create a Local Development Corporation that can work with the community or envision a Planned Unit Development for the entire area and make use of tools such as transfer of development rights, reconfiguration of lots etc. to maintain character and make the parcels more developable



Easton Best Practice Example: The Simon Silk Mill, a critical site at the seam of College Hill and West Ward, is being adaptively reused as mixed use residential and artists' loft spaces. In the interim, the site hosts temporary events like Movies at the Mill, drawing people and helping with revitalization

PRIORITY PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Create a comprehensive strategy to attract active street level uses, a grocery store and community center to this area

INTEGRATE DELAWARE AND LEHIGH RIVERS, AND BUSHKILL CREEK WITH UPLAND COMMUNITIES THROUGH A CONNECTED SYSTEM OF PEDESTRIAN, BIKE AND OPEN SPACE NETWORKS

Create safer pedestrian access to Delaware River across Larry Holmes

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Simultaneous with the Waterfront District master planning, plan and execute traffic calming measures on Larry Holmes Drive
- Provide for wider sidewalks and pedestrian plazas wherever possible
- Provide proper marking, stop signs and traffic signals, and signage leading to river amenities

Improve and where possible create additional waterfront access points from upland areas

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Design and install signage in dense urban areas directing people to the blue-green path, and along the blue-green path directing people to waterfront access points and amenities
- Install directional signage along the D&L trail to lead visitors to urban destinations in Easton
- Develop broken or missing links in the blue-green network and make it a continuous circuit
- Create new waterfront access points across 611 S / Delaware Drive and at the end of Nesquehoning Street and Highland Boulevard
- Create a bike and pedestrian friendly connection from Lehigh Bridge to the D&L trail below
- Improve and make safe existing upland connections to the waterfront and D&L trail

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Conduct a feasibility study and community visioning session to create a continuous 'blue-green' path linking urban open spaces, bike and pedestrian paths with waterfront access points and the waterfront
- Use events, awareness campaigns and marketing methods to promote use of the blue-green network and increase awareness about Easton's waterfront amenities

MANAGE PARKING AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Improve parking infrastructure

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Implement recommendations of previous parking studies (e.g. rate changes, wayfinding, enforcement, etc)
- Monitor usage at the Easton Intermodal Transportation Center and conduct a follow-up study as necessary
- Build people friendly bus stop infrastructure that offer seating and shelter and encourage transit use

Encourage alternative transportation such as walking and biking

Capital Projects (and Related Actions)

- Incorporate bike facilities with street rehabilitation and other right of way improvements, where appropriate

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Market and encourage the use of the proposed 'blue-green' way
- Educate Easton's population and especially youth about health benefits of walking and biking
- Study feasibility of a bike share program or other programs to encourage biking

3: THRIVE

Neighborhood-scale investment in urban conveniences, citywide scale investments in infrastructure, and closer partnerships with key stakeholders lay the groundwork for increasing livability, attracting new businesses, and building a strong economy.

NORTHAMPTON STREET: INDUCING A THRIVING, BUSINESS READY ENVIRONMENT TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES AND INFILL DEVELOPMENT

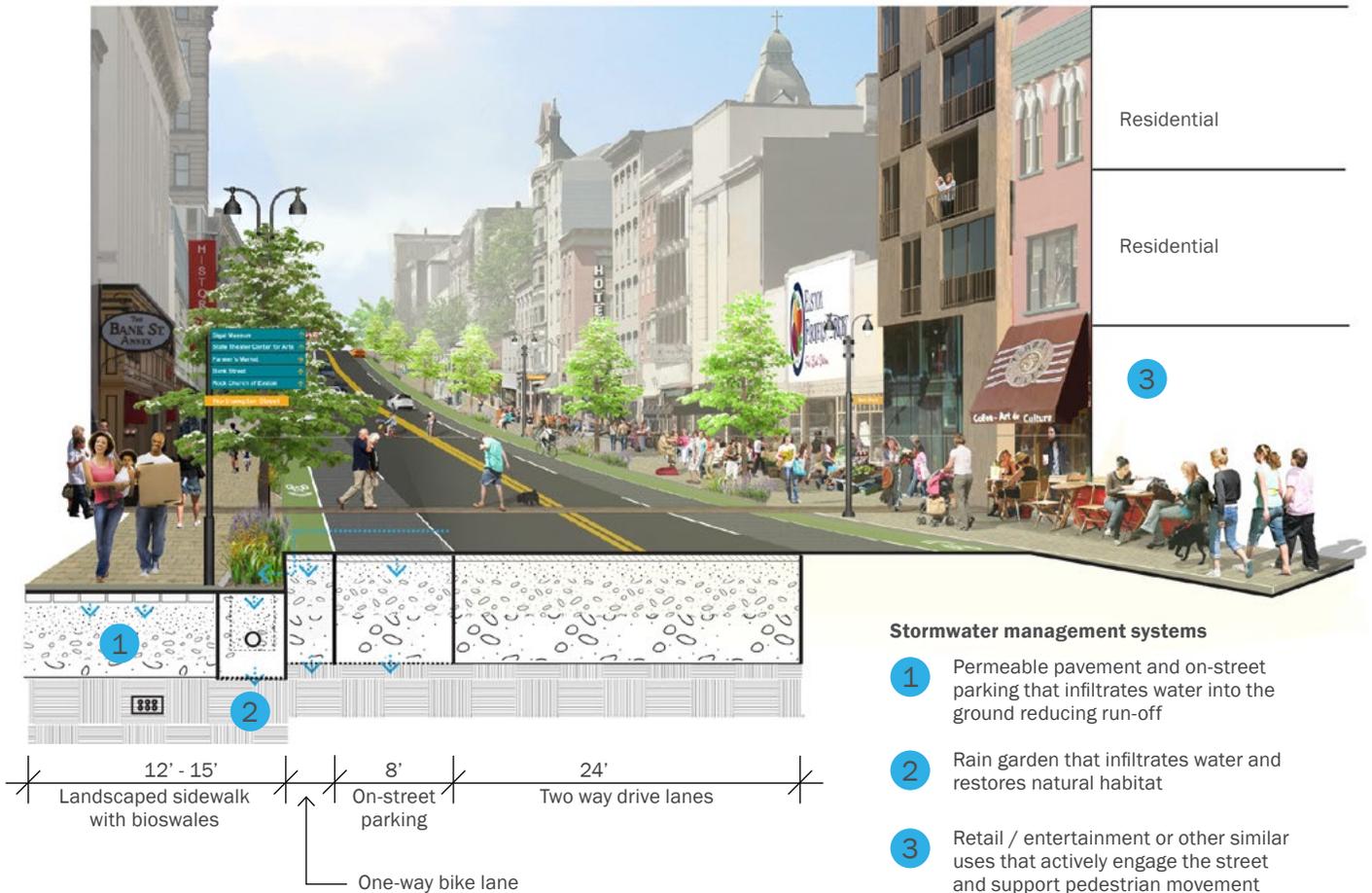
EXISTING

Existing image of Northampton Street looking towards West Ward. There are limited uses that engage the street and create a pedestrian environment. The demand for more restaurants, cafés and retail can be captured along this section of Northampton, attracting tourists, businesses and infill development.



PROPOSED

Rendering showing infill development, street level retail and streetscape improvements on Northampton Street. These improvements will attract greater tourism and economic development to Easton



ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES THROUGH A 'BUSINESS READY' ENVIRONMENT

Establish a business outreach center within City Hall equipped with an inventory of business incentives and a new economic development liaison to aid new and existing business owners

Policy Guidelines

- Increase capacity to provide single and direct point of contact for communications with aspiring business owners and assist them identifying funding and navigating the approvals and permitting process
- Develop a more robust plan to market Easton to businesses and actively recruit businesses in targeted industries

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Compile an inventory of Local, County, State, and Federal incentives for businesses. Organize an database to be easily searchable using a variety of criteria, so that business owners can find programs that match their circumstances
- Conduct an updated city-wide market study to identify suitable target industries

PROMOTE STRONG AND WELL BALANCED NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Investigate opportunities and appropriate locations for a grocery store that is central to the West Ward neighborhood

Policy Guidelines

- Identify and appropriately address code related issues for the development

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Determine a feasible location to attract a grocery store in the West Ward neighborhood

- Work with private owner and grocery store operator to determine an appropriate model for a grocery store in a dense urban fabric

Better connect Easton's neighborhood centers by providing enhanced, multimodal transit options

Capital Projects (and Related Actions)

- Develop a plan to add bike racks to bus station and neighborhood nodes or explore the creation of a bike share system

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Consult with Lafayette College to provide more frequent LCAT service to Downtown and to extend the shuttle service to other areas in Easton
- Coordinate with LANTA to add new bus routes circulating Easton's neighborhoods and longer and more frequent service



'Artists in the Alley' Festival on Bank Street

PRIORITY PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

CONNECT RESIDENTS WITH EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE TRAINING CENTERS

Attract light manufacturing and creative industries within existing underutilized and vacant buildings, and enhance the river corridors with appropriate uses

Capital Projects (and Related Actions)

- Conduct outreach and visioning to determine best uses for enhancing the Bushkill and Lehigh River corridors
- Pinpoint the best geographical areas and industries for growth, including an inventory of vacant buildings and land appropriate for light/creative industries

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Identify and correct any zoning / building code barriers preventing light industrial development and employ guidelines to protect such uses
- Offer incentives for businesses in target industries to redevelop properties

- Explore the possibility of including workforce training

DIVERSIFY AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Create a central body that markets the City's tourist attractions

Capital Projects (and related actions)

- Conduct a study of the tourism industry in Easton, including an assessment of the potential for new lodging

Public-Private Actions / Programs

- Work with business owners, institutions and cultural destinations to understand current marketing needs and issues
- Explore creation of a Tourism Marketing District (public-private model) to provide funding for tourism marketing efforts and explore ways to market Easton attractions and increase visitors and their length of stays



Crayola Experience, located at one of the most prominent locations in Easton's Centre Square is very inward looking with little presence or activity on the street

Symbols Key

-  Primary urban corridors
-  Potential waterfront district
-  Comprehensive signage leading to Downtown
-  Revitalization area
-  Priority revitalization area
-  Existing nodes that need densification
-  Gateways
-  Key development nodes
-  Existing paths on 'blue-green' network
-  Proposed paths on 'blue-green' network
-  Priority intersections for improvements (safety)
-  Priority streetscape improvements
-  Crosswalks / connections to waterfront
-  New or infill development
-  Proposed river corridors
-  Potential areas for creative / light industries
-  New bus shelters and stops



PRIORITY PROJECTS

Catalyzing Implementation

PRIORITY PROJECTS

All projects and actions described under the three themes in the comprehensive plan are critical in realizing the people’s vision in its entirety. However, prioritizing the execution of some of these projects and actions can capture early on successes that build momentum and catalyze the implementation of the entire comprehensive plan over the next two decades. These priority projects and actions illustrated on the map were selected based on a ranking system developed for this framework using community aspirations, partnership opportunities, project duration, and project costs as scoring / ranking parameters.

Priority Projects (Numbers Key)

TRANSFORM

- 1 Retrofit vacant office spaces in Downtown
- 2 Install highway signage on Route 22 and PA Route 611
- 3 Design and install consistent signage for Downtown business district
- 4a Southern Gateway into Downtown
- 4b Gateway into Easton (signage, landscape improvements, lighting and development guidelines)
- 5 Create a new Waterfront District and Master Plan for Riverfront Development
- 6 Implement Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (reduce vacancy, blight and underutilization)

UNIFY

- 7 Prioritize streetscape redesign for Butler, Ferry, Lehigh, Wood, Washington and Northampton Streets
- 8 Redevelop the Black Diamond Site to accommodate mixed use development

- 9 Create secondary gateway at Wood Avenue and Northampton Street
- 10 Connect to D&L Trail across Delaware Drive at Nesquehoning and Highlands
- 11 Create bike and pedestrian friendly connection to the D&L trail
- 12 Explore pedestrian connections between Nevins Park and Karl Stirner Arts trail

THRIVE

- 13 Attract light manufacturing and small industries within existing underutilized and vacant buildings, and enhance river corridors with appropriate uses
- 14 Add more frequent bus service and sheltered bus stops
- 15 Develop new lodging facilities in Downtown



EASTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2035

www.visioneaston.org

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