

IMPLEMENTABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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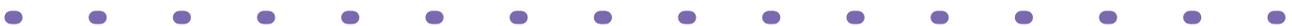
Crafton - Ingram

THRIVE



**A Small-Town Feel for a New Generation:
Working Together for a Community Plan**

2017



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RESOLUTION NO. 2017 - 04

BOROUGH OF CRAFTON

ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF CRAFTON, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING THE "CRAFTON-INGRAM IMPLEMENTABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, AS RECOMMENED FOR ADOPTION BY THE CRAFTON BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION.

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, hereinafter referred to MPC, (Act of 1968 P.L. 805, No. 247 as amended) empowers municipalities, individually or joint, to plan for their development and govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, and

WHEREAS, the Municipalities of Crafton and Ingram, Allegheny County, each being characterized by similar demographics, identities and common issues, and sharing common boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the two municipalities have joined together for the purpose of mutual cooperation through multi-municipal planning; and

WHEREAS, the joint steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the two Communities was formed to oversee the development of a joint comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the joint comprehensive plan identified four key priorities for: Blight (Deteriorating Properties), Commercial Development, Connectivity and Walkability and Communications; and

WHEREAS, the Borough received comments from Allegheny County Department of Economic Development and have incorporated many of the suggestions in the final version of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, Allegheny County, contiguous municipalities, Carlynton School District and Montour School District, have reviewed or been given the opportunity to review the joint comprehensive plan per the MPC; and

WHEREAS, the Plan has been made available for public review in the Administration Offices and on the Borough website; AND

WHEREAS, the Crafton Borough Planning Commission received public comment at their meeting of March 20, 2017 and recommended that the Borough Council adopt the Comprehensive Plan as presented; and

WHEREAS, said plan has been subject of a Public Hearing, held on April 24, 2017 per the MPC; and

WHEREAS, comments were received from the public at the hearing on April 24, 2017 and have been duly noted; and

WHEREAS, The Borough has determined that the proposed Crafton Ingram Implementable Comprehensive Plan is an accurate and through summary of the Communities assets, vision and recommendations for the future;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Statements contained above are hereby resolved and enacted by the authority of the same;

- a. The Borough of Crafton does hereby Adopt the Crafton Ingram Implementable Comprehensive Plan as the official Comprehensive Plan of Record for the Borough of Crafton. The Plan is hereby adopted in its entirety, including all maps, charts and textual matter, pursuant to the Municipalities Planning Code;
- b. Any Resolution or part thereof in conflict herewith, is hereby repealed to the extent of said conflict.

RESOLVED AND ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF CRAFTON THIS 24 DAY OF APRIL, 2017.

ATTEST:

BOROUGH OF CRAFTON



Ann C. Scott, Borough Manager



Nina Amendola, President of Council

David O'Brien, Vice President

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BEFORE ME THIS, 24 DAY OF APRIL, 2017.



James G. Bloom, Mayor

RESOLUTION NO. 5 OF 2017

BOROUGH OF INGRAM ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF INGRAM, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING THE “CRAFTON-INGRAM IMPLEMENTABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN”, AS RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION BY THE INGRAM BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION.

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, hereinafter referred to MPC, (Act of 1968 P.L. 805, No. 247 as amended) empowers municipalities, individually or joint, to plan for their development and govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, and

WHEREAS, the Municipalities of Crafton, Ingram, Allegheny County, each being characterized by similar demographics, identities and common issues, and sharing common boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the two municipalities have joined together for the purpose of mutual cooperation through multi-municipal planning; and

WHEREAS, the joint steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the two Communities was formed to oversee the development of a joint comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the joint comprehensive plan identified four key priorities for: Blight (Deteriorating Properties), Commercial Development, Connectivity and Walkability and Communications; and

WHEREAS, the Borough received comments from Allegheny County Department of Economic Development and have incorporated many of the suggestions in the final version of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, Allegheny County, contiguous municipalities, Carlynton School District and Montour School District, have reviewed or been given the opportunity to review the joint comprehensive plan per the MPC; and

WHEREAS, the Plan has been made available for public review in the Administration Offices; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Ingram Planning Commission received public comment at their meeting of June 12, 2017 and recommended that the Borough Council adopt the Comprehensive Plan as presented; and

WHEREAS, said plan has been subject of a Public Hearing, held on June 12, 2017 per the MPC; and

WHEREAS, comments were received from the public at the hearing on June 12, 2017 and have been duly noted; and

WHEREAS, the Borough has determined that the proposed Crafton Ingram Implementable Comprehensive Plan is an accurate and thorough summary of the Communities assets, vision and recommendations for the future;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF INGRAM AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Borough of Ingram does hereby Adopt and Crafton Ingram Implementable Comprehensive Plan as the official Comprehensive Plan of Record for the Borough of Ingram. The Plan is hereby adopted in its entirety, including all maps, charts and textual matter, pursuant to the Municipalities Planning Code;
2. Any Resolution or part thereof in conflict herewith, is hereby repealed to the extent of said conflict.
3. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 12th day of June, 2017.

ATTEST:

BOROUGH OF INGRAM

Debbie Stecko
Debbie Stecko, Borough Secretary

Richard E. Nucci
Richard E. Nucci, President of Council

EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY ME this 12th day of June, 2017.

Sharon Stetz
Sharon Stetz, Mayor

SUMMARY

CIThrive.wordpress.com

Crafton - Ingram

THRIVE



**A Small-Town Feel for a New Generation:
Working Together for a Community Plan**

A plan to thrive

Crafton and Ingram want to enhance the boroughs' small-town feel while propelling the communities forward. Working together, the boroughs can build on strengths and make improvements. Crafton and Ingram will each retain their friendly, small-town identities and character, and begin growing in new ways.

Crafton and Ingram collaborated to produce an implementable comprehensive plan and early intervention programs. The two policy initiatives together create an effective review and plan for creating changes that residents and officials desire while maximizing use of resources.

The boroughs chose four working areas as the primary focus of the implementable plan. Work to make positive changes is already under way.



Chapter 1: Deteriorating Properties



Chapter 2: Commercial Development



Chapter 3: Walkability + Connectivity



Chapter 3: Communications

Why you should care

- ▶ Citizens expressed a need for change in the four key areas and are expecting follow-through.
- ▶ The communities can best ensure their future viability by adapting their small-town identities for the next generation of home- and business owners, as detailed in this plan.
- ▶ There are costs to making changes (time, money, effort), but also costs to doing nothing (resentment, declining property values and less tax revenue).

Now who does what?

This report can serve as a guide in the following ways:

ELECTED OFFICIALS - This report documents the development of the comprehensive plan. It identifies the directions in which the boroughs will change, and lays out the practical next steps that will produce the desired changes. Next steps, in most cases, rest in the hands of elected and appointed officials who have the role and responsibility of initiating new policies or procedures; providing funding via grants or city revenue streams; providing human and material resources; and lending oversight. Residents expect leadership from their elected officials, including anticipating future challenges before they become today’s problems.

CITIZENS - Individuals may advocate for the plan and track progress by comparing the steps listed in this report to physical changes in the community and actions taken by the two boroughs. Citizens must attend public meetings where decisions are made. Citizens must take an active role by pressing for the actions and policies listed in this plan, which are designed to create change in the two communities. Citizens also may support and propel change by volunteering for committees or for special initiatives.

BOROUGH STAFF MEMBERS - Crafton and Ingram employees have the responsibility of identifying successive next steps and tracking progress. They will work on a day-to-day basis to develop policies and procedures; muster resources; and assist elected and appointed officials in pushing the outcomes of the plan. Staff members are in the best position to spot obstacles to progress and propose solutions.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS - People serving on the Planning Commission(s) should become deeply familiar with the contents of this report. These members, along with other board and commission members, hold the responsibility of keeping the boroughs’ “foot on the gas” for implementing the steps in this plan, anticipating what should happen next, and proposing action, and solving problems that will clear the way for progress.

Deteriorating Properties

Crafton and Ingram will be an attractive location where property values remain steady or grow, and where well-maintained homes and businesses create a healthy and inviting place to live, work and participate fully in community life. The main steps:

- Create a Blight/Enforcement Action Team to lead an overall process for addressing existing and emerging property maintenance problems and preventing new ones. The communities should implement software to track code enforcement and building permitting, with links to finance.



The presence of poorly maintained properties harms the value of other homes or buildings in the area.

- Adopt policies and practices that prevent and remediate property deterioration, including creating a consistent approach between the two communities, implementing new ordinances and programs, and employing a full-time code enforcement officer.

- Make it easier to improve and redevelop properties, including providing easy access to information about investment opportunities. This includes an online vacant land registry.

- Build awareness of and engagement in these efforts to show residents and business owners the two boroughs are energetically pursuing solutions to a problem identified by residents as one of the most critical in the communities.

Commercial Development

Crafton and Ingram will present business owners and investors, workers and residents with viable, diverse, convenient and attractive commercial environments. The main steps:

- Create a shared planning and zoning initiative to support the two boroughs' vision, goals and strategy steps. This would best be led by a joint planning commission. This commission will lead efforts to revising zoning ordinances, and will be the champions of implementing this comprehensive plan.
- Create a new impression of Crafton and Ingram's available properties and investment opportunities. This includes adopting policies and program that support redevelopment, and adding to the boroughs' capacity. One important step is to partner with Economic Development South to secure expertise and assistance to get the work done.
- Reinvigorate the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center. This includes close communication with owners to ensure changes follow progressive design standards, and for the boroughs to implement streetscape and connectivity improvements within rights-of-way.

Connectivity + Walkability

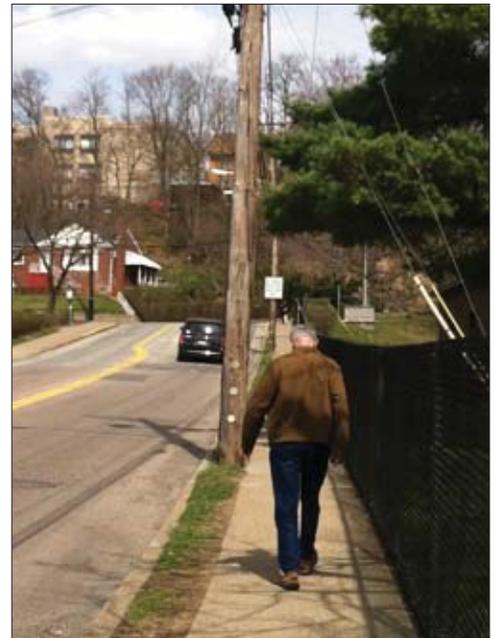
Crafton and Ingram will attract and retain residents and businesses by maintaining and improving the boroughs' status as highly walkable communities. The main steps:

- Identify existing and potential routes within, between and beyond the boroughs, and make improvements, such as repairs, new sidewalks, more visible crosswalks and other amenities that enhance walkability and connectivity.
- Build public awareness of the boroughs' strength and viability as walkable and bikeable communities. Publicize the walking/biking routes and create activities that engage citizens in more outdoor exercise for health and community-building.

Communications

Crafton and Ingram will engage the public through timely, accurate and effective two-way communications. The main steps:

- Learn the means by which residents, institutions and businesses want to receive information, ask questions or share ideas with the boroughs. Develop a communications plan and toolkit that meets these needs, and revise staff roles and responsibilities for consistent and effective two-way communications.
- Add information, functionality and usefulness to borough websites. Reasonable achievement goals may be set by viewing award-winning websites from other Pennsylvania communities of the same size.
- Create and implement a protocol for welcoming citizen participation and attendance at council and other official meetings.
- Develop a volunteer recognition program.



Both boroughs are already very “walkable.” Improvements along key walking routes will enhance the boroughs’ status as livable and desirable communities.

What set this plan in motion

Implementable comprehensive plans should be as deeply rooted as possible in community opinion. This was true for the Crafton-Ingram Thrive plan, which also placed a high priority on building awareness in the boroughs about the planning process.

Initial public meetings



On a walking tour of the boroughs, members of the steering committee pass a popular local restaurant.

- Our process began with public meetings in each borough, at which residents listed and prioritized the issues they felt are most important to the community, and also explained which problems are most feasible to address.
- The meetings were well attended, considering the boroughs' size. Long- and newer-term residents attended.
- Comments at the public meeting in Ingram reflected heightened sensitivities about a charged issue that was under discussion at the time: the future of the Volunteer Fire Department. Ingram Borough Council resolved the VFD issue while work proceeded with this plan. However,

some residents who were displeased with the VFD decision stated a mistrust of the planning process as well, saying they had lost confidence in any initiative led by the council.

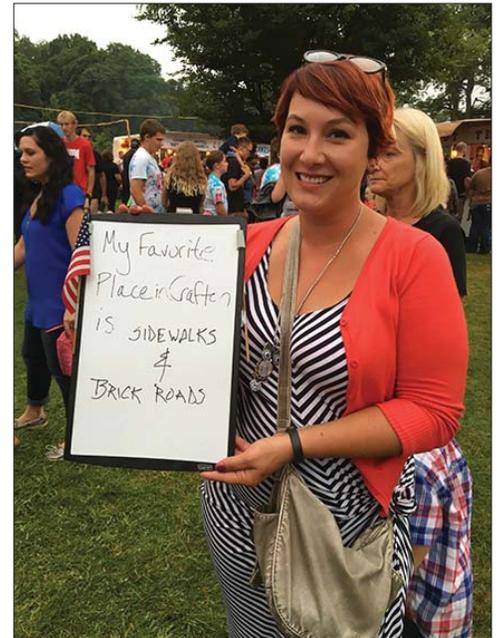
Steering committee

- Membership in the steering committee included long- and newer-term residents from both communities, members of the borough councils and planning commissions, the Crafton Borough manager, and the shared code enforcement officer. Meeting locations alternated between the two boroughs.
- The committee finalized the list of four key working areas.
- Members of the steering committee subsequently chose one or two of the working area topics as ones they would particularly help to pursue during the planning process. It is hoped that they will continue to help lead change as part of an ongoing process that is the heart of implementable comprehensive planning.
- As part of our information-gathering for the four working areas, the consultant and steering committee went on walking tours of the boroughs. This propelled common understanding of baseline conditions for Connectivity + Walkability, Commercial Development, and Deteriorating Properties.

Community awareness-building

A distinctive element of the implementable planning process in Crafton and Ingram was a well-developed and energetic effort to spread the word in the community about the planning process; collect opinions; and acquire contact information for people who might be willing to participate more actively in civic life in the future.

- Pashek Associates, serving as planning practice consultant, created a comprehensive plan website, providing information to the community about the four key working areas and how to get involved. The site is: CIthrive.wordpress.com.
- The steering committee and borough councils created a flyer that was sent to all residents. This explained the comprehensive planning process, the reasons behind choosing the four key working areas, and community goals for each of the four.
- Committee members and consultant held two pop-up events outside the Giant-Eagle store in Crafton-Ingram Shopping Plaza at which they handed out flyers, explained the plan and asked for input.
- Crafton Celebrates! and Ingram Days are the most well-attended annual events in each community. Held in the summer, they are great opportunities to meet large numbers of residents. Steering committee members and the consultant created a presence at each event to build awareness of the plan and generate community spirit. Residents were asked to pose for social media photos showing their favorite things about their boroughs.
- Community awareness efforts naturally align with the implementation strategies presented in the Communications working area within this comprehensive plan.



At Crafton Celebrates! and Ingram Days, residents told us their favorite thing in the boroughs. This resident wrote: “Sidewalks and brick roads.”

Crafton's top tasks in next 6 months

Of the implementation steps outlined in this plan, this list suggests what to do right away.

- ▶ Consider joining with Ingram to hire new code enforcement officer.
- ▶ Apply for a grant to update zoning ordinances to be consistent with this comprehensive plan and to assist in achieving the goals of this plan.



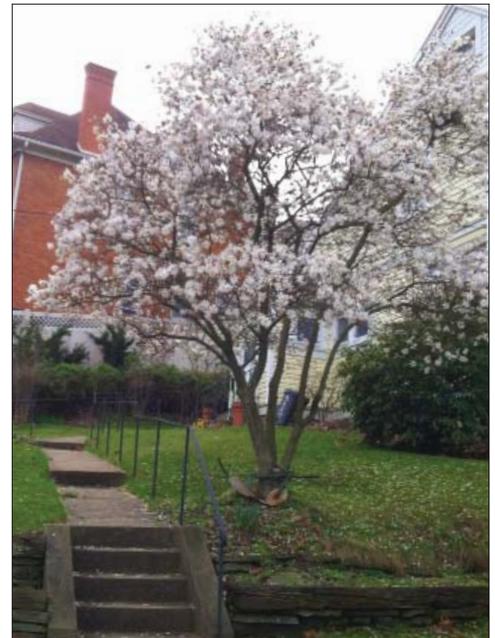
Focusing on four working areas encourages progress on matters that the boroughs feel are most important.

- ▶ Work with Ingram to form a Blight/Enforcement Action Team, and begin working on a comprehensive strategy to focus on deteriorated properties. The communities should implement software to track code enforcement and building permitting, with links to finance.
- ▶ Explore participating in Tri-COG Land Bank.
- ▶ Consider creating a joint planning commission with Ingram to champion the contents of this plan.
- ▶ Negotiate in concert with Ingram a contract with Economic Development South to provide professional capacity regarding economic development.
- ▶ Meet one or two times a year with owners of Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center properties to coordinate efforts to improve the appearance of the center. Identify grants that the borough can obtain to support the private developer(s) in improving the space.
- ▶ Create a joint connectivity working group to identify and implement improvements in borough walking and biking routes as detailed in comprehensive plan.
- ▶ Shade Tree Commission should continue its work, including applying for TreeVitalize grant to add trees along identified walking routes.
- ▶ The current joint communications working group should develop a communications toolkit for both boroughs to employ, and should pursue the other communications strategies in this plan.

Ingram's top tasks in next 6 months

Of the implementation steps outlined in this plan, this list suggests what to do right away.

- ▶ Consider joining with Crafton to hire new code enforcement officer.
- ▶ Apply for a grant to update zoning ordinances to be consistent with this comprehensive plan and to assist in achieving the goals of this plan.
- ▶ In the meantime, revise current regulations to adopt the current International Property Maintenance Code.
- ▶ Enact rental registration program.
- ▶ Explore participating in Tri-COG Land Bank.
- ▶ Consider creating a joint planning commission with Crafton to champion the contents of this plan.
- ▶ Work with Crafton to form a joint Blight/Enforcement Action Team, and begin working on a comprehensive strategy to focus on deteriorated properties. The communities should implement software to track code enforcement and building permitting, with links to finance.
- ▶ Negotiate in concert with Crafton a contract with Economic Development South to provide professional capacity regarding economic development.
- ▶ Meet one or two times a year with owners of Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center properties to coordinate efforts to improve the appearance of the center. Identify grants that the borough can obtain to support the private developer(s) in improving the space.
- ▶ Create a joint connectivity working group to identify and implement improvements in borough walking and biking routes as detailed in comprehensive plan.
- ▶ The borough should collaborate with Crafton to apply for a TreeVitalize grant to add trees along identified walking routes.
- ▶ The current joint communications working group should develop a communications toolkit for both boroughs to employ, and should pursue the other communications strategies in this plan.



An Ingram yard in springtime.



Acknowledgements

Crafton Borough Council

- Nina Amendola, President of Council
- David O'Brien, Vice President of Council
- Fred Amendola
- Marsha Damits
- Alice Glaser
- Phillip Levasseur
- Coletta Perry

Ingram Borough Council

- Richard "Sam" Nucci, President of Council
- Greg Butler, Vice President of Council
- Karen Dixon
- Joe Chesno
- Jerry Ellis
- Samantha Wilfert
- Don Bennett

Steering Committee

Crafton

- Robert Herring
- Lydia Herring
- Phillip Levasseur
- Dave Morgan
- David O'Brien
- Dennis Piper
- Megan Schriver
- Ann Scott

Ingram

- Don Bennett
- Donna M. Bodnar
- Greg Butler
- Dave Damp
- Joe Gertz
- Ron McClellan
- Rick Smith
- Karen Tarullo

Funders and Collaborators

- ▶ Work on this Implementable Comprehensive Plan was funded by Crafton and Ingram and through a grant from Allegheny County Economic Development.
- ▶ Pashek Associates served as planning consultant for this Implementable Comprehensive Plan.
- ▶ Work on the companion Early Intervention Program, conducted by Grass Roots Solutions, was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Crafton and Ingram in Context

The area where Crafton and Ingram lie was originally occupied by Native Americans, then invaded and settled by Europeans, who built farms across the region. By the middle of the 19th century, wealthy people from Pittsburgh used the Chartiers Valley area as a recreational site, taking advantage of the waterways and countryside atmosphere for weekend trips. In 1851, the railroad came through — built by the Chartiers Coal Company — and began carrying passengers in 1865.

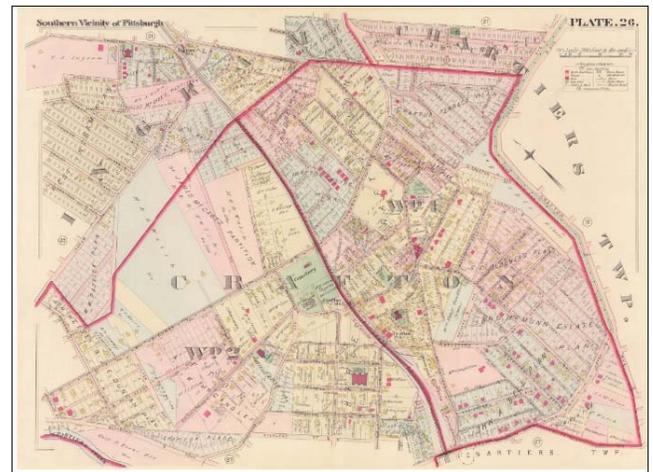
Crafton became incorporated as a borough in 1892, and Ingram became a borough in 1902. Both were suburbs where middle-class families lived, with an easy commute into Pittsburgh by rail. The streetcar came into the area in 1895, making the commute even more convenient, and real estate boomed. Several smaller properties were annexed to Crafton between 1901 and 1910. The Crafton Borough Council adopted one of the first zoning ordinances after Pittsburgh's in 1926.

After World War II, the population and demand for property in Crafton and Ingram went down, partly because of the invention of the automobile (streetcar transit became less important, and the old housing stock had no room for parking).

The Crafton/Ingram Shopping Center opened in 1958, creating new competition for the existing small businesses in the area. Construction of the Parkway West diverted traffic and attention from Crafton, and street cars were replaced by buses. As the population in Crafton and Ingram aged, a demand for housing for senior citizens emerged, spurring the construction of two senior high-rises: the Crafton/Ingram Towers in 1974 and Crafton Plaza in 1980. The shopping center was renovated in 1988-89.

The Chartiers Valley Council of Governments was formed in 1970, and merged with the West Hills and Valleys COG to form the Char-West COG in 1981. Crafton and Ingram both joined a Joint Planning Commission (along with Rosslyn Farms and Thornburg) created in 1982, but participation in that effort waned over time, partly, it is said today, because it was difficult to coordinate meeting times among four communities.

The West Busway opened in 2010, restoring convenient mass-transit commuting possibilities for Crafton and Ingram residents.



A 1905 G.M. Hopkins and Co. map of the “Southern Vicinity of Pittsburgh” shows land on Steuben Street owned by C.C. Craft and property on Prospect Avenue owned by T.A. Ingram.

historicpittsburgh.org

Information Sources:

<http://www.ingramhistoricalsociety.org/history.htm>

<http://digital.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/t/text/text-idx?idno=31735055766921;view=toc;c=pitttext>

Crafton Trends

From the Early Intervention Plan developed for Crafton Borough by Grass Roots Solutions

The Borough of Crafton, located seven miles west of downtown Pittsburgh, has a population of approximately 5,908 and a total land area of 1.1429 square miles. Crafton is surrounded by the City of Pittsburgh's neighborhoods Oakwood, Crafton Heights, and Westwood in addition to Ingram and Thornburg boroughs. The borough has excellent transportation access to the City of Pittsburgh's I-376 (Parkway) West, I-79, and the Port Authority's West Busway.



Crafton Plaza, now Arbors Crafton Plaza, on East Crafton Avenue, was built in 1980.

The community was originally named after James S. Craft, an attorney who bought a large amount of land, some of which encompassed the Borough. Upon James's death, his son, Charles Craft, divided the land into lots and submitted the lots to the Allegheny County Courthouse. One of the lots was named Crafton, which was finally incorporated in 1882.

Crafton's population steadily increased from 1900 to 1960 when the greater Pittsburgh-region was a hotbed for the steel industry. The earliest population data provided begins at 1900 where the borough had 1,927 residents. The

borough's population peaked in 1960 with a total of 8,418 residents. The largest decline of residents occurred between 2000 and 2010, with a loss of 11.3% of its population.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2009-2013 Five-Year American Community Survey (ACS), the borough had a population of 5,908 in 2014. The population is projected to remain somewhat consistent in the coming years.

According to the 2010 Census, approximately 91.7% of the population was white; 4.6% was African-American; 1.4% was of Hispanic origin; and approximately 2.5% was of two or more races.

The following statistics are reported in the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2009-2013 ACS:

- The median age of the population was 40.7 years.
- Approximately 19.0% of the Borough's population was under the age of 18.
- About 14.1% of residents are over the age of 65, which is less than in the county.
- The median age is comparable to that of Allegheny County, which has a median of 41.1 year, with 19.5% under the age of 18 and 16.9% over the age of 65.
- Males account for approximately 47.5% of the total population in the borough, and females account for 52.5% of the total population.
- There are 3,110 housing units in the borough. Of these, 10.4% were reported as vacant.

- There are approximately 2,788 households. The average household size is 2.13.
- Approximately 24.2% of households have someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older.
- The median household income is \$49,888.
- Approximately 1.2% of the borough's families are below the poverty level. This is much lower than the county level (8.9%), state level (9.2%) and national level (11.3%).
- The median value of an owner-occupied unit is approximately \$112,700, which is less than Allegheny County (\$122,400) and Pennsylvania (\$164,700).
- Slightly under half (48.4%) of the housing units in the borough are renter-occupied.

Like many Western Pennsylvania communities, the borough experienced a steady increase in population until 1960 and a slight decrease since 1960. However, there are indications that the borough could experience future increases in population because of several attributes, such as its close location to amenities in downtown Pittsburgh, easy access to the Pittsburgh International Airport, and excellent arterial roadways that include I-79, I-376, and the West Busway. Nevertheless, Crafton must begin to work from the premise that it will likely either remain at the same population level or realize only incremental population growth as land is redeveloped in the borough and blighted properties are returned to active use.

Ingram Trends

From the Early Intervention Plan developed for Ingram Borough by Grass Roots Solutions

The Borough of Ingram, located four miles west of downtown Pittsburgh, has a population of approximately 3,330 (2010 Census) and a total land area of 0.43 square miles. Ingram is surrounded by the City of Pittsburgh in addition to Crafton and Thornburg boroughs. The borough has excellent transportation access to the City of Pittsburgh's I-376 (Parkway) West, I-79, and the Port Authority's West Busway.

The community was originally named after Edward Ingram and his son Thomas, who emigrated from Ireland in the 1820s and bought land south of Pittsburgh. Ingram's population steadily increased from 1900 to 1970 when the greater Pittsburgh-region was a hotbed for the steel industry. The earliest population data provided begins at 1910 where the Borough had only 2,037 residents. The Borough's population peaked in 1970 with a total of 4,902 residents. The Borough saw its largest decline of residents between 1970 and 1980, after the Borough's population peak, with an -11.3% decline of its population.



Ingram Masonic Hall, an historic building on West Prospect Avenue.

The population in 2000 was 3,712, indicating a decrease of about 412 residents. The population is projected to remain somewhat consistent in the coming years.

According to the 2010 Census, approximately 91.7% of the population was white; 5.7% was African-American; 1.1% was of Hispanic origin; and approximately 1.5% was of two or more races.

The following statistics are reported in the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2009-2013 ACS:

- The median age of the population was 41.8 years.
- 20.4% of the borough's population was under age 18.
- About 15.0% of the residents in the borough are over the age of 65, which is less than in the county.



In Ingram, 36.1 percent of housing units are renter-occupied. In Crafton the figure is 48.4 percent.

- The median age is comparable to that of Allegheny County, which has a median of 41.1 year, with 19.5% under the age of 18 and 16.9% over the age of 65.
- Males account for approximately 47.7% of the total population, and females 52.3%.
- There are 1,623 housing units in the Borough. Of these, 6.9% were reported as vacant.
- There are approximately 1,511 households. The average household size is 2.20.
- Approximately 11.3% of households has someone living alone who is 65 years old or older.
- The median household income is \$47,639.
- Approximately 10.6% of the borough's families are

- below the poverty level. This is fairly consistent with the county level (8.9%), state level (9.2%) and national level (11.3%).
- The median value of an owner-occupied unit is approximately \$93,900, which is less than Allegheny County (\$122,400) and Pennsylvania (\$164,700).
- About a third (36.1%) of the housing units in the borough are renter-occupied.

Like many Western Pennsylvania communities, the borough experienced a steady increase in population until 1970 and a slight decrease since 1970. However, there are indications that the borough could experience future increases in population because of its close location to amenities in downtown Pittsburgh, easy access to the Pittsburgh International Airport, and excellent arterial roadways that include I-79, I-376, and the West Busway. Nevertheless, Ingram must begin to work from the premise that it will likely either remain at the same population level or realize only small incremental population growth as land is redeveloped in the borough and blighted properties are returned to active use.

DETERIORATING PROPERTIES





Deteriorating Properties

Overview

In both Crafton and Ingram boroughs, about half of the existing housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier, according to Census data. About 75% (Crafton) to 82% (Ingram) of homes are more than 50 years old. The age of these buildings contributes substantially to the communities' charm and character, but also presents a potential risk over time.

So far, "blight" is not a pervasive problem in these communities. Still, recognizing the importance of prevention, residents expressed a desire to be proactive. They wanted their boroughs to develop strategies that will forestall a community-wide problem.

Borough ordinances and official practices can have an influence on the upkeep of all types of housing, from single family homes to divided-up old houses, to large apartment buildings. Indeed, both communities want to prevent blight and address developing problems, and both see value in maintaining the historic character of the neighborhoods and communities.

This comprehensive plan advocates action to address any deterioration or lack of maintenance that can accumulate to create an impression of community decline. The goal is to achieve the communities' vision for managing deteriorating properties.

Age of Housing Stock		
Year Built	% built each decade	
	Crafton	Ingram
1939 and earlier	52	51.6
1940-1949	11.5	10.9
1950-1959	11.7	19.5
1960-1969	9.6	4.8
1970-1979	11.2	7.5
1980-1989	2.6	2.8
1990-1999	1.3	1.6
2000-2009	0	0.7
2010 or later	0	0.5

Housing data from U.S. Census ACS 2010-2014

VISION: Crafton and Ingram will be an attractive location where property values remain steady or grow, and where well-maintained homes and businesses create a healthy and inviting place to live, work and participate fully in community life.

Goals and Objectives

1. Preserve and enhance property values.
2. Create opportunities for commercial/economic growth.
3. Improve or create opportunities for safe and healthy residential, social, recreational and cultural life.
4. Create and sustain visually attractive locations and views.

Talking Points

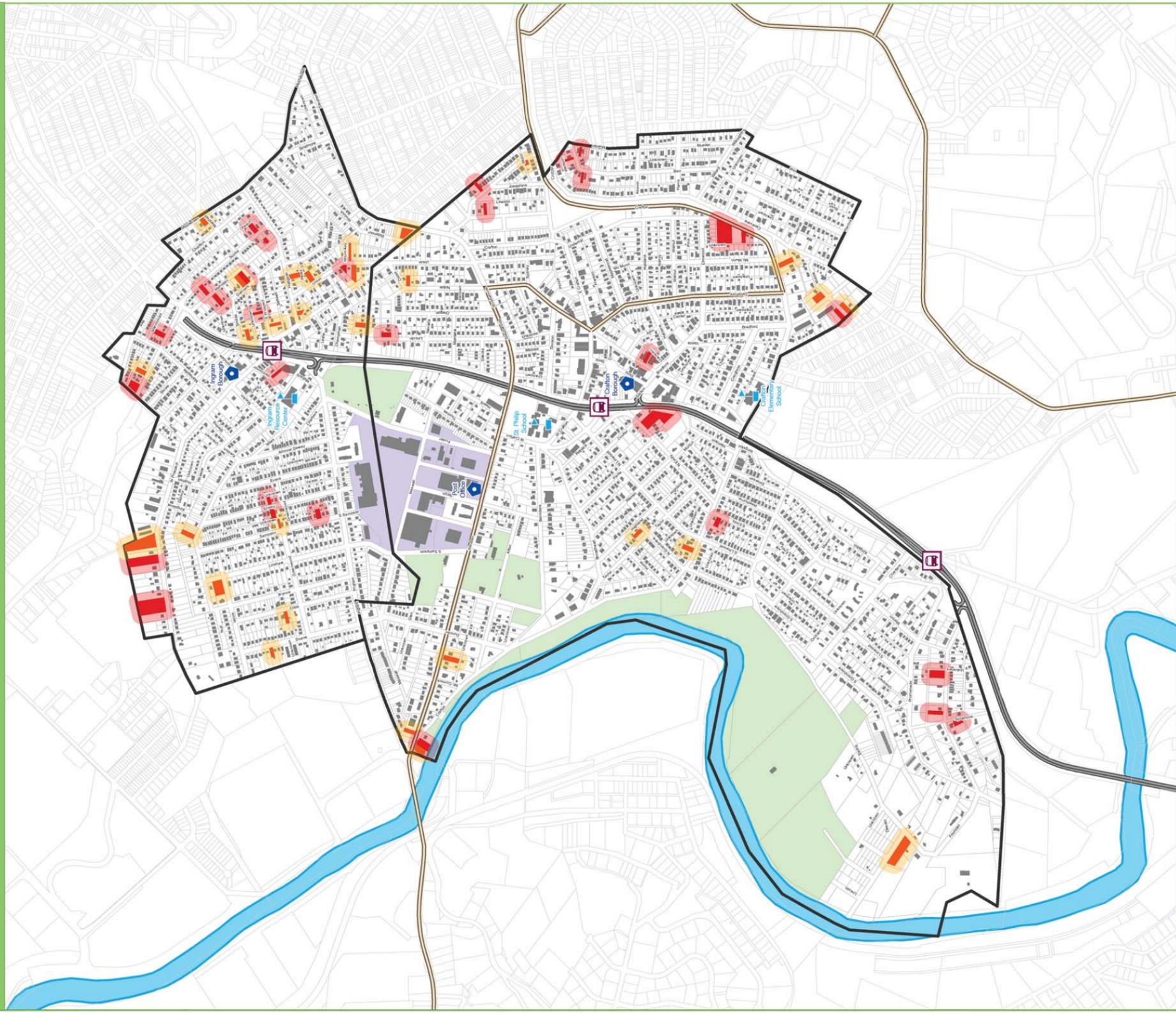
- ▶ Blight and deterioration have direct costs for communities in terms of spending on municipal services. These costs include: code enforcement, public safety (fire and police), public works, and demolition of blighted properties.
- ▶ Blight and deterioration also have direct costs for communities in terms of lost tax revenue. These include lower real estate taxes, lower earned income taxes, and the costs associated with collecting delinquent taxes.
- ▶ Blight and deterioration have indirect costs, including the decrease in the property value of nearby parcels. Lower property values, in turn, yield less tax revenue.



A deteriorated retaining wall and stairs mar this property and create a potential safety hazard.

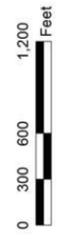
- ▶ Blight and deterioration have other costs as well. These include: the loss of residents who relocate, fearing a decline in property value due to poorly maintained properties nearby; and a blow to a neighborhood's sense of community when neighbors feel harmed by poorly maintained property nearby.
- ▶ To determine whether ordinances and enforcement policies meet the needs of the communities, it can be helpful to have a sense of the types of residences in a community. In Ingram, 64.6 percent of housing units are owner-occupied and 35.4 percent are renter-occupied; in Crafton, 53.5 percent are owner-occupied and 46.5 are renter-occupied. Policies must address both.
- ▶ The communities share a code enforcement officer, who also works in Rosslyn Farms.
- ▶ The communities have different policies and ordinances that, if aligned, would create a more effective effort at fighting blight. Crafton and Ingram should work together, using a unified approach, for maximum effect.
- ▶ Improvements are quite feasible, and this plan provides numerous strategies and implementation steps. These steps strive to address existing and developing problems, and also attempt to react sensitively to hardship cases or incidences of temporary need.

Crafton - Ingram Deteriorated Properties Map



Legend

- Crafton/Ingram Borough Borders
- Port Authority West Busway
- State Route
- Parcel Boundary
- Property Footprint
- Moderately Deteriorated Property
- Deteriorated Property
- Parks and Open Space
- Crafton-Ingram Shopping Plaza
- Charlton's Creek



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Strategies and Implementation Steps

STRATEGY: Create a comprehensive process for addressing deteriorating properties.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram boroughs’ Blight/Enforcement Action Team (BEAT) leads an effective ongoing initiative that addresses existing and emerging property maintenance problems and helps to prevent new ones.

This process will provide the boroughs with a full, data-driven view of the problem and set out specific steps for making improvements. This proactive approach is based on the “Five-Step, Fast-Track Blight Plan” created by the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, with adjustments to tailor it to the specific circumstances and needs of Crafton and Ingram. Here are the steps the boroughs should take to create their comprehensive blight fighting plan, and what the plan should include:



1. Gain consensus for developing a strategy for addressing blight and deteriorating properties.

- ❑ Engage political leadership, which has begun to occur through work on this comprehensive plan, but also must continue with elected and appointed officials.
- ❑ Commit staff resources, including fully supporting the work of the shared code-enforcement officer. Add or strengthen codes and ordinances. Be more aggressive with enforcement, and coordinate with policing.
- ❑ Engage key stakeholders by creating a joint blight/enforcement action team (BEAT) that includes the code-enforcement officer, representatives of the planning commissions, police and fire officials, human services workers, state representatives, the local magistrate and the district attorney. This reprises and builds on Crafton’s previous appointment of a code-enforcement commission (See Strategy on Page 22).

From the outset of the comprehensive planning process, citizens of both Crafton and Ingram said property maintenance and blight prevention was a very high priority.

2. Assess the nature and extent of the communities' problem with deteriorating properties. A comprehensive strategy must be based on data that, in turn, is based on agreed-upon definitions and ideas. The blight/enforcement action team guides, champions and propels these efforts.

- Develop definitions of blight and distress. A common understanding of the problem creates the basis of all future work for the action team.



Mapping of current incidences of blight and deteriorating properties show the locations are sprinkled around both communities, and do not occur only isolated pockets.

- Implement consistent data-collection and data-management mechanisms in both boroughs, including mobile capability and linking with software for tracking follow-up such as warnings, citations and remediation. The communities should implement software to track code enforcement and building permitting, with links to finance.

- Provide ongoing training for the code enforcement officer to collect and manage data.

- Link with GIS data mapping provided by the borough engineers, so the locations and extent of deteriorating property can be fully understood.

- The map on Page 15, a portion of which appears at left, was created by the consultant and the code enforcement officer during development of this comprehensive plan as a first-level assessment of the extent of the problem of blight and property deterioration. A more complete and detailed numerical rating system should be employed.

3. Create the capacity to lead the fight against blight.

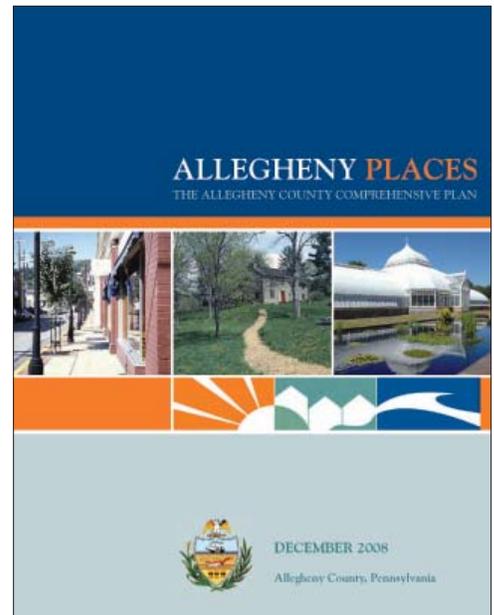
- The blight/enforcement action team will articulate a vision for desired outcomes and reasons for that vision. This will explain how the community would be better if it were less blighted, what it would look like, and how a fight against blight will have additional benefits.
- Create quantifiable goals.
- Select strategies designed to address prevention, remediation and redevelopment.

4. Engage local officials. The action team must ensure its work aligns with the goals and priorities of the two boroughs' elected and appointed officials, and vice versa.

- ❑ The blight/enforcement action team collaborates and communicates with borough officials to seek endorsement and support for the goals of the plan to address blight or deteriorating properties, and the strategic steps being developed.
- ❑ Some elected and some appointed officials participate on the BEAT team for best coordination.

5. Identify priorities and begin implementation. As the blight/enforcement action team and the boroughs move toward implementation of a proactive plan to fight blight and distress, the action team adds the responsibility of ensuring follow-through and accountability. It helps the two boroughs to keep their foot on the gas through a journey that will take time.

- ❑ Collaborate with other local non-profit or governmental organizations that have priorities and goals that align with blight prevention, blight reduction and redevelopment, such as a potential future community development person or organization.
- ❑ Tap the resources and expertise of the county planning division, county redevelopment authority and the Tri-COG Land Bank.
- ❑ Property deterioration occurs in both communities, and appears to be sprinkled about. It is not present solely in isolated pockets. Therefore, action to fight blight should be even-handed for both Crafton and Ingram, and assertive. The blight/enforcement action team should establish an approach, be it beginning with the worst properties, or beginning with the most highly visible locations, or beginning with deteriorated properties that are along community walking routes.
- ❑ Create a blight/enforcement policies and procedures manual in a three-ring binder. (Crafton currently has one, which can serve as an example for both communities, but should be expanded upon and updated.) This manual should be provided as handy reference to staff members in both boroughs, the code enforcement officer and all members of the blight/enforcement action team.



The Planning Division of Allegheny County Economic Development, the redevelopment authority and other agencies help with problem solving.



STRATEGY: Strengthen the ordinances and policies that seek to prevent or address blight, and enhance and further support enforcement efforts.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram boroughs maximize use of public resources and proactively address problems.

Both Crafton and Ingram state a strong desire to maintain property values and a positive quality of life, and to enhance community health and the attractive appearance of the boroughs.

The blight/enforcement action team and officials in both communities should pursue these strategies:

1. Create a consistent approach between the two communities.

❑ Ingram Borough Council should enact a resolution that will update borough standards and keep them current. (The two boroughs enforce different property maintenance codes. Crafton uses the current version of the International Property Maintenance Code, while Ingram uses the 1993 Building Officials and Code Administrators Inc. legacy standards.) As noted in the Early Intervention Program prepared in tandem with this comprehensive plan, it would be helpful if both communities adopted the following language into their adopting ordinances:

“The International Property Maintenance Code, as published by the International Code Council Inc., as the Property Maintenance Code of the Borough of _____, is hereby amended to automatically update to the most recent edition, as amended from time to time, and is hereby adopted and incorporated herein by reference as the International Property Maintenance Code of _____ Borough.”



A door hanger is a not-too-threatening way to let residents know they need to fix a problem with their property.

- ❑ Ingram Borough Council should enact a rental registration program. (Crafton has one in place.) As noted in the Early Intervention Program, rental registration allows a municipality to ensure that all residents are identified for tax collection purposes, and provides information on which properties to consider inspection needs.
- ❑ Both boroughs should operate with the same code enforcement policies and procedures manual, as suggested by the Early Intervention Program. This will help ensure consistent application of standards between two neighboring communities. The blight/enforcement action team should provide the two councils with regular updates on the team’s research and recommendations.
- ❑ Create consistent enforcement practices. For example, both communities should employ the same set of escalating notifications for property violations, from first-

warning door hangers through written warnings and through the manner in which cases are presented at court.

- ❑ Seek other opportunities to create consistency.

2. Embrace opportunities to create a proactive approach. Ideas continually emerge for how communities can pursue their goals through policies, ordinances or practices. The blight/enforcement action team and borough officials should remain on the lookout for programs that might be useful, and assess them to determine if they would be effective in Crafton and Ingram.

- ❑ Consider enacting these proactive ordinances, which were suggested as part of this comprehensive planning process:
 - Adopt a Quality of Life / Maintenance of Property ordinance. The ordinance notes that lack property maintenance, littering, improper trash storage, junk cars, unshoveled walks and unmowed grass are costly problems that contribute to the deterioration of property values and general disorder in a community. These problems degrade the physical appearance of the boroughs, which reduces business and tax revenue and in turn inhibits economic development. These problems negatively impact citizens' quality of life and community pride. The ordinance promotes the health, safety and general welfare of the boroughs by helping to create a clean environment for citizens. It employs both civil and criminal enforcement actions. An example of this ordinance from Pottsville, PA, appears on page A-3.
 - Require long grass to be cut within five days of notice, or borough will do it at the owner's expense. The charges for this work could be recouped in real time or accrued as a lien. An example of this ordinance from Green Tree, PA, appears on page A-15.
 - Place a lien against property for maintenance costs accrued by the borough, with settlement occurring as part of closing costs when a property is sold.
- ❑ Review and pursue ideas that align with the goals of Allegheny Places, the county comprehensive plan, and remain in contact with the Planning Division of Allegheny County Economic Development.
- ❑ State a willingness to be a location for policy experimentation.



Long grass and overgrown shrubs are among the property maintenance problems at this house.

3. Bolster enforcement efforts. A code enforcement officer is a shared employee of Crafton, Ingram and Rosslyn Farms. As noted in the Early Intervention Program, this officer is an hourly employee, and spends approximately 12-19 hours per week in Crafton and 12 in Ingram.

- The communities should budget additional hours for the code enforcement officer, and should provide a vehicle or continue reimbursement for use of the employee's personal vehicle.
- Both boroughs should support the code enforcement officer's use of mobile technology, which enable most efficient use of the officer's time. Currently, Crafton supplies a tablet and internet hot-spot and smart phone; Ingram should share these resources.
- Mobile technology described above should link to the boroughs' financial software and to enforcement related paperwork such as reports needed by the borough councils, notifications, citations and fees.
- Code enforcement data should be compatible with GIS mapping by the borough engineer.

4. Improve early intervention to help prevent the spread or worsening of distressed conditions.

- ❑ Both communities should provide an initial courtesy notice of a likely violation via door-hanger. This should be done more proactively.
- ❑ The blight/enforcement action team should assertively implement an escalating approach to achieve compliance. These approach should include: door-hangers, letters, calls, issuance of quality of life tickets, citations, and declaration of nuisance property.
- ❑ Make property owners aware of resources, such as:
 - Allegheny County Home Improvement Loan Program for low- and moderate-income households. This program offers low-interest home improvement loans to eligible owner-occupants. Emergency/Priority Loans provide timely financing for the repair of a code violation or emergency condition that presents a health and safety hazard. General Improvement Loans support the rehabilitation and improvement of residential properties.
 - Foreclosure Assistance Program (Save Your Home) helps homeowners seek amicable resolution of mortgage foreclosure proceedings through court intervention, counseling and conciliation.
- ❑ The blight/enforcement action team should create new programs or build on existing volunteer efforts to provide assistance in cases where property owners are in temporary distress.
 - In some communities, the Neighborly Gnomes program helps elderly or disabled homeowners cut grass, and Snow Angels, provides shoveling and salting.
 - Crafton and Ingram could tap potential partners in schools, churches, Scout troops and other volunteer or non-profit organizations.

Homeowner Resources

- Allegheny County Home Improvement Loan Program information:
<https://pa211sw.communityos.org/zf/profile/service/id/792640>
- Foreclosure Assistance program (Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas and Sheriff’s Office) information:
<https://www.alleghenycourts.us/civil/foreclosure.aspx>



STRATEGY: Make it much easier to improve and redevelop properties in the two boroughs.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram boroughs improve tax rolls and create a lively commercial environment by attracting investment, businesses and property owners.

The boroughs can support residents and prospective property owners, business owners and developers by providing information about opportunities and borough requirements.

Permit Applications & Ordinances

Permit Application Information

- o Building Permit Application
 - o [Ordinance](#)
 - o [Application Form](#)
 - o [Rebate for Home Improvements - ACT 42](#)
- o Certificate of Occupancy and Use Application
 - o [Ordinance](#)
 - o [Application Form](#)
- o Deck Permit Application
 - o [Application Form](#)
- o Demolition Permit Application
 - o [Ordinance](#)

Crafton and Ingram borough websites should assemble information about permits and applications.(above), and should provide links to downloadable forms.

1. Provide easy access to complete information about properties available for investment. As noted in the Early Intervention Program, prospective residents, business owners, or developers want to have their questions answered and forms available to advance their investment goals.

The blight/enforcement action team should coordinate with efforts by the two boroughs to foster economic growth (See Chapter 2: Commercial Development).

Each borough should provide consistent and easy-to access online information about parcels available for redevelopment.

2. Assemble and provide information, forms and applications online.

Property owners should be able to save time and resources by completing forms and applications by download in advance of an inspection or permit request.

Each borough website should assemble online and downloadable packets that include: a checklist of items required for zoning permits, special exceptions, subdivision and land development applications, and associated fees. The packets should outline the necessary approvals and timelines needed for various steps of the construction and/or development process.

3. Using a vacant land registry, actively publicize and utilize available programs to redevelop vacant property.

❑ Ingram should join Crafton as a participant in the Vacant Property Recovery Program, offered by the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County. The program’s “products” are:

- Residential Side Yard – Allows applicants the opportunity to acquire vacant residential lots adjacent to their primary residence to utilize as side-yards.
- Community Parcel – Individuals, private businesses, nonprofits and government organizations can acquire vacant, tax delinquent lots or structures. The reuse of these parcels varies based on each applicant’s development plan; some examples are urban farms, playgrounds, rental housing or parking lots in main business districts.
- Affordable Housing Development – Allows an experienced development organization the opportunity to acquire residential or commercial parcels that are being assembled for the purpose of developing affordable housing.



The images above show before-and-after shots of a vacant lot in Braddock, PA, that was improved through the Vacant Property Recovery Program.

- ❑ Create a vacant land registry, and promote opportunities and post applications online.
- ❑ Directly contact individuals whose property lies next to a vacant lot, and encourage them to pursue the property via the Residential Side Yard option.
- ❑ Speak with community groups to identify opportunities to improve borough locations areas via the Community Parcel option.
- ❑ Watch for opportunities to acquire distressed property to rehab for affordable housing.

4. Employ land banking. The Tri-COG Land Bank (in which Allegheny County municipalities and school districts may participate) acquires blighted properties, clears delinquent taxes and liens, and fixes the places up, with the goals of addressing blight and getting properties back onto the tax rolls.

- ❑ The boroughs and their school districts should consider joining the land bank. To do so, each borough would have to contribute 5 percent of delinquent taxes collected from properties in the land bank's jurisdiction and 50 percent of the property taxes collected for the first five years a land bank property returns to the tax rolls. The Allegheny County Land Bank is operated throughout the Tri-COG Collaborative (Steel Valley Council of Governments, Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments and the Twin Rivers Council of Governments). More information about the land bank program is available from An Lewis, Steel Valley COG.

Agenda for first meeting of blight/enforcement action team

- a. Welcoming remarks by the chief elected officials.
- b. Discussion of survey results about the nature and extent of the problem as well as the current level of effort.
- c. Discussion and consensus-forming on guiding principles and definitions of blight for the task force.
- d. Discussion of the impact of blight on community and economic development efforts.
- e. Discussion and consensus-forming on what success will look like (quantifiable goals if possible).
- f. Initial training on the array of tools to address or prevent blight.

 **STRATEGY:** Build public engagement in and awareness of community efforts to remediate or prevent blight and deteriorating properties.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram respond to the concerns of residents and business owners by successfully involving citizens in developing and implementing solutions.

The presence of blight and deteriorating properties became a Key Issue in the communities' comprehensive plan because residents, officials and the steering committee for Crafton-Ingram Thrive all considered the issue to be important and fixable. Public awareness of borough efforts to address the problems and enhance enforcement should create momentum and support for continual improvement.

1. As noted on Page 17, an early step in addressing the problems of blight and deteriorating property should be to create a joint Crafton-Ingram blight/enforcement action team.

- ❑ Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee finalizes the goals and purpose of the BEAT team, which appear on Page 28.
- ❑ Two borough councils agree to create and support the blight enforcement action team.

- ❑ Recruit members of the blight/enforcement action team. Members of the BEAT team should include:
 - Borough council representatives
 - Code enforcement officer
 - Borough manager and/or clerk
 - Fire department representative
 - Police department representative
 - Planning commission representatives
 - District attorney
 - County Department of Human Services representative

- ❑ Assemble BEAT team members for initial meeting (agenda on facing page, derived from the “Five-Step, Fast-Track Blight Plan” created by the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania). Pashek Associates will facilitate the first two meetings.

- ❑ Continue monthly meetings, following the general outline of the “Five-Step, Fast-Track Blight Plan, which is provided in the Appendices on page A-19.



Crafton-Ingram Blight/Enforcement Action Team (BEAT)

Mission:

To support and propel Crafton and Ingram boroughs' efforts to identify, address and prevent the problems of blight and deteriorating properties.

Purposes:

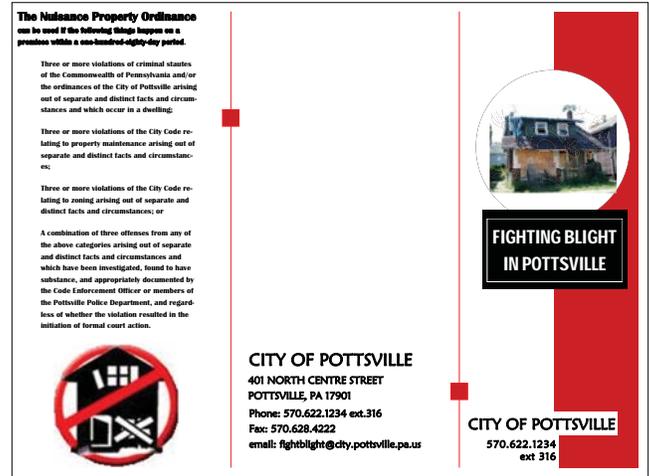
1. Provide the boroughs with updated information about the scope of the problems of blight and deteriorating properties to elected and appointed officials.
2. Provide research, expertise and best-practice advice to help the boroughs improve the effectiveness of their blight-fighting tools, such as ordinances, policies and procedures, and participation in regional programs.
3. Support the work of the code enforcement officer and other borough officials.
4. Assist the boroughs in seeking financial or technical assistance for addressing the problems, and in coordinating volunteer efforts.
5. Work in collaboration with economic development and property redevelopment efforts.
6. Help raise public awareness about the problem of deteriorating properties and potential solutions.

Responsibilities:

1. To participate fully in the effort, including attending regular meetings.
2. To strive to develop new expertise on this issue, such as through reading, interviewing experts or attending workshops.
3. To assist the two boroughs in pursuing joint action on this common issue.
4. To devise and propel next steps over the long-term.

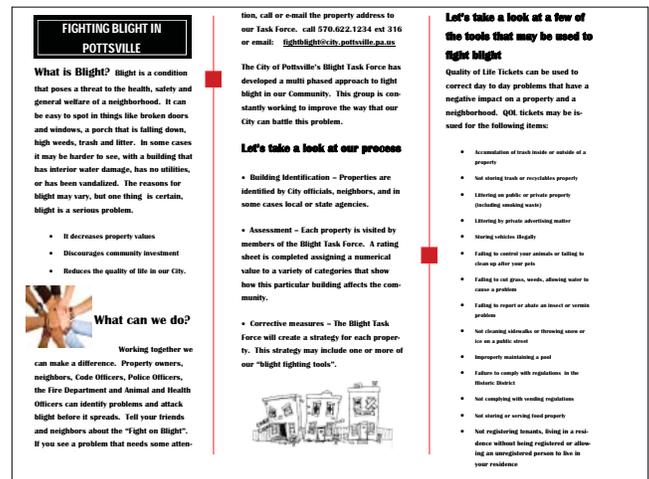
2. Explain and promote to citizens all new efforts to strengthen codes, ordinances, policies and enforcement efforts.

- Use the following channels:
 - Borough websites
 - Email blast
 - Newsletter or insert into bills
 - CI Thrive website
 - Social media
- Create a brochure to explain the boroughs' efforts and tell citizens how they can help. The example at right is provided on page A-47.



3. As noted on Page 25, the boroughs should publicize their list of blighted, distressed or long-vacant properties available for redevelopment.

- Use channels listed in No. 2 above to publicize the list of properties along with potential resources for acquiring or improving them.
- Promote the Vacant Property Recovery Program, and highlight successful examples of improved parcels.
- Promote participation in the Tri-COG Land Bank.



4. Build relationship with the local magistrate, who would most likely hear civil cases about property maintenance.

- Learn best ways the boroughs can present cases in court.
- Keep magistrate abreast of community goals at BEAT meetings.

The brochure shown above and available on page A-47 is an example from Pottsville, PA, where a blight-fighting team began working in 2012.



COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT





Commercial Development

Overview

As inner-ring suburban communities, Crafton and Ingram developed historically as places where people could enjoy a close proximity to Pittsburgh’s downtown amenities while living in neighborhoods that provided the goods and services people needed for everyday life.

Today, Crafton and Ingram seek to retain their character as traditional and friendly walkable places where residents can find convenient access to things they need. Public input collected for this comprehensive plan indicated a desire for bustling commercial activity at the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center and neighborhood commercial areas.

Residents also stated a desire that the types of businesses meet the needs of young families and new residents as well as older citizens and other long-term residents.

Buttressing a sense of some gaps in the number and types of retail services available locally are jobs statistics provided in the Early Intervention Plan produced in tandem with this comprehensive plan. Crafton lost 57 retail trade jobs between 2007 and 2014, while Ingram gained 34. Crafton lost 107 accommodation and food services job in that time frame.

This chapter of the comprehensive plan provides strategies and implementation steps to help Crafton and Ingram achieve the following vision, goals and objectives.



Small neighborhood commercial areas can be found in both Crafton and Ingram. These places sometimes struggle to retain business tenants.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram present business owners and investors, workers and residents with viable, diverse, convenient and attractive commercial environments.

Goals and Objectives

1. Make business investment and development opportunities simpler and more inviting, while increasing tax rolls.
2. Enhance the appearance and convenience of commercial areas, including the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center.
3. Provide a lively cultural, social, economic and residential atmosphere.

Talking Points

- ▶ Crafton and Ingram residents rely on and enjoy the opportunity to purchase goods and services in their communities.
- ▶ The commercial heart of the two communities is the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center, and surrounding businesses. About 45 retail and service businesses can be found in this area, which is bounded generally by Foster Avenue to the east, Ingram Avenue to the

north, South Linden Avenue to the west and Steuben Street to the south. Businesses occupy the perimeter, and surround an 8-acre parking/driving area.

- ▶ Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center straddles a border between the two boroughs. The portion of the shopping center owned by 1204 Corp. opened in 1956 and was last renovated in 1988-89. (See map showing shopping center ownership on Page 47.)

- ▶ Both communities have pocket neighborhood commercial areas. Crafton has a small “main street” area extending from the intersection of Crafton and Noble avenues. Ingram’s most prominent commercial intersection is

Prospect and Ingram avenues.

- ▶ Public transit bus routes serve the Crafton Ingram Shopping Center and other borough locations that have neighborhood commercial areas. Along the West Busway, two stops in Crafton and one in Ingram provide access for both residents and non-residents who come to shop or do errands.
- ▶ Crafton last updated its zoning ordinances and map in 2004. Ingram’s zoning dates to 1982.
- ▶ To date, the boroughs have not established a comprehensive effort to attract new businesses or investment.



This Port Authority route travels along Prospect Avenue in Ingram, past some neighborhood commercial buildings.

Strategies and Implementation Steps

STRATEGY: Create a shared planning and zoning initiative to support the two boroughs' vision, goals and strategy steps for commercial development.

VISION: Encourage reinvestment and new business development via contemporary ordinances and zoning map.

1. Develop impetus for multi-municipal planning and zoning. Both the state and Allegheny County support multi-municipal planning, which helps small locales maximize resources and employ a coordinated approach to mutually important issues.

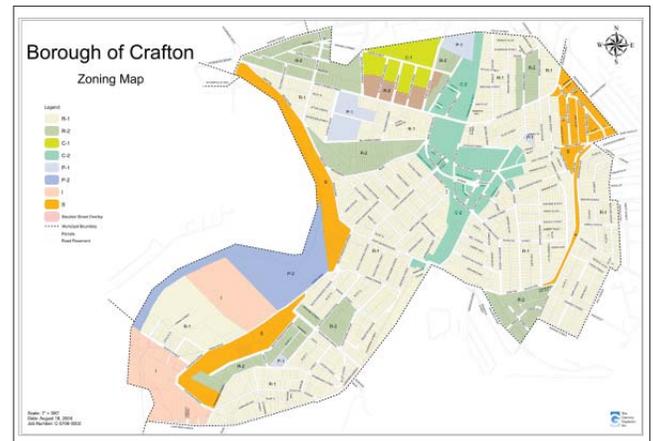
- Review a similar multi-municipal effort (Bellevue-Avalon-Ben Avon) to consider how it has worked in communities that bear some similarities to Crafton and Ingram.
- Secure approvals from both councils to proceed.

2. Consider establishing a joint Planning Commission.

- Create a timeline for transitioning, and set this plan into motion.
- Implement the transition.

3. The Planning Commission(s) leads the effort by Crafton and Ingram to create new zoning ordinances that support the boroughs' vision, goals and strategy steps for commercial development (as well as other issues, such as blight). Outdated ordinances may discourage reinvestment and make the boroughs less attractive to new businesses. For instance, they may require more parking spaces per business than are truly needed. Or they might not support trends toward shared workspaces, home-office-based enterprises, or mixed-use development.

- Develop full list of reasons the boroughs' zoning maps and ordinances need to be revised. These include:
 - Ingram's zoning map and ordinances were last fully revised in 1982, and Crafton's in 2004.
 - Borough demographics are shifting, which may predict shifts in the desired types and locations of business, housing and services. Census data for both boroughs show that the fastest growing population group between 2000 and 2010 was people between 45 and 64 years of age. Other age groups generally declined



Crafton's zoning map and ordinances were last revised in 2004. Ingram's zoning map was last updated in 1982 and currently is not available for viewing online.

slightly as percentages of the total population. The American Community Survey for 2010-14 shows no significant changes since 2010, except for a little bump in the percentage of population who are children under age 5.

- Borough poverty rates have dropped recently, which may predict a shift in housing and consumer patterns. The Census Bureau’s American Community Survey showed the percentage of population in poverty dropped from 9.2 percent to 4.7 percent in Crafton, and from 7.3 percent to 1.3 percent (2005-9 and 2010-15 estimates).



Zoning ordinances can help the boroughs retain their charming character over time.

by inviting guest speakers from communities that have embarked on joint zoning initiatives.

- Seek funding to jointly revise zoning maps and ordinances. Pursue funding opportunities through Pennsylvania and Allegheny County departments of economic development, with local matches.
- Issue request for proposals and revise zoning to incorporate a progressive position that is most likely to serve existing and new residents, reflect changing housing and workplace needs, and attract new businesses.
- Provide training for new members of the Planning Commission(s) via the Local Government Academy or

STRATEGY: Implement policies and practices that encourage business investment.

VISION: As traditionally charming, convenient and increasingly hip places to live, Crafton and Ingram boroughs present a desirable environment for business investment.

1. Create a shared vision for commercial development that refines the following vision statement (which emerged from this planning process): “Crafton and Ingram present business owners and investors, workers and residents with viable, diverse, convenient and attractive commercial environments.”

- ❑ Governing bodies in the boroughs - Planning Commissions and Borough Councils - further develop their understanding of the market realities of the communities, then settle upon a joint vision that is both distinctive and durable.
- ❑ Publicize this vision to citizens, real estate sales companies, and existing businesses.
- ❑ Prepare to incorporate this vision into other implementation steps in this chapter as well as implementation steps for Communication, Connectivity + Walkability, and Deteriorating Properties.

2. Pursue the “Main Street” approach to improving the boroughs’ traditional commercial areas.

- ❑ Beginning with a community vision for the boroughs’ commercial areas, embark on strategies that will bring change.
- ❑ The strategies should encompass these elements:
 - Design (make the commercial areas look their best)
 - Organization (engage citizens, groups, businesses, workers and borough officials in the pursuit of common goals)
 - Branding/Marketing/Promotion (articulate and effectively communicate the value of these commercial areas)
 - Economic Vitality (identify and pursue new or better purposes for business in these areas)
- ❑ Devise specific next steps for each element.



Crafton’s traditional “downtown” area includes a five-way intersection with charming and distinctive old buildings.

3. Add expertise and capacity for economic development by creating an alliance with Economic Development South (EDS). The boroughs should jointly contract with EDS for the work of a dedicated staff member to focus on developing economic opportunities in Crafton and Ingram. This avails the communities to the work of a dedicated staff member as well as the expertise of EDS without adding a large cost burden to the communities. The comprehensive plan steering committee works with two borough councils to develop buy-in for contracting with EDS, including bringing executive director in as guest speaker.



- Create line item in budgets, and fund the initiative.
- Deploy the economic development professional on community priorities, including those in this comprehensive plan.
- As needed, tap the expertise of EDS for additional help.

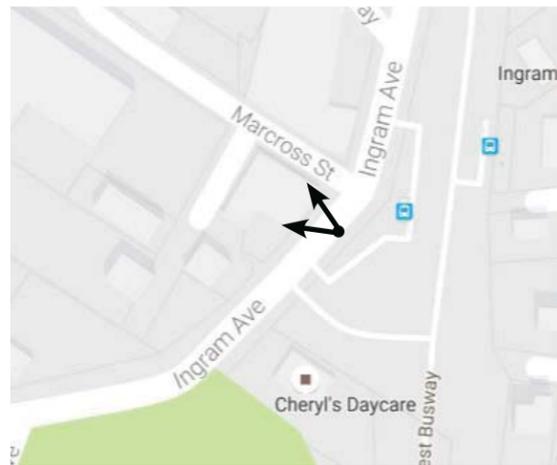
4. Develop a brand for the borough's commercial areas, and market these as charming, up-and-coming yet affordable places to do business.

- Work with local business people, graphic designers and marketers to create a logo, slogan and other branding

materials for the business community.

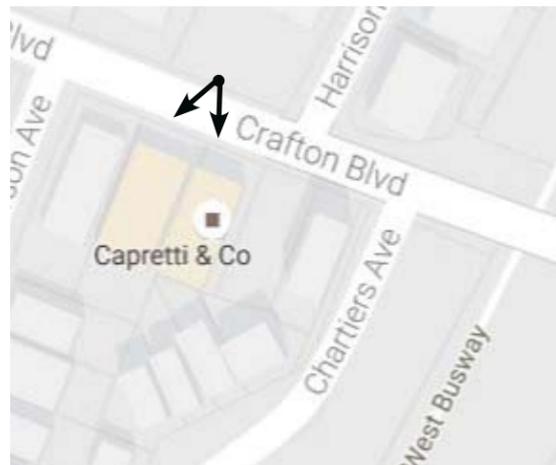
- Develop and implement a branding campaign that may be used by local businesses, real estate agents and others who are marketing properties.
- Develop marketing packages available to businesses considering moving to the area. Highlight demographics, positive area trends, results of any economic development survey, borough contacts, and other useful information.

The communities can develop a brand that identifies their strengths and invites residents and visitors to shop and do business locally.



A neighborhood commercial area on Ingram Avenue in near the West Busway station gets a virtual makeover that includes facade improvements, foundation plantings and new planters.





A neighborhood commercial area on Crafton Avenue in Crafton gets a virtual makeover that includes street trees, planters, new facade signs and lighting, and a bike rack.



STRATEGY: Reinvigorate the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center.

VISION: As the commercial heart of the two boroughs, the shopping center and surrounding businesses adopt a contemporary appearance that also aligns with the visual character of surrounding neighborhoods.

1. Collaborate with property owners to build awareness of community goals. (See map showing proposed shopping center streetscape improvements on Page 45.)

- Meet with property manager with 1204 Corp., which owns the main parking lot and many of the buildings in the plaza.
- Share information about how the comprehensive plan seeks renewal of the shopping center as a vehicular and pedestrian destination, and a location with a more contemporary and inviting appearance.
- Hear owner’s plans for the plaza, and include them in concept drawings for pedestrian connectivity.



2. Update ordinances regarding parking lot requirements.

- Propose revisions in ordinances to require fewer parking spaces.
- Seek agreement from 1204 Corp. and other property owners to update lease agreements in the future that would decrease parking 10% from current levels as leases are renewed.

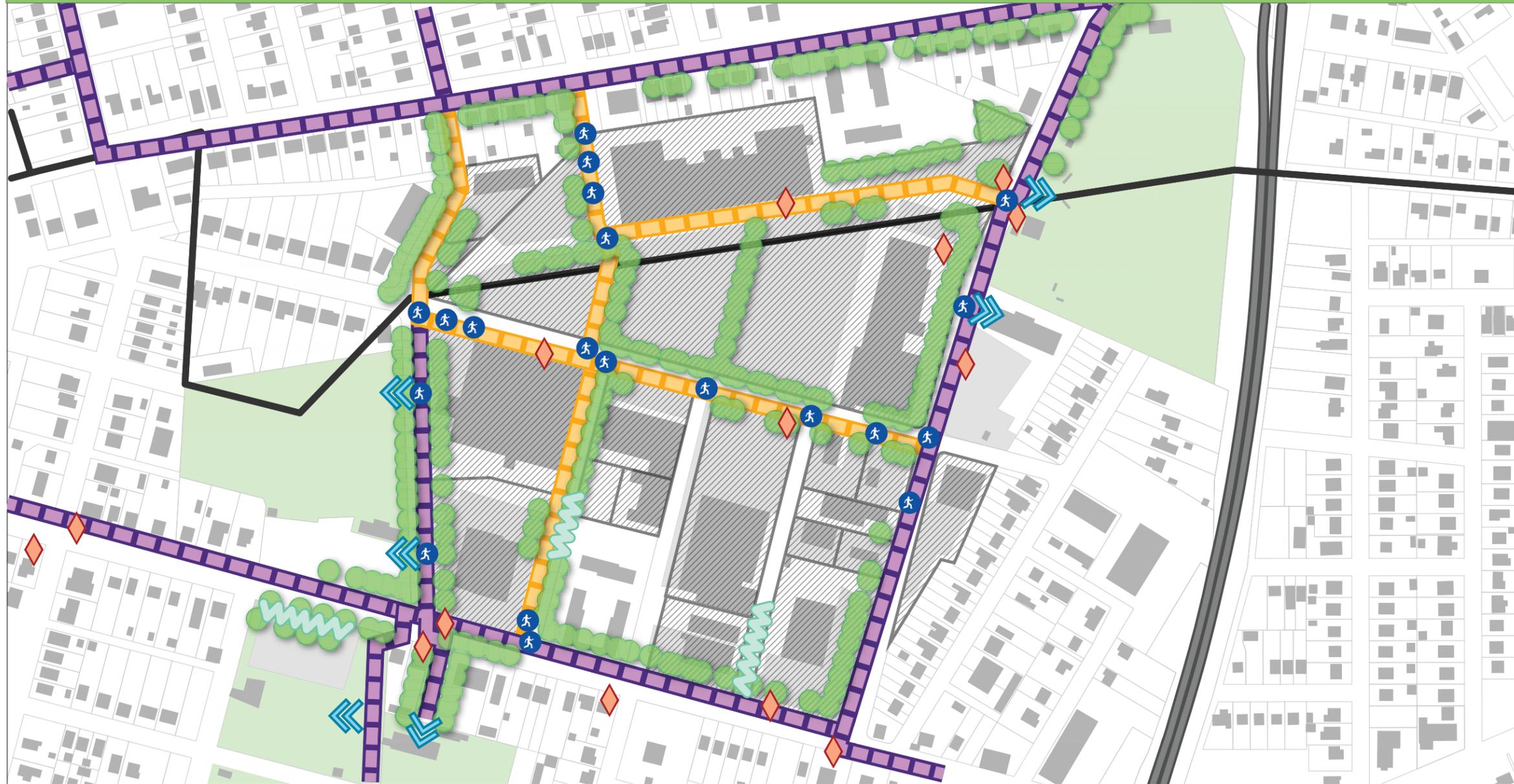
Pigeons congregate at the Crafton Ingram Shopping Center, where local residents scatter food. The food remains also attract rats, and guano creates safety and health hazards.

3. Improve appearance of the shopping center and surrounding businesses.

- Develop, adopt and enforce ordinances governing feeding of wild animals. The feeding of pigeons at the shopping center creates health and safety issues.
- Develop design guidelines for facade improvements, landscaping and signage.
- Add streetscape improvements, working in collaboration with Crafton Shade Tree Commission and property owners. Consider applying for grants. (See also Page 57 regarding Connectivity and Walkability.)

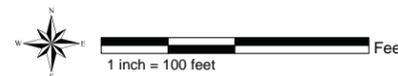


Crafton Ingram Shopping Center - Area Improvements



Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Walking Routes | Rain Gardens | Crosswalks |
| Walking Routes (New Sidewalks) | Building Footprints | PAAC Stops |
| BusWay | Parcel Boundaries | Proposed Trees |
| Crafton/Ingram Borough Borders | Parking Lots | Pedestrian Connections |
| | Parks and Open Space | |
| | Shopping Plaza | |



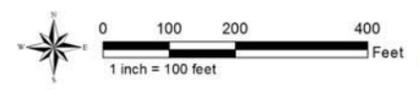
PASHEK ASSOCIATES
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | PLANNING

Crafton Ingram Shopping Center - Property Ownership



Legend

Streets	Parcel owner: GTJS A Pennsylvania Business Trust	Parcel owner: Piluso Lillian	Parcel owner: Norman Roth Revocable Trust
BusWay	Parcel owner: XU DI	Parcel owner: Nest Inc (The)	Parcel owner: Crafton Zamagias Limited
Building Footprints	Parcel owner: Schade Craig R & Jacqueline	Parcel owner: Weirton Shopping Plaza Inc	Parcel owner: Elster Family Trust
Parcel Boundaries	Parcel owner: GFR Real Estate LLC	Parcel owner: Oczypok Paul & Maureen (W)	Parcel owner: ARC CBPBGPA002 LLC
Crafton/Ingram Borough Borders	Parcel owner: Hess Investments LLC	Parcel owner: SCP 2009 C32 067 LLC	Parcel owner: Center Crafton LLC
	Parcel owner: JEET Links LLC	Parcel owner: Rubeo Martin P Jr	Parcel owner: 1204 Corporation



PASHEK ASSOCIATES
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | PLANNING

CONNECTIVITY + WALKABILITY





Connectivity + Walkability

Overview

Set foot any time in Crafton or Ingram, and you'll see plenty of people outside. With three major stops on the West Busway, a busy shopping center/commercial area, well-maintained parks, significant populations of retirees and young families, charming neighborhoods with mature trees, and an extensive network of sidewalks, the boroughs have many of the ingredients needed to cook up excellent connectivity.

Residents participating in the public process for this comprehensive plan listed many reasons to get outside and walk:

- Neighborliness and friendliness
- Getting exercise for themselves or their dogs
- Getting to work
- Completing some errands
- Entertainment

Census data shows that an increasing percentage of workers in Crafton and Ingram commute via public transportation. Their numbers are higher than for

Allegheny County as a whole. This most likely also indicates that an increasing number of people walk twice a day to their transit stops.

Population Commuting via Public Transit			
5-year period	Percent of Workers 16 Years and Older		
	Crafton	Ingram	Allegheny County
2010-2014	18.7	11.8	9
2006-2010	13.8	11.5	9.9

Data from the 5-year American Community Survey, U.S. Census, 2010 and 2014

VISION: Crafton and Ingram attract and retain residents and businesses by maintaining the boroughs' status as highly walkable communities.

Goals and Objectives

1. Provide safe, convenient walking routes to connect community assets.
2. Provide exercise and recreation opportunities.
3. Provide safe walking routes for individuals commuting to work.

Talking Points

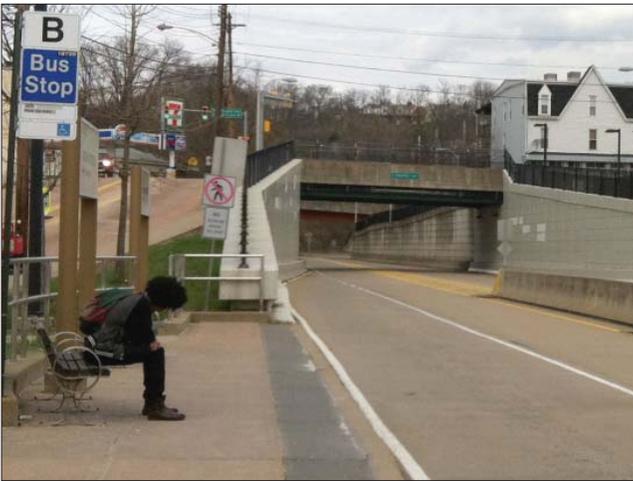
- ▶ An interest in increased walkability and connectivity mirrors an earlier period in Crafton and Ingram’s history:

Both communities began development in the late 1800s. Crafton incorporated in 1892, and Ingram in 1902. Both began as suburbs where middle-class families lived, with an easy commute to Pittsburgh by rail. The streetcar came into the area in 1895, making the

commute even more convenient, and real estate boomed.

After World War II, however, the population and demand for property in Crafton and Ingram declined, partly because of the influx of cars, which made streetcar transit less important. In addition, the lots and streets in these communities did not include much room for parking, making them less desirable for new residents.

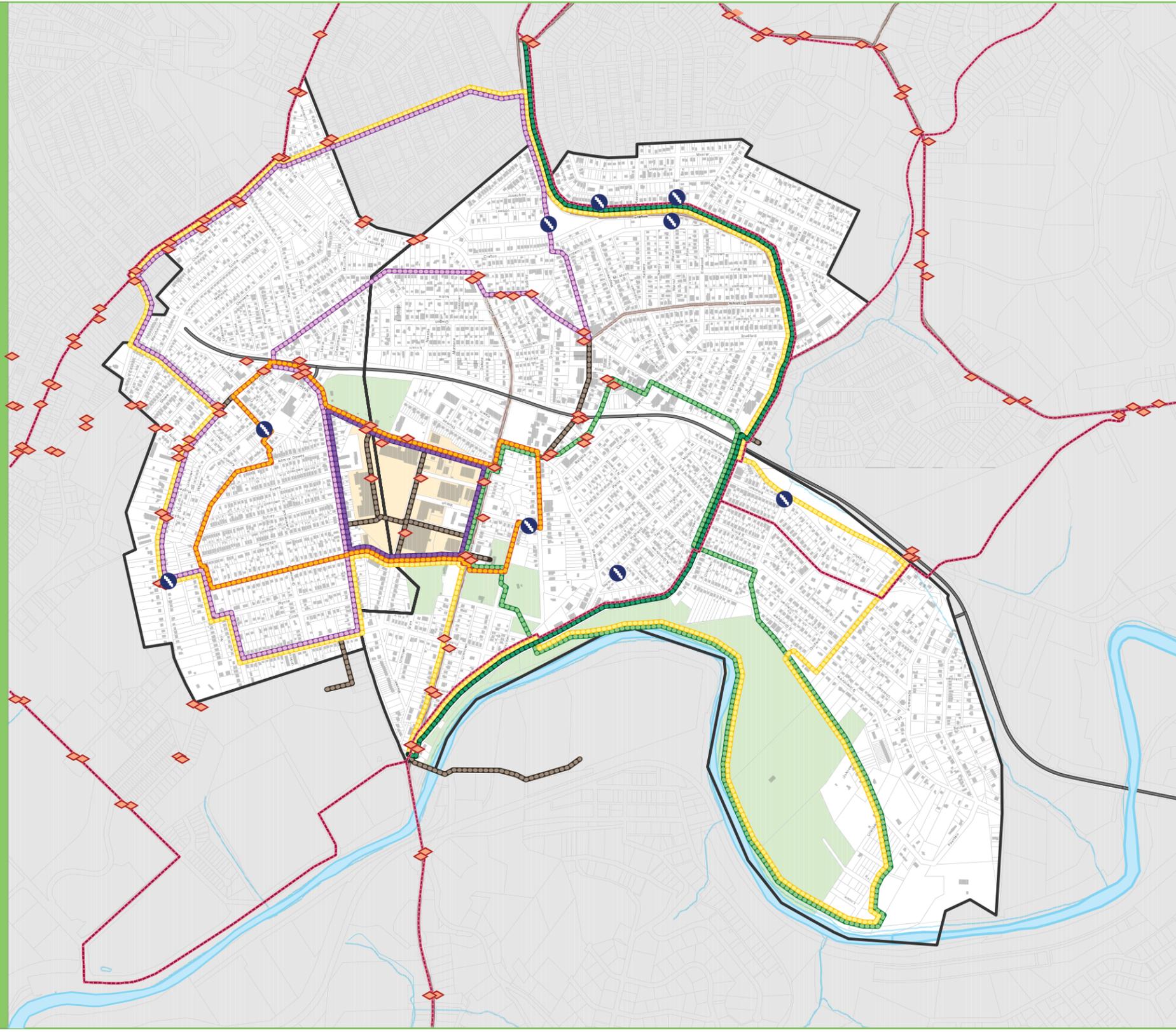
Today, residents, especially millennials and first-time home buyers, again are gravitating toward commuting by public transit, and the communities hope this trend will continue to propel home ownership. This was encouraged by the development of the West Busway, which opened in 2010.



A man describing himself as a new resident of Ingram awaits a bus for his commute to work.

- ▶ Residents value the convenience of the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center, but say the focus on vehicle parking and a ban on dog walking makes it less desirable as a walking destination.
- ▶ Crafton and Ingram parks get a lot of use. Foster Park in Ingram has no dedicated parking lot, so park visitors need to walk there or park across Foster Avenue in the shopping center lot. Crafton’s neighborhood parks are walking destinations.
- ▶ Sidewalks line most streets in both communities, creating an overall welcome for walkers.
- ▶ Crafton’s Meyer & Middleton Park and other green space along Chartiers Creek present opportunities for trails connecting the parks and creek to residential neighborhoods.
- ▶ Other trail connections may be extended beyond Crafton and Ingram’s borders to Clearview Park Trail in the Westwood neighborhood of Pittsburgh; to the Conservation area park in Thornburg; to the Chartiers Nature Conservancy Trail in the Oakwood neighborhood of Pittsburgh; and to trails in the Fairywood neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

Crafton - Ingram Walkability and Key Connections



Legend

- Ingram Walking Loop (1.3 mi)
- Shopping Center Perimeter Walking Loop (1.7 mi)
- Crafton-Charters Creek Walking Loop (2.4 mi)
- Cleanview Greenway - Crafton Spine Walking Loop (2.0 mi)
- Around Town Walking Loop (1.6 mi)
- Crafton Ingram Perimeter Walking Loop (6.1 mi)
- Connector Walking Trails
- Bike Routes
- Bus-way
- State Route
- Crafton/Ingram Borough Borders
- Building Footprints
- Parcel Boundaries
- Charters Creek
- Crafton-Ingram Shopping Plaza
- Parks and Open Space
- Right of Way Stairs
- PAAC Stops

0 300 600 1,200 Feet

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Strategies and Implementation Steps

STRATEGY: Identify existing and potential routes within and between Crafton and Ingram as well as external links to trails, routes or assets in neighboring communities.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram boroughs provide an important service to residents, newcomers and visitors by developing long- and short-term plans for improving pedestrian connections.

1. Form a joint borough connectivity group to continually identify next-step improvements and find solutions to issues as they arise.

- ❑ Working group should include a planning commission member from each borough, the code enforcement officer, and citizens.

2. Research and identify pedestrian routes and important connections.

- ❑ Note community assets that should be accessible via pedestrian routes. These include:
 - Public buildings such as schools, borough offices, and library
 - Parks, trails and greenways
 - Commercial / shopping areas
 - Major employers
 - Natural features, including Chartiers Creek as well as views from hilltops
- ❑ Note potential connections between and beyond borough borders. These include:
 - Right-of-way stairs linking areas of Crafton and Ingram that are separated by steep hillsides.
 - Trails and walking routes that lie beyond Crafton and Ingram. These include: Clearview Park Trail in the Westwood neighborhood of Pittsburgh; the Conservation area park in Thornburg; the Chartiers Nature Conservancy Trail in the Oakwood neighborhood of Pittsburgh; trails in the Fairywood neighborhood of Pittsburgh.



Sidewalks, curb cuts, crosswalks and street trees all contribute to walkability in Crafton and Ingram.

- Biking routes through the community should include “share the road” markings, and should connect with any routes in neighboring communities, including the Clearview Park Trail in the Westwood neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

☐ Note public transit locations. These include:

- Two stops in Crafton and one stop in Ingram along the West Busway.
- Currently, seven bus routes serve Crafton and/or Ingram.



A sidewalk is needed along South Linshaw Avenue.

☐ Note major assets or employers immediately outside the boroughs. These include:

- A popular restaurant on Steubenville Pike just west of Crafton.
- Large industrial and warehouse centers on Woodmere Drive, just west of Ingram.

3. Identify gaps in connectivity to show the location of potential future sidewalk and trail development.

☐ Note locations where sidewalks or stairways are needed or desirable. These include:

- Places where sidewalks do not exist along important routes, forcing pedestrians into the street, such as South Linshaw Avenue and on Crafton Boulevard behind the borough park.
- Routes between a high-rise residential building along Foster Avenue and the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Plaza.
- Places where “desire lines” indicate people walk frequently through lawn areas on public rights of way.

☐ Note locations where new trails are needed or desirable to provide greenway or parkland connections. These opportunities primarily lie in Crafton, including linking Crafton Park with the greenspace above Chartiers Creek, as well as along the creek itself.

STRATEGY: Identify locations for safety or quality improvements through a comprehensive inventory of existing conditions.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram boroughs show they invest public money wisely and treat private property owners fairly by operating from a well-thought-out plan for investing in walkability and connectivity.

1. Identify locations for sidewalk improvements through a comprehensive inventory. The code enforcement officer inventories all sidewalks in Crafton annually, and should maintain a list of priority projects.

- Note locations where deterioration makes sidewalks unsafe, difficult or impassible.
- Note locations where sidewalks do not comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Note locations of deteriorated right-of-way stairs.

2. Identify locations for cleanup and new pedestrian amenities.

- Note locations where litter or weeds have accumulated.
- Note location where trash cans or benches could be added.

3. Inventory the location of future street trees.

- In Crafton, a Shade Tree Commission oversees the locations and health of shade trees, in collaboration with the public works department. In Ingram, the public works department manages this matter. Both should become familiar with the boroughs' walkability maps, and provide recommendations for additional trees along key routes.
- New street trees are suggested for proposed walking routes near the Crafton Ingram Shopping Center.



Amenities and additional trees would improve the visual appeal of the pedestrian approach to Crafton's pool.



STRATEGY: Improve the safety and quality of walking routes.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram boroughs demonstrate the value they place on walkability and connectivity by investing in improvements that enhance the experience of residents and visitors.

1. Improve or replace substandard sidewalks and stairs.

- Boroughs budget annual funds and complete work for sidewalks and stairs on public land.



- Boroughs maintain list of residents looking to complete upgrades on their sidewalks to enable the residents to negotiate work jointly with contractors, to realize the benefits of economies of scale.

2. Add pedestrian safety features.

- Members of the steering committee’s walkability team meet with borough police and public works departments to prioritize locations for additional pedestrian safety features.
- Boroughs complete necessary work to add ADA compliance such as curb cuts.
- Boroughs add specialty paving surfaces and markings at crossings along important walking routes.

3. Add amenities such as trash cans, benches and street trees

- Members of the steering committee’s connectivity team create prioritized list of locations for benches and trash cans and bike racks to enhance the convenience of walking and biking. The committee members collaborate with borough councils, public works department and/or shade tree commission, as appropriate.
- Members of the steering committee’s connectivity team meet with Crafton Shade Tree Commission and Ingram officials to discuss locations for future trees, stressing value of new trees when they are along major walking routes.
- Pursue grant applications for multi-modal transportation, trail planning and construction, and street trees, all of which are initiatives supported in this comprehensive plan.

Dormont Borough has added specialty pavement and markings to increase the visibility of crosswalks along important walking routes.



STRATEGY: Build public awareness of the boroughs' strength and viability as walkable and bikeable communities.

VISION: Citizens of Crafton and Ingram prize the community spirit, convenience and improved health that are benefits of walking and biking in highly connected locations.

1. Make commitments as boroughs to provide new opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens.

☐ Participate in the Live Well Allegheny program sponsored by Allegheny County, which has the goal of improving the health and wellness of residents. (A model resolution is provided on page A-51.) Participating communities need to choose three action steps that promote living well. Some possible action steps that align with this chapter of the comprehensive plan are:

- Develop indoor and outdoor wellness trails accessible to residents of all abilities
- Develop walking maps; measure the distances mapped and encourage residents to meet goals
- Offer incentives for employees who walk or bike to work
- Encourage multi-modal transportation of residents by providing facilities or policies that encourage walking and bike riding
- Encourage involvement with community volunteer activities
- Utilize web sites and social media to provide information on physical activity, nutrition, stress management, tobacco cessation, and other health and wellness related initiatives.

☐ Enlist volunteers to assist with walking, biking and other connectivity improvements such as building trails, planting street trees, cleaning up litter. Potential partners are local nature conservancies, gardeners, walking/running groups, Scout troops, student organizations and trail organizations.

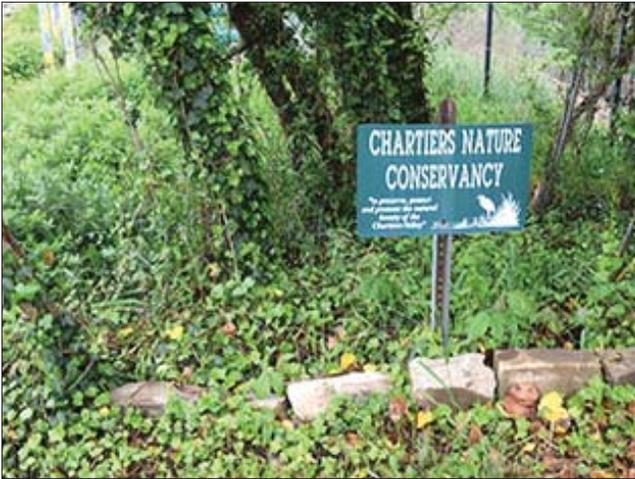
☐ Link language of grant applications with the Live Well Allegheny initiatives supported in this comprehensive plan.



At Ingram Station on the West Busway, amenities include an accessible sidewalk, a bike rack and trash cans.

2. Publicize the communities' designated walking/biking/hiking routes.

- Create connectivity web pages and place downloadable route maps on the communities' websites.
- Develop and provide mobile app maps.
- Add walking route signage in the communities to provide information about directions and distances.



Area trail groups, walking groups and other allied organizations are likely to support Crafton and Ingram's connectivity initiatives.

- Employ all communication channels for community awareness of walking routes. (See also Chapter 4: Communications.)

3. Create other outreach mechanisms and opportunities.

- Meet with existing walking/hiking/biking/running groups as well as special events organizations and local civic groups to make them aware of connectivity and walkability.
- Designate four dates a year as Take A Walk Days, encouraging residents to go outside to take a walk, and potentially meet new people, visit a new location and enjoy the boroughs in new ways.

COMMUNICATIONS





Communications

Overview

Crafton and Ingram, in many ways, are “small towns.” The compact, integral boroughs proudly offer a small-town feel within the larger Pittsburgh metropolitan area. They have relatively small populations (roughly 6,000 and 3,000 respectively), nicely kept homes, good schools, pleasant neighborhoods, and the friendly nature of older, inner-ring suburbs.

In small towns, neighborliness and friendliness stem from mutual respect and shared understanding of the community’s goals, plans and decisions. To that end, the boroughs want and need to foster effective two-way communication – in one direction, to hear from citizens and business owners about their hopes and wishes for their community, and in the other direction to provide information that helps people feel in-the-know, connected, and invested in their community.



This chapter of the comprehensive plan provides strategies and implementation steps to help Crafton and Ingram achieve the following vision, goals and objectives.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram engage the public through timely, accurate and effective two-way communications.

Goals and Objectives

1. Encourage citizen engagement by providing transparency in local government operations and a welcoming atmosphere at borough meetings.
2. Communicate in a timely and accurate way with citizens, the business community, visitors and the media.
3. Provide access to information about community resources for old and new residents to the greatest extent resources allow.

Talking Points

- ▶ Citizens participating in the public process as part of this comprehensive plan stated a strong desire for improved two-way communication with their boroughs.
- ▶ The consultant has noticed that more places working on issues-driven comprehensive plans are listing “Communications” as a high priority need these days.
- ▶ Work on this comprehensive plan began during a time of tension within Ingram Borough over the future of its Volunteer Fire Department. This comprehensive plan was in no way involved with that issue; however, it is possible that some desire on the part of citizens for increased communication arose partly out of concern over the VFD.



- ▶ Communication delivery systems are important. Different people want to receive information through different methods: Some people like print on paper; some prefer emails; some check social media; some watch local-access cable.
- ▶ It can be predicted that a significant number of households in Crafton and Ingram do not have internet access. Census data about computer and internet access is not available for smaller Census places like Crafton and Ingram. That said, countywide data can give an indication of likelihood. According to the 2015 American Community Survey one year estimate, 23.9 percent of Allegheny County households with income \$20,000-\$74,000 do not have internet subscriptions. (Crafton’s median income is \$49,888, and Ingram’s is \$47,639.)
- ▶ Some citizens participating in the public process for this comprehensive plan said they did not feel welcome at public meetings, and as a result were hesitant to speak up.
- ▶ Some citizens participating in the public process hoped the boroughs could create a systematic way of welcoming new homeowners and businesses to town.
- ▶ During the time this plan was under development, Crafton Borough initiated a Communications Working Group. This citizen group is researching and studying the issue of two-way communication, with the goal of making recommendations to council. The steering committee for this comprehensive plan worked collaboratively with the working group and made efforts to broaden the initiative to include Ingram as well.

Strategies and Implementation Steps

STRATEGY: Create communications plan.

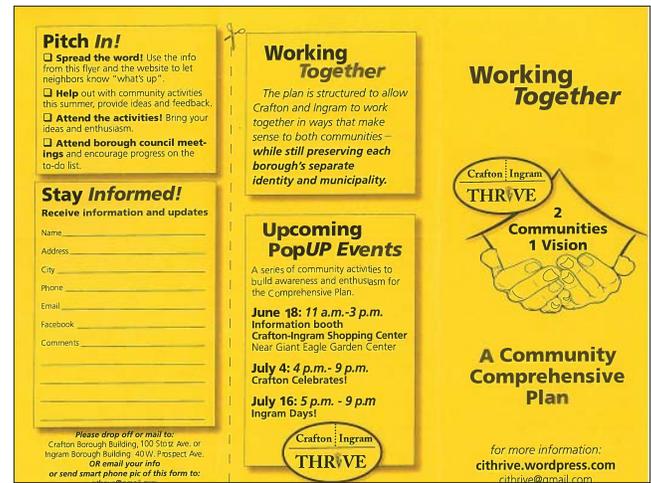
VISION: The boroughs provide citizens with information they need, want and can use, and provide mechanisms for citizens to ask questions or present ideas or concerns.

1. Identify citizens' preferences for methods of receiving information from the boroughs.

- The Communications Working Group conducts research on potential content delivery methods. Research includes understanding demographics and conducting a survey.
- Working group develops recommendations on the ways citizens should be able to receive information, and presents to borough councils.

2. Develop an information/communications toolkit to meet the needs of a diverse citizenry. The toolkit suggests what types of information to convey via which distribution channels.

- Based on the research results, the toolkit should be tailored to meet the needs of the largest citizen preferences, with care taken not to omit groups such as lower-income or elderly.
- The toolkit should account for a range of information types, from answers to frequently-asked, routine questions to time-sensitive, important or urgent news the boroughs must convey.
- Distribution channels should include newsletters, email blasts (Crafton already does this; Ingram should begin), borough website(s), social media. Other options might include public access cable television and mobile apps.
- Ensure that toolkit includes emergency communications plans.
- The communications toolkit, once developed, should be used in both communities by the individuals designated to hold primary responsibility for communications. See Page 65, "Revise responsibility for communications."



Flyers or newsletters can be useful distribution methods.

3. Develop a digital media policy.

- ❑ The Communications Working Group should recommend which social media platform(s) the boroughs use. Each borough should have only one presence on any social media platform, such as a single facebook page for all borough business.
- ❑ The working group and borough staffs should identify which borough staff members and officials should be responsible for posting to borough websites or social media platforms, and provide guidelines for what to post, and how frequently to post.

2016 Citizen Communication Award Winners from PSATS

(Pa. State Association of Township Supervisors)

CLASS 2 – Pop. 5,001-10,000

1. Thornbury Township, Delaware County:
www.thornbury.org

2. East Brandywine Township, Chester County:
www.ebrandywine.org

3. Brighton Township, Beaver County:
www.brightontwp.org

CLASS 3 – Pop. 2,001-5,000

1. East Caln Township, Chester County:
www.eastcalntownship.com

2. Londonderry Township, Dauphin County:
www.londonderry.org

3. Winfield Township, Butler County:
www.winfieldtownship.net

These websites may be good examples for Crafton and Ingram to emulate.

 **STRATEGY:** Add more information, functionality and usefulness to borough websites, to the degree allowed by limited staff resources. Include mechanism enabling citizens to post event information.

VISION: Borough websites serve the two communities by presenting residents and outsiders continual access to readily available information they need and want, and providing convenient ways for citizens to interact with their local governments.

1. Prepare to revamp websites, including the possibility of adopting a new content management system, so the websites can provide the level of content and service that mainstream users need and expect.

❑ The Communications Working Group and borough staffs should review examples of award-winning websites for communities the size of Crafton and Ingram (list at left). This

can help set reasonable standards.

- ❑ The working group and borough staffs should identify the types of new content and functionality that should be added to borough websites. This should include functions that are suggested elsewhere in this comprehensive plan, such as trail mapping, the ability to track community efforts to combat property deterioration, and financial transactions.

- ❑ Employ a joint approach to remodeling the two websites, including selection of a new platform. This will save on website development costs and facilitate future joint initiatives, such as with fighting blight and employing consistent financial systems. This also could enable content to be added to both boroughs' sites when that is useful.
- ❑ Seek grant or other funding for website development, based on how the new websites will facilitate commercial development.

2. Revise responsibility for communications.

- ❑ Divide up or assign responsibilities for applying the communications toolkits. Each borough may have a different approach, and the two might have different levels of service due to their size difference.
- ❑ Consider sharing the services of a public information officer.
- ❑ Employ the help of citizens, board members and/or outside groups to populate the websites, as appropriate. Most content management systems allow different levels of access for different pages, thus preserving the integrity of official content while permitting “trusted providers” to add information, such as dates on the events calendar.

Interests & Experiences

Why are you interested in volunteer board

In what other ways are you active in our c

Upload a Resume

3. Add searchable content. Many of today’s users want to find information via data searches.

- ❑ The Communications Working Group and borough staffs should identify what data can and should be provided online routinely as a public service, and what should simply be available by Freedom of Information Act requests. This is a balancing act that must ensure the public’s right to know while also acting in recognition that the boroughs have finite resources and no position dedicated to website management.

4. Add interactive functionality. Automated functions can reduce work currently accomplished by borough staff members, freeing up their time for other duties.

- ❑ Provide downloadable and online-based forms for permit applications, park shelter or room reservation forms, commission/volunteer applications and other civic responsibilities.
- ❑ Enable online payment of borough fees, such as facility rental and permit applications.

Many residents may find online forms more convenient than paper versions. Automation may also save time for borough staff.

5. Enable sign-up for email blasts.

- Ingram should join Crafton in providing easy way for residents to sign up to receive emails from the borough.

6. Enhance events calendar functionality.

- Create a data-driven visual calendar.
- Include all official borough events and meetings, and automatically supply agendas and meeting information

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
26 School Story Elder Story Ti Davidson Rotary Read to Read Planning Board h Road To Me	27 4p Paws to Read 6p Davidson Board d	28 7p Democrats of Nor	29 9:30a Baby Story Tir 11a Listen and Move 4p Teen Tutoring 4p Reading Buddies 6p Over the River an	30 8p Over the River an 6p C
3 School Story Elder Story Ti Davidson Rotary Read to Read	4 4p Davidson Board d 4p Paws to Read 7p KnowWine Night!	5 International Walk to	6 9a Davidson Connec 9:30a Baby Story Tir 11a Listen and Move 4p Reading Buddies 4p Teen Tutoring 6p Teen Advisory Co 8p Over the River an	7 8p Over the River an 10a 3p C 6p C
10 School Story Elder Story Ti Davidson Rotary Read to Read	11 4p Paws to Read 4:30p Far Frontiers T 6p Davidson Board d	12	13 9:30a Baby Story Tir 11a Listen and Move 11:45a McGuire Nuc 4p Reading Buddies 4p Teen Tutoring 6p Over the River an	14 8p Over the River an 1:30 3p T 6p C

- Include community events by enabling “trusted providers” to enter events, activities and opportunities onto the calendar. This community-generated content could be posted simultaneously on both boroughs’ websites.

7. Create a “welcome package” for new residents.

- On the public website, provide valuable content for newcomers, including:

- Community overview information that showcases what the two boroughs have to offer.

- The community events and activities calendar.

“Trusted providers” such as local organizations or the school district could be permitted to place entries into the boroughs’ community calendars.

- Links to local organizations and activities.
- A statement welcoming newcomers to attend public meetings and to get involved in civic life.
- Provide prizes, coupons or other special offers to new residents via a link to a non-public web page. Send this link quarterly to new residents as determined by property transactions and/or rental registrations.



STRATEGY: Create and implement a protocol for welcoming citizen participation and attendance at council and other official meetings.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram encourage civic engagement.

1. Develop a public meeting protocol for welcoming citizens.

- A draft welcome statement is provided on this page.
- Boroughs should review and revise as desired.

Suggested public meeting protocol

Purpose

Our borough values civic engagement. We welcome and encourage citizens to attend and participate in all of our public meetings.

Statement

My name is _____, and my role here is _____. Before I call this meeting to order, I'd like to welcome our citizens - those in the room and those who are watching at a different time or location.

We're glad you are here, and that you care enough about your community to attend. If you wish to make a comment regarding an agenda item, your opportunity will be during the "Citizen Comments" section of the agenda. If your topic is not on today's agenda, the time for you to speak will be during the "Additional Citizen Comments" section of the agenda at the end of the meeting. When you speak, please introduce yourself and please keep your remarks to XX minutes.

Again, thank you for coming to this meeting and participating in our community.

2. Implement use of the protocol.

- Provide protocol and welcoming remarks to chairpersons of council and commissions.
- Read welcome statement at public meetings. This should occur whether or not citizens are in the room, as some people watch the meetings via live stream or rebroadcast.



STRATEGY: Develop a volunteer recognition program.

VISION: Crafton and Ingram encourages participation in activities that improve our quality of life.

1. Plan annual event to recognize and thank people who have volunteered on commission, boards or other borough-sponsored groups or initiatives.

Create event at park or borough building.



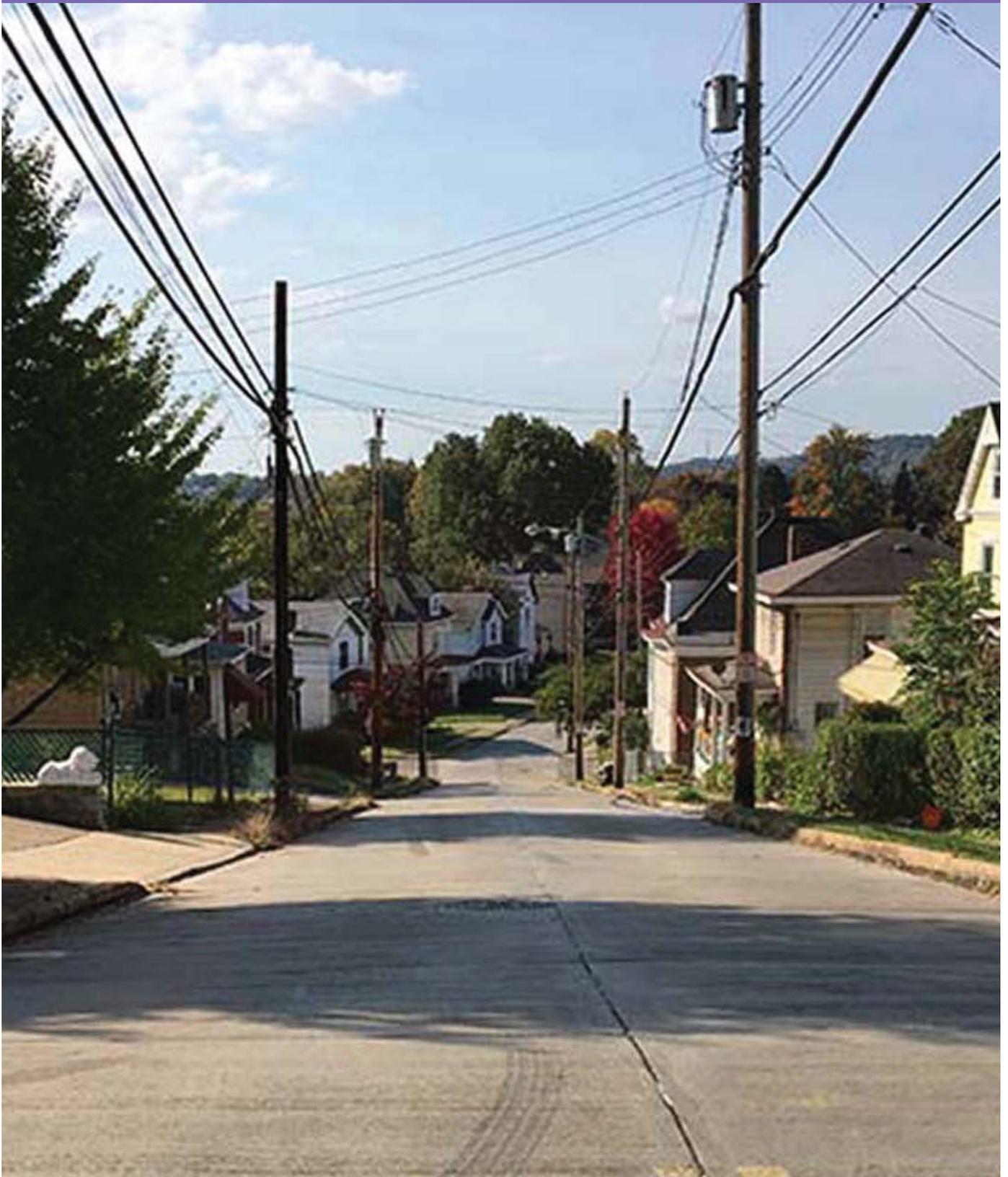
Recruit sponsors or pay out of borough budget. Could include food/beverages, entertainment by student musicians.

Short appreciation speech by senior borough official(s).

Presentation of thank you gifts (Ingram formerly gave out holiday ornaments).

**A low-cost
volunteer thank
you gift.**

ADDITIONAL TOPICS





Zoning Initiative

One implementation step in this comprehensive plan is a suggestion that the two boroughs pursue a multimunicipal approach to zoning. As noted in Chapter 2: Commercial Development, Crafton last updated its zoning in 2004, and Ingram in 1982, so this work is due.

Zoning is sometimes revised in tandem with comprehensive planning because zoning can support and propel the kinds of changes that are sought in an implementable plan. Zoning can be one of the tools the communities employ to make sure they are steering future growth and development in the directions they have chosen. For example, zoning ordinances and maps build on goals for community development by adding specificity about what kinds of development should occur, where, and in what manner.

The public input component of this plan did not unearth a strong desire to “re-do our zoning”; therefore, new zoning did not become its own chapter in this book. Instead, the idea to revise the communities’ zoning arose as a potential implementation strategy for helping Crafton and Ingram pursue the kind of commercial development and other changes they’d like to see happen.

A new zoning ordinance and maps could help the two boroughs achieve their goals related to the Commercial Development chapter, but also related to Deteriorating Properties and Walkability + Connectivity.

This section of the Crafton Ingram Thrive document sets out Community Development Goals and Objectives, which are a primary building block of zoning ordinances. The goals and objectives, which appear on Page 74, align with the intention of the comprehensive plan as well as the Early Intervention Plan that is being prepared concurrently.



Zoning can help Crafton and Ingram pursue the kind of commercial development they want in various locations, such as this intersection in Ingram.



Statement of Community Development Objectives

Crafton and Ingram boroughs aim to foster healthy, economically vibrant, and visually attractive communities for residents, business owners, and visitors. In order to achieve this vision, they have adopted the following Community Development Objectives:

- ▶ Reduce blight and property deterioration, and spur reinvestment in the existing building stock.
- ▶ Stimulate commercial development that is related to the needs of the residential and institutional activities in the boroughs and adjoining municipalities.
- ▶ Preserve and protect the existing traditional architectural character of the communities.
- ▶ Require that new uses are developed in ways that complement nearby uses, and minimize impacts on surrounding residential areas.
- ▶ Allow for mixed uses where appropriate, especially residential living on the upper floors of businesses.
- ▶ Allow for new and productive uses where appropriate, such as shared work spaces, work-at-home environments and “pop-up” businesses.
- ▶ Ensure quality, visually attractive development in the public realm, with an overall intention of expanding community assets. This includes incorporating best practices for design of streetscapes and facades.
- ▶ Require appropriate buffers and transitions between uses of greatly different intensity.
- ▶ Encourage safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian movement throughout the boroughs and beyond.
- ▶ Protect and enhance natural resources and features, open space and historic resources.
- ▶ Reduce stormwater runoff and improve quality of groundwater and streams.
- ▶ Facilitate administration and enforcement of the boroughs’ regulations, including through a joint zoning initiative led by, preferably, a newly convened joint Planning Commission.

Future Land Use

Both Crafton and Ingram are built-out, inner-ring suburban communities. There is little open and developable space in the planning area. The focus of this plan regarding future land uses has been on targeted areas of redevelopment and reinvestment. Otherwise, the plan has focused on enhancing existing development and improving quality of life in other ways.

A major influence on the communities' anticipated joint revision of zoning regulations is the future land use component of the Crafton-Ingram Thrive Implementable Comprehensive Plan. Each community's zoning ordinance should be consistent with the land use vision of the plan. Consequently, the Future Land Use Plan presented herein combines and depicts the communities' vision for upholding quality neighborhoods and businesses while supporting redevelopment and reinvestment in targeted areas. The existing zoning for Crafton is also mapped and displayed in this section for comparison to the future land use plan.



Future Land Use Plan

Overall, the general land use patterns that currently exist would be maintained. Residential neighborhoods would remain intact, existing commercial areas would be strengthened, and industrial areas would continue in place.

Redevelopment and reinvestment strategies presented in previous portions of the comprehensive plan highlight the major proposed changes:

- In both communities, the future vision includes a new emphasis on denser mixed-use redevelopment capitalizing on the boroughs' proximity to the West Busway.
- The vision extends through Ingram a "Conservancy Residential" use that is intended to retain existing residential areas while also protecting and reflecting the community value of green space and steep slopes. This land use is consistent with elements of the plan focusing on Connectivity.

The boroughs' wooded steep slopes create a bowl-shaped landscape, with the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center, community parks and some residential areas at the bottom.



Consistency with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code

In order for the Crafton and Ingram borough councils to approve this comprehensive plan, the proposed plan must be reviewed by Allegheny County for consistency with the county’s own comprehensive plan, and the plan must meet the requirements of the state Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) Article III, Section 301. The following is a summary of those MPC requirements and a comparison of where that information is included in this comprehensive plan. Where the key issues did not include an element in the MPC, we address that following the chart.

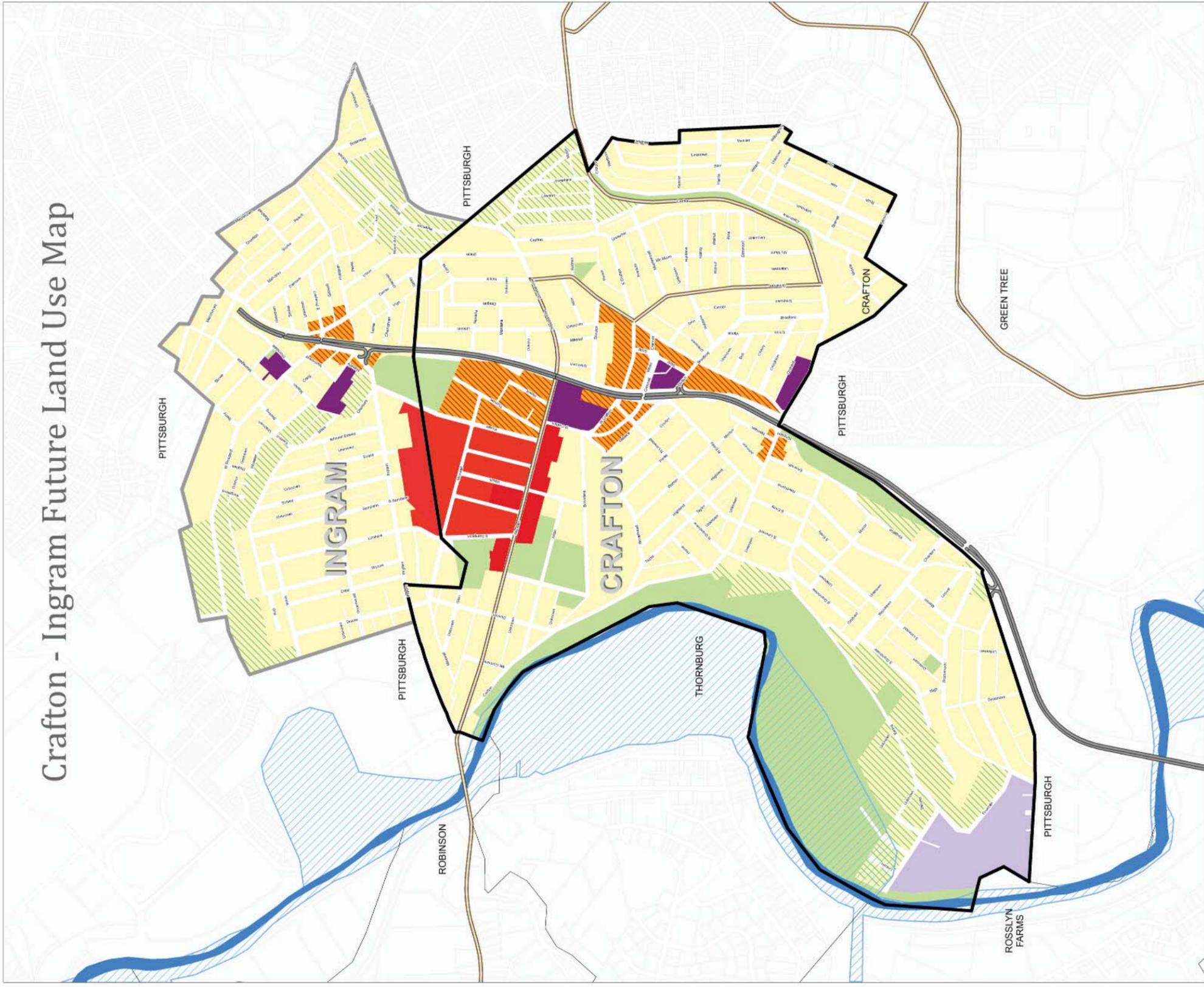
MPC requirement	Where it can be found in the Comprehensive Plan
Statement of community development objectives	Page A-3
Plan for land use	Page 77
Plan to meet housing needs	Discussion about Housing Needs can be found in the “Deteriorating Properties” chapter.
Plan for movement of people and goods	Discussion about public transit and connectivity appear in the “Walkability+Connectivity” chapter.
Plan for community facilities	In the “Walkability+Connectivity” chapter, plans are proposed for new walking and biking routes and a greenway/trail along Chartiers Creek. .
Statement of interrelationship among various plan components.	The nature of Implementable Comprehensive Planning is to focus on major issues in the community. Each issue tends to address multiple planning elements in an integrated manner. For example, the “Deteriorating Properties” chapter addresses land use, economic development, housing and community facilities.
Short- and long term implementation strategies	Found in each chapter for the specific issue.
	<i>Continued on next page</i>

MPC requirement (continued)	Where it can be found in the Comprehensive Plan
Statement that existing and proposed development is compatible with existing and proposed development in adjacent communities and consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan.	We believe that the proposals in this plan are consistent with the Allegheny County Plan. The county planning department staff participated actively in the development of this plan.
Plan for protection of natural and historic resources	The “Deteriorating Properties” and “Walkability+Connectivity” chapters illustrate the goal of preserving the charming older character of residential neighborhoods; adding stormwater green infrastructure and more street trees; and improvements to the Chartiers Creek riparian area through trail building and maintenance.
Plan for reliable supply of water	The Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan indicates that the water supply for Crafton and Ingram is adequately delivered via Pennsylvania-American Water service.



Page intentionally blank.

Crafton - Ingram Future Land Use Map



Legend

- Crafton/Ingram Borough Borders
- Port Authority West Busway
- State Route
- Charliers Creek
- 100-Year Floodplain

USES

- Parks and Open Space
- Government and Institution
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Residential
- Conservancy Residential
- Mixed Use - Neighborhood Commercial and Medium Density Residential

0 300 600 1,200 Feet

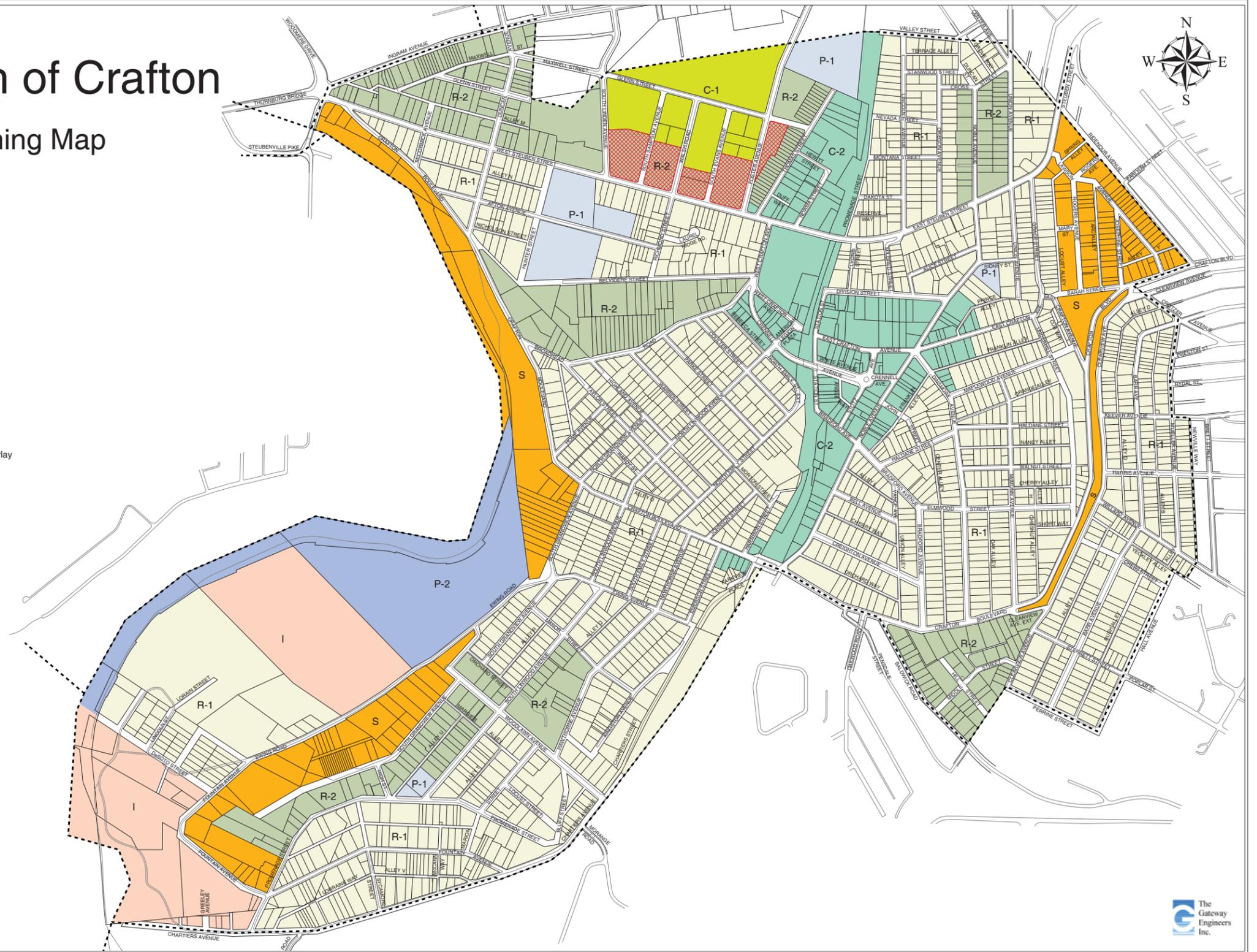
PASHEK ASSOCIATES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | PLANNING

Borough of Crafton

Zoning Map



- Legend:
- R-1
 - R-2
 - C-1
 - C-2
 - P-1
 - P-2
 - I
 - S
 - Steuben Street Overlay
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Parcels
 - Road Pavement



Scale: 1" = 300'
 Date: August 18, 2004
 Job Number: C-5706-0002



APPENDICES

CIThrive.wordpress.com

Crafton - Ingram

THRIVE



**A Small-Town Feel for a New Generation:
Working Together for a Community Plan**





Appendix 1 - Sample Ordinance, Pottsville, PA

Quality of Life, Maintenance of Property

- ▶ This is provided as an example of an ordinance used effectively since 2012 in Pottsville, PA, as a tool to address the problem of blight.



201395
319239
@had

FILE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF POTTSVILLE, PA

Ordinance Number **858** **1st Reading 6/13/2016**
Bill Number 10/2016

Introduced by **Councilman Atkinson**

Enacted by Council **July 11, 2016**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF
POTTSVILLE – CHAPTER 171. QUALITY OF LIFE MAINTENANCE**

Chapter 171. Property, Quality of Life Maintenance of

§ 171-1. Purpose.

Lack of maintenance of properties, littering, improper storage of trash and rubbish, storage of inoperable/non-registered vehicles, vendor operations without permits and accumulation of snow and ice are costly problems that contribute to the deterioration of property values and general disorder in a community. These problems degrade the physical appearance of the City which reduces business and tax revenue, inhibiting economic development. The quality of life and community pride of the citizens of Pottsville are negatively impacted by the occurrences and existence of these activities. Recognizing these are community problems, the purpose of this chapter is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the City by helping to create a clean environment for the citizens of Pottsville.

§ 171-2. Scope.

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all existing and future properties and structures.

§ 171-3. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases when used in this chapter shall be defined as follows, unless context clearly indicates otherwise:

ADULT

Any person 18 years of age or older.

DEBRIS

Any material upon the premises that is a residue of structural demolition, or any other material that is not neatly stored, stacked or piled in such a manner so as not to create a nuisance or become a harboring place or food supply for insects and rodents

DUMPING

JUL 14 2016

Includes, but is not limited to, depositing of litter, depositing durable goods (refrigerators, washers, dryers, etc.), small appliances, furniture, carpets, tires, vehicles, vehicle parts and automotive products and other such municipal waste, hazardous waste, residual waste and construction or demolition debris on public or private property, except as authorized.

DWELLING UNIT

One or more rooms, including a kitchen or kitchenette and sanitary facilities in a dwelling structure, designed as a unit for occupancy.

GARBAGE

The animal or vegetable waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking and consumption of food.

HARB

Historical Architectural Review Board as described in the City of Pottsville Codified Ordinances, Chapter 9, Article VI.

INDOOR FURNITURE

Any and all pieces of furniture which are made for only inside use including, but not limited to, upholstered chairs and sofas, etc.

JUNKED VEHICLE

A.

Includes any vehicle which presents a hazard or danger to the public or is a public nuisance by virtue of its state or condition of disrepair. The following conditions, if present, are examples of a state or condition of disrepair:

(1)

Rusted and/or jagged metal on or protruding from the body of the vehicle.

(2)

Broken glass or windows on or in the vehicle.

(3)

Leaking of any fluids from the vehicle or deflated or flat tire(s).

(4)

Unsecured and/or unlocked doors, hood or trunk.

(5)

Storage or placement of the vehicle in an unbalanced condition, on concrete blocks or other similar apparatus.

(6)

Harboring of rodents, insects or other pests.

B.

The foregoing examples are not inclusive of all conditions which may constitute a state or condition of disrepair. See also "nuisance motor vehicle."

LANDLORD

Any person who grants a lease or otherwise permits the use of his real estate or portion thereof for a consideration, monetary or otherwise.

LITTER

Includes, but is not limited to, all waste material, garbage, trash, i.e. waste paper, tobacco products, wrappers, food or beverage containers, newspapers, etc., municipal waste, human waste, domestic animal waste, furniture or motor vehicle seats, vehicle parts, automotive products, shopping carts, construction or demolition material, recyclable material, dirt, mud and yard waste that has been abandoned or improperly discarded, deposited or disposed.

MOTOR VEHICLE

Includes any type of mechanical device, capable or at one time capable of being propelled by a motor, in which persons or property may be transported upon public streets or highways, and including trailers or semitrailers pulled thereby.

NUISANCE MOTOR VEHICLE

A motor vehicle with one or more of the following defects:

A.

Broken windshields, mirrors or other glass, with sharp edges.

B.

Broken headlamps, tail lamps, bumpers or grills with sharp edges.

C.

Any body parts, truck, firewall or floorboards with sharp edges or large holes resulting from rust.

D.

Protruding sharp objects from the chassis.

E.

Missing doors, windows, hoods, trunks or other body parts that could permit animal harborage.

F.

One or more open tires or tubes which could permit animal harborage.

G.

Any vehicle suspended by blocks, jacks or other such materials in a location which may pose a danger to the public property, owners, visitors or residents of the property on which said vehicle is found.

H.

Any excessive fluids leaking from vehicle which may be harmful to the public or the environment.

I.

Disassembled body or chassis parts stored in, on or about the vehicle.

It is prohibited to store or place any/all appliances or furniture, including, but not limited to, ranges, refrigerators, air conditioners, ovens, washers, dryers, microwaves, TVs, computers or electronic components, dishwashers, mattresses, recliners, sofas, interior chairs or interior tables on the exterior of any property for the purpose of sale or any other reason except for removal or the temporary purpose to perform maintenance in said property.

(3)

Refrigerators and similar equipment, including, but not limited to, washers, dryers, dishwashers and ranges not in operation shall not be discarded, stored or abandoned on any premises without first removing the doors.

B.

Storage of hazardous material. It shall be unlawful for any person, business or entity to store combustible, flammable, explosive or other hazardous materials, including, but not limited to, paints, volatile oils and cleaning fluids or combustible rubbish, including, but not limited to, wastepaper, boxes or rags unless the storage of said materials is in compliance with the applicable fire and/or building codes, and at least 10 feet away from the public right-of-way.

C.

Storage of recyclables. Storage of recyclables is only permitted in approved containers which must be kept clean and sanitary at all times.

D.

Storage containers for waste or trash.

(1)

All containers that store waste or trash shall be durable, watertight and made of metal or plastic, have tight fitting covers and must be kept clean and odor free at all times.

(2)

All containers must be stored so said containers are not visible from the public right-of-way.

(3)

Waste/trash containers may only be placed in front of any property when darkness occurs the night before the day of the scheduled pickup day, and all containers must be returned to their storage area before daybreak on the day following pickup.

E.

Littering, scattering rubbish or dumping.

(1)

No person shall throw, dump, place, sweep or dispose of any litter, waste, trash, garbage, tobacco product or rubbish upon any public sidewalk, alley, street, bridge, public passageway, public parking area or on any public property.

(2)

The improper disposal of rubbish or garbage or dumping or disposing of rubbish or garbage on vacant, unoccupied, or other property is prohibited.

F.

Motor vehicles.

(1)

It shall be unlawful to store, park or place any unregistered, uninspected, inoperative, unlicensed, junked or nuisance motor vehicle or trailer on any premises not designated for that use.

[Amended 6-8-2015 by Ord. No. 845]

(2)

Painting of vehicles is prohibited unless conducted inside an approved spray booth.

(3)

Vehicle repairs/maintenance in a residential district. No person shall operate repairs for profit in residential districts. This would include vehicles not owned by the property occupant/owner and use of repairs and storage on or off street. A zoning variance and licensing would be required to operate such businesses in residential districts.

[Added 6-8-2015 by Ord. No. 845]

G.

Placement or littering by private advertising matter.

(1)

No person shall throw, place, sweep or dispose of litter or private advertising matter upon any public sidewalk, alley, street, bridge, public passageway, public parking area or any public property.

(2)

No person, group, organization or entity will hang, place or advertise on any public property in any manner.

(3)

No person, group, organization or entity will hang, place or advertise on any property that they do not have any ownership rights to without written approval of said owner.

H.

Animal maintenance and waste/feces cleanup. People owning, harboring, keeping or responsible for an animal within the City of Pottsville:

(1)

Shall not permit them to run at large or make unreasonable noise.

(2)

Shall not allow waste matter/feces from the animal to collect or remain on their property so as to cause or create an unhealthy, unsanitary, dangerous or offensive living condition and shall clean it up on a daily basis.

(3)

Shall clean up waste matter/feces from the animal deposited anywhere else in the City immediately.

I.

Insects or vermin. Infestation of insects or vermin shall not be allowed to continue, and the owner or occupant of any infested property shall report same to the Health Officer of the City of Pottsville and take appropriate steps to abate said infestation without unnecessary delay. Failing to do so is a violation.

J.

High weeds, grass, plant growth or standing water. All premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds, or plant growth in excess of eight inches as defined herein, and water shall not be allowed to stand or accumulate in a manner that would attract insects or vermin.

[Amended 6-8-2015 by Ord. No. 845]

K.

Snow and ice removal from sidewalks.

(1)

Every owner, tenant, occupant, lessee, property agent or any other person who is responsible for any property within the City of Pottsville, is required to remove any snow or ice from his sidewalk and shall, within the first 12 hours after every fall of snow or sleet or formation of ice upon the sidewalks, cause the same to be removed from the sidewalks to within one foot of the curbline opposite the entire frontage of such dwelling house, store, building or vacant lot.

(2)

No person shall cast, discharge, throw, shovel or place or cause to be cast, discharged, thrown, shoveled or placed into or onto the traveled portion of any street or alley, by any means whatsoever, any snow, slush or ice.

L.

Swimming pools.

[Amended 6-8-2015 by Ord. No. 845]

(1)

Swimming pools shall be maintained in good repair at all times. They shall also be kept clean, safe, sanitary, and covered when not in regular use.

(2)

It shall be unlawful for any person to install an in-ground pool, aboveground pool, or temporary pool (inflatable, or any pool that can be taken down each year) without proper permits, inspections, and safeguards in place (fences, locking gates or ladders, proper electrical grounding). Any pool that can hold 24 inches of water or more is subject to permits, inspections and safeguards.

M.

Compliance with HARB regulations. No changes shall be made to a building or other structure within the Historical District contrary to HARB permits, approvals or regulations.

N.

Vending license violations.

(1)

It shall be unlawful for any person, business, partnership or entity to operate, including, but not limited to, any business, vending cart, food cart, yard sale, store or establishment without the proper permits.

(2)

It shall be unlawful to violate any term, part, portion or in total, of any vending license. Any person, business, partnership or entity violating its vending license, shall be in violation of this chapter.

O.

Storing or serving of potentially hazardous food. No person, business, partnership or entity shall store or serve potentially hazardous food, including, but not limited to, out-of-date food, food being stored above or below the appropriate temperature, food being stored directly on a flooring surface, in the presence of infestation problems or serving food that had previously been opened.

P.

Registration of tenants.

[Amended 6-8-2015 by Ord. No. 845]

(1)

It shall be unlawful for a landlord to allow adult tenants or occupants to reside within the City of Pottsville without registering them with the office of the City Treasurer of the City of Pottsville. Tenants or occupants must be registered within 10 days of their moving into the building.



(2)

It shall be unlawful for a tenant to allow adults to reside within their dwelling unit without their being registered with the City Treasurer of the City of Pottsville. Tenants or occupants must be registered within 10 days of their moving into the building.

(3)

It shall be unlawful for an adult to reside in a leased or rented dwelling unit without being registered with the City Treasurer of the City of Pottsville. Tenants or occupants must be registered within 10 days of their moving into the building.

Q.

Permits and approvals.

[Added 6-8-2015 by Ord. No. 845]

(1)

It shall be unlawful for an owner or contractor to perform work to a building or structure without a permit, where permits are required. Any work that is not defined as exempt as defined in the City of Pottsville's Zoning Ordinance, §§ 101-1 and 101-2, added 12-11-2006.¹³

[1]

Editor's Note: So in original. For exemptions for residential buildings with respect to alterations and repairs, see § 101-7 in this Code.

(2)

Temporary dumpster permits are required. Each temporary dumpster, whether placed on private property or in a public right-of-way, shall have a valid permit issued by the City of Pottsville.

(3)

Illegal signs/billboards. No person or business shall construct and display a sign/advertisement without the appropriate approval and permit from the City of Pottsville.

(4)

Working without a license. No person shall work within the City of Pottsville without a business license and proof of insurance, which shall be supplied to the Code Enforcement Office.

R.

Property maintenance.

[Added 6-8-2015 by Ord. No. 845]

(1)

Accessory structures. All accessory structures, including detached garages, fences and walls, shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.

§ 171-5. Authority for issuance of violation tickets and citations.

Upon finding a quality of life violation, any public officer of the City of Pottsville, appointed by the Mayor and/or City Council of the City of Pottsville, may issue quality of life violation tickets and/or citations to the owner and/or occupant of the property at issue or to the individual known to have violated this chapter.

§ 171-6. Service.

A violation ticket may be served upon a violator by handing it to the violator or his/her agent, by handing it to an adult member of the household or other person in charge of the residence, by

leaving or affixing the notice or violation ticket to the property where the violation exists, by handing it at any office or usual place of business of the violator, or to the person for the time being in charge thereof, or by mailing the violation ticket to the violator's address of record.

§ 171-7. Separate offense.

Each day a violation continues or is permitted to continue may constitute a separate offense for which a separate violation ticket may be issued and fine imposed.

§ 171-8. Regulations.

Public officers are hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to implement and supplement the provisions of this chapter.

§ 171-9. Abatement of violation.

A.
 Any person or business violating this chapter is hereby directed to satisfy the City of Pottsville, upon issuance of a quality of life ticket, by correcting the violation in question. Public officers are authorized and empowered to cause a violation to be corrected.

B.
 The City of Pottsville reserves the right to abate the violation in question at the expense of the owner. If the City has effected the abatement of the violation, the cost thereof may be charged to the owner of the property, tenant or offending party. A bill/invoice will be generated to the violator for payment separate from the quality of life ticket which will also be paid separately.

C.
 City of Pottsville cleanup. The City reserves the right to perform any necessary work to abate any violation once 72 hours passes from the date of issuance of the quality of life ticket. Should the violation at the discretion of the appropriate officer(s) present imminent danger and/or pose a health hazard and/or risk, the City reserves the right to perform the abatement immediately. The City will perform this work at a rate of \$60 per hour, per man and forward the cost of any material necessary for the abatement. The City reserves the right to charge an additional 20% on all material purchases to cover all miscellaneous expenses such as wear and tear on equipment.

D.
 Contractor cleanup. The City reserves the right to direct a contractor to perform the abatement of the violation in question once 72 hours passes from the date of issuance of the quality of life ticket. Should the violation present imminent danger and/or pose a health hazard and/or risk, the City reserves the right to direct the contractor to perform the abatement immediately. The contractor will submit a bill for his work to the City of Pottsville, and the City will forward these costs to the violator. The City reserves the right to add a thirty-percent processing fee in addition to the cost of the contractor.

§ 171-10. Fines and penalties.

Any person who violates this chapter shall pay a fine as set forth herein for each offense plus all direct and indirect costs incurred by the City for the cleanup and abatement of the violation.

A.

Violation ticket fines. For a violation of this chapter, violation tickets shall be issued in the amount of \$25.

B.

Violation ticket penalties. If the person in receipt of a twenty-five-dollar violation ticket does not pay the fine or request a hearing within 15 days, the person will be subject to a ten-dollar penalty for days 16 through 30.

C.

Failure to respond. If a person fails to make payment or request a hearing within 30 days of a violation ticket, they shall be subject to a citation for failure to pay.

D.

Repeated violations. Upon issuance of four tickets for the same violation, right is reserved for a Public Officer to issue a citation for fifth and subsequent offenses.

E.

Continuous or egregious violations: If violations are continuous or egregious, a public officer has the right to issue a citation without first issuing a ticket, provided notice has been given. Any previously issued violation tickets will be considered as notice given.

F.

Citation fines. Any person, firm or corporation who shall fail, neglect or refuse to comply with any of the terms or provisions of this chapter, or of any regulation or requirement pursuant hereto and authorized hereby shall, upon conviction, be ordered to pay a fine of not less than \$300, not more than \$1,000 on each offense or imprisoned no more than 90 days, or both.

§ 171-11. Appeal.

A.

A person in receipt of a violation ticket may appeal to the City Administrator's office by filing his appeal request in writing on a form to be provided within 15 calendar days of the date of the violation ticket, stating his reasons for appeal, and accompanied by the appropriate fine amount.

B.

If abatement or other costs were associated with the violation, these may be required to be posted, at the City Administrator's sole discretion, along with the appeal.

C.

The violator may request an opportunity to meet in person with the City Administrator concerning their appeal, and the request may be granted at the sole discretion of the City Administrator, who may also deem it appropriate to consult with the public officer(s) involved in the matter or any other concerned parties.

D.

Within 30 days of the appeal date, the City Administrator may decide to uphold the appeal, deny the appeal, or may modify the violation ticket and/or any associated costs, fines or penalty amounts as he/she deems appropriate, and will issue written notice of the decision, along with any refunds applicable.

§ 171-12. Collections. At the discretion of the City of Pottsville, all tickets for which payment is not received within 45 days of issuance of a ticket for which an appeal is not taken and 45 days from denial of appeal and monies paid by the City of Pottsville for abatement of a violation not paid within 45 days of billing may be turned over by the City to a collections agency for receipt.

§ 171-13. Liens. At the discretion of the City of Pottsville, liens may be placed upon a property against which tickets were issued for which payment is not received within 45 days of issuance of a ticket for which an appeal is not taken and 45 days from denial of appeal and monies paid by the City of Pottsville for abatement of a violation and not paid within 45 days of billing.

§ 171-14. Nonexclusive remedies.

The penalty and collection provisions of this section shall be independent, non-mutually exclusive separate remedies, all of which shall be available to the City of Pottsville as may be deemed appropriate for carrying out the purposes of this chapter. The remedies and procedures provided in this chapter for violation hereof are not intended to supplant or replace to any degree the remedies and procedures available to the City in the case of a violation of any other City of Pottsville Code or Codified Ordinances, whether or not such other code or ordinance is referenced in this chapter and whether or not an ongoing violation of such other code or ordinance is cited as the underlying ground for a finding of a violation of this chapter.

§ 171-15. Severability.

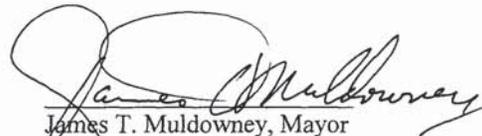
Should any section or provision of this chapter be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, that decision shall not affect the validity of this chapter as a whole or any part thereof, other than the part so declared to be invalid.

§ 171-16. Effective date.

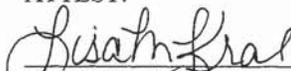
This chapter shall become effective immediately upon approval.

ORDAINED AND ENACTED THIS Eleventh day of July, 2016.

CITY OF POTTSVILLE


James T. Muldowney, Mayor

ATTEST:


Lisa N. Kral, City Clerk



Appendix 2 - Sample Ordinance, Green Tree, PA

Property Maintenance Ordinance

- ▶ This is provided as an example of an property maintenance ordinance that employs a different approach than shown in Appendix 1.



*Borough of Green Tree, PA
Friday, September 30, 2016*

Chapter 248. Property Maintenance

Article I. Brush, Grass and Weeds

§ 248-1. Vegetation in the public right-of-way.

- A. An owner of real estate fronting or abutting on any street or highway of the Borough shall keep the same, from curb to property line, free from rubbish and the growth of vegetation, except grass, shade trees or ornamental shrubbery, such grass, trees or shrubbery to be so kept and maintained as to not interfere with the free use of the sidewalks.
- B. An owner of a lot or ground or other real estate fronting or abutting on any street or highway of the Borough shall keep the same, for a distance of 15 feet from the line of any such street or highway, free from briars, weeds or other vegetable growth, except fruit, shade or ornamental trees, ornamental plants, shrubbery, flowers, grass or vegetable gardens, and shall also keep the same free from rubbish of any kind.

§ 248-2. Prohibited growth.

[Added 9-11-1995 by Ord. No. 1288]

No person owning or occupying any property within the Borough shall permit:

- A. Any grass, weeds or other vegetation not edible or planted for some useful or ornamental purpose to grow or remain upon such premises so as to exceed a height of eight inches;
- B. Any grass, weeds or other vegetation to give off, emit or discharge any unpleasant or noxious odor;
- C. Any grass, weeds or other vegetation to conceal an infestation of insects, rodents or vermin or debris, garbage or other such deposits;
- D. Any poison ivy, poison oak or other toxic vegetation or growth of any nature or variety;
- E. Any dead, dying or diseased trees, or parts thereof, whose existence poses a hazard to persons or property in their vicinity; and
- F. Any tree, shrub or vegetation or any part of such trees, shrub or vegetation, or ornamental grasses, from projecting into the public right-of-way or any public sidewalk so as to interfere with the normal use of said right-of-way or sidewalk.

§ 248-3. Declaration of nuisance.

[Added 9-11-1995 by Ord. No. 1288]

Any grass, weeds or other vegetation located in or growing upon any property within the Borough in violation of §§ 248-1 and 248-2 is hereby declared to be a nuisance and detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, cleanliness and comfort of the Borough and its residents.

§ 248-4. Noncompliance; remedy of Borough.



[Added 9-11-1995 by Ord. No. 1288]

If any owner or occupant of real estate located in the Borough neglects or refuses to remove, cut, trim or otherwise destroy any prohibited growth of vegetation, grass, weeds, trees, poisonous and toxic vegetation or dead, dying or diseased trees, or any tree, shrub or vegetation interfering with the right-of-way or sidewalk, as set forth in this article, then Borough authorities shall serve notice upon such owner or occupant, in writing, of such violation, ordering him or her to comply with § 248-1 and/or 248-2 within 10 days after service of such notice. If such owner or occupant fails to comply with such notice, then, in addition to the penalty provided in § 248-5, such prohibited growth shall be removed, trimmed, cut and/or destroyed by the Borough, and the costs of such work, together with a penalty of 10% thereof, shall be a lien against the real estate in question, which shall be collected according to law and/or may be collected from the owner and/or occupant of the premises in the manner provided by law.

§ 248-5. Violations and penalties.

See Chapter 1, General Provisions, § 1-2, for the general penalty provisions of this Code.

Article II. Deposit of Debris

§ 248-6. Definitions.

A. As used in this article, unless otherwise expressly stated, the following terms shall have the meaning indicated:

OCCUPANT

A tenant, lessee, agent, holder or squatter.

PERSON

A person, copartnership, association or private corporation.

WATERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Any and all streams, creeks, rivulets, lakes, dammed water, ponds, springs and all other bodies of surface and underground water, or parts thereof, whether natural or artificial, within or on the boundaries of the Borough.

B. Words and phrases used in the singular include the plural, and vice versa, and the present tense includes the future.

§ 248-7. Deposit of debris on public and private property.

A. No person shall dump or cause to be dumped, deposit or cause to be deposited, or throw or cause to be thrown any rubbish, waste material, paper, cardboard, dead animal, garbage, ashes, trash, or any combination of the same, upon any private or public property, road or sidewalk, or in or upon any appurtenance thereto, or in any waters of the commonwealth located in the Borough, or permit the same to accumulate thereon or therein.

B. No person shall dump or cause to be dumped or deposit or cause to be deposited decaying matter; cuttings from trees, bushes or grass; stones or rocks; or any combination of the same, upon any property in the Borough when the same is left in such a manner as to constitute a health hazard because of being a breeding place for infestation or because of the danger created to children who may be attracted to play in the area.

§ 248-8. Notice of abatement; removal by Borough.



Whenever the authorities of the Borough determine that a violation of § 248-7 has been committed, they shall give notice to the owner or occupant of the property, by registered or certified mail to his or her last known address, to remove the debris within five days after service of such notice. If after such five days the debris has not been removed, the authorities are hereby authorized to remove the debris and to proceed against the owner or occupant for the cost of such removal. Such remedy shall be in addition to the penalty provided in § 248-10.

§ 248-9. Exceptions.

No part of this article shall be construed as prohibiting the filling of property pursuant to Chapter 181, Grading and Excavation, of this Code; the use of fertilizers, peat moss, topsoil or other materials customarily used in cultivating gardens and lawns; the use of slag, red dog, crushed stone or other similar materials on private driveways or roadways in the Borough; or the depositing by a resident of the Borough of rubbish, trash or other refuse for collection.

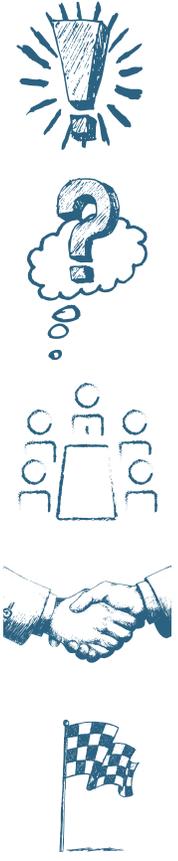
§ 248-10. Penalty.

See Chapter 1, General Provisions, § 1-2, for the general penalty provisions of this Code.

Appendix 3 - Blight-Fighting Program Template

A Five-Step, Fast-Track Blight Plan

- ▶ The comprehensive program to address blight that is suggested for Crafton and Ingram in Chapter 1: Deteriorating Properties is adapted from the “We can DO this!” program developed by the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. The program has been used in Pottsville since 2012.



**we can
DO this!**

**A Five-Step,
Fast-Track
Blight Plan**

by **Chris Gulotta** for the
 **Housing Alliance
of Pennsylvania**



Housing Alliance
of Pennsylvania

We Can DO This! A Five-Step, Fast-Track Blight Plan March 2016

by Christopher Gulotta
for the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Liz Hersh, Executive Director



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– continued –

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Christopher Gulotta is the former executive director of the Redevelopment and Housing Authorities of Cumberland County. In 2010, Chris left the authorities after 30 years to form The Gulotta Group, LLC, which provides technical assistance to community development professionals on a variety of issues, including organizational strategic planning and development, neighborhood revitalization, and community economic development. Chris has worked with a number of communities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in addressing blighted-property concerns in general and forming land banks in particular.

ABOUT THE HOUSING ALLIANCE OF PENNSYLVANIA



Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

Founded in 1985, the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania is a statewide membership and advocacy coalition that provides leadership and a common voice for policies, practices, and resources to ensure that all Pennsylvanians, especially those living with low incomes, have access to safe, decent, accessible, and affordable homes.

Today seen as a leading expert on blight policy, the Housing Alliance published its first research report in 2003. *Reclaiming Abandoned Pennsylvania* became an agenda for the new blight tools that have now become law including Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship, Land Banks, and Property Donation.



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INTRODUCTION

We Can Do This! A Five-Step, Fast-Track Blight Plan describes a systematic, proven, and inexpensive way for municipalities and counties to develop a comprehensive strategy to address blight. It is your “411,” a how-to guide for a local, customized, stakeholder-driven method.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Local leaders have long sought guidance in wrapping their arms around the blight problem so that the effort of preventing, remediating, and repurposing blighted properties can move forward.

Depending on the jurisdiction, these local leaders may come from the public, nonprofit, or private sector. They may be—

- **Elected officials** at the county and municipal levels
- **Appointed public officials** from a variety of public agencies, such as community development, housing, and planning
- **Nonprofit organizations** that seek to improve the quality of life in a community, including those engaged in economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and affordable housing
- **Business and civic leaders** concerned about their community’s future and health

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

One frustration expressed by people who recognize the need to address blight in their communities is, “Where do we begin?” Attacking the challenge can be overwhelming, which frequently results in postponing efforts to deal with blighted properties.

Three counties in Pennsylvania—Clearfield, McKean, and Northumberland—have used the “Fast-Track Method” described in this publication to reach consensus on the most effective strategies to address their local blight. More about their experiences appears in brief case studies provided throughout the document as well as in the *Results to Date* section following Step 5.

Fast-Track Your Blight Plan

The perceived amount of time it takes to craft a comprehensive strategy to counter blight can cause communities to delay. The perception is that the process will be lengthy, costly, and burdensome to staff, who are already stretched thin. The process described in this guide, however, can be achieved in four months, and with minimal cost. It is proven, straightforward, streamlined, and effective.

HOW THE FIVE-STEP, FAST-TRACK METHOD WORKS

The process begins with a quick assessment of the local blight problem. A blight task force is established, meets to discuss the nature and extent of local blight, and identifies possible strategies to address it. Participants engage in a consensus-building exercise designed to help them select the strategies most appropriate for their community. A comprehensive blight strategy report documents what they have decided and is released at a joint meeting of the task force with local, county, and/or municipal officials. The meeting launches the implementation process.



Step 1: Gain Consensus for Developing a Blight Plan



Step 2: Assess the Nature and Extent of the Blight



Step 3: Convene a Blight Task Force



Step 4: Engage Municipal Officials



Step 5: Identify Priority Action Steps and Implement Them

This Five-Step, Fast-Track Method has paid significant dividends for the counties that have embraced it. They have attracted new money to address blight, because funders increasingly want to see a comprehensive plan with clearly identified steps to carry it out, strong local buy-in, and consensus on how to move forward. A blight strategy builds confidence among funders and investors that the money will be well used and make an impact.



Keys to Success

The following are essential ingredients in developing a successful comprehensive blighted-property strategy:

- 🔑 **Engagement of Political Leadership**
- 🔑 **Commitment of Staff Resources**
- 🔑 **Engagement of Stakeholders**
- 🔑 **Assessment of the Nature and Extent of the Blight**
- 🔑 **Engagement of Municipalities**
- 🔑 **Commitment to Implementation**

The keys are discussed in more detail under the various steps for completing the blight strategy plan.

STEP-BY-STEP EXPLANATION OF THE FAST-TRACK METHOD



Step 1: Gain Consensus for Developing a Comprehensive Blighted-Property Strategy

🔑 Engagement of Political Leadership

The decision to undertake a comprehensive blighted-property strategy should be made by the elected political leadership in the jurisdiction, whether that jurisdiction covers a county, a region within the county, or a single municipality. Although some political leaders will see the need for the strategy without any urging, a typical situation involves staff or local leaders' approaching the political leadership about the strategy's importance.

Gaining the support of political leaders is essential for several reasons. First, the political leadership is needed to appoint the members of the blight task force, which will develop the comprehensive blight strategy. This will add legitimacy to the task force's work, so that its recommendations can hold weight. Second, costs may be incurred in completing the comprehensive blight strategy, particularly if an external facilitator is retained to help identify the most appropriate strategies for dealing with blight. The political leadership makes the final decision on the source of funds needed to complete the task force's work.

🔑 Commitment of Staff Resources

As mentioned above, one or more staff members in key organizations that see the importance of aggressively

tackling blight will need to take the lead. That involves sitting down with the appropriate elected officials to talk about the need for a comprehensive blighted-property strategy. Assuming that staff members get the green light from political leaders, the work is just beginning.

Responsibilities of the Staff

The responsibilities of the staff include (a) engaging a facilitator to lead the process, (b) conducting the blighted-property assessment, and (c) handling task force administrative duties. These are described on *the following page*.

Representatives of local organizations—such as economic development, redevelopment, community development, housing, planning commission, and local nonprofit staff—can encourage political leaders to see the value in this endeavor by connecting the dots between elected officials' favorite policies or projects and preventing and remediating blight. As examples, policies may include economic development (specifically, creating jobs and expanding business activity), neighborhood revitalization, and reducing crime. Effective staff members or local leaders will be able to show how dealing with blighted properties translates into successful outcomes.

a. Engage the Services of an Internal or External Facilitator to Lead the Process

Because staff members from the lead agency may be unintentionally biased in favor or against certain strategies, and about the causes of blight, they should probably not facilitate the meetings. A consultant or external facilitator is an option, but funds will be needed to cover the expense. Another option is an experienced facilitator who lives in the community—possibly someone who works for a local company, college or university, or nonprofit agency. The role of the facilitator is described more fully in *Step 3*.

b. Conduct the Blighted-Property Assessment

Completing the blighted-property assessment is essential. Before the task force's first meeting, staff members from the lead agency will need to draft and implement a survey instrument targeting municipalities.

c. Handle Administrative Duties When the Blighted-Property Task Force Convenes

Staff from the lead agency should be prepared to send meeting notices to task force members, keep notes of task force meetings, and assist in drafting the comprehensive blight strategy report. Even after the report is published, the work of the lead agency staff is not complete. They will need to convene an "action team" to focus on implementing the report's recommendations.

Engagement of Key Stakeholders 

To succeed, the jurisdiction will need to bring together key stakeholders who are directly or indirectly affected by blight.

Communities that have used this approach have included stakeholders in a task force charged with formulating a comprehensive strategy.

Criteria for selecting stakeholders to serve on such a task force might include those with particular insight, capacity, or resources to address the challenges of blighted properties. Representatives from county planning commissions, local government, economic development agencies, the county tax claim bureau, local chambers of commerce, nonprofit community development and housing organizations, councils of government, and redevelopment and housing authorities are typical organizations represented on the task force. To give the undertaking some legitimacy (as mentioned above), it is a good idea for a county or municipal government body to appoint the task force.

Key stakeholders typically include residents, businesses, organizations tasked with addressing blight, and organizations such as colleges and hospitals located in neighborhoods that have a significant number of blighted properties.

Case Study: McKean County

In McKean County, the redevelopment authority took a lead role in advocating for the formation of a blighted property task force. The authority's executive director approached the county commissioners, offering to provide the staff services needed to support the task force's work, including sending meeting notices and agendas, arranging for a meeting room, and reaching out to municipal officials to share the report's recommendations.

Dusti Dennis, the redevelopment authority's executive director, reports: "The work of the task force and the completion of the comprehensive blight strategy have given us a blueprint for effectively addressing blight in McKean County."



Step 2: Assess the Nature and Extent of the Blight

A comprehensive strategy to address blight must be based on data, not anecdotes. Municipalities are often in the best position to supply information on the nature and extent of blighted properties, but they must be given a definition of blight. One complication encountered in crafting a comprehensive strategy is the variety of thoughts about what constitutes a blighted property. We recommend using the definition of blight from Pennsylvania's Urban Redevelopment Law, because many legislative tools deployed to address blight require that targeted properties meet the law's definition.

Survey Questions about Municipal Effort

Has the municipality enacted—

- A nuisance ordinance or property maintenance code?
- A landlord registration ordinance?
- A rental housing inspection program?
- A ticketing ordinance to address blight?
- An ordinance allowing the municipality to escrow fire insurance proceeds, as provided by state law?

Definition of Blighted Property in Urban Redevelopment Law

35 P.S. § 1712.1

(c) Blighted property shall include:

- (1) Any premises which because of physical condition or use is regarded as a public nuisance at common law or has been declared a public nuisance in accordance with the local housing, building, plumbing, fire and related codes.
- (2) Any premises which because of physical condition, use or occupancy is considered an attractive nuisance to children, including but not limited to abandoned wells, shafts, basements, excavations, and unsafe fences or structures.
- (3) Any dwelling which because it is dilapidated, unsanitary, unsafe, vermin-infested or lacking in the facilities and equipment required by the housing code of the municipality, has been designated by the department responsible for enforcement of the code as unfit for human habitation.
- (4) Any structure which is a fire hazard, or is otherwise dangerous to the safety of persons or property.
- (5) Any structure from which the utilities, plumbing, heating, sewerage or other facilities have been disconnected, destroyed, removed, or rendered ineffective so that the property is unfit for its intended use.

(6) Any vacant or unimproved lot or parcel of ground in a predominantly built-up neighborhood, which by reason of neglect or lack of maintenance has become a place for accumulation of trash and debris, or a haven for rodents or other vermin.

(7) Any unoccupied property which has been tax delinquent for a period of two years prior to the effective date of this act, and those in the future having a two-year tax delinquency.

(8) Any property which is vacant but not tax delinquent, which has not been rehabilitated within one year of the receipt of notice to rehabilitate from the appropriate code enforcement agency.

(9) Any abandoned property. A property shall be considered abandoned if: (i) it is a vacant or unimproved lot or parcel of ground on which a municipal lien for the cost of demolition of any structure located on the property remains unpaid for a period of six months; (ii) it is a vacant property or vacant or unimproved lot or parcel of ground on which the total of municipal liens on the property for tax or any other type of claim of the municipality are in excess of 150% of the fair market value of the property as established by the Board of Revisions of Taxes or other body with legal authority to determine the taxable value of the property; or (iii) the property has been declared abandoned by the owner, including an estate that is in possession of the property.

A good starting point is to ask municipalities to complete a survey about blight. The survey has three main elements: (a) identify problem properties in detail, (b) identify relevant locational information, and (c) identify what tools, if any, are already in place to address the problems.

Identify Each Problem Property

- What is the address of the blighted property?
- Who owns the property? For how long? Is the owner an absentee?
- Does the property have structures, or is it vacant?
- If the property is vacant, for how long?
- If the property is occupied, is it owner or renter occupied?
- Is the property tax delinquent? If so, at what stage (such as judicial sale or county repository)?
- Is the property subject to a foreclosure action or owned by an estate?
- (OPTIONAL) Provide photos of each property (can be taken with smart phones by volunteers or students).

Identify Relevant Locational Information

It is helpful to know whether the property is located on a gateway street, in a neighborhood revitalization area, in a central business district, or in a floodplain. The information will be useful in determining funding that might be available to address the problem. It may also help in prioritizing which problems to tackle first,

because the community will probably be unable to take on all problem properties at once.

Identify Existing Tools to Address Blight

The last portion of the survey should document what the municipality is already doing to address blight. A municipality may indicate that it has a problem with blighted properties but has no effective nuisance ordinance or property maintenance code. If the municipality does have ordinances to address blighted properties, it is important to determine the extent to which the ordinances cover issues such as abandoned vehicles, uncut vegetation, dangerous structures, and the improper disposal of trash.

A sample municipal survey of blighted properties is provided on the following two pages.

The lead organization—such as the redevelopment authority, community development agency, or planning commission—can take responsibility for mailing or emailing the survey and compiling the results. Consideration should be given to using an online survey product, such as Survey Monkey, to save time and money. To increase the response rate, follow-up calls will be needed to municipalities that don't return the survey on time.

When the survey results are compiled, a picture of the nature and extent of blight will emerge, as will a sense of the effectiveness of municipal efforts to address the blight. If possible, the data should be mapped. Local universities and colleges are often a useful resource for mapping or GIS services. The information will lay the foundation for the task force's work in crafting the comprehensive blighted-property strategy.

Case Study: Clearfield County

Jodi Brennan and Lisa Kovalick of the Clearfield County Planning Commission took the lead in the blight assessment process by drafting the survey document and sending it to municipalities. Thirty-three of 51 municipalities responded. Twenty-four of the 33 responded that they had a blighted- or abandoned-property problem. Sixteen of the 33 reported that they had no property maintenance code and that 70% of the 323 blighted properties were located in communities that had no property maintenance code.

Rental properties led the list of types of properties that were blighted, but only three municipalities had a rental registration ordinance.

"This information was extremely helpful to the task force in looking at the cause of blighted properties and crafting solutions," said Brennan, the planning commission's executive director.

Blighted Properties Survey

Name of Municipality: _____
 Person Completing this Survey: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please use the following definition when completing this survey:

A property is considered blighted when...

- The property exhibits signs of deterioration sufficient to constitute a threat to human health and safety or,
- The property has been declared a public nuisance by the local government or,
- The property is an attractive nuisance to children including abandoned wells, shafts, basements, and unsafe fences or structures or,
- Any structure from which the utilities, plumbing, heating, sewerage or other basic facilities have been removed or disconnected so the property is unfit for human habitation or,
- The property has otherwise been declared by the municipality as unfit for human habitation or,
- The land is abandoned for at least six months and there are unpaid municipal liens against the property or the liens placed against a property are 150% in excess of the value of the property.

1. Do you feel that blighted properties are a problem in your municipality? Yes No
2. How many blighted properties are in your municipality? _____
3. Please provide the addresses of the properties that are blighted in your municipality and answer the following questions for each. *(Attach additional sheet if necessary.)*

Address of property	Is there a structure on the property? <i>(circle response)</i>	If yes, is that structure vacant or occupied? <i>(circle response)</i>	If the structure is occupied is it a homeowner unit (HU) or rental? <i>(circle response)</i>	Approx. how long has the property been blighted?	Is it owned by someone who lives outside of the county? <i>(circle response)</i>	Approx. how long has the current owner owned the property?	Why is the property blighted? Enter a code from the list below*
	Yes / No	Vac / Occ	HU / Rental		Yes / No		
	Yes / No	Vac / Occ	HU / Rental		Yes / No		
	Yes / No	Vac / Occ	HU / Rental		Yes / No		
	Yes / No	Vac / Occ	HU / Rental		Yes / No		
	Yes / No	Vac / Occ	HU / Rental		Yes / No		
	Yes / No	Vac / Occ	HU / Rental		Yes / No		
	Yes / No	Vac / Occ	HU / Rental		Yes / No		

*Reasons for blighted property:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Elderly homeowner; unable to keep up with home
(b) Property owner is deceased; property is not being maintained by the heirs | (c) Absentee owners (live outside of the area)
(d) Owners/Landlord does not properly maintain property
(e) Other <i>(please write in response)</i> |
|---|--|

continued on next page



Blighted Properties Survey

(page 2 of 2)

- 4. Does your municipality have a property maintenance code? Yes No
If yes, do you have adequate staff to enforce the property maintenance code? Yes No

- 5. If you answered Yes to the previous question (#4), how does the code address blight? *(check all that apply)*
 - abandoned vehicles
 - uncut vegetation
 - unsafe structures
 - improper disposal of trash
 - other *(Please specify: _____)*

- 6. If your municipality does not have a property maintenance code, are you interested in learning more about what is covered by a property maintenance code? Yes No

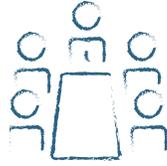
- 7. Please tell us what barriers you are facing in adopting a property maintenance code:

- 8. Do you have a landlord registration ordinance? Yes No
If not, are you interested in learning more about a landlord registration ordinance? Yes No

- 9. Has your municipality enacted a ticketing ordinance for code violations? Yes No
If not, are you interested in learning more about an ordinance that would allow your municipality to ticket for code violations? Yes No

- 10. Has your municipality enacted an ordinance that allows the municipality to escrow fire insurance proceeds?
 Yes No
If not, are you interested in learning more about a fire insurance proceeds escrow ordinance that would require insurance companies to share the proceeds of fire insurance with the municipality for the demolition of the property in the event of fire? Yes No

Thank-you for completing this survey!
Please return by _____ (date) to:



Step 3: Convene Blight Task Force

The purpose of the blight task force is to lead a process that answers these questions: How would my community be better if blight were less prevalent? In the end, what will this community look like, and how will attacking blight yield dividends?

When the members of the task force have been appointed and the blighted-property survey has been completed, the task force work can begin.

Three meetings, spaced about one month apart, will be needed to reach consensus on the nature and extent of the blighted-property problem, guiding principles for the task force, and effective strategies for addressing blighted properties. Task force members should be given a clear idea of their responsibilities in the appointment letter they receive from the governing body that has

selected them. The responsibilities include attendance and active participation at all meetings and background reading about the tools available to address blighted properties.

After the task force has been appointed by the political leadership of your community, the initial meeting should be convened. The blight survey results should be sent to members to review well before the first meeting (at least two weeks).

The next section describes how to approach agenda topics and what should emerge from the discussion.

a. Welcoming remarks by the chief elected official of the organization that appointed the task force members

During opening remarks, the chief elected official should clarify that the mission of the task force is to formulate a comprehensive blight strategy and that an action team, composed of representatives of organizations that will have a lead role in carrying out the plan, will be formed after the task force completes its work.

b. Discussion of survey results about the nature and extent of the problem as well as the current level of effort

Various questions can be posed about the summary tabulation of the blight-survey results:

- What do the survey results tell us about the extent of blight found?
- What light does the survey shed on possible causes of the blight?
- How would you describe the level of effort your municipality is making to address blight?

Initial Task Force Meeting: *What's on the Agenda?*

- a. Welcoming remarks by the chief elected official of the organization that appointed the task force members
- b. Discussion of survey results about the nature and extent of the problem as well as the current level of effort
- c. Discussion and consensus-forming on guiding principles for the task force
- d. Discussion of the impact of blight on community and economic development efforts
- e. Discussion and consensus-forming on what success will look like (quantifiable goals if possible)
- f. Initial task force training on the array of tools to address blight

STEP 3 Convene Blight Task Force

c. Discussion and consensus-forming on guiding principles for the task force

After the discussion of survey results, principles that will guide the task force should be addressed. The principles will serve as a set of ground rules for discussion and achieving consensus and for highlighting shared thinking about the process.

d. Discussion of the impact of blight on community and economic development efforts

In discussing the impact of blight on quality of life and on efforts to expand the economic base, a good question to ask is, “How would my community be better if blight were less prevalent?” An open-ended question, it encourages the task force to focus on the essential question: “In the end, what will this community look like, and how will attacking blight yield dividends?”

e. Discussion and consensus-forming about what success will look like (quantifiable goals if possible)

At its first meeting, the task force will also want to talk about what constitutes a successful effort to prevent, remediate, and reuse blighted properties. In the early years, this can be quantified in terms of outputs rather than outcomes. Outputs might include the number of blighted properties demolished or rehabilitated or the reduction in municipal costs related to fire and police protection as a result of blight remediation.

Over time, however, the community will want to measure longer-term goals. They include increased property values and an increase in the tax base and business activity, as the chilling effect that blight has on economic activity is reduced through aggressive remediation and redevelopment.

f. Initial task force training on the array of tools to address blight

The final item on the agenda is to begin educating task force members about effective tools. The members will come from a variety of fields, and many may not be aware of the extensive toolkit that exists for preventing and remediating blighted properties.

An excellent compendium of strategies to address blighted properties is the July 2014 Housing Alliance publication, *From Blight to Bright, a Comprehensive Toolkit for Pennsylvania* <http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/swell/fromblighttobright>. Six to eight tools should be extracted from the report for a summary discussion at the end of the first task force meeting. Topics could include Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship, Denials of Permits for Tax-Delinquent Properties, Disqualification of Owners at Tax Sales, Creation of a Land Bank, and a Ticketing Ordinance for Code Violations.

At this stage, the goal is not to overwhelm the task force with information about tools and strategies, but to provide a ray of hope: specific ways to successfully address blight do exist.

Before adjourning the first task force meeting, the members of the task force should be assigned to read *From Blight to Bright* cover to cover before the next meeting so that they can gain greater knowledge of what communities can do to arrest blight. Task force members should be given either the printed version or a link to access the handbook online. They should also begin considering the strategies they think will best meet the challenges in their jurisdiction.

**Clearfield County Guiding Principles:
A Partial List**

- The process and outcomes must be respectful of the rights of property owners in the context of creating an environment that will encourage private investment, with the desired effect of improved quality of life and a more stable tax base. This is a balancing act that will require considerable discussion throughout the process.
- Localities are in the best position to decide if a strategy is appropriate and workable.
- Collaboration among various players will be important in developing and implementing strategies.
- The process is very much an educational one, where information is shared with key players and stakeholders.

Second Task Force Meeting: *What's on the Agenda?*

- a. Review of notes from first meeting (distributed in advance)
- b. Quick review of strategies in reading assignment *From Blight to Bright, a Comprehensive Toolkit for Pennsylvania*
- c. Consensus-building exercise to determine most effective strategies
- d. Review of task force thoughts about priority strategies

The second task force meeting should be scheduled about a month after the first. That gives enough time for task force members to process the material in *From Blight to Bright* and to think about what strategies would be most appropriate given the dynamics of their jurisdiction.

The purpose of the second meeting is to quickly review the strategies and tools referenced in *From Blight to Bright* and to reach consensus on the most effective comprehensive approach to countering blight.

a. Review of Notes from First Meeting

Notes should be distributed in advance of meeting.

b. Review of Strategies from Reading Assignment *From Blight to Bright, a Comprehensive Toolkit for Pennsylvania*

The first part of the meeting will be used to clarify or answer any questions about the material in *From Blight to Bright*. This can be accomplished with a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the main strategies and tools referenced in the publication. The purpose of the presentation is not to present an exhaustive explanation for each strategy or tool, but to provide basic information and to give task force members the opportunity to ask questions. Because of the number of strategies and tools described in *From Blight to Bright*, this part of the meeting typically lasts at least an hour, depending on the number of questions from the task force.

c. Consensus-Building Exercise to Determine the Most Effective Strategies

Before the meeting, the facilitator should group the strategies into one of three categories:

- Prevention
- Remediation
- Redevelopment

The facilitator should write a brief summary of each strategy on a letter-size piece of paper (one piece of paper for each strategy) and place the strategy into one of the three groups. The group headings and the strategies under each group should be taped onto a blank wall in the meeting room.

Northumberland County Blight Strategy Plan, Top- and Middle-Tier Strategies: *A Partial List*

- Encourage municipalities to implement provisions of Act 90 of 2010.
- Encourage municipalities to take advantage of laws that prohibit bad actors from purchasing additional properties at tax sales.
- Encourage municipalities to ticket for code violations as summary offenses.
- Encourage district attorney to charge repeat code violators with second-degree misdemeanor under the PA Crimes Code.

STEP 3 Convene Blight Task Force

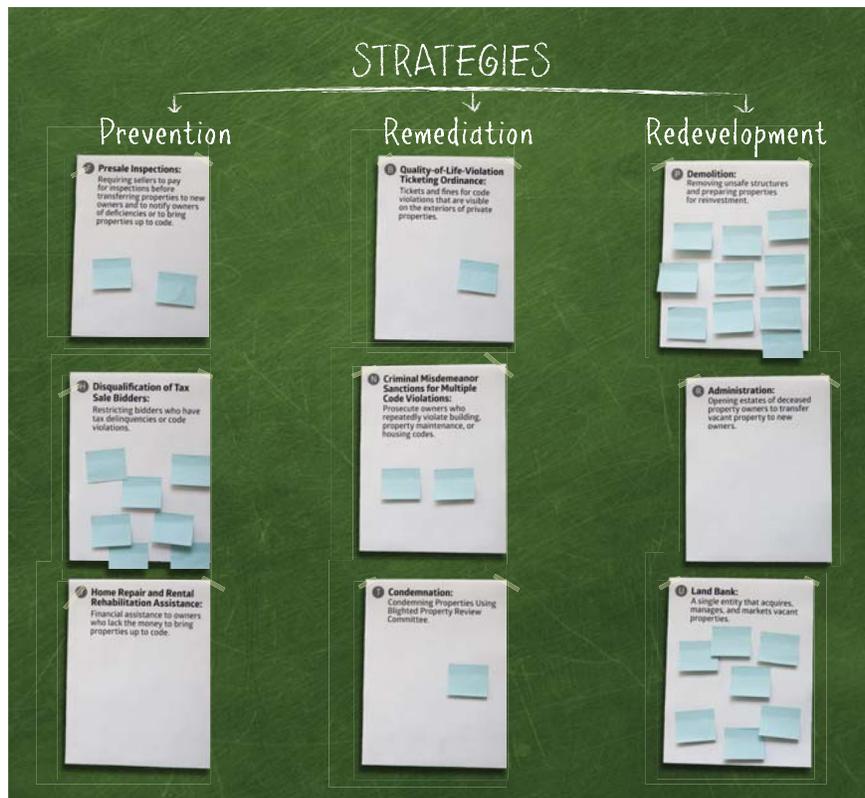
Each task force member is given five to seven sticky notes. The facilitator will then pose this question: “Based on your understanding of the strategies that are posted on the wall, which will be the most effective in addressing blight in this county [or municipality].” Task force members are given about 15 minutes to use their sticky notes as votes to indicate their preferences. They do this by placing their notes on the strategies that they think will be most effective.¹

Because the result of the voting is graphic, the top-tier strategies (usually five or six) immediately become apparent. Below the top is a middle tier of strategies that have received votes but not as many as the top tier.² The middle-tier strategies may be important and should be discussed and identified as such in the comprehensive blight strategy report. The lower-tier strategies that received only a few votes or no votes at all should not be discussed in the report, because there is no consensus about them.

d. Review of Task Force Thoughts about Priority Strategies

After this segment, the facilitator will review the results of the voting with the task force. This involves tallying the votes (sticky notes) placed on each item.

Before adjourning the meeting, the facilitator will instruct task force members to expect a draft strategy report detailing the top- and middle-tier strategies. The draft report will be sent out at least a week before the third meeting, to give members ample opportunity for review.



1 If task force members feel strongly about a particular strategy, they may be allowed to place more than one sticky note on it; to avoid skewing the results, however, there should be a limit to the number of sticky notes a member may place on one item.
 2 The number of votes that distinguish the top tier from the middle tier will vary. The facilitator may want to suggest the cut-off in terms of number of votes and ask the task force to react to the suggestion.

Third Task Force Meeting: *What's on the Agenda?*

- a. Review of notes from second meeting
- b. Review of draft comprehensive blight strategy task force report
- c. Feedback from task force members on report
- d. Discussion about agenda for the last meeting

a. Review of Notes from Second Meeting

Notes should be distributed in advance.

b. Review of Task Force's Draft Report

The draft blight strategy report can be written by an individual such as a paid consultant or volunteer, or by a team of volunteers. The report should consist of the following sections:

- Introduction, which discusses the formation of the task force, guiding principles, and members of the task force
- Survey data on the nature and extent of blight and the level of effort in addressing blight
- Impact of blight on community and economic development
- Desired outcomes

- Priority strategies that emerged from the task force deliberations
- Possible next steps

The report will be given to task force members before the third meeting, but time should be reserved at the beginning of that meeting to briefly review the report's contents.

c. Task Force Members' Feedback on Report

Feedback on the report should be invited. One challenge will be to reach a consensus on the validity of comments made by individual members. Although all feedback should be encouraged, the final report needs to reflect the thinking of the entire task force rather than of an individual member. Thus, a trained facilitator can be helpful.

d. Discussion of Agenda for the Last Meeting

Before adjourning, the purpose of the next and final meeting of the task force should be discussed. The last meeting of the task force will be critical because is an opportunity to engage more municipal officials in the process. Task force members should be encouraged to spread the word about this meeting with any municipal officials they know to maximize turnout.



Step 4: Engage Municipal Officials

After the draft report has been discussed and consensus on the feedback has been reached at the third task force meeting, a final meeting should be scheduled. It is a joint meeting of the task force and municipal officials. Each municipality in the county (assuming the task force is countywide) should be invited to send one or more representatives. They could include elected municipal officials as well as key staff members, such as the manager and code enforcement officers.

b. Feedback on Report Recommendations

After the presentation, attendees should be encouraged to provide feedback and to ask questions.

To encourage municipal officials to implement strategies included in the report, sample ordinances should be made available to them at the meeting. For example, if the recommended strategies include ticketing for code violations, denying permits, and initiating a rental housing licensing program, hard copies of sample ordinances related to these strategies should be handed out to any municipal officials who believe that those would be effective approaches in their municipalities.

Final Meeting of the Task Force: *What's on the Agenda?*

- a. Summary of final task force report, with emphasis on priority strategies
- b. Feedback on report recommendations
- c. Discussion of possible next steps

c. Discussion of Possible Next Steps

Municipal officials should leave the meeting equipped with new ideas to address blight, as well as the documents needed to implement the specific strategies that could be useful to their jurisdictions.

The final task force meeting is crucial because it provides an opportunity to include municipal government officials who have an interest in dealing with blighted properties. This is particularly important when the comprehensive strategy is being developed countywide. The reason is that the task force probably includes only a fraction of the municipalities, because of the need to limit its size. The bottom line is that the vast majority of the strategies included in the *From Blight to Bright* will need municipal action. Further discussion of the agenda follows.

a. Summary of Final Task Force Report, with Emphasis on Priority Strategies

The meeting should begin with a presentation on the task force strategy report, with a focus on its recommended strategies.

Before adjourning the fourth and final meeting, it is important to discuss next steps, such as—

- Pursuing funding to acquire and demolish or rehabilitate blighted properties
- Technical assistance to municipalities in drafting ordinances to address blight
- Other initiatives, such as engaging a circuit rider code official who could serve two or more local governments
- The formation of an "action team" to oversee the implementation of the report recommendations



Step 5: Identify Priority Action Steps and Implement!

“The blight strategy created a foundation for action among a variety of organizations that have a number of resources to effectively address blight.”

—Ed Christiano, executive director of the Northumberland County Housing Authority, crediting the Fast-Track Blight Plan for his county’s success in tackling blight

Commitment to Implementation

The task force’s development of a comprehensive blight strategy is just the beginning of the process of effectively addressing blight. Although the process described above can be concluded in as little as four months, effectively countering blight is an ongoing endeavor that demands considerable focus.

The Action Team

To ensure implementation of the plan, an action team should be formed. The team will consist of representatives from each organization that will have a role in putting the plan into action.

The job of the action team is to develop a detailed action plan for each strategy recommended in the report. Typically, an action plan includes the tasks necessary to implement each strategy, the time frame for accomplishing those tasks, the lead organization(s) for accomplishing each task, the resources (financial or other) that will be needed, and a method to measure success. An example of such an action plan appears on the next page.

The work of the action team is not finished with the completion of the action plan. The action team will want to meet quarterly to assess progress in accomplishing tasks, update the plan periodically, and

identify prominent blighted properties that might be good opportunities for redevelopment and reuse.

The action team should consider forming a redevelopment team to look more closely at prominent blighted properties that are deemed good opportunities for redevelopment. The redevelopment team should include organizations whose missions include undertaking such projects. Members would typically include the redevelopment authority, a land bank, an economic development corporation, nonprofit development corporations, and municipal officials. In most cases, the goal of the redevelopment team is to tee the project up for a private developer or investor by obtaining site control, completing preliminary environmental due diligence, and managing other risks that would make the property difficult to develop from a private developer’s perspective. In some cases, a nonprofit organization may be the best option for redevelopment. To undertake the project, the redevelopment team can initiate discussions with appropriate nonprofit organizations.

Typical Action Plan Elements

- Tasks to be completed
- Time frame
- Lead organization for each task
- Resources
- Measuring Success

Sample Action Plan

Strategy and Tasks	Lead Organization	Time Frame for Accomplishment	\$ Resources Required	Measurements of Success
STRATEGY 1. Encourage municipalities to adopt comprehensive property maintenance codes	Planning commission			Four communities adopt a property maintenance code within 12 months
Task a. Identify which municipalities do not have a property maintenance code		Jun 30	none	
Task b. Reach out to municipalities to gauge their interest in adopting a property maintenance code		Sept 30	none	
Task c. Retain consultant to work with municipalities in drafting an appropriate ordinance		Dec 31	\$7,500	
STRATEGY 2. Use the conservatorship process to deal with long-time blighted properties	Redevelopment authority			Three conservatorship actions filed within 12 months
Task a. Identify properties appropriate for conservatorship action		Mar 31	none	
Task b. Develop pool of funds to undertake rehab or demolition of properties		Sept 30	\$100,000	
Task c. Retain legal services to file conservatorship actions		Sept 30	\$10,000	

RESULTS TO DATE OF THE FAST-TRACK METHOD



BEFORE

McKean County

McKean County, which completed its comprehensive blighted-property strategy in 2013, recently formed a Blighted Property Review Board. The board, which is authorized by the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, permits redevelopment authorities to acquire vacant, blighted properties using eminent domain. That was one of the top strategies identified in McKean County's Comprehensive Blight Strategy.

In the past year, McKean County gave five municipalities technical assistance to rewrite their ordinances on nuisances, dangerous structures, and property maintenance to make them more effective in addressing blighted properties.

The redevelopment authority has used Act 137 and community development block grant funds to demolish four structures, including one commercial building.



Top, L-R:
 Front, rear, and side of blighted property that was demolished.

Right:
 The park that was built in its place.

AFTER



Clearfield County

To demolish blighted structures, Clearfield County has applied for Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Act (PHARE) funds through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. Since completing its comprehensive blight strategy in 2014, the county has tapped into PHARE funds through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to demolish and rehabilitate deteriorated properties. To date, more than \$130,000 has been awarded from that source.

In addition, several blight strategies identified in the comprehensive blight strategy are moving forward:

- The county is developing an education program to promote public awareness of the tax sale process. The objective is to encourage a greater number of responsible people to bid on the properties.
- The planning and community development office has completed a maintenance guide that is distributed to housing providers and consumers. The guide emphasizes the importance of keeping up with property repairs, rather than deferring them, and cost-effective approaches to repairs.
- The Moshannon Valley COG has provided leadership in encouraging five municipalities to adopt or update property maintenance

codes. The COG will provide code enforcement services through a joint cooperation agreement with the municipalities.

- Finally, the City of Dubois is considering the implementation of a rental-housing licensing program; several communities are considering the enactment of a ticketing ordinance.

In each case, the planning process helped build a shared understanding of the problems, the political will to address them, and a consensus about what to do first. The plan provided a platform from which to raise needed funds. The use of the 5-Step, Fast-Track Method made these steps forward possible.





BEFORE

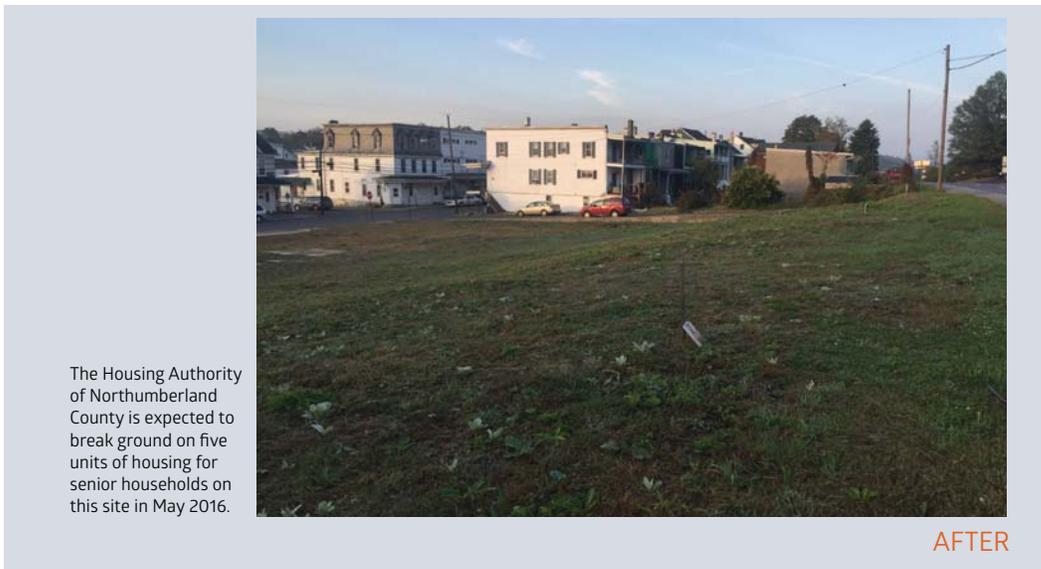
Northumberland County

Northumberland County has been highly successful in its efforts to prevent and remediate blighted properties. In the past three years, 37 blighted properties have been demolished and two have been rehabilitated. The county established Pennsylvania's tenth land bank in December 2015, building on the blight plan work completed three years before.

The housing authority led the effort to undertake a blighted-property strategy in 2012, and it has provided leadership to secure funding and to use new tools that address blight, including conservatorship and land banking. It was instrumental in spearheading efforts

to secure more than \$1.5 million in funding through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, specifically to acquire and rehabilitate or demolish blighted properties. In addition, the housing authority has secured a variety of funding sources to construct new housing for seniors on a previously blighted site.

Municipalities in the county pledged more than \$300,000 in community development block grant funds as a match for a state grant that the municipalities used to tear down 12 blighted structures.



The Housing Authority of Northumberland County is expected to break ground on five units of housing for senior households on this site in May 2016.

AFTER

CONCLUSION

Frequently, community efforts to address blight are stymied by the lack of a comprehensive blight plan that focuses and coordinates the resources and talents of organizations to effectively counter blight. **The process of developing the comprehensive strategy must be inclusive in order to gain the buy-in of those organizations.** This publication has described a step-by-step process that can be led by an internal or external facilitator and can be completed in a relatively short time so that community momentum to address blight persists.

Also, a comprehensive blight strategy should put the community in a better position to compete for funding from public and private sources because it demonstrates consensus about how blight should be tackled and which organizations will take the lead. Funders want to know that the process for developing the comprehensive strategy has included key stakeholders and that the strategies are based on needs and on data about the nature and extent of blighted properties particular to the community. With a sound, comprehensive strategy and adequate resources, successful outcomes are just around the corner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Appendix 4 - Blight-fighting communications brochure

‘Fighting blight in Pottsville’

- ▶ This communications brochure was provided to all residents in Pottsville, with copies also available in public locations. The point was to inform citizens and business owners of efforts to address a serious community problem.

The Nuisance Property Ordinance
 can be used if the following things happen on a premises within a one-hundred-eighty-day period.

Three or more violations of criminal statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and/or the ordinances of the City of Pottsville arising out of separate and distinct facts and circumstances and which occur in a dwelling;

Three or more violations of the City Code relating to property maintenance arising out of separate and distinct facts and circumstances;

Three or more violations of the City Code relating to zoning arising out of separate and distinct facts and circumstances; or

A combination of three offenses from any of the above categories arising out of separate and distinct facts and circumstances and which have been investigated, found to have substance, and appropriately documented by the Code Enforcement Officer or members of the Pottsville Police Department, and regardless of whether the violation resulted in the initiation of formal court action.



CITY OF POTTSVILLE

401 NORTH CENTRE STREET
 POTTSVILLE, PA 17901

Phone: 570.622.1234 ext.316

Fax: 570.628.4222

email: fightblight@city.pottsville.pa.us



**FIGHTING BLIGHT
 IN POTTSVILLE**

CITY OF POTTSVILLE

570.622.1234
 ext 316

FIGHTING BLIGHT IN POTTSVILLE

What is Blight? Blight is a condition that poses a threat to the health, safety and general welfare of a neighborhood. It can be easy to spot in things like broken doors and windows, a porch that is falling down, high weeds, trash and litter. In some cases it may be harder to see, with a building that has interior water damage, has no utilities, or has been vandalized. The reasons for blight may vary, but one thing is certain, blight is a serious problem.

- It decreases property values
- Discourages community investment
- Reduces the quality of life in our City.



What can we do?

Working together we

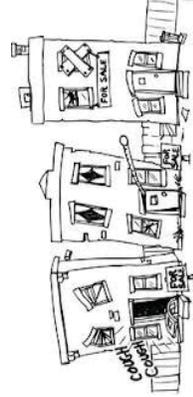
can make a difference. Property owners, neighbors, Code Officers, Police Officers, the Fire Department and Animal and Health Officers can identify problems and attack blight before it spreads. Tell your friends and neighbors about the “Fight on Blight”. If you see a problem that needs some atten-

tion, call or e-mail the property address to our Task Force. call 570.622.1234 ext 316 or email: fightblight@city.pottsville.pa.us

The City of Pottsville’s Blight Task Force has developed a multi phased approach to fight blight in our Community. This group is constantly working to improve the way that our City can battle this problem.

Let’s take a look at our process

- **Building Identification** – Properties are identified by City officials, neighbors, and in some cases local or state agencies.
- **Assessment** – Each property is visited by members of the Blight Task Force. A rating sheet is completed assigning a numerical value to a variety of categories that show how this particular building affects the community.
- **Corrective measures** – The Blight Task Force will create a strategy for each property. This strategy may include one or more of our “blight fighting tools”.

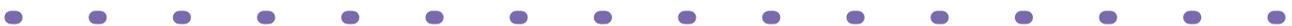


Let’s take a look at a few of the tools that may be used to fight blight

Quality of Life Tickets can be used to correct day to day problems that have a negative impact on a property and a neighborhood. QOL tickets may be issued for the following items:

- Accumulation of trash inside or outside of a property
- Not storing trash or recyclables property
- Littering on public or private property (including smoking waste)
- Littering by private advertising matter
- Storing vehicles illegally
- Failing to control your animals or failing to clean up after your pets
- Failing to cut grass, weeds, allowing water to cause a problem
- Failing to report or abate an insect or vermin problem
- Not cleaning sidewalks or throwing snow or ice on a public street
- Improperly maintaining a pool
- Failure to comply with regulations in the Historic District
- Not complying with vending regulations
- Not storing or serving food property
- Not registering tenants, living in a residence without being registered or allowing an unregistered person to live in your residence





Appendix 5 - Model Resolution, Allegheny County, PA

Live Well Community

- ▶ This is provided as an example of a resolution the boroughs could enact to demonstrate their commitment to helping residents “live well” through steps that address physical and mental wellness and more.



[Insert Municipality Name]
ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION NO. [Insert Number]

RESOLUTION INDICATING THE INTENT OF [Insert Municipality Name] TO WORK ALONG WITH ALLEGHENY COUNTY TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOALS OF THE *LIVE WELL ALLEGHENY* CAMPAIGN

WHEREAS, in January of 2013, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, under the leadership of the Board of Health and Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker, launched a comprehensive, innovative strategy on wellness called *Live Well Allegheny*; and

WHEREAS, living well is a broad concept that incorporates physical health, mental wellness, personal and community safety, prevention and preparedness, physical activity, nutrition, fitness, managing chronic disease, improving well-being, quality of life, education, improving our standard of living, cessation programs, vaccinations, weight loss, anti-aging, health literacy and so much more; and

WHEREAS, the health of our county residents, and the health of [Insert municipality name] residents, requires a coordinated effort to ensure that programs, studies, outreach events and other efforts have the ability to improve our overall health; behavior changes requires a cultural change which *Live Well Allegheny* is intent on providing; and

WHEREAS, one of the main initiatives of the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign is to endeavor to have the participation of all 130 municipalities and to provide programming in each of those communities; the campaign can enhance the capacity of communities to effectively plan, implement, evaluate and sustain activities and interventions that accomplish the goals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the [Insert municipality name] will endeavor to work along with Allegheny County to accomplish the goals of the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign; and

FURTHERMORE, that the [Insert body taking action] of [Insert municipality name] pledges to take the following steps within our community toward these goals:

[Insert or delete as appropriate; the resolution should reflect at least three action steps that are being committed to for participation]

- Promote participation in a voluntary wellness campaign for the community's employees
- Share information on wellness campaign events with the broader community to encourage the voluntary participation of residents
- Plan, promote and implement a Live Well Allegheny event in cooperation with the campaign that encourages active living
- Develop indoor and outdoor wellness trails accessible to residents of all abilities

- Develop walking maps; measure the distances mapped and encourage residents to meet goals
- Offer incentives for employees who walk or bike to work
- Encourage multi-modal transportation of residents by providing facilities or policies that encourage walking and bike riding
- Ask your vending machine company to add healthy foods, and work with the company to post calories and nutrient contents and amounts for the foods offered
- Promote and support farmers' markets
- Encourage involvement with community volunteer activities
- Promote smoke-free buildings and perimeters
- Provide health information focused on monthly or seasonal events
- Utilize web sites and social media to provide information on physical activity, nutrition, stress management, tobacco cessation, and other health and wellness related initiatives

ADOPTED this [insert date] day of [insert month], 2014 by the [insert body] of the [insert municipality].

ATTEST: [INSERT MUNICIPALITY NAME]

[Insert Name, Title & Signature of Attestor]

[Insert name, title and signature of appropriate officer]

