

Community Revitalization in "Older Communities"



Main Street, Yardley, PA

July 2005



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Community Revitalization in “Older Communities”

Introduction

Pennsylvania, one of the original thirteen states, is blessed in many ways. Important among our physical assets are cities, boroughs and villages where many aspects of the Commonwealth’s history are seen in the buildings, parks and the urban patterns of these communities. Imprinted upon native-American place names, the form and character of these communities reflect the many ethnic groups that built their communities, this state and the nation. The nation’s political history and industrial might began here. Many of these communities house world-class institutions for education, hospitals, athletic facilities, businesses, and centers for culture and the arts. Pennsylvania’s “Older Communities” are important elements of our heritage and should be equally important in our future.

However, many of these communities or significant portions of the communities are physically and financially distressed. The 2003 Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy report, [Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania](#), describes conditions and decisions that have contributed to the stress experienced in these more urban communities. This report also offered recommendations that would help change the negative course these communities have been experiencing so that their quality of life would be enhanced and their contribution to the state’s future will be greater.

This Study

In order to better understand aspects of community revitalization, Heritage Conservancy has completed a limited study related to revitalization efforts undertaken by several boroughs in Bucks County. Through the assistance of state Senator Joe Conti (10th senatorial district), the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development provided funding for this effort.

Municipal officials in seven boroughs were interviewed to identify the communities’ experience in three aspects of planning for revitalization. These main areas of inquiry were:

- Conditions that warranted revitalization and efforts to affect change;
- Use of the borough’s comprehensive plan to address revitalization efforts; and
- Use of multi-municipal comprehensive planning and other aspects of inter-municipal cooperation to facilitate revitalization.

Boroughs involved in this study were located in Bucks County’s more urbanized areas closer to Philadelphia, along the Delaware River which attracts many tourists, in the growing central parts of the county, and in upper portion of the county which is experiencing development occurring somewhat later than the other parts of the county.

Municipal officials were interviewed in the following boroughs:

<u>Borough County</u>	<u>Official Interviewed</u>	<u>General Location within Bucks</u>
Doylestown	Borough Manager	Central
Dublin	Borough Manager	Central/Northern
Morrisville	Borough Manager	Lower
New Hope	Two Council Members	Central/Along River
Newtown	Mayor	Central/Southern
Perkasie	Council Member	Northern
Yardley	Planning Commissioner	Southern/Along River

Each community is different in terms of its characteristics, efforts devoted to revitalization, financial capabilities, applicability of grant funding and other related factors.

A set of prepared questions were distributed to the official to be interviewed. The questions were discussed with the borough officials by a Heritage Conservancy staff member and their responses were recorded. For detailed findings, please see the completed interview questionnaires included in the appendix.

Demographics

A summary of several demographic characteristics of each community is helpful to understand basic population and housing trends and possible patterns among the boroughs.

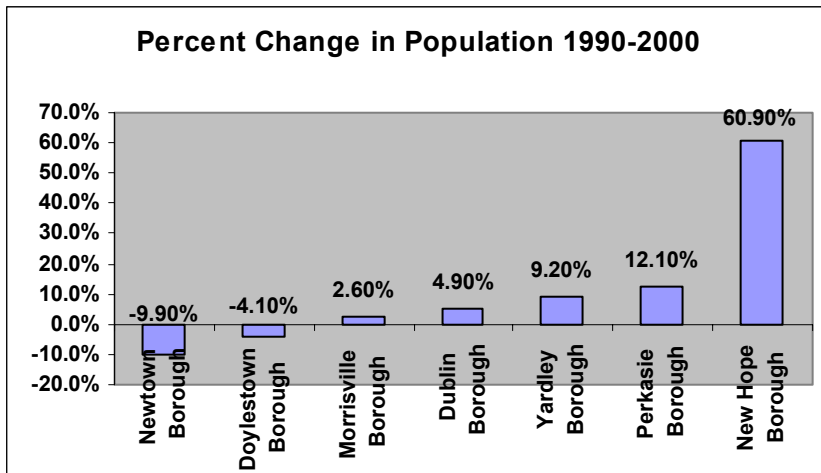
Based on US Census Data, the seven boroughs vary in population growth and in total population. As noted in table 1 and in graph 1, most of the boroughs have increased population over the past decade, with the exception of Doylestown Borough and Newtown Borough. Leading the group in population growth was New Hope Borough, which is currently undergoing a large amount of building along its riverfront. In the ten year period between 1990 and 2000, its population increased by over 60%. New Hope is unique among Bucks County municipalities due to its year-round appeal to tourists. Among the Borough's reviewed for this study, New Hope also has the highest median housing value at \$275,300. (See Table 2) New Hope, Yardley and Morrisville Boroughs are all located along the Delaware River or the historic Delaware Canal and can take advantage of many river related amenities and cultural heritage opportunities.

Doylestown Borough is the county seat of government and therefore includes the county offices and courthouse. Among the seven boroughs studied, Dublin had the newest housing stock, while Newtown had the oldest. Perkasie and Yardley had the highest homeownership rates (71-72%), similar to statewide averages. Dublin Borough had the lowest homeownership rate (42.5%). Another demographic characteristic reviewed was the percent of population migration out of the Borough's within the 5-year period between 1995 and 2000 (See Graph 2) This type of migration data provides a snapshot of how stable the population of a given community is. In addition, it is typically useful when reviewing regional population

trends. For example, within Bucks County approximately 63 % of the population lived in the same house between 1995 to 2000. According to the census data, all of the boroughs we reviewed were below this figure. New Hope and Dublin had the lowest percentage of population living in the same house over a five-year period. It is hard to draw conclusions based on our limited scope, but in the case of New Hope, this figure could be attributed to the addition of new households due to the more recent construction activity.

Area	U.S. Census Population		Numeric Change	Percent Change
	1990	2000	1990-00	1990-00
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	12,281,054	399,411	3.4%
Bucks County	541,174	597,635	56,461	10.4%
Doylestown Borough	8,575	8,227	-348	-4.1%
Dublin Borough	1,985	2,083	98	4.9%
Morrisville Borough	9,765	10,023	258	2.6%
New Hope Borough	1,400	2,252	852	60.9%
Newtown Borough	2,565	2,312	-253	-9.9%
Perkasie Borough	7,878	8,828	950	12.1%
Yardley Borough	2,288	2,498	210	9.2%

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, Census 1990 and 2000.



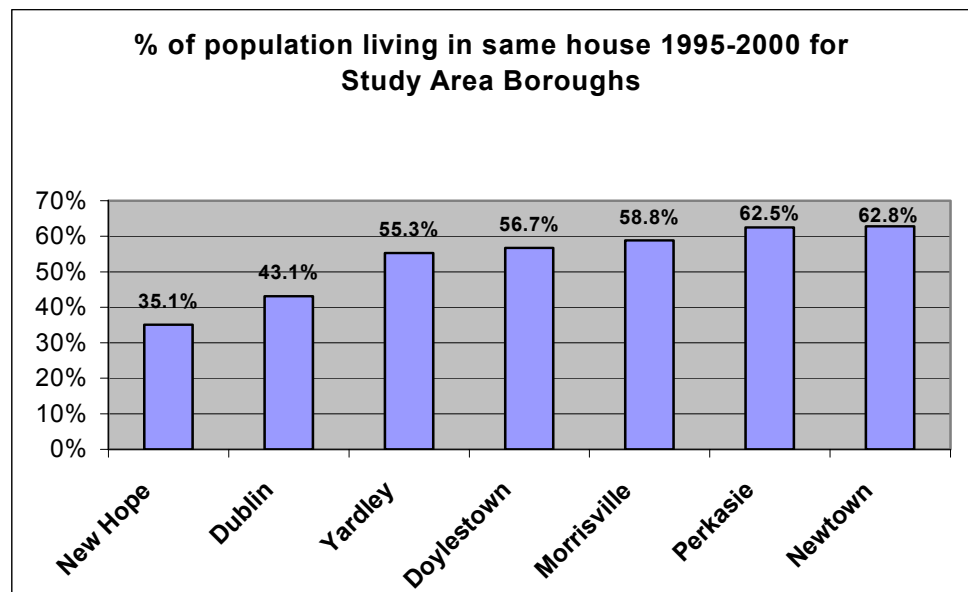
Graph 1 – Percent Change in Population 1990-2000 – Study Area Boroughs

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 1990 and 2000.

Area			% Owner occupied
	Median Housing Value *	Median Year Structure Built	
Pennsylvania	\$94,800	1957	71.3%
Bucks County	\$161,900	1970	77.3%
Doylestown	\$179,900	1961	48.2%
Dublin	\$159,600	1974	42.5%
Morrisville	\$113,000	1952	56.2%
New Hope	\$275,300	1972	60.6%
Newtown	\$233,500	1940	66.3%
Perkasie	\$141,500	1969	72.3%
Yardley	\$173,300	1951	71.3%

*Median value for all owner occupied housing units (2000)

Sources: US Bureau of the Census, Census 2000.



Graph 2 – Percent of Population Living In Same House (1995-2000) for Study Area Boroughs

Source: US Census, 2000 Table PCT21, Summary Data File 3 (SF 3)

The demographic characteristics we reviewed are perhaps more notable for what they do not tell us. We did not find any patterns or relationships among these boroughs that would indicate that they are either in decline or improving. Housing values varied greatly as did home-ownership rates, yet these figures did not appear to correlate with each other. For example, housing stock age did not appear to correlate with housing values. What we have concluded is that Boroughs, much like Pennsylvania townships are different and should not be classified or grouped as being one way or another.

Summary of Findings

For summary purposes, the responses have been organized into four general categories.

A. Conditions or Pre-conditions that Warrant Revitalization

- Infrastructure Deterioration (Housing and Commercial)
- Loss of large retailer or industry
- Underutilization or marginal use of buildings
- Abandonment
- Fire Event
- Vacancy of key properties

B. Boroughs' Efforts to Effect Change

The techniques and programs utilized to effect change varied in each borough, although most programs focused on the commercial centers or business districts.

- Community Initiated Committees
- Improvement of infrastructure (Renovation or Rehabilitation)
- Providing technical assistance to startup businesses
- Participation in Main Street Programs (except Dublin)
- Sought grants from State and Federal Agencies (DCED, DEP, CZM)
- Participation in County Redevelopment Programs
- Participation in Specialized Federal or State Programs such as Keystone Enterprise Zone, Brownfields and Heritage Park, if appropriate.

C. Use of the Borough's Comprehensive Plan to Address Revitalization

Most of the Boroughs used the comprehensive plan in some fashion to address revitalization. In some cases, the plans were not current, so the Borough undertook special studies to address a specific site. In other communities, the comprehensive plan was being updated and revitalization was to be included as part of the economic component. It appeared that the majority of Boroughs sought consistency between their comprehensive planning and their revitalization efforts, especially due to concerns regarding traffic management and utility infrastructure costs.

D. Use of Multi-municipal Planning or Inter-governmental Cooperation to Facilitate Revitalization

All of the Borough officials we interviewed were familiar with the multi-municipal provisions in the Municipalities Planning Code, but none have participated in multi or joint planning on a formal basis. (Newtown Borough, was part of the Jointure among Wrightstown, Newtown Township and Upper Makefield township, but withdrew over 10 years ago.)

The most common aspect of multi-municipal cooperation to facilitate revitalization usually focused on joint or multi-municipal Water and Sewer Authorities and the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Act.

Some of the Boroughs indicated their reluctance to participate with adjacent municipalities in planning due to the fear of losing some control over land use issues. In other communities, the lack of cooperation was due to the lack of interest from neighboring municipalities.

Appendix

Interview Notes:

Doylestown Borough
Dublin Borough
Morrisville Borough
New Hope Borough
Newtown Borough
Perkasie Borough
Yardley Borough

DCED – Community Revitalization in “Older Communities” – Doylestown Borough

Date: February 17, 2005

Municipality: Doylestown Borough

Interviewer: S. Myerov

Official(s) Interviewed: John Davis, Borough Manager

A. Conditions That Warrant Revitalization

Are there residential and/or nonresidential portions of your community that have warranted revitalization in the past?

Main Street Business District/Central Business District

Please describe the conditions.

Tail end of 1992-93

Building stock deterioration, underutilization of existing buildings (vacant on top floors), high vacancy rates, demise of county theater, demise of Woolworth's Dept. Store. These conditions were not related to population change nor tax rates.

Were there any revitalization plans undertaken to change those areas?

There were a number of phases 92-93 focus on downtown business district. Task force (via municipal leaders) – plan developed and presented to residents. Transportation Center/Train Station – centerpiece was parking near Doylestown. Local Task force was formed – same proposal- parking and Main Street Program (but developed on grass-root level, not by municipal leaders). This effort raised funds privately and identified matching grants for development of visible, public investments (street lighting, for example)

Are there residential and/or nonresidential areas of your community that warrant revitalization at this time?

Not really.

Please describe the conditions.

Initial revitalization spurred improvements to center city. Trend to infill housing – additions, and renovations or replacements. Secondary impact on town center neighborhoods. Walkability and transportation issues/Quality of life issues are more prevalent than economic development. Improvements, not gentrification.

Are there current plans or programs intended to upgrade those areas?

The Borough is anticipating parking and traffic maintenance problems. New group of board members. Programs include parking surveys, expanding historic district, inter-ring neighborhood.

Are there brownfields sites within your community?

Cartex, former industrial area was converted to a traditional neighborhood called Lantern Hill. Another traditional neighborhood is being built at former Mrs. Pauls fish factory (Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). Current PennDot Facility on Broad Street.

Does the community have an inventory of brownfield sites? - *Not too many.*

Are there abandoned properties in the community? - *No*

Are there any programs in place to address the abandoned properties? - *Not applicable*

In your view, what are the roadblocks that make revitalization difficult?

*Continued regional growth and traffic – only so much room.
There is enough parking, however parking management is the issue.
PennDot Signage along 611 directs cars into Doylestown, but not at best location. Working on Broad Street Interchange to bring traffic into Borough from that location (Broad Street Corridor Plan).*

Do you believe the residents and business community believe revitalization is a priority for the community? - Yes

B. Loss of Business, Industry and Employers

In the past ten years, were there business, offices and industries that moved out of your community?

There was constant turnover. County theater. Woolworth's became GAP. Starbucks replaced vacant building. Created a better mix of business and therefore more viable downtown. Less specialty stores.

Where did they relocate? – *Not an issue in Borough*

Were those businesses replaced by others that have made positive contributions to the community or were they replaced by less desirable businesses?

Yes, upgraded. There was concern that retail would be replaced by office uses, but that has been arrested.

C. Main Street and Redevelopment Programs

Has your community ever had a Main Street program?

Yes, mid 1990's. However there was a big difference between the initial program and final proposed program. Lasted for three years.

In what time period was that program active? - 1995-1998

What were the major initiatives, successes and failures in the Main Street program

Educational component was not as good regarding residential vs. downtown issues. Doylestown not meant to be a New Hope. There were parking issues and traffic concerns.

Major initiatives included façade improvements and hiring of main street manager.

Program included the Main Street Manager and 21-person revitalization board. Only five years of funding. The program still had value even after the funding expired. The Main St. Manager resigned in 1999. Question as to whether the Main Street Manager position would be absorbed by either the business community or the municipality. There was a compromise that matched the borough and the businesses. It was decided that the Borough Manager would fill role of Main Street manager. Bond still exists via ordinance and the revitalization board is advisory to the Borough Council.

Were there redevelopment programs in your community? - N/A

Please describe when and what types of programs. Successes and disappointments.

D. Comprehensive Plan

Does your community have a comprehensive or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?

Yes

When was your current comprehensive plan adopted?

1997 plan was updated during revitalization. Very successful, residents involved and visionary.

Has it been updated or amended in recent years?

No. 1997 plan is still used.

Does the comprehensive plan recognize or address revitalization issues?

Yes. Central focus of plan, but goes beyond.

Is there an economic component in the plan?

Yes, but emphasis is on transportation.

Please describe how the plan targets those issues.

*Sustaining development – Main Street Program
Land use and development is real focus (physical improvements)*

As a community leader, do you believe that the comprehensive plan could be used to address matters related to revitalization?

Yes, it does a good job.

In what specific ways could the comprehensive plan help?

Addressing issues such as traffic, parking regulations, signage and by targeting areas. Comprehensive plan allowed sidewalk cafes and recommended zoning amendments to address issue of infill housing. Related to the folks in the neighborhoods. Allows fees in lieu of parking. Addresses building height issues and neighborhood streets such as Maple, Spruce and Cottage Streets.

Should your comprehensive plan be revised to better address revitalization issues?

No. It is still relevant and viable.

E. Multi-municipal Planning

Have you worked with any of the adjacent municipalities in any type of planning?

*Transportation? – Doylestown Township (great relationship)
Water and sewer? – Doylestown Township
Land use? (Traffic and Transportation issues, bike and pedestrian planning, parks cultural and police.)
Sharing of equipment?*

Do you see any advantage in working with any adjacent municipalities, formally or informally, in comprehensive planning where revitalization would be the goal?

Yes, more with land use and traffic issues. Would like to address the issues with Routes 313 and 202.

Are you familiar with the PA MPC's provisions for multi-municipal planning?

Yes.

Do you feel that DCED's grants are incentives sufficient to encourage multi-municipal planning?

Yes, but it is more a factor of political will. "State money follows success".

F. Case Studies.

Would you describe the specifics of one or more revitalization efforts or projects that you feel was/were successful?

Doylestown as focal point. Provider of rental housing/higher density in regional sense.

Were these major or minor successes? Please describe.

*Broad Street Corridor and Transportation Center. Two new neighborhoods (Veteran's Lane). Lantern Hill - Big Success
Re-invented town – Broad Street as new gateway to rival Main Street.*

Is there anyone else in the community that you think would be interested in talking about revitalization and the comprehensive plan?

Is there any available information that could be used to prepare case study on this revitalization project?

G. Open Ended

Is there anything else you would add on the relationship of the community's comprehensive plan to revitalization program?

Lantern Hill – Last big open space. Wanted it to look like the rest of Doylestown. Singles, twins, multi-plexes, but ended up as higher end cost. (Might exclude kids being able to afford living in area)

Lots of property owners can impact community in both negative and positive ways. Mainly positive. Approval process is "friendly." Shift emphasis from process to implementation. Emphasis on zoning, not SLDO. Waivers on preliminary plans. Architecture control vs. infrastructure on a case by case basis. Try to influence design standards.

Chain stores are ok, but should not take over an area.

People are from Doylestown, not Bucks. Doylestown is not "New Hope" - not a tourist attraction.

Court House could have an enormous impact if it leaves. It is our "steel mill".

DCED – Community Revitalization in “Older Communities” – Dublin Borough

Date: February 14, 2005

Municipality: Dublin Borough

Interviewer: Michael Frank

Official(s) Interviewed: Paul Williams, Borough Manager

A. Conditions That Warrant Revitalization

Are there residential and/or nonresidential portions of your community that have warranted revitalization in the past?

- *Tech Center property on Main Street*
- *Mill Street industrial property*

Please describe the conditions.

- *Tech Center was an old clothing manufacturing shop. Under used. Converted into small shops and offices. Diverse set of occupants in the building.*
- *Mill Street property was acquired and used for the storage of a private owner's automobiles. Exterior access in poor shape. Drainage problems.*

Were there any revitalization plans undertaken to change those areas?

No. Both were private efforts.

Are there residential and/or nonresidential areas of your community that warrant revitalization at this time?

Yes. Main St. and Elephant Road. Located in the heart of the commercial district, the center of the community.

Please describe the conditions.

Traffic, noise, lack of parking, small parcel size, high impervious surface cover.

Are there current plans or programs intended to upgrade those areas?

The Borough is looking into facilitating access through an adjoining property in an attempt to make the subject property more usable.

Are there brownfields sites within your community?

Yes. TCE contamination of groundwater. EPA is involved. Borough uses all treated water.

Does the community have an inventory of brownfield sites? - *No.*

Are there abandoned properties in the community? - *No.*

Are there any programs in place to address the abandoned properties? - *No.*

In your view, what are the roadblocks that make revitalization difficult?

- *Getting the business community involved.*
- *Dublin is too small for a Main Street Manager. Could use a circuit rider.*
- *Need to enhance the visuals.*

- *Most important, the borough does not have the money to do what would result in the needed improvements.*
- *Site conditions along Main St. does not provide for on-street parking as in many old town centers.*

Do you believe the residents and business community believe revitalization is a priority for the community? - *Yes.*

B. Loss of Business, Industry and Employers

In the past ten years, were there business, offices and industries that moved out of your community?

Some from the industrial area. Minor issue.

Where did they relocate?

Hatfield Industrial Park.

Were those businesses replaced by others that have made positive contributions to the community or were they replaced by less desirable businesses?

Yes. In the Tech Center and on Mill Street. Industrial and office uses.

C. Main Street and Redevelopment Programs

Has your community ever had a Main Street program?

No. Population base is too small for a traditional program. Could be an “affiliate.” Would open the opportunity for some grants if the match were small.

In what time period was that program active?

What were the major initiatives, successes and failures in the Main Street program?

Were there redevelopment programs in your community?

Please describe when and what types of programs. Successes and disappointments.

D. Comprehensive Plan

Does your community have a comprehensive or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?

1985 comprehensive plan is being updated.

The revitalization committee is involved.

When was your current comprehensive plan adopted?

Has it been updated or amended in recent years?

Does the comprehensive plan recognize or address revitalization issues?

Yes. The Main Street Revitalization Advisory Board is involved.

Interested in design guidelines for historic integrity of Main St.

Development of a Mixed Use Zoning District.

Comprehensive review of the zoning and land development ordinances.

Change land use regulations to accommodate redevelopment.

Investigate funding sources.

Investigate PA’s New Communities Program.

Is there an economic component in the plan? - *No.*
Please describe how the plan targets those issues. - *See notes above.*

As a community leader, do you believe that the comprehensive plan could be used to address matters related to revitalization?
Yes. That lead to zoning changes.

In what specific ways could the comprehensive plan help?

Should your comprehensive plan be revised to better address revitalization issues?
Yes, it's underway.

E. Multi-municipal Planning

Have you worked with any of the adjacent municipalities in any type of planning?
Roads. *Working with Bedminster to locate a new road into the commercial area. Working on traffic signal timing.*
Water and Sewer. *Work with Hilltown. Discussing a water interconnect with Bedminster.*
Land Use. *Discussions with Bedminster. Nothing formal.*
Sharing in Equipment. *Bedminster does not have much to share.*
Open Space. *Purchased open space with Hilltown.*

Do you see any advantage in working with any adjacent municipalities, formally or informally, in comprehensive planning where revitalization would be the goal?
Yes. More could be done.

Are you familiar with the PA MPC's provisions for multi-municipal planning?
Yes.

Do you feel that DCED's grants are incentives sufficient to encourage multi-municipal planning? -
Yes.

F. Case Studies.

Would you describe the specifics of one or more revitalization efforts or projects that you feel was/were successful?
Noted above.

Were these major or minor successes? Please describe.

Is there anyone else in the community that you think would be interested in talking about revitalization and the comprehensive plan? - *No.*

Is there any available information that could be used to prepare case study on this revitalization project? - *No.*

G. Open Ended

Is there anything else you would add on the relationship of the community's comprehensive plan to revitalization program?

Dublin is about to go through a renaissance. A few people on Borough Council are new, have vision and are energetic. Others so not participate or offer much.

DCED – Community Revitalization in “Older Communities” – Morrisville Borough

Date: March 2, 2005

Municipality: Morrisville Borough

Interviewer: S. Myerov

Official(s) Interviewed: George Mount – Borough Manager

A. Conditions That Warrant Revitalization

Are there residential and/or nonresidential portions of your community that have warranted revitalization in the past? - *Yes*

Please describe the conditions.

Housing and businesses had code issues.

Were there any revitalization plans undertaken to change those areas?

Yes. Gilmore Assoc. (engineers) and Keystone Heritage.

DCED Community Revitalization Grant (2002) for \$39,000. CZM Grant for Calboun Street Bridge Area.

Are there residential and/or nonresidential areas of your community that warrant revitalization at this time? - *Ongoing.*

Please describe the conditions.

Physical deterioration – see attached redevelopment outline.

Are there current plans or programs intended to upgrade those areas? - *Yes.*

Are there brownfields sites within your community? - *Yes*

Does the community have an inventory of brownfield sites?

One area. A.E. Stanley. Keystone Enterprise Zone.

Are there abandoned properties in the community?

Yes, partially. Not really an issue

Are there any programs in place to address the abandoned properties? *Yes*

In your view, what are the roadblocks that make revitalization difficult?

Financing is the biggest issue

Do you believe the residents and business community believe revitalization is a priority for the community?

Yes. Survey of residents indicated that this was the #1 issue.

B. Loss of Business, Industry and Employers

In the past ten years, were there business, offices and industries that moved out of your community?

Yes. Large site (Corn Syrup Mfg) moved back to corporate headquarters in Illinois

Where did they relocate? - *Illinois*

Were those businesses replaced by others that have made positive contributions to the community or were they replaced by less desirable businesses?

Not as desirable.

C. Main Street and Redevelopment Programs - (Morrisville is certified blight)

Has your community ever had a Main Street program?

No. Has an economic development corporation which functions as marketing and outreach group.

In what time period was that program active? - *N/A*

What were the major initiatives, successes and failures in the Main Street program?

N/A

Were there redevelopment programs in your community?

Partnership with Bucks County Redevelopment Authority and work closely with them. Abandoned landfill area – interest in age-restricted development.

Please describe when and what types of programs. Successes and disappointments.

D. Comprehensive Plan

Does your community have a comprehensive or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?

Yes. Draft is online at www.morrisville.com

When was your current comprehensive plan adopted? - *1982*

Has it been updated or amended in recent years?

Being updated now. All redevelopment areas will be incorporated.

Does the comprehensive plan recognize or address revitalization issues? - *Yes.*

Is there an economic component in the plan? - *Yes.*

Please describe how the plan targets those issues. - *See plan*

As a community leader, do you believe that the comprehensive plan could be used to address matters related to revitalization? - *Yes*

In what specific ways could the comprehensive plan help? - *Identifies target areas.*

Should your comprehensive plan be revised to better address revitalization issues?

N/A

E. Multi-municipal Planning

Have you worked with any of the adjacent municipalities in any type of planning?

Transportation? – Falls Twp. Rail Yard with Conrail

Water and sewer? – *Worked with Falls Twp. Act 537 being updated. Morrisville Sewer and wastewater treatment plant includes Lower Makefield and Yardley and Falls Twp.*

Land use? – *Heritage Riverfront Development*

Sharing of equipment?

Do you see any advantage in working with any adjacent municipalities, formally or informally, in comprehensive planning where revitalization would be the goal?

Yes. Advantage is that Borough Manager is also head of the Water and Sewer Authority.

Are you familiar with the PA MPC's provisions for multi-municipal planning?

Yes, somewhat familiar.

Do you feel that DCED's grants are incentives sufficient to encourage multi-municipal planning?

Yes, because you feel it is important.

F. Case Studies.

Would you describe the specifics of one or more revitalization efforts or projects that you feel was/were successful?

Were these major or minor successes? Please describe.

Is there anyone else in the community that you think would be interested in talking about revitalization and the comprehensive plan?

Is there any available information that could be used to prepare case study on this revitalization project?

G. Open Ended

Is there anything else you would add on the relationship of the community's comprehensive plan to revitalization program?

Delaware River Heritage Corridor – Signage study. Delaware River Greenway.

BOLD project (DRG – Celeste Tracey) and VISTA

Tonpath is in Morrisville and is well used with connections is Morrisville and Bristol. Some obstructions in Bristol and Bensalem. The canal will be re-channeled by Corps of Engineers.

Tonpath and levy will be resurfaced .

There are different organizations in the Borough:

Historic Society

Economic Development

Heritage Development Association

NJ and PA – Historic Trail Project – Sue Pridemore

DCED – Community Revitalization in “Older Communities” – New Hope Borough

Date: February 8, 2005 Municipality: New Hope Borough
Interviewer: M. Frank Official(s) Interviewed: Richard Hirschfield, Borough Council President
Sharyn Keiser, Borough Council Vice

President

A. Conditions That Warrant Revitalization

Are there residential and/or nonresidential portions of your community that have warranted revitalization in the past?

Union Camp property became the Union Square development in an old industrial area.

The business district is not blighted.

Residential areas are not blighted.

Please describe the conditions.

The Union Camp property was the site for an old paper bag manufacturer. A portion had been used for the storage of equipment. The site and buildings have been mostly abandoned for years.

Were there any revitalization plans undertaken to change those areas?

The site has been rehabbed to include a retail and office development. Includes a brew pub. Also includes a branch of the James A. Michener Art Museum and a municipal parking lot. The Borough was the prime mover in bringing the museum to the site and has developed the parking lot. Good cooperation with legislators (esp. Conti and Greenwood), a developer and the borough were very important in this project. A federal grant helped with the parking lot project. Consultant Rob Loughery, Keystone Heritage Group, helped secure grants and manage grants that were awarded to the borough.

Are there residential and/or nonresidential areas of your community that warrant revitalization at this time?

The Delaware and Lehigh Canal runs through the Borough. The west side of a portion of the canal, located adjacent to the Union Square site, is in very poor shape. Much of the land is owned by the New Hope Ivyland Railroad. The reluctance of the railroad to participate in any clean-up is the greatest impediment to change and improvement. The borough would like to construct a canal work from the municipal parking area on the Union Square site to the downtown center. The borough would use T-21 grant money to construct that pedestrian path project.

The Borough Hall is located in the business district. It is essential to keep the municipal building in the center of town for an historic community like New Hope. However, the building needs to be upgraded to meet contemporary needs. The public meeting room should be larger with handicapped access provided. The police offices could use more space. Other improvements are needed. A tentative budget has been developed (approximately \$400,000) and grants would be needed to accomplish the improvements. The borough officials have stated it would be unfortunate if the borough hall had to move to a site outside of the town center area. The municipal building should be located in an historic town's center.

Please describe the conditions.

Scrub growth. Old railroad equipment and refuse along the canal.

Are there current plans or programs intended to upgrade those areas?

Negotiations with the railroad.

Are there brownfields sites within your community? - *No.*

Does the community have an inventory of brownfield sites? *N/A*

Are there abandoned properties in the community? - *No.*

Are there any programs in place to address the abandoned properties? *N/A*

In your view, what are the roadblocks that make revitalization difficult?

Difficulty in bringing the railroad company into the project. Good partnerships are critical.

Do you believe the residents and business community believe revitalization is a priority for the community? - *Yes.*

B. Loss of Business, Industry and Employers

In the past ten years, were there business, offices and industries that moved out of your community?

Yes. About six years ago there was a notable exodus of businesses.

Where did they relocate? - *Lambertville, NJ.*

Were those businesses replaced by others that have made positive contributions to the community or were they replaced by less desirable businesses?

There was a period when there were vacant stores in the borough. Currently, properties are all occupied. There is normal turnover of retail space. Retail real estate is strong. For example, an old church became available. There was concern that it was not adaptable and usable for retail uses, but it has been converted and occupied for retail uses.

C. Main Street and Redevelopment Programs

Has your community ever had a Main Street program?

No. Retail business people were opposed to the possibility of anyone directing their business matters.

In what time period was that program active? *N/A*

What were the major initiatives, successes and failures in the Main Street program? *N/A*

Were there redevelopment programs in your community?

Union Square as noted above, but not as part of a Main Street program.

Please describe when and what types of programs. Successes and disappointments.

Union Square as noted above.

D. Comprehensive Plan

Does your community have a comprehensive or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?

Yes. An individual municipal plan.

When was your current comprehensive plan adopted? - *April 1997.*

Has it been updated or amended in recent years? - *April 1997.*

Does the comprehensive plan recognize or address revitalization issues?

Yes, but not from the standpoint of upgrading distressed areas. It focuses on the value of the riverfront, but there is no or very limited access to the Delaware River for the residents or visiting public. The river is a major asset that is not used because of access problems. The plan also addressed the need for community parks, particularly pocket parks along the river.

Based on the goals stated in the comprehensive plan, a Revitalization Committee was formed in 2000 in order to move those goals forward.

Is there an economic component in the plan?

Yes in the sense of the need for grants and the inclusion of time lines for specific projects.

Please describe how the plan targets those issues.

The plan identified the major economic development issues: the riverfront, the canal walk and community, pocket parks. The plan includes 10-year goals for those projects. Many of the project elements have been accomplished ahead of schedule.

As a community leader, do you believe that the comprehensive plan could be used to address matters related to revitalization?

Yes and it does in New Hope.

In what specific ways could the comprehensive plan help?

Identify needs. Set priorities and time lines.

Should your comprehensive plan be revised to better address revitalization issues?

Review and update in about three years.

E. Multi-municipal Planning

Have you worked with any of the adjacent municipalities in any type of planning?

Transportation?

Water and sewer?

Land use?

Sharing of equipment?

There is cooperation in a number of ways. The borough works with Solebury Township on street lights. New Hope, Solebury Township and Lambertville Borough in New Jersey share a public sewer system. New Hope and Solebury cooperate in fire and rescue services and informally share other equipment. New Hope and Lambertville cooperate in rescue services. New Hope participates in the Bucks County Consortium for purchasing supplies and equipment.

Do you see any advantage in working with any adjacent municipalities, formally or informally, in comprehensive planning where revitalization would be the goal? - *Yes.*

Are you familiar with the PA MPC's provisions for multi-municipal planning? - *Yes.*

Do you feel that DCED's grants are incentives sufficient to encourage multi-municipal planning? - *No.*

F. Case Studies.

Would you describe the specifics of one or more revitalization efforts or projects that you feel was/were successful?

A lock along the canal, Lock 11, has been rehabilitated and will be opened as a functioning, historic attraction in the near future. The canal needs to be repaired after hurricane Floyd in order to provide water supply for the lock to function.

The borough upgraded its visitors center to provide restrooms, handicapped access and landscaping.

Were these major or minor successes? Please describe.

Major contributions to the unique assets of the borough and its town center.

Is there anyone else in the community that you think would be interested in talking about revitalization and the comprehensive plan?

John Burke, Borough Manager

Rob Loughery, Keystone Heritage Group

Is there any available information that could be used to prepare case study on this revitalization project?

Check with John Burke, Borough Manager.

G. Open Ended

Is there anything else you would add on the relationship of the community's comprehensive plan to revitalization program?

Rob Loughery, Keystone Heritage Group, has provided consulting services to the Borough in its revitalization work. Keystone's website notes the following projects:

Borough of New Hope, PA - Municipal Parking Facility Development (May 2000 - Present)

Project manager & developer of a municipal parking lot that will provide supplemental parking for the downtown commercial district and \$12 million mixed-use redevelopment project. The property is owned by the Borough of New Hope and is adjacent to the Delaware Canal, New Hope-Ivyland Railroad, and the former Union Camp industrial site. Storm water best management practices (BMP) have been incorporated into the design of this parking area. A \$330,000 US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Economic Development Initiative Special Projects grant was secured to design and construct the project. Keystone Heritage Group prepared the grant application, conducted the federal environmental review and coordinated the planning, design, engineering and construction.

Borough of New Hope, PA - Visitors Center Renovation & Redevelopment (March 2001 - Present)

Project Manager for the renovation and redevelopment of the New Hope Borough Visitors Center - a 19th century former municipal hall located in the heart of the town on Main Street. Over 40,000 visitors pass through the doors of this center each year. The objective of the project is to make the center more attractive, accessible and user-friendly to visitors in an effort to further enhance and promote the unique cultural and historic attractions of the town. Keystone Heritage Group has secured over \$80,000 in grants from state and federal sources and is working with a steering committee and architect to complete the design and renovations.

DCED – Community Revitalization in “Older Communities” – Newtown Borough

Date: February 16, 2005

Municipality: Newtown Borough

Interviewer: Michael Frank

Official(s) Interviewed: Glenn D. Hains, Mayor

A. Conditions That Warrant Revitalization

Are there residential and/or nonresidential portions of your community that have warranted revitalization in the past?

No. Some restoration, not revitalization.

Please describe the conditions.

The Brick Hotel was restored.

Were there any revitalization plans undertaken to change those areas?

Brick Hotel was private project. Borough was not involved.

Are there residential and/or nonresidential areas of your community that warrant revitalization at this time?

No. The Borough is in good shape.

Please describe the conditions.

Are there current plans or programs intended to upgrade those areas?

A Main Street manager was hired. A facade program is underway.

Are there brownfields sites within your community? - *No.*

Does the community have an inventory of brownfield sites? - *No.*

Are there abandoned properties in the community?

No. But there are underused buildings.

Are there any programs in place to address the abandoned properties?

Not applicable.

In your view, what are the roadblocks that make revitalization difficult?

Do you believe the residents and business community believe revitalization is a priority for the community?

No, but restoration of existing buildings is warranted.

B. Loss of Business, Industry and Employers

In the past ten years, were there business, offices and industries that moved out of your community?

No, just normal turnover of commercial spaces.

Where did they relocate? *N/A*

Were those businesses replaced by others that have made positive contributions to the community or were they replaced by less desirable businesses? *N/A*

C. Main Street and Redevelopment Programs

Has your community ever had a Main Street program?

Yes, shared with Newtown Township.

In what time period was that program active?

The program began about one year ago.

What were the major initiatives, successes and failures in the Main Street program?

Façade easements

Grants search

First Friday Events (weather is an issue; 6:00 p.m. into the evening)

Holiday and Christmas events

Street decorating (eg. lighting)

Were there redevelopment programs in your community?

Please describe when and what types of programs. Successes and disappointments.

D. Comprehensive Plan

Does your community have a comprehensive or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?

Yes.

When was your current comprehensive plan adopted?

December 1999

Has it been updated or amended in recent years?

Too current.

Does the comprehensive plan recognize or address revitalization issues?

Restoration and Historic resources issues.

Is there an economic component in the plan?

Yes. Includes aspects related to:

Expansion of the business district.

How to deal with available space at the ends of town.

Residential and office uses.

Keep retail in the center of the business district.

Please describe how the plan targets those issues.

As a community leader, do you believe that the comprehensive plan could be used to address matters related to revitalization? - *Yes. Helpful.*

In what specific ways could the comprehensive plan help?

Provides the time and opportunity to think and discuss related matters.

Should your comprehensive plan be revised to better address revitalization issues?

Yes, in about 15 years from the last update in 1999.

E. Multi-municipal Planning

Have you worked with any of the adjacent municipalities in any type of planning?

Yes. Much.

Transportation. *Bucks County Transportation Management Association. SEPTA bus.*

Street maintenance cooperation did not work out; snow plowing problem.

Water and sewer?

Land use?

Sharing of equipment? - *Yes.*

Do you see any advantage in working with any adjacent municipalities, formally or informally, in comprehensive planning where revitalization would be the goal?

Newtown Borough opted out of the joint municipal planning and zoning in the Newtown Area Joint Municipal Planning and Zoning Program.

Are you familiar with the PA MPC's provisions for multi-municipal planning?

Yes.

Do you feel that DCED's grants are incentives sufficient to encourage multi-municipal planning?

Money is not the primary incentive.

F. Case Studies.

Would you describe the specifics of one or more revitalization efforts or projects that you feel was/were successful?

Three restoration projects. Most current is the Frost-Watson property reuse. It was a lumberyard and building supply place. Toll Bros. Is building 75 residential units at 8.5 or 9 dwelling units per acre.

Brick Hotel project in the past.

Town center has a good mix of retail uses.

Were these major or minor successes? Please describe.

Is there anyone else in the community that you think would be interested in talking about revitalization and the comprehensive plan?

Is there any available information that could be used to prepare case study on this revitalization project?

G. Open Ended

Is there anything else you would add on the relationship of the community's comprehensive plan to revitalization program?

DCED – Community Revitalization in “Older Communities” – Perkasie Borough

Date: February 27, 2005

Municipality: Perkasie Borough

Interviewer: S. Myerov

Official(s) Interviewed: Harry McGonigle (Borough Councilman) -
Economic Development. Borough liaison to Perkasie Old Town.

A. Conditions That Warrant Revitalization

Are there residential and/or nonresidential portions of your community that have warranted revitalization in the past?

Yes – Stainless.

Please describe the conditions.

Some businesses were failing about 18 years ago. Borough does not have a “main drag”.

Were there any revitalization plans undertaken to change those areas?

1988 big fire in area. Affected 31 businesses. Had fundraiser which provided start-up for families.

Are there residential and/or nonresidential areas of your community that warrant revitalization at this time?

Market Street area to be refocused for business and mixed use.

Please describe the conditions.

Are there current plans or programs intended to upgrade those areas?

Are there brownfields sites within your community?

Yes. Stainless property.

Does the community have an inventory of brownfield sites?

Are there abandoned properties in the community?

Not known...working with redevelopment authority.

Are there any programs in place to address the abandoned properties?

In your view, what are the roadblocks that make revitalization difficult?

Do you believe the residents and business community believe revitalization is a priority for the community?

B. Loss of Business, Industry and Employers

In the past ten years, were there business, offices and industries that moved out of your community?

Nothing of significance

Where did they relocate? - *N/A.*

Were those businesses replaced by others that have made positive contributions to the community or were they replaced by less desirable businesses? - *N/A*

C. Main Street and Redevelopment Programs

Has your community ever had a Main Street program? - *Yes*

In what time period was that program active?

1991-2000

What were the major initiatives, successes and failures in the Main Street program?

Borough Hall and Police Station were renovated. Need to be inclusive, not exclusive. Need support from business community. Facade improvements were focus, not training for new businesses. So some start up businesses did not succeed.

Were there redevelopment programs in your community?

Only in industrial areas that were created by Council. Authority used more as a pass-through for federal programs.

Please describe when and what types of programs. Successes and disappointments.

D. Comprehensive Plan

Does your community have a comprehensive or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?

Yes.

When was your current comprehensive plan adopted?

Did not know

Has it been updated or amended in recent years?

Does the comprehensive plan recognize or address revitalization issues?

It identifies districts.

Is there an economic component in the plan?

Please describe how the plan targets those issues.

As a community leader, do you believe that the comprehensive plan could be used to address matters related to revitalization? - *Yes.*

In what specific ways could the comprehensive plan help? - *Just starting.*

Should your comprehensive plan be revised to better address revitalization issues?

E. Multi-municipal Planning

Have you worked with any of the adjacent municipalities in any type of planning?

Transportation? – Would like a shuttle.

Water and sewer? – *some*

Land use?

Sharing of equipment?

Do you see any advantage in working with any adjacent municipalities, formally or informally, in comprehensive planning where revitalization would be the goal?

You give up some control. It needs to be beneficial to town. Ability to pool resources.

Are you familiar with the PA MPC's provisions for multi-municipal planning?

Yes.

Do you feel that DCED's grants are incentives sufficient to encourage multi-municipal planning?

Need to see what the "hooks" are. It depends

F. Case Studies.

Would you describe the specifics of one or more revitalization efforts or projects that you feel was/were successful?

Skiffington (Formerly part of the lumber mill that burned down). Now it is Re-max and Court House. Brings traffic.

Were these major or minor successes? Please describe.

Is there anyone else in the community that you think would be interested in talking about revitalization and the comprehensive plan?

Is there any available information that could be used to prepare case study on this revitalization project?

G. Open Ended

Is there anything else you would add on the relationship of the community's comprehensive plan to revitalization program?

Some rental properties available. Perkasio Neighborhood Development project providing money and information. It provides grants of up to \$3,000 for new start-ups. It is based on the Doylestown model. Match needs to be provided.

The current business district along Market Street is fractured.

Perkasio Old Town program intended to enhance the business community as old town charm. Includes businesses and residents. Partnership with Chamber of Commerce and Borough for grant.

DCED – Community Revitalization in “Older Communities” – Yardley Borough

Date: April 19, 2005

Municipality: Yardley Borough

Interviewer: M. Frank

Official(s) Interviewed: Bob Bushar, Planning Commission

A. Conditions That Warrant Revitalization

Are there residential and/or nonresidential portions of your community that have warranted revitalization in the past?

Yes. An old lumber yard on Canal Street.

Please describe the conditions.

The property had been vacant for a long time. It was run down and in poor condition.

Were there any revitalization plans undertaken to change those areas?

Yes. The property was converted into the Canal Street Grill. A major issue was parking facilities. Numerous zoning variances, including parking requirements, were needed to facilitate the revitalization.

Are there residential and/or nonresidential areas of your community that warrant revitalization at this time?

Yes. The U.S. Magnet property.

Please describe the conditions.

This is a 23.1-acre property, which is a large piece of land for most boroughs. Several uses existed on the land. Currently, there is a beverage distributor dong business. There are a number of unused, older industrial buildings in various stages of disrepair. Paved parking areas remain in poor condition. There were areas of the site that were contaminated, but were clean to industrial use standards. A substantial portion of the site contains woodlands, ponds and steep slopes. Brock Creek crosses the property. Although surrounded by commercial and residential uses in the Borough and residential development in adjoining Lower Makefield Township, deer have been seen on the property.

Are there current plans or programs intended to upgrade those areas?

The Borough has prepared a Brock Creek Corridor Study that proposes a pedestrian path through the property.

There have been numerous proposals to reuse the property for various residential and nonresidential purposes. The owner has proposed a brake distributor use, but the truck traffic would not be suitable for the limited access of the surrounding road system.

The property is zoned for industrial uses. It is likely zoning amendments would be needed to facilitate revitalization.

Are there brownfields sites within your community?

Yes. The U.S. Magnet property noted above. It has been cleaned up to industrial standards.

Does the community have an inventory of brownfield sites?

Not needed. Only one site.

Are there abandoned properties in the community? - *No.*

Are there any programs in place to address the abandoned properties?
Not applicable.

In your view, what are the roadblocks that make revitalization difficult?
Zoning. Communities must be very flexible to facilitate reuse.

Do you believe the residents and business community believe revitalization is a priority for the community? - *Yes.*

B. Loss of Business, Industry and Employers

In the past ten years, were there business, offices and industries that moved out of your community?
*Yardley Hardware (6 to 7 years ago). Could not compete with big home supply stores.
Two drug stores. Could not compete with new CVS in town.*

Where did they relocate?

Were those businesses replaced by others that have made positive contributions to the community or were they replaced by less desirable businesses?
The hardware store was converted to a shop and café, which is positive.

C. Main Street and Redevelopment Programs

Has your community ever had a Main Street program? - *No.*

In what time period was that program active? - *Not applicable.*

What were the major initiatives, successes and failures in the Main Street program?
No.

Were there redevelopment programs in your community? - *Not applicable.*

Please describe when and what types of programs. Successes and disappointments.
Not applicable.

D. Comprehensive Plan

Does your community have a comprehensive or multi-municipal comprehensive plan?
Yes. An individual comprehensive plan.

When was your current comprehensive plan adopted?
In 2002. Three years ago.

Has it been updated or amended in recent years?
In 2002. Three years ago.

Does the comprehensive plan recognize or address revitalization issues?

Not specifically. However, the revision of the plan involved a number of town meetings. The public input did include comments on the use and reuse of a number of properties.

Is there an economic component in the plan? - *No.*

Please describe how the plan targets those issues. – *Not applicable.*

As a community leader, do you believe that the comprehensive plan could be used to address matters related to revitalization?

Yes. The town meetings raised important issues.

In what specific ways could the comprehensive plan help?

It can identify issues and stress the need for flexibility in zoning.

Should your comprehensive plan be revised to better address revitalization issues?

No. The plan is current and adequate.

E. Multi-municipal Planning

Have you worked with any of the adjacent municipalities in any type of planning?

Yes. Preparation of the Brock Creek Corridor study with Lower Makefield Township.

Emergency services with Lower Makefield Township.

Nothing else.

Do you see any advantage in working with any adjacent municipalities, formally or informally, in comprehensive planning where revitalization would be the goal?

Not much need or to be gained. Very different communities.

Are you familiar with the PA MPC's provisions for multi-municipal planning? - *No.*

Do you feel that DCED's grants are incentives sufficient to encourage multi-municipal planning? - *No familiar enough.*

F. Case Studies.

Would you describe the specifics of one or more revitalization efforts or projects that you feel was/were successful?

Reuse of the lumber yard noted above.

Were these major or minor successes? Please describe.

It was a very complicated matter, particularly related to the parking matters.

The Borough was very flexible in terms of needed zoning adjustments.

The applicant secured a number of zoning variances from the zoning hearing board.

There was lots of give and take from all parties involved.

It only took about 6 months for the planning issues and 1 year for construction.

Is there anyone else in the community that you think would be interested in talking about revitalization and the comprehensive plan? - *No*

Is there any available information that could be used to prepare case study on this revitalization project?

Could get a copy of the comprehensive plan.

G. Open Ended

Is there anything else you would add on the relationship of the community's comprehensive plan to revitalization program? - *No*