



A New Blueprint for New Stanton

Borough Comprehensive Plan

Adopted February 2017

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Refer also to companion documents:

Background Studies
Market and Economic Analysis
Implementation Workbook

Acknowledgements

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Many additional individuals and organizations contributed to the plan via public and stakeholder outreach, as described in the appendices.

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared with assistance from:

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www.mackinengineering.com

and 4Ward Planning, Inc.



RESOLUTION NO. 2017-855

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF NEW STANTON, COUNTY OF WESTMORELAND, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING THE NEW STANTON BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, a copy of the Comprehensive Plan, which includes the text, maps, charts and any other items which form the whole of the Comprehensive Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit “A”, was made available for public review at the New Stanton Borough Building; and,

WHEREAS, the plan was sent to all contiguous municipalities, the Hempfield Area School District, and the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development for review and comment on November 16, 2016; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough of New Stanton has received no substantial comments from the contiguous municipalities, the Hempfield Area School District, or the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development within forty-five (45) days of submission of the Comprehensive Plan; and,

WHEREAS, public notice of a public hearing before Borough Council to hear and consider comments with regards to the Comprehensive Plan was published twice in the Tribune Review on the 24th and 31st days of January, 2017; and,

WHEREAS, Borough Council held a public hearing on February 7, 2017 to hear and consider public comments, and that the comments received at the public hearing were duly noted; and,

WHEREAS, Borough Council, after consideration of comments received (or lack thereof, as the case may be), has determined that the Comprehensive Plan should not be substantially revised in whole or in part; and,

WHEREAS, Borough Council has found the Comprehensive Plan is beneficial to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Borough of New Stanton.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOROUGH OF NEW STANTON COUNCIL AND IS HEREBY RESOLVED AND ENACTED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE SAME AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I. The Borough Council by this resolution hereby adopts the New Stanton Borough Comprehensive Plan attached hereto, marked Exhibit “A”, and expressly made a part hereof, pursuant to Article III and Article XI of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

SECTION II. Any and all previous comprehensive planning documents are hereby repealed.

SECTION III. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Borough of New Stanton

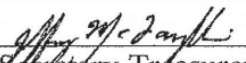
By _____
President

ATTEST: (SEAL)

_____
Secretary-Treasurer

CERTIFICATION

I, Jeffrey McLaughlin, Secretary-Treasurer of the Borough Council of the Borough of New Stanton, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, do hereby certify that the attached Resolution No. 2017-855 is a true and correct copy of the Resolution, duly resolved and enacted by the Borough Council of the Borough of New Stanton, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, on the 7th day of February, 2017.



Secretary-Treasurer

Date: 3/1/17

Using the Plan

What's all this, anyway?

Authorized by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), a community's Comprehensive Plan lays out strategies for the nature, pace and location of physical development as well as plans for future economic and social conditions.

In short, a comprehensive plan is:

- An educational tool for understanding current conditions, issues and opportunities,
- An assessment and prioritization of needs,
- A statement of the optimally desirable vision of future growth and development, and
- A public policy guide to community decision-making adopted by the governing body.

Unlike traditional comprehensive plans, which study topics in isolation (housing, transportation, etc.), New Stanton's new plan is organized to address priority community issues. In keeping with the implementable plan model promoted by Pennsylvania's Department of Community and Economic Development, the plan frames each key issue within the context of all of the planning topics it touches.

Form and function

This document is designed primarily as a decision-making guide for elected and appointed officials of New Stanton Borough. It is a playbook of projects and strategies that will help the borough become the best possible future version of itself.

What, exactly, does that desired future look like?

The project's Steering Committee spent roughly 12 months gathering input and research to build a consensus answer to this question. Details on the planning process, including stakeholder and public participation, appear in the appendices.

The **vision statement** appears in the following section. Most of the remainder of this document is dedicated to six **priority focus areas**, community development objectives that the public and stakeholders determined to be especially important to the future that — *and this is key* — the borough intends in earnest to address. The priority focus areas are not statements of need with associated general recommendations; they do not suggest things that the Steering Committee determined would be politically, financially or practically impossible. The focus areas examine key ways in which the borough can immediately begin moving forward to make the future vision for New Stanton a reality. They are a blueprint for community prosperity.

The **Additional Actions** section contains topics and projects that the borough analyzed and believes are necessary to address, but did not rise to the priority level. The **Implementation Tools** section provides detail on how the borough can set this plan into motion.

Supporting documentation appears in two companion documents. The **Background Studies** present an overview of the latest available demographic, housing and economic data as well as an inventory of community services, facilities and conditions as they relate to a variety of planning topics, comparing New Stanton to other highway hub municipalities across the state. This report incorporates relevant existing plans and ordinances completed for New Stanton, Westmoreland County, neighboring municipalities and any other jurisdictions that have implications for the borough's comprehensive planning process. The **Market and Economic Analysis** surveys socio-economic, labor and workforce and real estate market trends to identify market-supportable economic development opportunities for New Stanton.

The borough can keep track of ongoing progress using the **Implementation Workbook**, an Excel file that assigns responsible parties and timelines to each recommended task. This should be treated as a living document, revisited and updated at least annually.

Goals interwoven

In determining which action steps would best address New Stanton's long-term key priorities, the Steering Committee realized that many actions address multiple community goals. For example, streetscape improvements upgrade the quality and appeal of the built environment, which serves to bolster community pride and identity, improve perceptions of public safety, encourage economic development and encourage travel via bicycle or foot. Action steps in this plan are listed under the single heading to which they are most directly relevant, but each serves more than one purpose.





Context and Principles



Ballfields at New Stanton Park

Existing Trends and Conditions

New Stanton Borough has developed a reputation as the “highway hub of Western Pennsylvania” by virtue of its location at the intersection of Interstate 70, the Pennsylvania Turnpike (Interstate 70/76), U.S. Route 119 and Pennsylvania Turnpike Route 66 Toll Road. The borough has developed as a natural center for trucking, warehousing and distribution and is home to a United Parcel Service facility employing 1,700, a SuperValu grocery distribution center employing 500 and employers related to traveler services, such as hotels, gas and convenience stores and national fast-food chains.

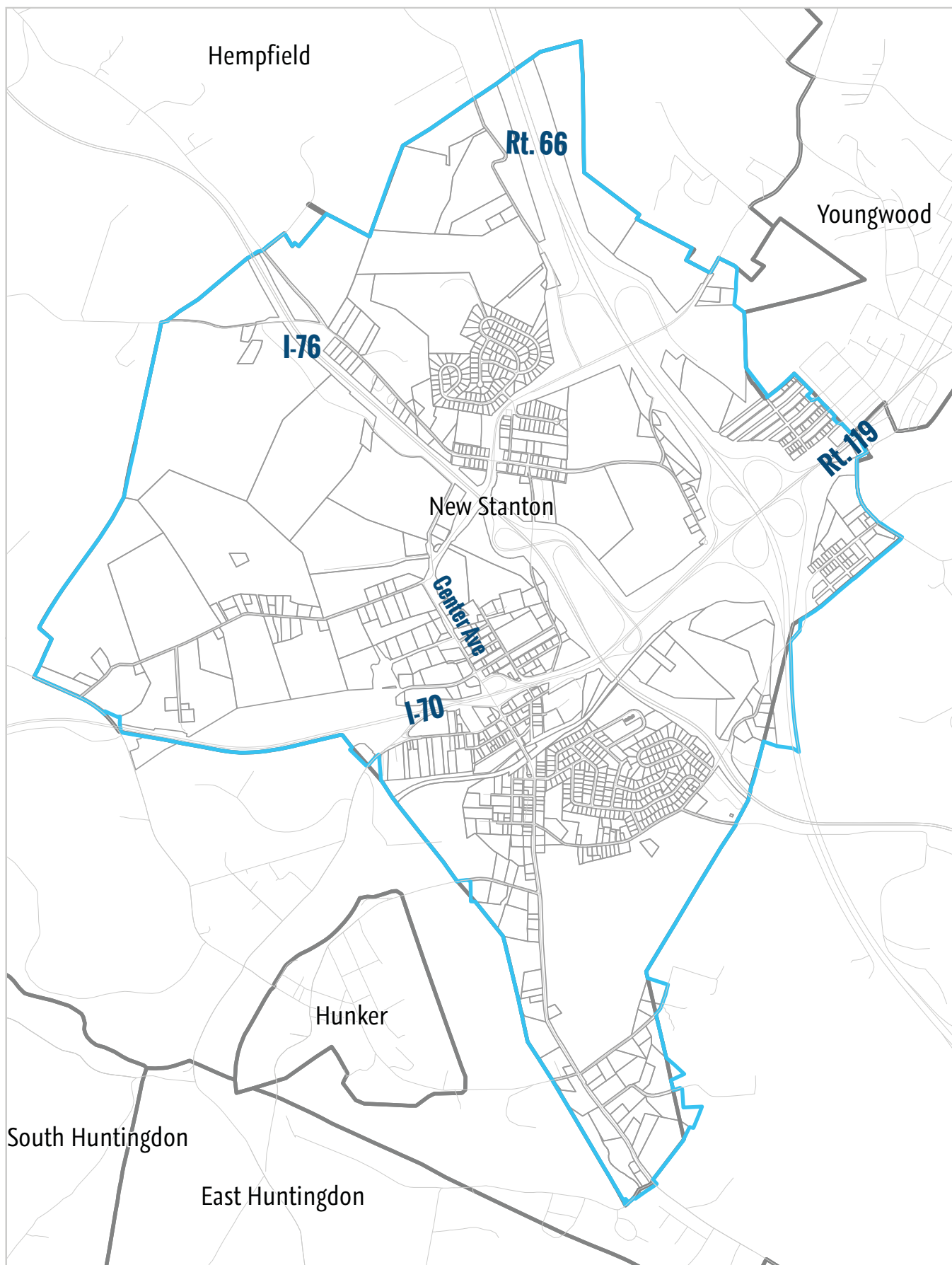
Highlights from the Background Studies and Market and Economic Analysis appear on pages 12 and 13. They reveal a community that reflects the socio-economic trends of its region: Growing proportions of smaller households and senior citizens. However, unlike Westmoreland County, New Stanton is also gaining youth — its median age (38) is two years younger than it was in 2000, driven by a 90% growth (197 people) in older teens and young adults. Other key ways in which New Stanton diverges from the county overall is its high proportion of renters and its diminished spending power (relatively low and stagnant median household income). The borough’s concentration of large employers in growing industries — warehousing and distribution, particularly — represents great potential to attract new residents.

In Summer 2015, work began to construct a \$55 million replacement interchange one-half mile west of the existing interchange Exit 75 on Interstate 70. By 2018, the project is expected to open up access to more than 80 acres of undeveloped land in the immediate vicinity. The project will reconfigure traffic patterns into and within the borough. Beyond that, it will represent an opportunity for the borough to leverage new investment to achieve a desired community form and character while ensuring that existing businesses and residents share in the area’s growing prosperity.

While the highway-commercial focus of the borough’s development pattern has been a boon for the local economy, it has led to traffic congestion, poor internal mobility, poor connectivity, fragmentation of neighborhoods and a lack of neighborhood services and downtown-type amenities. Owners of existing businesses worry that the interchange relocation will weaken the existing business district by routing would-be patrons to new competition with better access. Residents worry about how New Stanton will retain and enhance its local character as new road patterns transform its built environment.

This plan represents the borough’s intention to proactively leverage coming changes.

Figure 1: Reference Map



Data source: Westmoreland Development Council, Planning Division

0 0.1 0.2 Miles

Data trends summary

New Stanton Borough is unlike many other boroughs of similar size and character across the region in one very important way:

It's growing.

The Census figures here describe growth that was happening even prior to the I-70 interchange improvement project breaking ground. The project is expected to attract substantial new investment.

2014 Census estimates:



Population: 2,510



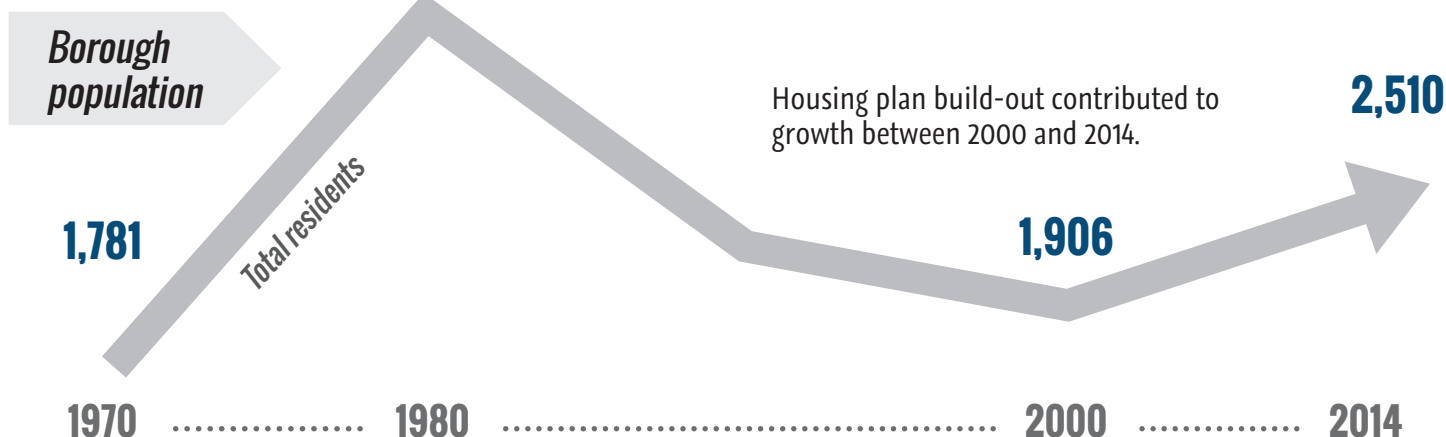
Land area: 3.9 sq. miles



Households: 1,100



Median household income: \$55,556

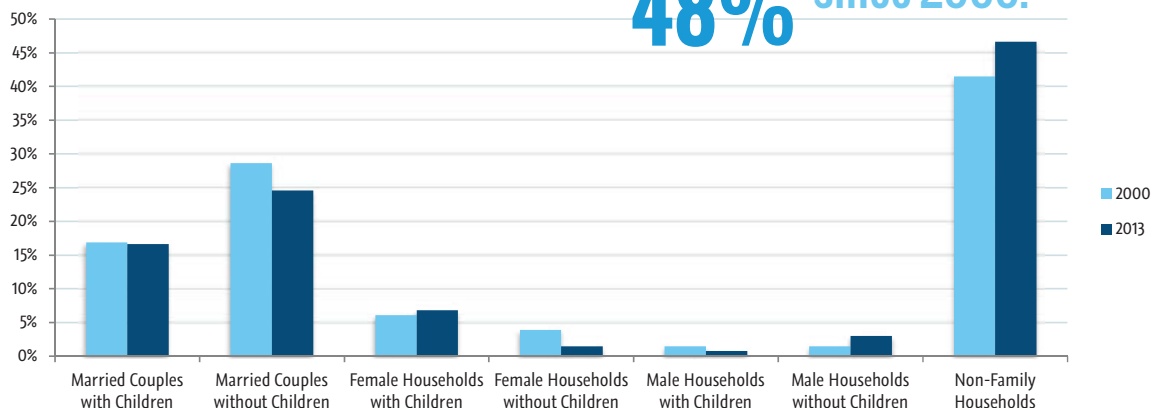


Age and household type

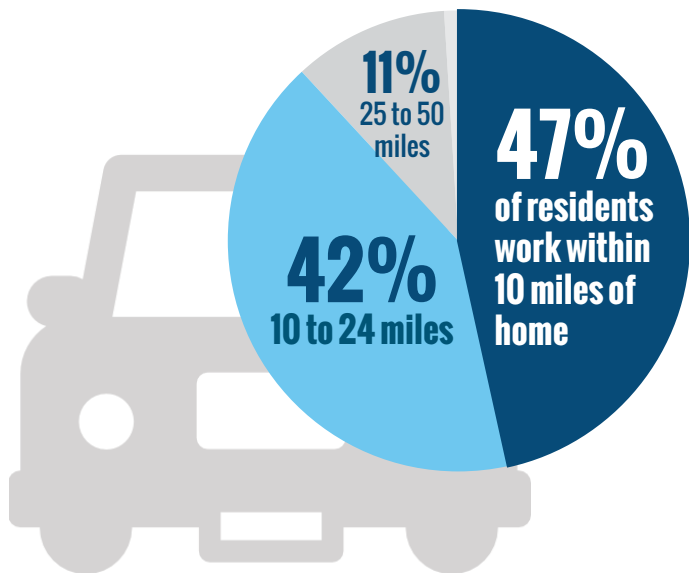
Expansion among the young adult and senior cohorts calls for focus on the community needs specific to those groups.

The number of residents age 60 and up increased by **48%** since 2000.

Single-person households are on the rise



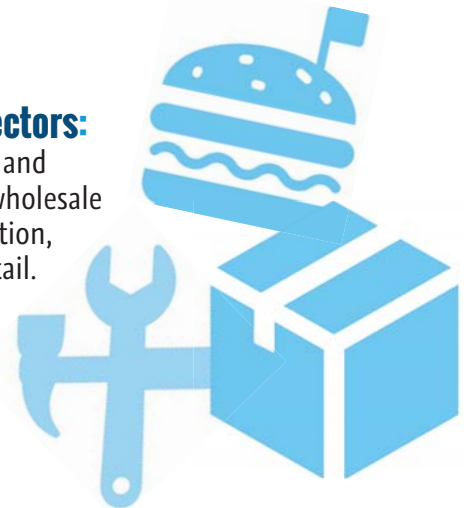
Local economy



New Stanton businesses tend to fall into one of two categories: Those capitalizing on its advantageous location and the highway commercial activity it brings, and locally owned ventures with long histories of serving the community.

Strongest sectors:

Transportation and warehousing, wholesale trade, construction, utilities and retail.



There were 3,654 jobs in the borough in 2013, **98%** of which were occupied by workers who live elsewhere.

Housing



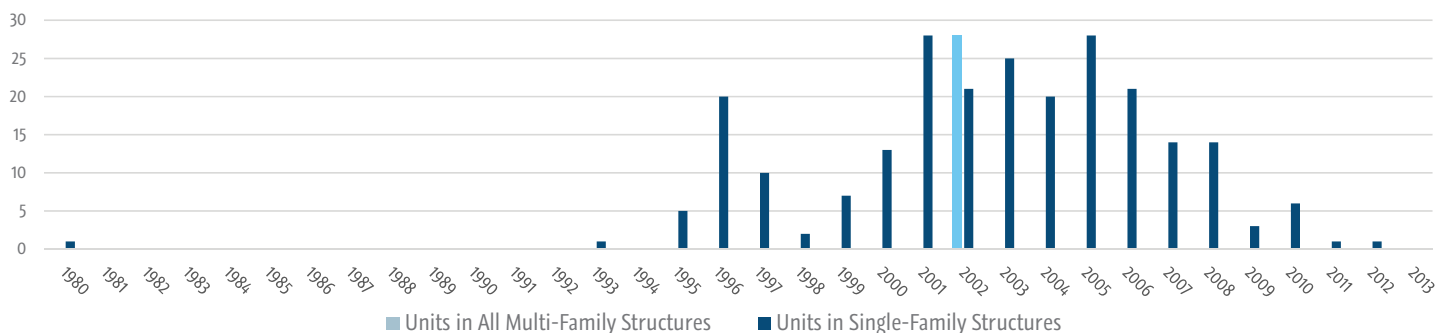
New Stanton added more than 250 new housing units between 2000 and 2013, an increase of

29.4%.

The borough's homes are **48%** renter-occupied.

The borough's housing stock will need to grow to attract an increasing number of New Stanton workers to become New Stanton residents.

Borough building permits took off in the 2000s:



See the companion documents for full analysis.

Vision and Guiding Principles

The vision statement for a community's comprehensive plan should satisfy (at least) the following three purposes:

- Elected and appointed officials and staff will use it to provide guidance in determining the priority and degree of evaluation of future projects.
- Borough employees will be guided in the provision of quality municipal services.
- Most importantly, Borough Council, its advisory bodies and the community as a whole will proceed with a common understanding of the quality of life values or themes that will shape the community for years to come.



The vision:

In the year 2025, New Stanton will be a unique and growing community that offers a welcoming atmosphere with regionally competitive business opportunities.

It will be widely known for:

- *A thriving local economy*
- *Accessible and safe multi-modal transportation*
- *Effective and efficient community facilities and services*
- *Inclusive and complete public infrastructure*
- *Exciting and inviting places*
- *Integrated and strong neighborhoods*
- *A connected and balanced recreation system, and*
- *Usable and well-organized land use ordinances*



The development of New Stanton’s vision created a dialogue about the type of place the borough should become. It reflects a general community consensus on local values and sets up long-term goals that can be advanced by short-term actions.

In general, the vision is the foundation upon which all other plan elements were formed. The following generally accepted planning principles informed the vision and all the plan elements that followed:

Land use:

Use land resources efficiently

Support the preservation of land and natural resources and compact development patterns that shorten trips, lessen vehicle dependence and make infrastructure cost-effective.

Mix compatible land uses

Provide spaces where stores, offices, homes, schools and recreation can exist in relatively compact neighborhoods.

Redevelop first

Prioritize the reuse and redevelopment of “brownfield” and previously developed sites for economic activity that creates jobs, housing, mixed-use development and recreational assets.

Concentrate development

Support infill and “greenfield” development that is compact, conserves land and is integrated with existing or planned transportation, water and sewer services and schools.

Markets:

Increase job opportunities

Attract businesses that offer well-paying, high-quality jobs and that are located near existing or planned water and sewer infrastructure, housing, existing workforce and transportation access.

Expand housing opportunities

Support the construction and rehabilitation of housing of all types to meet the needs of people of all incomes and abilities.

Public assets:

Create transportation options

Seek ways to improve the convenience and safety of the travel network, including roads as well as routes for walking and cycling. Route heavy traffic around residential neighborhoods to the greatest extent possible.

Provide efficient infrastructure

Fix it first – use and improve existing infrastructure; require private and public expansions of service to be consistent with adopted plans and implementing ordinances.

Enhance recreational and heritage resources

Maintain and improve recreational and heritage assets and infrastructure.

Restore and enhance the environment

Conserve and restore environmentally sensitive lands and natural areas for ecological health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Design:

Require thoughtful, human-scaled design

Promote privacy, safety and visual coherency through ensuring that development and redevelopment are compatible with existing or desired neighborhood character. This involves consideration of the massing of buildings, orientation to the street and access for bicycles, vehicles and pedestrians. Windows, porches, landscaping and similar architectural elements can create visual compatibility.

Governance:

Plan regionally; implement locally

Support multi-municipal, county and local government planning and implementation that has broad public input and support and is consistent with these principles.

Be fair

Ensure that the benefits and burdens of development are equitably shared.



Priority Focus Areas



Boy Scout Troop #457 provides input at a youth workshop

Enhancing aesthetics: Creating a “there” here

When attendees at New Stanton’s Annual Community Picnic were asked to rank the most important priorities for the borough to address in the long term, overall aesthetics ranked No. 1.

Residents of New Stanton view this place as far more than a roadway stop for a quick meal or a tank of gas: It is a place where people know and care for one another, a great place to raise a family. However, the borough’s functional fragmentation by the major roadways that cross it present a challenge to creating a cohesive sense of place. It lacks a traditional downtown, instead centering on a heavily-signed, concrete-covered commercial strip designed principally to serve highway travelers. Further detracting from New Stanton’s sense of place is deferred property maintenance. Instead of communicating community pride, run-down properties invite property crime and related problems.



Google Streetview of Center Avenue pre-construction, 2016

Related findings

■ Unsightly properties

Small business owners reported deteriorated and inadequately maintained properties. They believe that a clean community is needed to attract investment. There would be more demand for vacant rental properties, for example, if they were located in a cleaner-looking place.

■ Sandwiched together

Many separate small communities share a common reputation, so inadequately maintained properties and crime in neighboring municipalities affect perceptions of New Stanton.

■ Public safety

Residents and business owners reported that some people feel unsafe walking around New Stanton due to crime perceptions, and the lack of activity in turn makes public spaces feel less safe. This is to some extent an urban design problem related to the character of the environment that was created through highway commercial development.

Borough Council considers public safety a top priority, as do many of the residents and stakeholders who contributed to the plan. State Police provide coverage to the borough and have represented to Borough Council that the borough and its residents receive policing services that could not be equaled by a local police force. More on this issue appears on page 61.

■ Downtown definition

Public meeting attendees pointed out that New Stanton lacks a traditional gathering place, a welcoming and walkable public realm where people feel comfortable spending time.

Unifying and giving character to the business district is made difficult by its location spanning I-70, creek beds and other dividing features.

■ Making places

The borough has updated its slogan from “the Highway Hub of Western Pennsylvania” to “All Roads Lead Home,” reflecting its identity as a whole community beyond its utility as a turnpike stop. Yet stakeholders note that New Stanton doesn’t yet have the image or feel of a hometown.

Enhancing aesthetics Strategy steps

Increase code enforcement capacity

Hire a zoning/code officer or otherwise procure these services.

The Borough Manager currently fills these roles, in addition to managing the business of the borough, staffing Planning Commission and other responsibilities. Code enforcement can require substantial work out of the office, which is difficult to balance with the demands of full-time public management. Dedicating more staff time to this work will increase the borough's effectiveness in responding to problems and proactively working with property owners to improve the appearance and safety of the community.

Implementation plan:

- Planning Commission and/or Personnel and Human Resources Committee evaluates the issue and makes a recommendation to Borough Council on the amount of work hours needed per week or month, specific targets or goals for the work and how the need would be best fulfilled (i.e. part-time hire, contract out, etc.).
- Borough Council authorizes hiring a staff member or approves a contract for this purpose, based on the costs/benefits of in-house hire vs. a contractor handling the work.
- Borough Manager trains new zoning/code officer and oversees enforcement activities.

Make code enforcement transparent and proactive.

Given additional capacity, the borough should transition its complaint-driven code enforcement system to one that proactively identifies and abates problems.

Implementation plan:

- Follow through on minor violations (overgrown grass, abandoned vehicles, etc.) to establish community standards and potentially prevent the manifestation of more serious violations.

continued ...

Create a system to track violations in a consistent and well-organized manner. A code enforcement database could include details on complaints and violations as well as ownership records, permits and public safety reports. The borough should use this information to track owners of multiple problem properties, determine the most common violations and strengthen cases before judges.

Ensure that public works and other borough employees are encouraged to recognize and report code violations.

Develop a resource guide that the zoning/code officer would provide to violators that contains information on how to address the situation. It should contain a summary of key compliance standards, contact information for landscaping, towing and junk removal contractors and other related items.

Strengthen enforcement of the property maintenance code.

State legislation adopted in recent years empowers municipalities with a variety of approaches to address serious code violations. The borough should increase public awareness of its 2016 property maintenance code and, as warranted, consider the legal options below:

Publicize information about the new maintenance code in the borough newsletter, explaining its purpose and major requirements. Add the code to the borough website.

As cases warrant, work with the Borough Solicitor to determine whether any of the following approaches would be appropriate and feasible:

- Municipalities can file actions against property owners for failure to repair deteriorating property and can deny municipal permits due to deteriorating property and failure to pay property taxes or municipal claims.
- Under the Municipal Housing Code Avoidance Act, persons with at least four convictions for the same code violation where the violation remains unabated; threatens health, safety, property; and no reasonable attempt to abate may be charged with a 2nd degree misdemeanor (1st degree for five or more convictions).
- Under the Municipal Code and Ordinance Compliance Act, any purchaser of a building with known code violations must correct the violations or demolish the building within 18 months (or longer by agreement with the municipality), a requirement enforceable with fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Inspection of property is required at sale and again at 12 or 18 months from date of sale to enforce abatement.
- Under the Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship Law, a court-appointed third party (municipality, nonprofit or nearby neighbor or business owner) may take control of a blighted property when the owner has died or refuses to act.
- Under the Real Estate Delinquency Act, municipalities may coordinate the waiver of municipal, school and county tax claims upon receipt by one of them of donated tax delinquent property.



Make a statement of place

Create a visual identity that says something to residents and visitors about the type of place that New Stanton is and intends to become.

The I-70 interchange reconfiguration provides New Stanton with an immediate and tremendously important opportunity to design a statement gateway, a lasting first impression for all who enter. Beyond adopting form-sensitive standards for land development in the vicinity and controlling signage (topics covered in detail in the “Upgrading the Built Environment” section of this plan), the borough should create and maintain entrance features that will convey a sense of community pride and excitement.

Implementation plan:

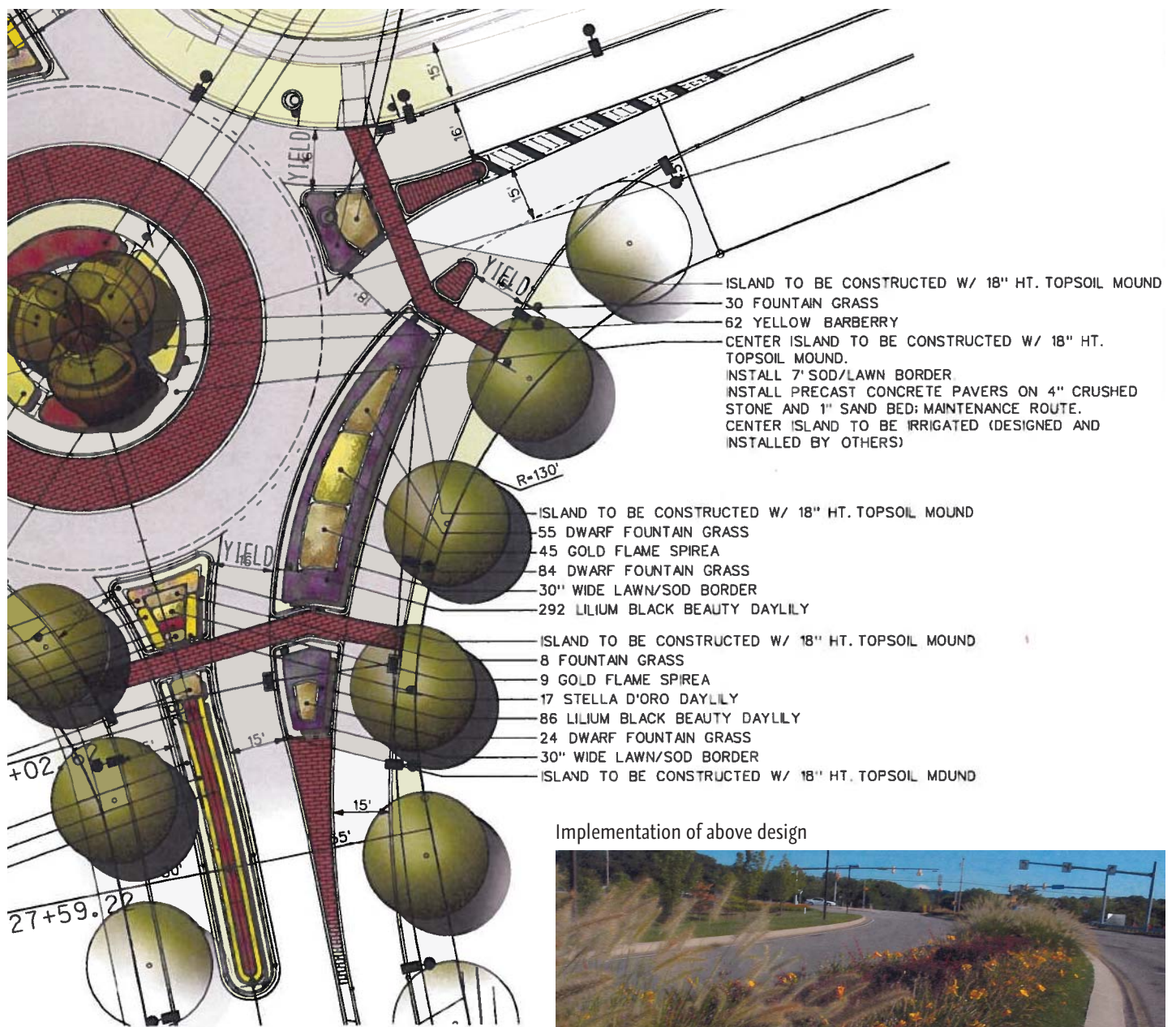
- Focus attention and resources first on the entrances created by new roundabout connections, but carry concepts to other gateways in future years as resources allow.
- Select a concept for welcome signage that incorporates and is visually consistent with the borough’s new logo and slogan. An example concept design appears on pages 24 and 25.
- Install signage and complementary landscape features in locations that enhance public safety and are visually prominent.
- Create a plan for ongoing maintenance, either through the public works department or by creating a partnership with a local school or community organization willing to volunteer. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy’s Community Gardens and Greenspace program also represents a possible resource.
- Design a tree planting strip as part of any new roadway in the interchange vicinity.

Primary objectives of roundabout landscape design

- Make the central island more conspicuous, thus improving safety
- Improve the aesthetics of the area while complementing surrounding streetscapes as much as possible
- Make decisions regarding placement of fixed objects (e.g., trees, poles, walls, guide rail, statues or large rocks) that are sensitive to the speed environment in which the roundabout is located
- Avoid obscuring the form of the roundabout or the signing to the driver
- Maintain adequate sight distances
- Clearly indicate to drivers that they cannot pass straight through the intersection;
- Discourage pedestrian traffic through the central island

—Federal Highway Administration

Figure 2: Sample Roundabout Approach Landscape Design



Implementation of above design



Source: Mackin Engineering Company

Current streetview of Bair Boulevard



Gateway concept idea:

Internally illuminated beacon and wayfinding pylons

This design solution addresses the following issues:

- **Safety:** Installing a feature in the inner portion of a roundabout's central island makes it safer by increasing conspicuity, breaking the headlight glare of oncoming vehicles and promoting lower speeds. FHWA standards recommend placing fixed objects in the inner portion to obscure the line of sight straight through the roundabout and keeping perimeter features low in height to maintain sight distances for vehicles within the circulatory roadway and at the entrance line.
- **Maintenance:** The borough determined that any type of planting within the central island would be infeasible due primarily to maintenance concerns.
- **Visual identity:** Incorporating the borough's new logo and slogan to reinforce a sense of place

The primary two interchange roundabout islands will have radii of 63 feet, representing a large, concrete-covered expanse. The 22-foot pylon signage shown below could be installed in the center of both islands to welcome motorists to New Stanton. The first step in advancing this type of concept would be to pursue PennDOT approval. The borough could then determine specification details and solicit bids to fabricate and install the features.

Night view

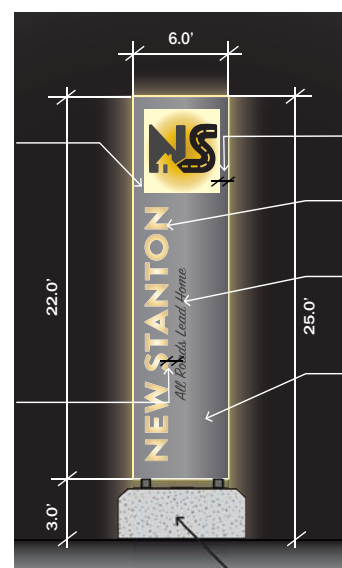


Figure 3: Primary Roundabout Pylon Concept

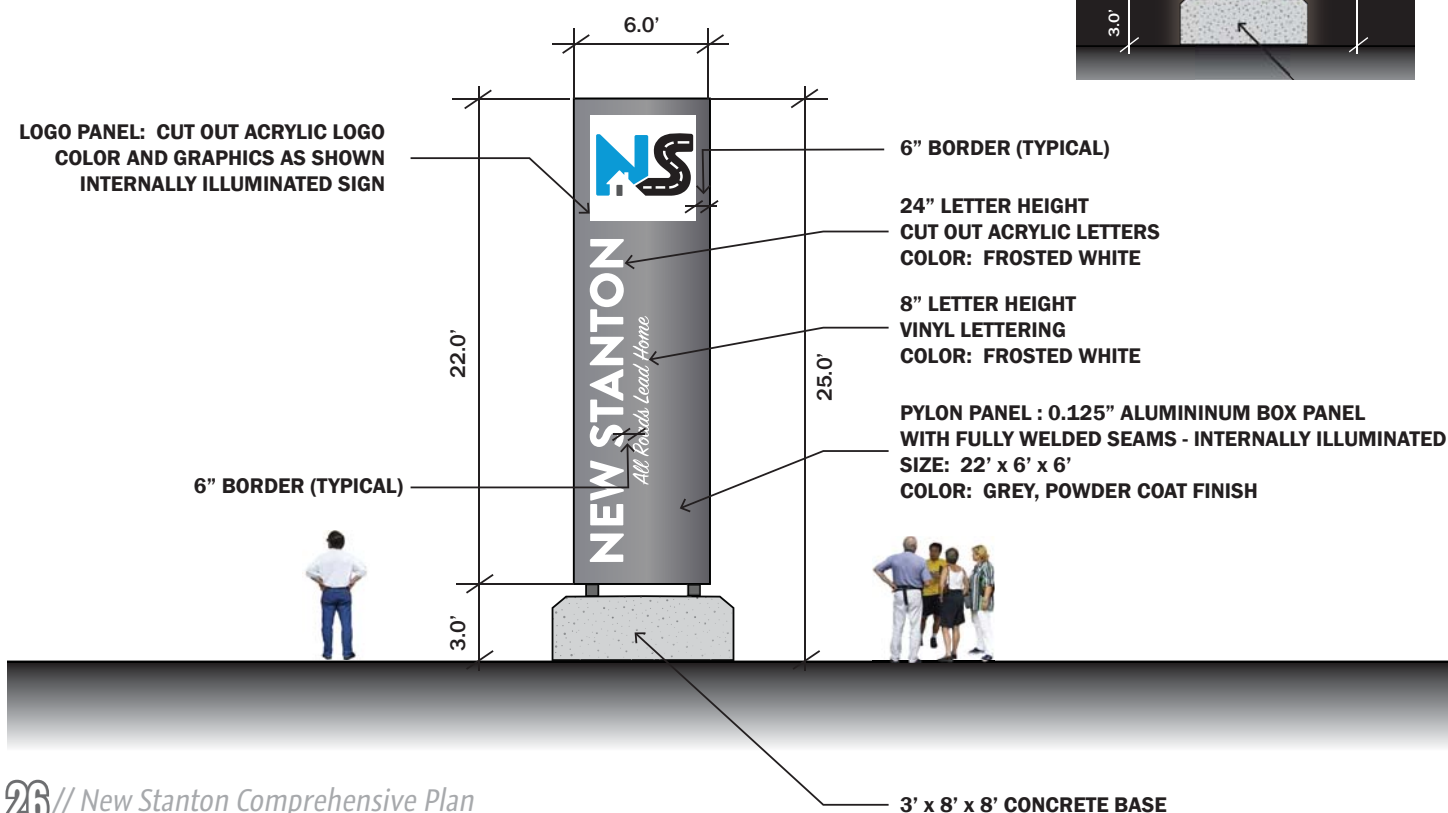
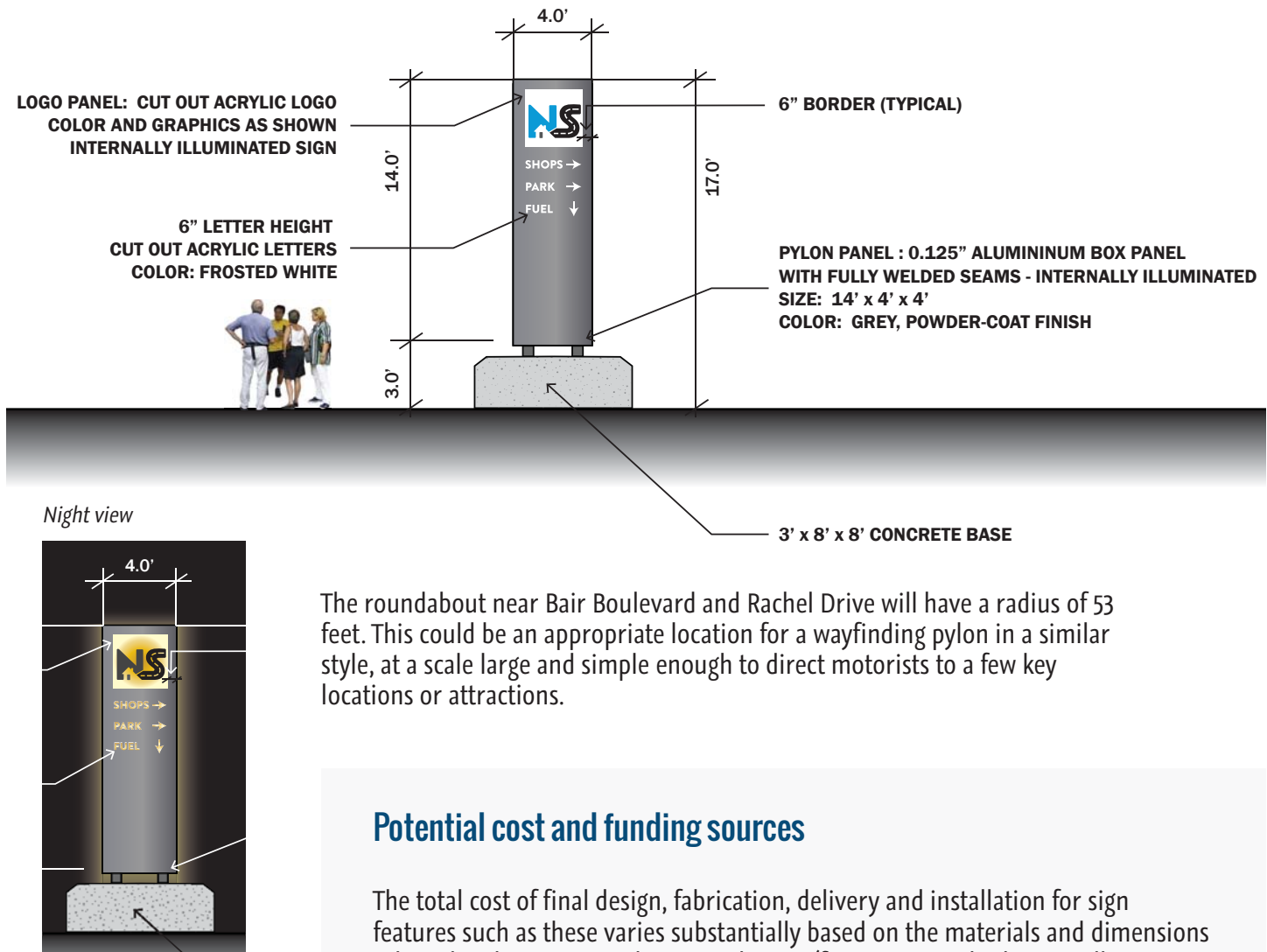


Figure 4: Roundabout Wayfinding Sign Concept



The roundabout near Bair Boulevard and Rachel Drive will have a radius of 53 feet. This could be an appropriate location for a wayfinding pylon in a similar style, at a scale large and simple enough to direct motorists to a few key locations or attractions.

Potential cost and funding sources

The total cost of final design, fabrication, delivery and installation for sign features such as these varies substantially based on the materials and dimensions selected and existing conditions at the site (for instance, whether installation can be coordinated with PennDOT's work, whether electricity is already available). The concept presented here could cost \$10,000 to \$50,000 to implement. However, there is the potential for partnership with local sponsors or schools such as the Central Westmoreland Career and Technology Center to offset cost or volunteer assistance with creating and installing the features.

Some possible funding sources, in addition to borough general funds, include the Westmoreland County Tourism Grant Program (Capital Grant), DCED Keystone/ Growing Greener II, DCED "Marketing to Attract Tourists" program, low-interest loans such as PA's Local Government Capital Project Loan Program and sponsorship/grants from area businesses.

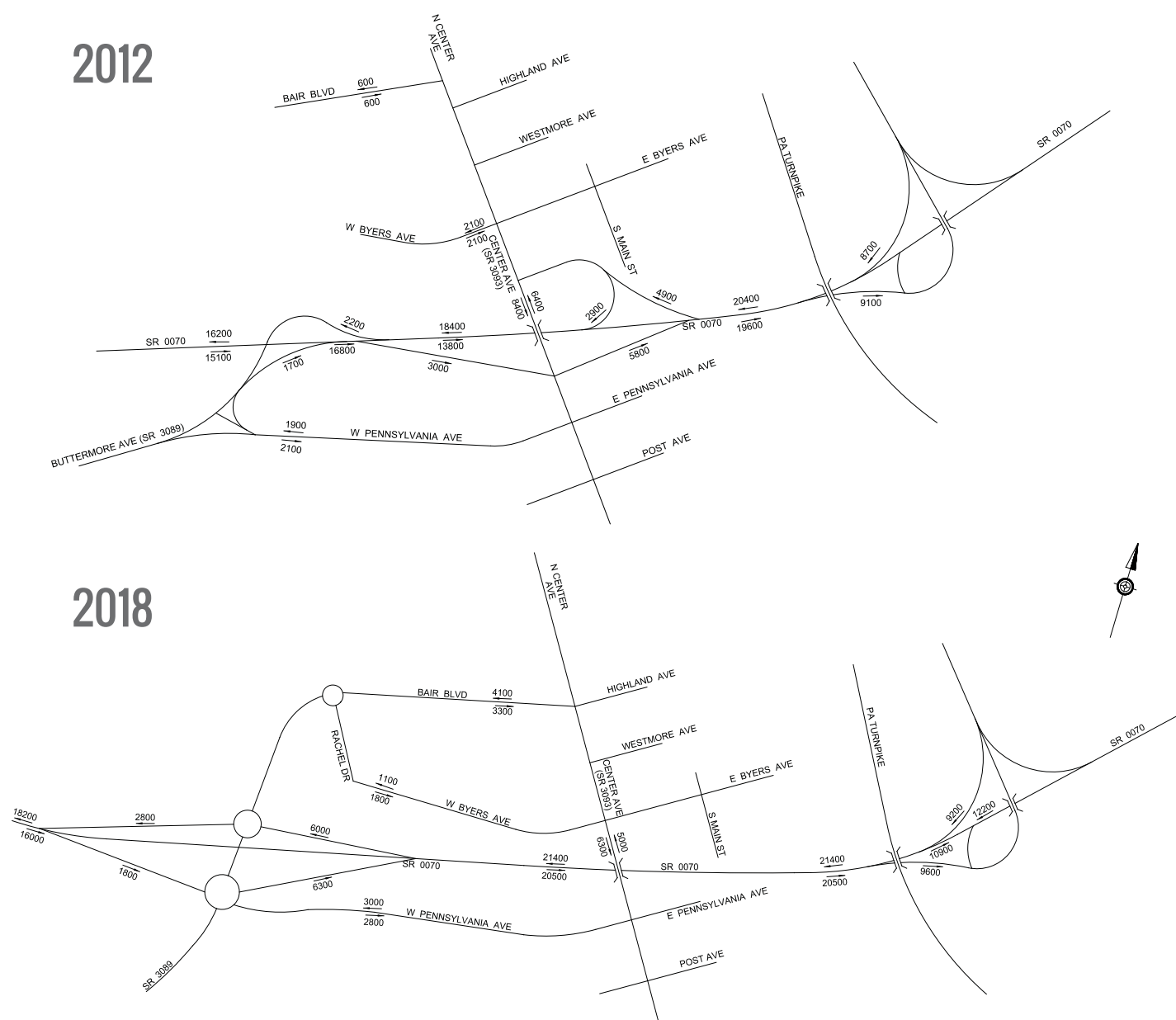
Improving traffic safety and flow

The I-70 interchange reconfiguration will dramatically transform the way vehicles move through New Stanton.

PennDOT's \$53.7 million upgrade to New Stanton's I-70 interchange leads the borough to an identity crossroads: Will the investment heighten the intensity of highway commercial development, turning the area into a loud and fast Breezewood-esque boulevard of curb cuts and competing pole signs, or can the Borough channel its new traffic patterns into creating a friendly, inviting space for residents and travelers alike?

The borough currently owns and maintains about 12 miles of road amid a hub of major transportation routes —the Pennsylvania Turnpike, I-70 and routes 66 and 119. Traffic safety emerged as a primary concern during nearly every facet of public and stakeholder outreach for the Comprehensive Plan. This section focuses on vehicle circulation, while the following section focuses on non-vehicle travel.

Figure 5: Projected Changes in Traffic Pattern and Volume, 2012 vs. 2018



Key changes:

- Bair Boulevard increases from 600 daily vehicles to 4,100/3,300 daily vehicles (by direction)
- W. Byers Avenue decreases from 2,100 daily vehicles to 1,100/1,800
- Center Avenue near the overpass bridge decreases from 6,400/8,400 daily vehicles to 5,000/6,300
- W. Pennsylvania Avenue increases from 1,900/2,100 daily vehicles to 3,000/2,800
- I-70 increases from 20,400/19,600 daily vehicles (east of Center) to 21,400/20,500

Related findings

■ “You’ve gotta break a few eggs ... “

Local business owners seemed to agree that the long-term benefits of the interchange reconfiguration were worth the short-term inconveniences of its construction. Currently, congestion along Center Avenue impacts business. Workers at area major businesses have an hour for lunch, but sit for up to 10 minutes in traffic. Permanent traffic re-routing will affect some existing businesses positively and some negatively.

■ Speeding persists

Some public input cited the lack of local police presence as a reason for traffic problems, particularly speeding. The borough has implemented measures including mobile radar and a speed bump to improve safety in problem areas, including Pine Drive.

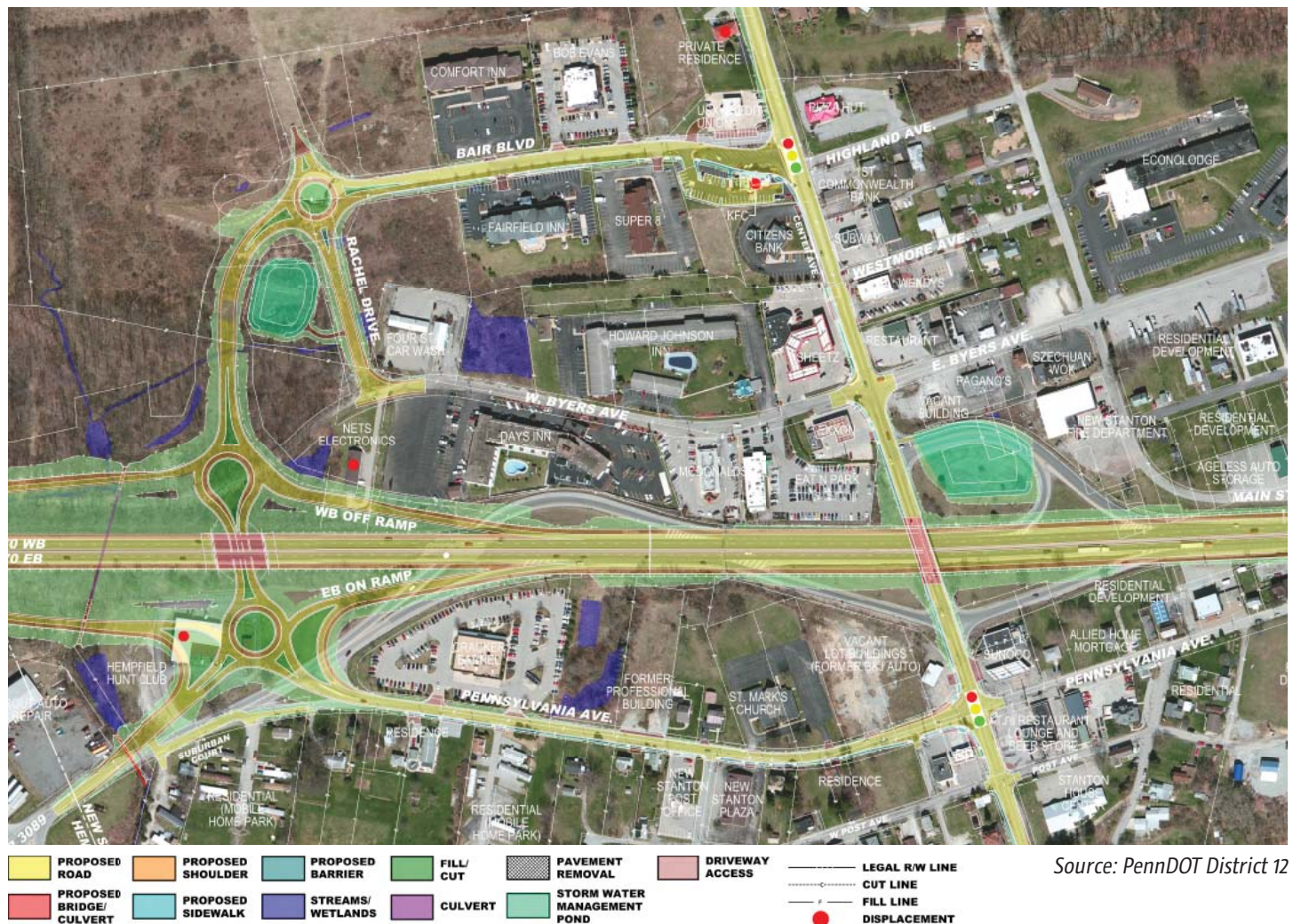
■ Upgrades possibly needed in the long term

Based on existing conditions, PennDOT has determined that the borough’s roadway network appears sufficient other than required maintenance as needed. However, depending on how the area around the interchange develops or re-develops, improvements could be required on local roads, including but not limited to Byers Avenue and Post Avenue.

■ Future development and redevelopment could cause traffic issues

To ensure the long-term functionality of the roadway network, the borough and PennDOT will need to ensure that development is designed strategically and that developers are held responsible for required roadway improvements. For example, the Pennsylvania Avenue corridor has the potential of having a total different look in the years following completion of the interchange project, and local officials and PennDOT will both need to ensure that future development does not result in traffic congestion on either local or state roads.

Figure 6: I-70 Interchange Redesign



Source: PennDOT District 12

Improving traffic Strategy steps

Mitigate known problems

Implement traffic-calming measures to discourage speeding on local streets.

Traffic calming aims to balance vehicle traffic with other uses of the street, treating the street as more than a conduit to move cars through a place as quickly as possible — streets are also public spaces where people can walk, gather, play and otherwise enjoy the community. Many relatively inexpensive and flexible technical improvements are proven to slow vehicles down, creating a safer and more inviting environment. Some of the approaches most relevant to New Stanton's local roads are listed on page 31.

Implementation plan:

- Update SALDO §503, Street Requirements, to add flexibility that would allow for traffic-calming measures such as narrow lanes under certain circumstances. Verify with the Fire Chief that any new specifications would accommodate emergency equipment.
- Consider design interventions for roads where speeding is an ongoing concern, especially in combination. Signs, markings and configuration changes work best in concert to heighten awareness of safety and improve travel conditions.
- Measure speed before and after changes to evaluate effectiveness.



Clear signage, combined with other tools, can help create desired motorist behavior.

Traffic-calming tools

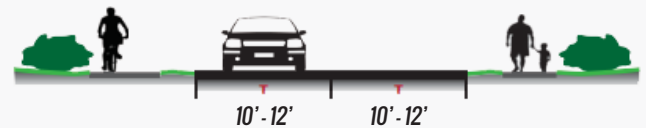
Narrowing streets and traffic lanes

Lane widths on a local road should be determined by intended function, traffic volume, intensity of adjacent uses and neighborhood design (lot sizes, setbacks, parking needs, etc.). Local and internal roadways tend to fall into one of three categories:

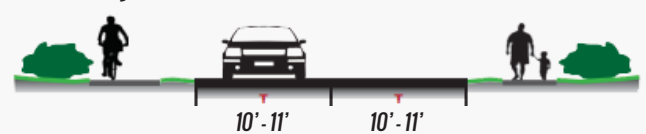
- **Primary distributor:** Moves traffic from neighborhoods or subdivisions to larger arterial or collector roads at speeds of 25-45 mph and daily volumes of 750-2,500. Access should be more limited than on the following two local road types. On-street parking is inappropriate except in more dense villages.
- **Secondary distributor:** Moves traffic through a neighborhood or subdivision to a primary distributor, or directly to larger roads, at speeds of 15-25 mph and daily volumes of 200-1,500.
- **Local access:** Speeds should be 15 mph or less, daily volumes below 500. Design features will vary: A narrow cartway would be appropriate for a subdivision of large lots with off-street parking, but not necessarily for a local access street serving large commercial or industrial development.

Lanes as narrow as nine feet can still be safe for driving on certain local roads, particularly local access. Primary and secondary distributors can carry traffic safely in lanes of 10-12 feet. New Stanton currently requires that local streets (those with a design speed of 35 mph) have a minimum cartway of 24 feet.

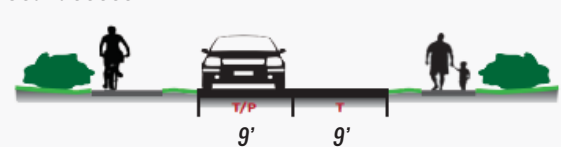
Primary distributor



Secondary distributor



Local access



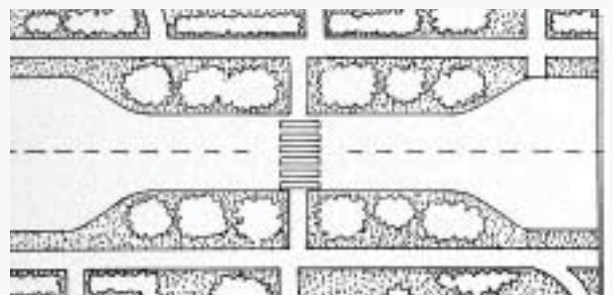
Neighborhood traffic circles

Small roundabouts can replace intersections of local or collector streets to reduce mid-block speed by about 10% and impact an area about 200 feet upstream and downstream. Traffic is only minimally diverted, and collisions are typically sharply reduced by this configuration.



Bulbs, chokers and neckdowns

Extensions of sidewalk and/or landscaping at intersections narrow the road to about 20 feet for two-way traffic, which improves pedestrian safety and typically reduces speeds by up to 14%. Some applications use an island that allows drainage and bicyclists to continue between the choker and original curb line. Islands also represent an opportunity to incorporate stormwater infiltration features.



Potential cost and funding sources

The table below reports the inflation-adjusted costs of various traffic-calming measures in 2013 dollars, based on bid letting sheets and cost summaries from states and cities across the country. It is useful for getting a general comparative idea of cost, though the cost of any specific intervention will vary widely with location and actual project specifications (size, materials, whether right-of-way needs to be purchased, etc.). The figures below include engineering, design, mobilization and installation.

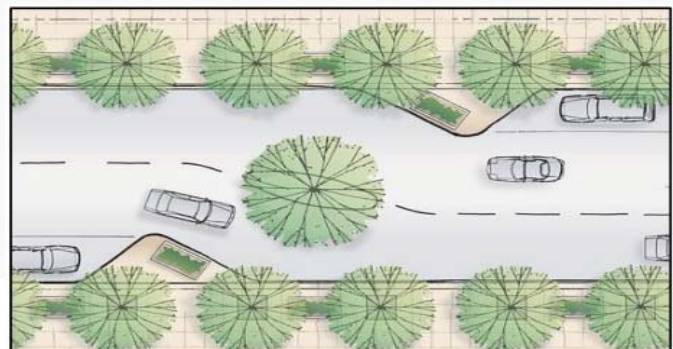
In addition to liquid fuels funding and other borough sources available for roadway improvements, support for traffic-calming projects could be available through PennDOT and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission sources such as the Transportation Alternatives Program.

Countermeasure	Median	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Unit	Number of Sources (Observations)
Chicanes	\$8,050	\$9,960	\$2,140	\$25,730	Each	8 (9)
Curb Extension/Choker/Bulb-Out	\$10,150	\$13,000	\$1,070	\$41,170	Each	19 (28)
Flashing Beacon	\$5,170	\$10,010	\$360	\$59,100	Each	16 (25)
Median	\$6.00	\$7.26	\$1.86	\$44	Sq. Ft.	9 (30)
Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon	\$14,160	\$22,250	\$4,520	\$52,310	Each	3 (4)
Roundabout	\$27,190	\$85,370	\$5,000	\$523,080	Each	11 (14)
Speed Bump*	\$1,670	\$1,550	\$540	\$2,300	Each	4 (4)
Speed Hump*	\$2,130	\$2,640	\$690	\$6,860	Each	14 (14)
Speed Table*	\$2,090	\$2,400	\$2,000	\$4,180	Each	5 (5)
Speed Trailer	\$9,480	\$9,510	\$7,000	\$12,410	Each	6 (6)

*These are all vertical diversions; the primary difference is in the width. Bumps are abrupt, tables raise the entire wheelbase of a vehicle, and humps fall between the two.

Source: Bushell, Max; Poole, Bryan; Rodriguez, Daniel; Zegeer, Charles. (July, 2013). "Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements: A Resource for Researchers, Engineers, Planners and the General Public."

Chicane



Reduce pressure on North Center Avenue

Create route alternatives in the vicinity of Bair Boulevard and Broadview Road.

Borough stakeholders expect substantial development interest in the vicinity of the new I-70 interchange roundabouts, particularly along Broadview Road. Increased traffic along Broadview will intensify congestion along North Center Avenue that could be at least partially relieved by opening up access between Bair and Broadview.

Implementation plan:

- Negotiate with property owners for easement, fee simple right-of-way purchase or other arrangement to gain access to build a new local street connecting Bair and Broadview.
- Design and construct new street according to goals and standards for the area, in terms of streetscape, pedestrian and bicycle access, landscaping, lighting, etc. (See “Upgrading the Built Environment” section.)

Figure 7: Bair/Broadview Vicinity



Control the traffic impact of land development

Work with PennDOT to carefully evaluate development proposals and hold developers responsible for good design and safe, efficient travel connections .

In the long run, making the borough more attractive for bicycle and pedestrian trips can help reduce demand for vehicle trips and ease congestion, and creating more traditional standards for the core area's built environment will change parking and circulation. These and other strategies described later in the plan are designed for results that will materialize in the long term. In the more immediate term, the following steps involve planning for the way new development and redevelopment will fit into the borough's transportation system.

Implementation plan:

- For future developments that connect on local roads such as West Byers Avenue, Post Avenue or (the currently non-existent) North Rachel Drive, work with PennDOT to ensure that proper traffic studies are conducted. If those studies determine that improvements are required to either the local road connecting to a state road or adjacent intersections on the state road system, the borough needs to be the applicant for a Highway Occupancy Permit.
- Consider introducing transportation impact fees as a means of funding roadway improvements needed to serve intense residential, commercial and/or industrial development. Fees can be assessed to new development in proportion to its impact on transportation. This would require, among other things, that the borough adopt a Capital Improvements Plan. (See "Additional Actions.")¹
- In reviewing land development applications for sites along roadways that are currently or may become congested, limit curb cuts and turning movements to the extent possible, encouraging shared road access points among multiple properties and alternative access from side streets. Council could entirely prohibit new curb cuts in targeted areas.
- Coordinate with PennDOT and/or the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission on the coordination of new traffic signals to ensure that intersections work as safely and efficiently as possible. Timing programs reduce delays on arterial streets by allowing more vehicles to maintain a smooth flow according to to peak direction.

¹ PennDOT has created a guide to help municipalities determine whether transportation impact fees makes sense based on local conditions. It is available at <http://goo.gl/7UU9DD>.

Facilitating active transportation

New Stanton's streets were designed for cars and trucks, not people.

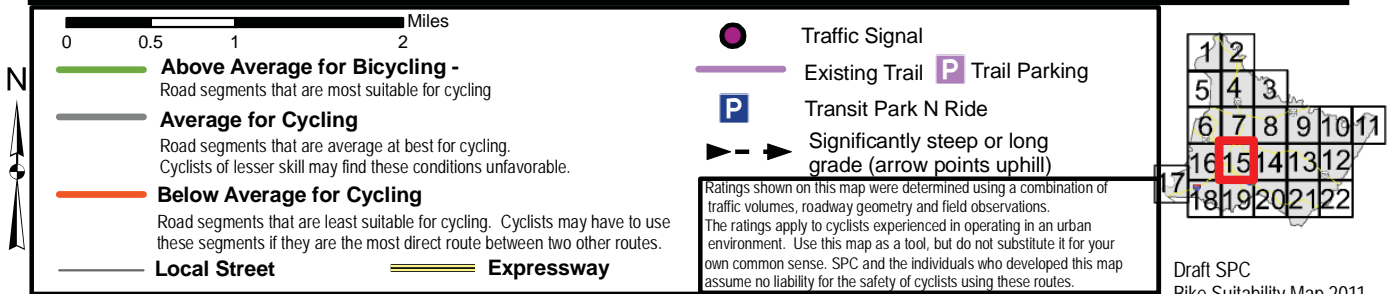
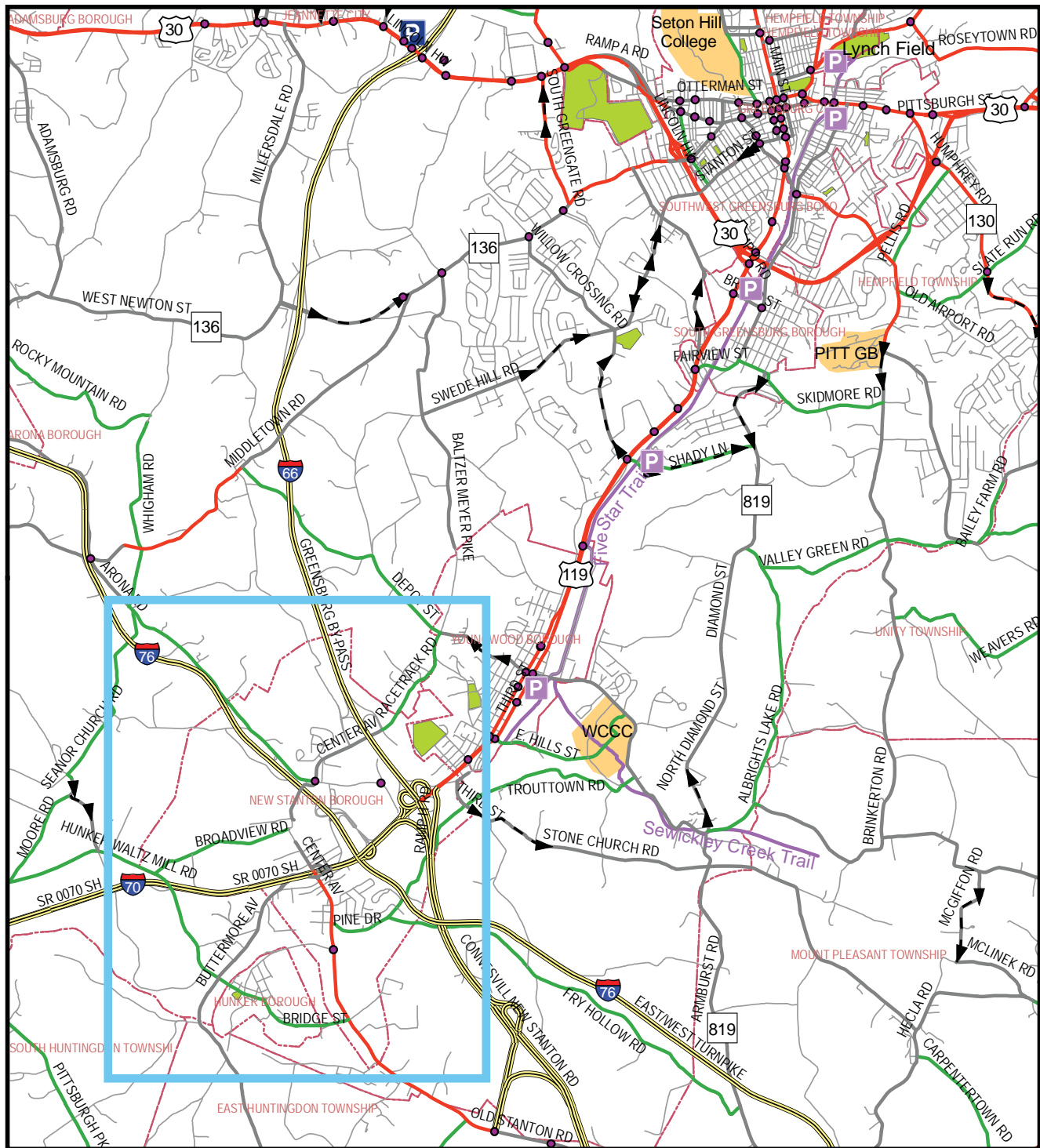
The borough's lack of "walkability" surfaced as a key theme early in the planning process and was reinforced throughout, as public and stakeholder comments revealed that people feel uncomfortable at best and unsafe at worst when attempting to walk or ride bicycles many places within New Stanton.

In a very perceptible way, the presence of pedestrians heightens public safety and makes a place feel more welcoming and vibrant. Beyond this, having viable options for non-vehicle travel creates public health, environmental and economic benefits. Well-connected and maintained pedestrian and bicycle networks increase property values, promote tourism, relieve traffic congestion and provide public space for residents and visitors to actively enjoy the community.



Pine Drive, the primary route for most residents to New Stanton Park, lacks continuous sidewalks and a road shoulder to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. All must share the road with vehicles known to speed through this area.

Figure 8: Bike Suitability Map for Greater New Stanton



Draft SPC
Bike Suitability Map 2011

Related findings

■ “Notorious” difficulty for cyclists

A survey of Westmoreland County’s bike-ped committee indicated that the borough is “notoriously difficult to access via bicycle.” Respondents generally agreed that there are no real bike routes within the borough.

Major barriers to bike riding within New Stanton are a lack of bike infrastructure (bike lanes, paths, wide shoulders) and concern about safety problems (motorist behavior, visibility, road conditions).

As Figure 6 indicates, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission determined that Broadview Road, Arona Road and Pine Drive are above average for cycling, while North Center is average and South Center is below average. However, limited visibility and speeding vehicles present serious safety concerns on sections of all of those roads sufficient to deter recreational cyclists.

■ Lack of sidewalk connections

As identified by the bike-ped group, public meeting participants and survey takers, major barriers to walking around New Stanton include a lack of sidewalks, concern about safety (visibility, traffic speed/volume) and lack of reasonable routes between destinations.

Participants in the youth workshop noted that kids walk and ride bicycles within the borough, but that doing so would be easier and safer with sidewalks. They identified Center Avenue as the most dangerous place in New Stanton.

The borough’s lack of sidewalks represent its most serious impediment to pedestrian circulation. While the borough’s Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance contains sidewalk requirements for certain types of development, stakeholders reported that they are not consistently or firmly enforced.

■ Fragmentation of business district

New Stanton lacks a traditional downtown, due primarily to the highway-commercial focus of its development history. Running errands among businesses within the community requires driving from stop to stop, rather than parking and walking between destinations.

Active transportation Strategy steps

Make walking more safe and appealing

Get serious about requiring quality sidewalks.

The borough already requires sidewalks in certain land development cases, but these requirements have not created a connected, useful and safe network of sidewalks that residents and visitors can use to get between destinations.

Implementation plan:

- Work with the Borough Solicitor to update the Borough's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance §607 in regard to sidewalk requirements to add clarification and flexibility that will help developers provide what the borough needs, such as:
 - Requiring sidewalks along both sides of all roadways in commercial and industrial areas, along all arterials and collectors in residential areas, and along local streets with at least one unit per acre in residential areas
 - Requiring sidewalks along one side of the street in residential areas with less than one unit per acre
 - Requiring sidewalks in rural areas where the road changes from open swales to curb-and-gutter, except where traffic volume is less than 400 average vehicles per day.
 - Allowing developers to propose alternative pathways, i.e. crushed stone/permeable material trails, in areas where sidewalks may not be necessary (low-density residential subdivisions, industrial parks, etc.).
- Avoid granting sidewalk requirement waivers, especially on the basis of expected low pedestrian activity. For sites where physical hardships would make sidewalk installation infeasible, allow applicants to provide equal or greater pedestrian circulation through amenities such as off-street trails.

Sidewalks currently required:

"In any proposed subdivision or land development with an average lot size or area per dwelling unit of 15,000 square feet or less, or where a subdivision is immediately adjacent to or within 1,000 feet of any existing or recorded subdivision having sidewalks, sidewalks shall be on each side of the street in accordance with Borough specifications, unless the developer can establish specific facts which obviate the need for sidewalks in the particular development or subdivision."

Improve safety features in higher-traffic areas.

Optimal safety conditions require that both drivers and pedestrians are cautious and attentive when approaching and using crosswalks, and that pedestrian crossing is accessible and highly visible. Many tools exist to improve crosswalk safety, though not all are appropriate for every environment.

Implementation plan:

- Incorporate pedestrian crossing signals, crosswalks, ADA-compliant ramps and other features on all legs at all signalized intersections to improve the safety of crossing. Coordinating this action step with PennDOT's work to reconfigure the I-70 interchange in the short term could potentially maximize benefits and efficiency and reduce costs. The borough could seek grants to support this type of improvement from sources such as the County's Community Development Block Grant.

In addition to intersection crossings, mid-block crosswalks could also be appropriate in other areas, provided that none should be installed where vehicles travel at or above 40 mph, and that accompanying features would need to be more intense on collectors than local roads. (For example, a collector might require advance yield markings and accompanying lights, while pedestrian warnings signs could be sufficient for a calmer local road).

Figure 9: Crosswalk Safety Features



From left to right: Lateral crosswalk lighting increases pedestrian visibility at night, an advance warning sign heightens awareness and a curb ramp compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ensures access for everyone.

Pave the way for bicycle infrastructure

Create a Borough Bicycle Plan to identify priority routes for multi-modal improvements. Lobby for these projects to be included in future regional Transportation Improvement Program and other roadway improvements.

Developing and adopting a plan is the first step in attracting funds to bring about desired improvements to the borough's bicycle network. The plan could create a more vibrant and healthy New Stanton by developing strategies to increase ridership, improve safety for riders, create a network that reaches where people want to travel and improve access to biking.

Implementation plan:

- Assemble or appoint a working group of interested citizens and stakeholders.
- Connect with potential partners, such as the county's bike-ped committee, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, BikePGH, local employers or other organizations with capacity and expertise who may be interested in assisting.
- The working group may either undertake or RFP for professional services to create a plan, including an analysis of existing and planned pathways, trails, roadway infrastructure, utility and drainage easements, open spaces and linear parks and destinations within and beyond the borough, as well as the feasibility and cost of a variety of design solutions to improve the bicycle network. The plan should identify routes for priority investment.
- Use the results of the plan to advocate for investment among funders to implement priority improvements.



Potential cost and funding sources

The table below reports the inflation-adjusted costs of various bike/ped infrastructure features in 2013 dollars, based on bid letting sheets and cost summaries from states and cities across the country. It is useful for getting a general comparative idea of cost, though the cost of any specific intervention will vary widely with location and actual project specifications. The figures below include engineering, design, mobilization and installation.

PennDOT, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission and Westmoreland County's CDBG program represent potential sources for grants or low-interest loans to undertake this type of improvement.

Countermeasure	Median	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Unit	Number of Sources (Observations)
Bike Lane	\$89,470	\$133,170	\$5,360	\$536,680	Mile	6 (6)
Concrete Sidewalk	\$27	\$32	\$2.09	\$410	Linear Ft.	46 (164)
High-Visibility Crosswalk	\$3,070	\$2,540	\$600	\$5,710	Each	4 (4)
Multi-Use Trail (paved)	\$261,000	\$481,140	\$64,710	\$4,288,520	Mile	11 (42)
Multi-Use Trail (unpaved)	\$83,870	\$121,390	\$29,520	\$412,720	Mile	3 (7)
Pedestrian Signal	\$980	\$1,480	\$130	\$10,000	Each	22 (33)
Raised Crosswalk	\$7,110	\$8,170	\$1,290	\$30,880	Each	14 (14)
Shared Lane Marking	\$160	\$180	\$22	\$600	Each	15 (39)
Signed Bicycle Route	\$27,240	\$25,070	\$5,360	\$64,330	Each	3 (6)
Striped Crosswalk	\$5.87	\$8.51	\$1.03	\$26	Linear Ft.	12 (48)
Wheelchair Ramp	\$740	\$810	\$89	\$3,600	Each	16 (31)

Source: Bushell, Max; Poole, Bryan; Rodriguez, Daniel; Zegeer, Charles. (July, 2013). "Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements: A Resource for Researchers, Engineers, Planners and the General Public."

Upgrading the built environment

The reconfiguration of I-70 access presents the borough with an unprecedented opportunity to reinvent its core area.

A primary task of all building, site and landscape design in densely settled areas is to define streets and public spaces as places of shared use. Physical design should create a consistent and coherent framework to support local goals—to foster a thriving local economy, to become a safe and friendly place for families to grow and play, to respect the past while preparing for what the future may bring.

In many ways, land development in New Stanton's core area (shown on the future land use map, figure 8) has taken forms and created spaces that have the opposite effect. Buildings set back behind large parking lots disconnect users from street activity, and a lack of gathering places discourages people from spending time in the area, which makes it feel less safe. Site design is driven by developers, so the area is a collection of buildings rather than a cohesive neighborhood comprised of complementary building blocks. This is in part due to the borough's relatively short history: Its core area, built in the latter half of the last century to cater to automobile travel, lacks the underlying design principles that characterize many of Western Pennsylvania's old downtowns.

This can all change. Traffic patterns running through the core area will be dramatically different following completion of the I-70 interchange project in 2018, and the project is expected to generate strong development interest in more than 80 acres of undeveloped land nearby. The configuration changes and market demand put the borough in the driver's seat for requiring changes in the built environment that will occur incrementally, with each development and redevelopment. Updating design standards now will influence what is about to occur.

***The most important question, then:
What kind of place does the borough want to become?***



North Center Avenue is a study in plentiful curb cuts and confusing entrance layouts that create traffic congestion and hazards.

Related findings

■ The car is king

Most businesses in New Stanton are stripped out along major roads, which is to say that they are not concentrated in centralized vibrant, walkable places that attract patrons. Parking lots comprise the primary street frontage, interrupted by large signs and multiple driveways. This makes sense from the perspective of individual businesses competing for motorist attention, but it makes New Stanton a less safe and inviting place.

■ Fragmentation is a challenge

Local business owners acknowledged the lack of a cohesive business district, citing the borough's division by major roads and creekbeds as the primary impediment.

■ “No one strolls around”

Stakeholders and the public described feeling unsafe in the core commercial area, especially at night, due mostly to drug activity.

Built environment Strategy steps

Adopt land use controls that support a shared vision

Develop design guidelines for the core area identified on the Future Land Use Map.

To create a more traditional town center, an idea that surfaced throughout the planning process, the borough will need to determine what uses, scales and massing the community wants in undeveloped areas that are now of interest (such as parcels along Broadview Boulevard), and it will need to impose specific standards in built-up areas so that redevelopment will create and reinforce the desired environment.

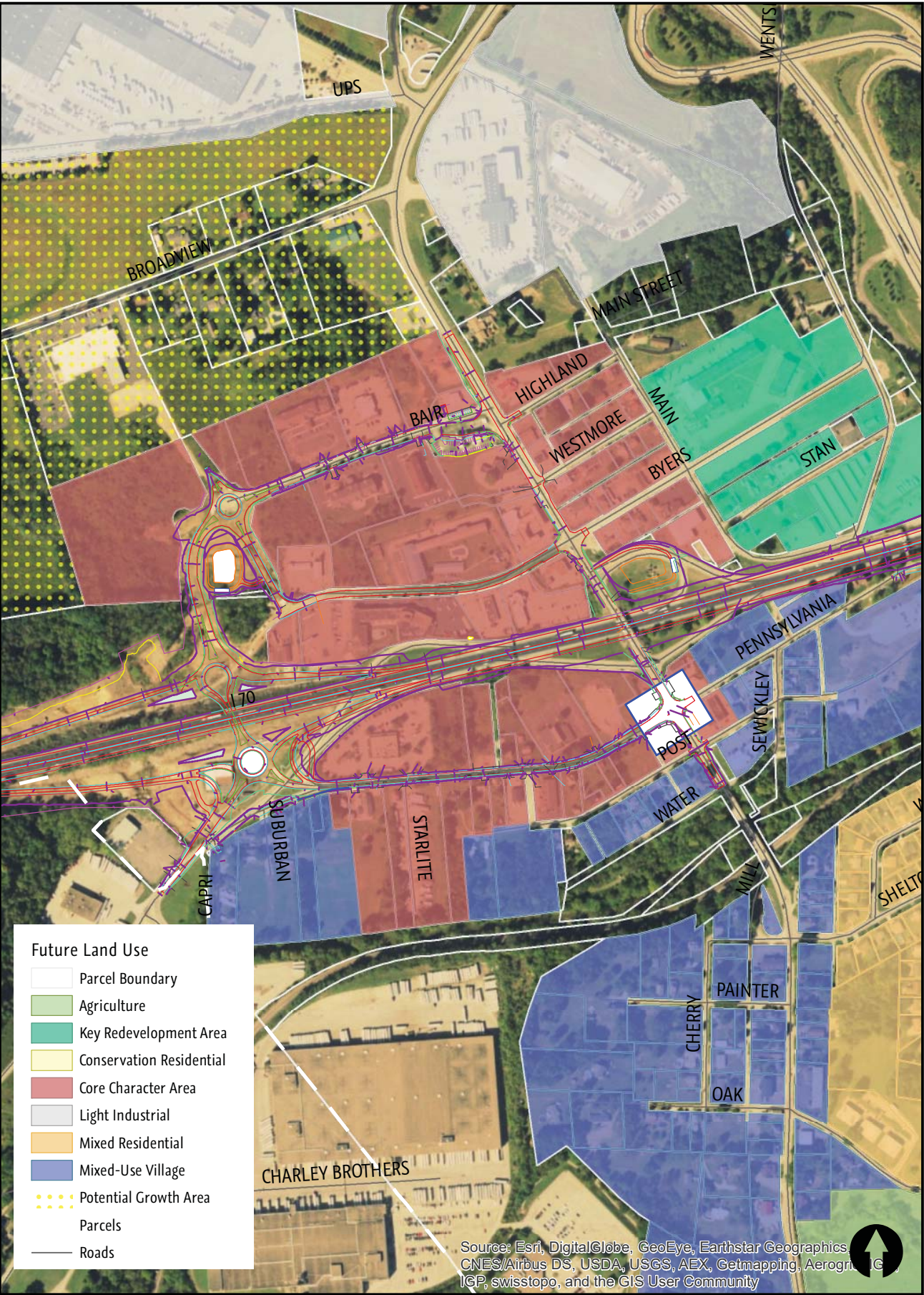
Implementation plan:

- Amend the zoning ordinance to include district-specific design standards and guidelines that address features such as street trees, wide sidewalks and building design. The standards should be consistent with best practices in urban design and downtown revitalization, creating conditions that foster retail prosperity and attract pedestrian activity. Sample ideas appear on page 46.
- Evaluate performance zoning in certain areas, which would allow land development to respond flexibly to market forces while preserving public interests. Performance zoning de-emphasizes the separation of specific uses and instead controls impacts on the environment, neighboring properties and public infrastructure. This could encourage the vibrancy characteristic of flexible downtown districts where many types of activities comfortably co-exist.
- Amend the SALDO to allow for the design of streets that accommodate on-street parking in the core area, and set an intention to redesign other streets in the vicinity accordingly as long-term infrastructure planning allows (in coordination with other street and public utility projects).

Potential cost to prepare standards for certain districts: \$5K to \$10K. County and/or DCED may be able to assist.

The full Future Land Use Map appears in the Implementation Tools section of this plan.

Figure 10: Future Land Use Map: Core Downtown Area



Design standard tools

Reduce or eliminate setbacks

In walkable downtown areas, buildings are commonly required to be set at a build-to line, with exceptions for specified architectural elements, in order to create a cohesive street wall and sense of space. A consistent setback and continuity of building height would help create this effect in New Stanton.



Concentrate local retail

Select an area in which to target the location of smaller-scale retail to the exclusion of most other uses—for instance, allow general commercial to continue to serve highway commercial needs in areas where it already predominates, but cultivate another area for local retail by limiting the types and scale of businesses that are permitted by right.



Back off parking minimums

Avoid wasting land and unnecessarily expanding paved surface by requiring too much parking. Many communities set limited or no minimums for downtown off-street parking, allowing the market to determine what is actually needed. Update the Zoning Ordinance and/or SALDO to allow flexibility, including shared parking and reserve parking. Shared parking allows destinations with different peak times (such as an office, a restaurant and a church) to use the same parking spots to reduce overall need, and reserve parking allows a developer to leave some required parking spaces as unpaved green space unless it's later determined that they need to be built (which, in practice, they nearly never are).



Demand quality form

Municipalities may impose certain architectural requirements, such as prohibiting blank facades along street frontages, the incorporation of recesses, projections, windows or other elements to break up wide facades and a minimum percentage of window coverage. Municipalities can also *suggest* specific design considerations that would advance neighborhood goals, such as the use of brick and the limitation of large logos and/or proprietary colors used over large expanses of buildings.



Envision landscaping and lighting

Design standards should include specific provisions for the type and placement of amenities such as street furniture, landscaping and lighting in a downtown district.



Reduce visual clutter and confusion

Require new and replaced signs to conform to more specific standards.

Signs have a major impact on the visual appeal of a neighborhood. The borough's Zoning Ordinance currently controls signs, limiting their size and placement. Signs are treated the same across the General Business District, Neighborhood Business District, Village District, Transportation District and both Light Industrial Districts. The regulations are generally permissive, which allows businesses a great deal of freedom in advertising themselves, to the detriment of visual order and wayfinding along Center Avenue and other primary thoroughfares.

Implementation plan:

- Work with the Borough Solicitor, Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board to:
 - Review the ordinance in light of the 2015 *Reed vs. Gilbert* court decision to ensure that it regulates visual clutter (such as temporary signs) within the legal framework created by the new case.
 - Create sign regulations specific to the core area in order to promote an attractive downtown environment. For instance, pole signs are generally inappropriate in walkable downtown areas, while many communities encourage businesses to use a larger number of smaller signs (as opposed to one or two very large signs) to engage pedestrians, as well as other tools such as sandwich boards. The types and sizes of signs in a given area should correspond to the type and speed of traffic that is desired and appropriate there.



Above: Current conditions present drivers with an overwhelming amount of information at the interchange gateway, which could cause confusion and traffic delay.



Right: Shared monument signs such as this example are an attractive alternative to individual pole signs, particularly in areas targeted for more traditional, human-scale neighborhood character.

Creating “critical mass” in local attractions

New Stanton is currently perceived as a functional place, a one-hour destination where travelers eat and refuel. The borough can accelerate its local economy by becoming something more.

There is currently no attraction that would make the borough a destination to keep visitors in town for 24 to 48 hours. New Stanton is one of the most heavily used exits on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, handling tens of thousands of cars and nearly 8,000 trucks each day. These visitors provide the borough’s service-oriented businesses with a reliable revenue stream, but business owners and other stakeholders have found that they don’t stay long. New Stanton is rarely a destination, though it is often a stop.

New Stanton has key competitive advantages on which it can capitalize — the footprint to build something big, the transportation infrastructure to support it and large employers who might benefit from the use or sponsorship of such facilities. Developing a regional attraction would fit naturally into the current economic landscape, as existing businesses would benefit from longer-staying visitors, who could access the borough by virtue of its convenient connection to the region’s transportation arteries.

Related findings

■ The borough has never been known for having a lot of rooftops

The local economy is bolstered by the borough's location as a transportation hub more than the demands of its resident households. This makes attracting certain purveyors difficult. The average 45,000-square-foot grocery store, for example, typically requires 10,000 people to support it within a three-to-five-mile radius. The borough has about 2,500 residents. This also accounts for the mix of local business clientele: Small, independent restaurants can be up to 80% local business, while chain restaurants cater principally to travelers.

■ Rooms for days

New Stanton has likely reached a point of hotel saturation, yet has multiple additional facilities in the works. New/improved facilities will put pressure on substandard, aging lodging, which could be redeveloped as another use if no longer viable.

■ Tax-base tipping point

Absent an intervention strategy, current demographic trends (a regional loss in young workforce and early-stage families with a gain in older empty nesters and retirees) will negatively impact the borough's industry and employment, housing market and local tax revenue.

■ Future projections

Demand for office and industrial space within Westmoreland County are lower than within the region overall. Regionally (and nationally), retail is experiencing a retrenchment as big-box "category killers" hit a saturation point that will not be sustained by the millennial generation, which is categorically more likely to be interested in experiences than status-symbol purchases, and to shop online. The skyrocketing popularity of online shopping, which accelerates demand for warehousing and shipping facilities, and the intention of the Turnpike Commission to implement totally cashless tolling within 10 years all portend future prosperity for the borough's transportation-oriented businesses.

■ Supply-side shortage

The area's major employers all compete for a shrinking labor pool. Worker in-migration is insufficient to meet demand, so employers reach out farther to recruit. The median age for skilled workers is rising, and in 10 years many will retire without replacements.

The big idea:

Could New Stanton attract a regional recreation facility?

■ Benefits

Regional parks and open spaces, particularly larger parks or open spaces immediately adjacent to homes, have been shown to increase property values and tax revenues. Regional recreation amenities bring numerous benefits through operations and capital spending, jobs and ancillary spending from tourists. Development of a regional recreation facility in New Stanton that may regularly draw participants from beyond the immediate locality with tournaments, events or specialized activities, is likely to result in direct, indirect and induced impacts from facility operations and expenditures, as well as visitor spending.

■ Supply

Currently, the inventory of regional recreation facilities and amenities within a 100-mile radius of New Stanton is dominated by campgrounds and recreation parks providing residents with outdoor sports, leisure and recreation activity opportunities (e.g., fishing, boating, sports and picnicking). However, apart from two existing water parks, there are few themed or specialized recreation facilities, and few focused on other activities in which residents are likely to participate (e.g., golf, bicycling, archery and target shooting).

■ Demand

Demographic and consumer behavior analysis indicates that the population within 100 miles of New Stanton demonstrate a preference for participation in outdoor sports, leisure and recreation activities (e.g., camping, fishing, golf, and bicycling) and non-team/individual sports (e.g., swimming, weightlifting, archery, target shooting and auto racing), as well as attending sporting events.

Given this data, new entertainment and recreation facilities in New Stanton should consider the preferences of dominant demographic segments, especially those with higher entertainment and recreation spending levels (e.g., older, active adults who enjoy the outdoors).



Family First Sports Park, Summit Township, PA

Local attractions Strategy steps

Draw in visitors and extend their stays

Conduct a market and financial feasibility study for a sports and recreation complex and use its findings to engage prospective developer-operators.

The borough does not have the resources to develop such a facility on its own, but it does have highly marketable development opportunities and an advantageous location. Laying the groundwork to attract an attraction that takes advantage of those features will require research and networking.

The first step is to conduct an in-depth market study for such a use. This would examine supporting demographic trends within the region as well as the type of sports and recreation complex that would be the most successful (e.g. indoor and outdoor sports venue, water park attraction, paid vs. non-paid activities, etc.). The market study would also need to identify prospective construction costs and annual operating revenues and expenses. Only after such an analysis will the borough be in the position to determine if such a facility is worth pursuing, and further, whether the facility should be privately operated or operated under a public/private partnership.

The following page provides a breakdown of steps required to initiate this process.

Implementation plan:

1 Form a steering committee
This should include up to 12 diverse representatives such as local business owners, elected and appointed officials, school officials and interested citizens. *(Two months)*



2 Identify key project elements
The steering committee will need to find consensus on what they believe to be the important elements of a sports and recreation complex for New Stanton. *(One month)*



3 Develop request for proposals
Using the provided sample RFPs as guides (see Companion Documents), develop an RFP to solicit consulting firms having the necessary qualifications and experience to perform a comprehensive market study and financial feasibility analysis for a sports and recreation complex. *(One month)*



4 Select the preferred firm
The Steering Committee should allow sufficient time for response, then review submittals and interview a short list of firms in person. Enter into a contractual agreement with the firm best suited to meet the borough's needs. *(Three to four months)*



5 Conduct study, review findings
Thoroughly review the study's findings, ensuring that they identify prospective developer-operators for the sports complex as well as references who can speak to their experience. *(Five months)*



6 Solicit developer-operators
Assuming that the study reveals more than a handful of prospective developer-operators for sports and recreation complexes, issue an RFP (including the market study) to solicit interest. *(Three months)*



7 Contract with a developer-operator
Based on a similar vetting process, determine the best suited developer-operator and enter into an agreement to develop the complex based on the market study findings. *(Two months)*

Potential cost and funding sources

A feasibility study such as this could cost around \$60,000 to conduct. The borough can seek support for the sports/recreation facility initiative through state and county agencies that fund community economic development projects, as well as through approaching area businesses who stand to benefit substantially if such a facility is opened in New Stanton. The following ideas are places to start.

Public sector

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC)

The BRC provides grant funding under its Community Recreation and Conservation planning grant program, which is designed to underwrite all or a portion of planning/feasibility studies associated with specific types of recreation and open space projects. Listed below is the type of study eligible for funding for which New Stanton might secure grant assistance:

Indoor Recreation Facility Feasibility Study: Professionally prepared studies to determine community support, market characteristics, physical/structural assessment and the legal and financial capability to acquire, develop or rehabilitate, manage and sustain an indoor recreation facility. Examples include a community recreation center, vacant school building, indoor swimming pool, gym, indoor sports complex or indoor ice rink.

Next grant round: January 13, 2017 to April 13, 2017

<https://www.grants.dcnr.state.pa.us/Dashboard/Grants>

Private sector

Local hotels and restaurants

Lodging facilities and restaurants are the two types of businesses that would stand to benefit the most from the development of a large recreational complex in New Stanton. Therefore, the borough should coordinate an outreach effort to representatives of these businesses to inform them of the types of economic benefits that would accrue, such as increased exposure and sales. While financial contributions from these businesses toward the cost of performing a feasibility study is not a guarantee of a sports and recreation complex being developed, it would move the community one step closer toward that goal.

Additionally, large employers with locations in New Stanton may be interested in eventual sponsorship opportunities.



Connecting residents to recreation

Enjoying outdoor recreational facilities in New Stanton typically requires getting in a car and driving.

New Stanton Park is a beautiful community asset that offers a variety of events and activities to residents of all ages. However, it is likely underused due to its relative isolation. The park is located between Sewickley Creek and Route 119 along Thermo Village Road near the border with Youngwood and Hempfield, accessible to most borough residents via Pine Drive. As noted earlier in the plan, Pine Drive is a winding road with speeding problems and lack of continuous sidewalks or road shoulder for pedestrians (especially children) to travel safely.

New Stanton is located in a region increasingly connected by shared-use recreational trails, such as the Five Star Trail stretching from Greensburg to Youngwood and the Great Allegheny Passage, which runs through southwestern Westmoreland County on its way between Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. However, the borough lacks direct connection to the regional trail system. Past study of the issue has revealed complicated logistical and topographic challenges to extending trails into New Stanton.



Kids enjoy some of the playground facilities at New Stanton Park during the Annual Community Picnic

Related findings

■ A local gem

New Stanton Park is a key local attraction, created on a 21-acre site to include playground equipment, pavilions, a walking trail, two baseball/softball fields, a bocce court, concession stand, restrooms and a storage shed. The park hosts community events, offers facility rentals and is home to ongoing recreational programming, including a baseball and softball league that involves about 160 participants between the ages of two and 14.

■ Updates needed

Public and stakeholder outreach revealed desired improvements to recreational offerings within New Stanton Park including improved lighting, surveillance, signage and ADA compliance.

■ Access is an issue

Because New Stanton's recreational assets are centralized in a location relatively isolated from neighborhoods where children live (such as Chanticleer), there might be demand for smaller, less intense "parklet" areas elsewhere in the borough.

Stakeholders pointed out the possibility of incorporating public space in commercial areas, either through redeveloping existing grayfield sites ("there's no reason that a site 90% paved needs to remain paved to the same extent") or through requiring developers to incorporate a certain minimum amount of public features as part of site planning. This would attract pedestrians and cultivate a sense of neighborhood.

■ Trail connection

The borough and Westmoreland County Parks determined that connecting New Stanton to the Five Star Trail is made infeasible by excessive rail crossings and other configuration problems. One option for trail creation might be a paved bike path along roadsides, as was completed in Youngwood.

■ Hidden space

The Sewickley Creek Wetland is a small passive recreation space in New Stanton maintained by Westmoreland County Parks, created as a mitigation area for the toll road. It includes walking trails and some interpretive signage.

■ Youth perspective

During a youth workshop, boy scouts suggested the need for a recreation facility that has features such as a track and multi-purpose playing fields. They reported that there is no area of the borough currently well suited to running or walking as an athletic activity.

Recreation connection Strategy steps

Enhance use of recreational facilities

Pursue funding to undertake a Comprehensive Recreation, Park, Open Space and Greenway Plan and Master Site Plan for New Stanton Park

Attracting further funding to improve the borough's recreation facilities —and ensuring that resources are invested in what the community needs and would use the most —will require conducting a borough-wide study to determine where and how to meet New Stanton's long-term recreational goals. This research would advise the borough on what specific recreation amenities would be most beneficial and where their location would be practical. It should also involve an in-depth study of all possible alternatives for trail development and connection, including strategies and expected costs.

Implementation plan:

- Prepare an application and authorize 50% matching funds for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant program, which provides grants for such studies. Consider collaboration with Youngwood, which also recently completed a community plan.

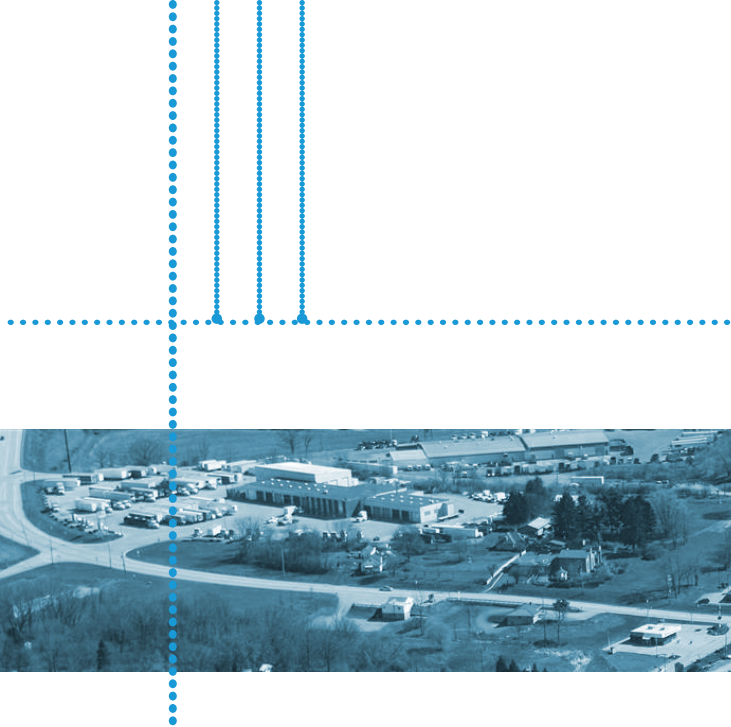
Potential total cost to prepare this plan: \$25K to \$35K.

Continue to schedule community events and programming in New Stanton Park and otherwise promote its use among residents

The borough's new website represents a great platform for outreach to residents. Gatherings, sports leagues and other events should be advertised here and elsewhere to attract residents to the park. The Recreation Board should gauge interest for adult and senior activities, either as part of the planning effort described above or by conducting survey outreach.

Implementation plan:

- The Recreation Board should regularly apprise the Borough Manager of developments and events that can be promoted and work together to increase engagement. The borough newsletter would work well to increase publicity, as well as a welcome kit for new residents/businesses highlighting amenities and events. Local realtors could provide assistance.

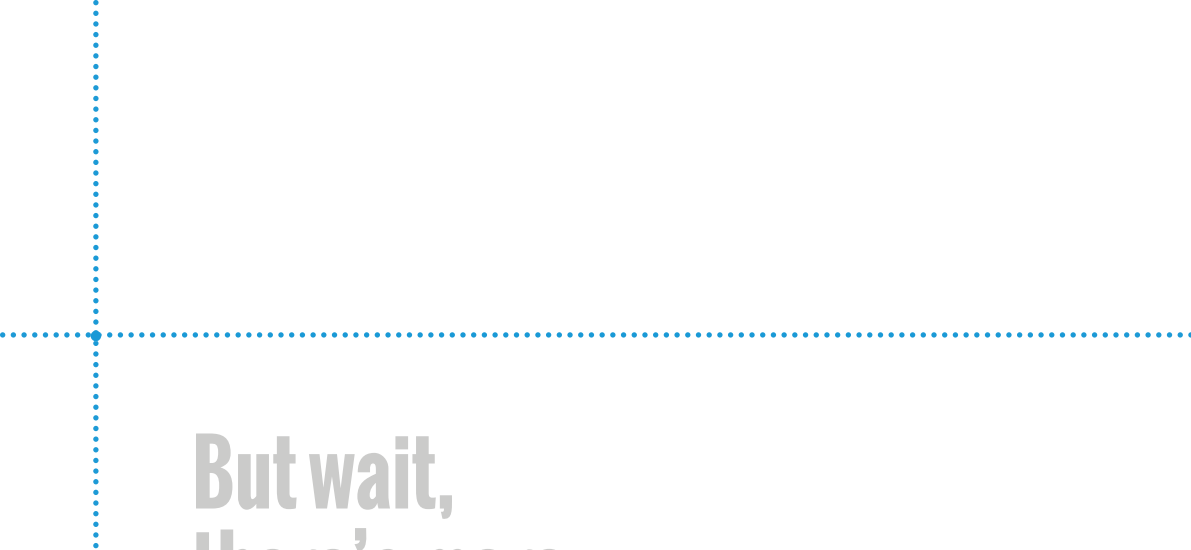


Additional Actions



A Summer 2016 aerial shows the new northern roundabout and Rachel Drive in progress





But wait, there's more

The planning process revealed a variety of ways the borough can achieve its future vision, but it cannot implement everything at once.

The borough has a finite amount of available resources, in terms of both budget and the time that elected officials, staff and volunteers can spend advancing any one given goal. For that reason, this plan identified six priority areas and described their implementation in detail. The public ranked those six areas highly in importance, and the Steering Committee agreed that the borough should and could begin to address those issues in the short- to medium-term, starting with the adoption of this plan.

The issues in this section are no less relevant to the vision, but they ranked lower in priority or, in the case of public safety, were determined to be issues the borough does not have the ability to fully address in the short- or medium-term. A brief description and recommended action steps are included here, and more supporting documentation appears in the companion documents.

Improve the reality and perception of public safety

Despite the location of a Pennsylvania State Police barracks within its borders, the borough lacks a visible police presence. Though state police provide coverage to the borough, some residents and business owners perceive that patrols are rare and that response times are long. Multiple business owners reported waiting more than 25 minutes for a response to an alarm call. Motorists are aware that there is no local enforcement of moving violations, which exacerbates speeding and other traffic problems.

Stakeholders reported drug trade as a major issue in and around the borough. Dealing occurs openly under bridges and on hotel premises, likely benefiting from the same locational advantages that other local businesses enjoy —New Stanton is a centrally located hub. Many small communities located in the area are sandwiched together in reputation, so that blight and crime occurring in any community affects the perception of safety in all.

However, the borough has determined that it could not provide a higher level of service than State Police without incurring tremendous cost. State police offer professionalism and have improved the manpower they offer the borough, as the force is now younger and more aggressive, concentrating (often undercover) on drug activity in New Stanton, Youngwood and South Huntingdon. They estimated the average response time for New Stanton calls at five minutes, with mostly all responses within 10 minutes.

The borough may wish to further explore the disconnect between the services provided and what borough residents have experienced by conducting survey research, as how people perceive crime in New Stanton is arguably just as important as the actual occurrence of crime. In the future, it may also be useful to conduct public outreach to gauge how much residents would be willing to shoulder additional tax burden to offer a local force, as there is little appetite for regional cooperation. For now, the borough should:

- Open a regular dialogue with State Police to ensure that they are aware of specific public safety problems in the borough.
- Devise means of making police more accessible to residents, whether via event outreach, communication through the Borough Manager, etc.
- Evaluate ways to solicit definitive public opinion on this topic, such as issuing a mailer to every household. Survey results would not represent a mandate, but would help leaders better understand the will of their constituents.

Meet present and future community public safety needs through effective education, hazard prevention and emergency response

New Stanton's Volunteer Fire Department covers a service area totaling four square miles. The department's 34 total volunteers, 15 of whom are active, respond to 370 calls per year, on average, including structure fires, vehicle accidents, ambulance assistance and good will calls. The average response time is 7 minutes, which is half the 14-minute standard for rural fire agencies recommended by the National Fire Protection Association. The apparatus fleet was expanded in 2015 by the addition of a fire engine with a 75-foot aerial ladder that can reach three-story homes or businesses. Additionally, the department maintains a 1999 rescue truck, a 2008 fire engine and a 2015 multi-use vehicle, all in good condition. The department's building at 108 S. Main Street serves as a community center, offering facilities for various events and public gatherings.

New Stanton Borough has historically provided strong financial support for its Volunteer Fire Department, including the enactment of a one-mill real estate tax (equivalent to \$1 per every \$1,000 of value). This source has been in place for about a decade and amounts to roughly \$32,000 in annual revenue. Additionally, the department benefits from the Local Service Tax, \$52 paid annually by each person working in the borough that must be used solely for emergency services. The borough has also purchased equipment and insurance for the department. All of these contributions enable members of the VFD to scale back fundraising efforts and focus on training, effective service, public outreach and other activities that benefit the community.

During the plan's development, the department did not identify any immediately outstanding issues for concern, nor any locations that pose a particular hazard or hindrance from an emergency management perspective. However, New Stanton's fire department depends on the dedication of volunteers, so it is always recruiting new members as junior (age 14 to 17) or senior (age 18+) firefighters. The effort has become more difficult across rural Pennsylvania as volunteerism has waned with increasing job demands, family commitments, demographic change and other factors. The department will also continue to need to provide adequate equipment and training in future years to ensure a high level of service to the borough.

The borough should:

- Support the New Stanton VFD's efforts to respond quickly to emergencies with sufficient equipment and well-trained personnel.
- Encourage a proactive response to emergency management with an emphasis on incident prevention.
- Offer marketing assistance to the VFD in volunteer recruitment via the borough's website and/or newsletter.
- Ensure that new construction meets code requirements. Depending on staff availability, the borough could additionally perform regular business inspections to check safety.



Members of the New Stanton Volunteer Fire Department allow the public to explore the apparatus fleet at the annual Community Picnic.

Plan for inclusive and complete public infrastructure

Maintaining safe and adequate water and wastewater systems represents an ongoing challenge for many communities, including the borough:

- New Stanton is among roughly 1,000 jurisdictions in Pennsylvania classified by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as a small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) that must develop and implement stormwater management programs. In particular, the borough must identify best management practices and measurable goals for public outreach, runoff control and other responsibilities. DEP has proposed changes to its MS4 Program that are scheduled to take effect in March 2018. Therefore, the borough's next five-year permit application will need to consider appropriate strategies to mitigate discharge impacts to Sewickley Creek and Wilson Run.

What are BMPs?

Best management practices, as defined for purposes of the NPDES permitting program, are:

- Schedules of activities
- Prohibitions of practices
- Structural controls (such as infiltration trenches)
- Design criteria
- Maintenance procedures
- Other management practices to prevent or reduce pollution

Peak rate control is a classic form of stormwater BMP (detention ponds, tanks, etc.). Volume controls (such as infiltration trenches) remove water from the runoff path, and quality controls (such as treatment via filtering or settling) remove pollutants.

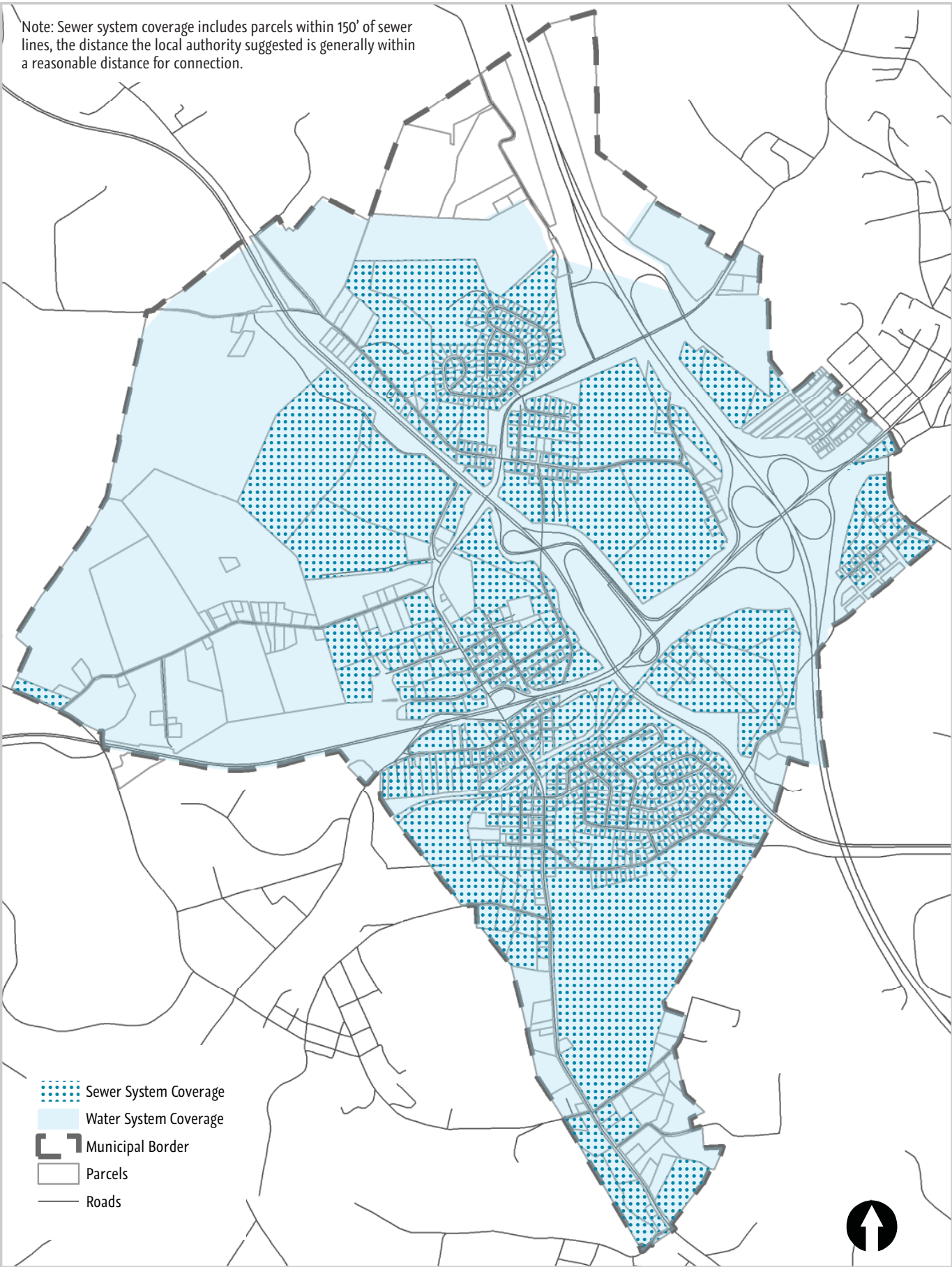
The most proactive form of stormwater BMP is the type of control that avoids the problem: low-impact development principles. These would include such measures as reducing impermeable surface area (removing parking minimums, reducing street widths, promoting reduced building footprints, preserving green spaces) as well as promoting green infrastructure such as bioswales, rain gardens, rain barrels, porous pavement and green roofs.

On the whole, it is far less expensive to handle excess runoff by implementing green solutions than to expand water treatment facilities.



Rain gardens such as this help control the volume of water entering the runoff path.

Figure 11: Water and Wastewater Service Area, Updated for 2016



Data sources: Westmoreland County, HTMA

- In past years, problems with infiltration/inflow have caused DEP to limit the wastewater system tap-ins available to communities served by the local wastewater authority, including New Stanton. Future growth depended on a) these systems correcting their various deficiencies, and b) adequate capacity remaining within their service areas. Since then, the borough has monitored flow in its main drainage area (Sewickley Creek, in the vicinity of Cracker Barrel) and satisfied all concerns, thus taps are generally not an issue. Taps are allocated to the local authority by DEP annually, but the authority currently does not believe there will be a capacity issue for New Stanton, even given expected large developments.
- PennDOT has acquired and enlarged an existing basin on the westerly side of South Rachel Drive receiving flow from Stanton Square. PennDOT sized the basin based on expected need for the adjacent roadway and paving work along Bair Boulevard and Rachel Drive. The borough must continue to work with PennDOT to ensure that the volume of water draining into the pond does not increase. This may involve on-lot solutions, such as underground tanks, green infrastructure or some combination of approaches.

- Identify a future service boundary consistent with the Borough's Future Land Use Map, the local wastewater authority's Act 537 plan and any known potential service expansions. This area would represent a designated growth area served by public infrastructure where the borough should target medium- to higher-intensity land uses. By contrast, areas outside of the boundary should be largely preserved as low-density residential or agricultural use.
- Continue to ensure that the local wastewater authority remains apprised of all substantial development proposals in the borough so that the authority may account for future tap allocation.
- Adopt a practice of verifying, prior to issuing any building permit for a project that will disturb at least one acre, that the applicant has received an NPDES permit.

- Design and/or require low-impact development solutions to handle stormwater in the vicinity of the interchange reconfiguration north of I-70. Capacity limitations on the existing basin call for development that handles water primarily at the source, instead of relying on paving, curb and gutter, piping, inlet structures and ponds. “Green” solutions would reduce the cost and logistical problems associated with siting, building and maintaining additional collection/conveyance infrastructure.
- Update the SALDO to add provisions allowing for low-impact development (“green infrastructure”) approaches and stormwater best management practices that work with natural features to manage stormwater as close as possible to the source. These might include such options as permeable pavement, green roofs, rain gardens and bioretention facilities.
- Seek opportunities to reduce the coverage area of impermeable surfaces. This could involve collaborating with developers on site design (such as subdivision layout that reduces the amount of required new road), including low-impact development principles in new road or cul-de-sac design, reducing street width, reducing parking minimums, allowing flexible ways to meet parking requirements, etc.
- Continue compliance with the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program requirements, which include completion of tasks under the requirements of the current General Permit (2013 PAG-13); development of a Pollution Reduction Plan and the Municipal Control Measures (with attendant BMP’s) required for the next General Permit, 2018 PAG-13, Notice of Intent; and enactment, implementation and enforcement of the required Ordinances for compliance with the MS4 program.
- Monitor the development of the countywide stormwater management plan, specifically its findings for Sewickley Creek. Enact ordinances to meet the goals and objectives of the plan, and ensure that borough regulations are consistent with its eventual guidelines for land development.

Ensure that anticipated new development and redevelopment is consistent with local and county priorities and represents the highest and best possible land use

- Adopt an Official Map (as authorized by Article IV of the MPC) that shows the locations of future public lands and facilities the Borough intends to create, such as:

- Public streets, watercourses and public grounds (including widening and extension)
- Public parks, trails, playgrounds and open space reservations
- Pedestrian thoroughfares and easements
- Railroad or transit rights of way and easements
- Flood control basins, floodways and floodplains, stormwater management areas and drainage easements

Showing such areas on an Official Map expresses the borough's interest in acquiring these lands for public purposes at some point in the future. It gives the Borough an opportunity to negotiate the acquisition of property or rights where a public use would be beneficial before development or redevelopment occurs.

- If a property owner or developer informs the borough of an intention to build, subdivide or perform other work on land that is designated on the Official Map, the borough has one year to confirm its acquisition interest and negotiate to acquire the land. Acquisition could occur via dedication by owner, purchase of land or easement, negotiations with the owner/ developer to make desired improvements, or eminent domain.
- Participate in the development of the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan.
- During the next zoning ordinance update, consider ways in which the ordinance could be made more flexible and business-friendly, within the context of the character the borough is working to create in its core and growth areas. This might include examining variance requests (if a type of variance is always granted, it should not have been prohibited), requiring only small setbacks between adjacent business uses and updating the use table and districts as appropriate to encourage compatible mixed uses.

Address the impact of the I-70 interchange reconfiguration on existing businesses to ensure that they share in future prosperity

- Develop a system of wayfinding signage that is attractive and consistent with the borough's new logo and marketing efforts. Simplified signs should be quickly understandable and direct motorists (and potentially pedestrians and cyclists) to select key attractions and areas of the business district. Alternately, work through PennDOT's Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign program to encourage select qualifying businesses (typically gas, food, lodging and attractions) to purchase signs in a coordinated manner.
- Feature a local business each month on the Borough's new website.
- Convene a regular meeting of local business owners/operators to learn about local issues and devise strategies to address them. In order to catalyze momentum, these meetings should focus on a specific issue that the business community can help address (i.e. directional signage).

Promote redevelopment of targeted sites

- Use DCED's Business in Our Sites loan program to build an inventory of ready sites (<http://goo.gl/uNJKoJ>). Funds can be used for site development and business, infrastructure and/or land and building.
- Continue the borough's positive relationship with county staff in order to take advantage of county technical and financial assistance:
 - Redevelopment Authority: programs designed to remove blight and improve conditions for the County's low- to moderate-income residents,
 - Community Development Division: administers the federal CDBG and HOME grant programs, and
 - Industrial Development Corporation: provides investment in redeveloping nearby RIDC Westmoreland as a multi-tenant facility with significant leasable space and critical rail connections.

Expand access to commute modes that are more sustainable than driving alone

- Maintain involvement in Westmoreland Transit route planning activities, ensuring that the needs and preferences of New Stanton residents and employers factor into decision-making about stop locations, frequency and timing.
- Work with PennDOT and Westmoreland Transit to develop a new park and ride facility with bicycle parking along North Center Avenue.
- Promote SPC's *CommuteInfo.org* to link residents to carpooling, van shares, etc.

Provide effective and efficient community facilities and services

- Adopt a capital improvement program to coordinate the timing, location and financing of the borough's capital expenditures over a specified future time period (typically four to six years).
- The capital budget represents a powerful means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, so the two documents should be consistent. Capital projects would include those involving facilities – streets, sidewalks, parks, utility infrastructure and other public amenities – as well as equipment and less obvious investments such as land purchase.
- Open lines of communication with Hempfield Township, Hunker Borough, Youngwood Borough and other neighboring communities in search of opportunities for different types of cooperation:
 - Coordinating, in which municipalities ensure that their short- and long-range plans and regulations are complementary;
 - Shared Service Delivery, either by operating agreements (i.e. joint equipment purchase), the functional transfer of services among governments or the creation of special districts; or
 - Fiscal, in which local government structures are unchanged but public facilities and/or services are jointly funded.

Specifically, this could include facilitating sharing of training, coverage and/or specialized equipment among volunteer fire departments or municipal public works departments, creating a jurisdiction for regional police, or other mutually advantageous solutions to shared challenges.

Protect green space and natural features, balancing property rights with the public interest

- Evaluate and consider adoption of one or more of the following approaches:
 - Incorporate conservation or cluster design provisions that are density-neutral, but require site configuration that permanently protects open space and/or sensitive features
 - Create an overlay district in the zoning ordinance to add an extra layer of protection to certain sensitive areas
 - In site-specific cases, negotiate conservation or preservation easements
 - Acquire or seek donation of parcels in sensitive areas that are at risk for development
- Ensure that any adopted open space requirements create real benefits, requiring spaces that can be practically used, provide visual relief and/or protect sensitive features.
- Require developers to incorporate and preserve trees in site design.

Establish a unified and unique community identity

- Market the borough using its new logo, slogan and website by including the website address on all printed materials circulated by the borough, and by incorporating the logo/slogan at gateway entrances and in other local public signage.
- Leverage the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau as a means of promoting New Stanton as an ideal lodging location for area attractions, and eventually as its own attraction.

Implementation Tools





General action steps

Overall implementation

Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require continued commitment from the borough, specifically the following:

- Assign the Planning Commission to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The commission would not be responsible for directly carrying out actions, but would initiate tasks and coordinate with agencies, volunteers, borough staff, local organizations and/or other groups to help carry them out.
- Submit priority implementation projects as part of borough budget discussions. If projects require municipal approval and/or funding, ensure that they are presented to Council with plenty of time for deliberation.
- Annually evaluate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, documenting actions taken during the past year to help achieve the vision, address community development objectives and make recommendations to Borough Council of modifications to the Comprehensive Plan. Append the annual update to the Plan document to create an ongoing record of progress.
- Use the borough's subdivision and land development application process as a means of implementation, requiring that applications demonstrate consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. This could involve revising applications to expressly require an explanation of consistency, or a checklist to ensure that the application addresses the plan's objectives.
- Update the borough's zoning ordinance to achieve consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Specific updates to implement the vision are included throughout the plan and summarized later in this section.

Future land use map

New Stanton's Future Land Use Map represents a long-range vision of how the borough should develop over time. It is a guide for future decisions to encourage orderly growth and redevelopment, not to be confused with current mechanisms for regulating development (such as the zoning ordinance). The realization of the borough's vision will be gradual, particularly where current development patterns are inconsistent with what is envisioned for the future. However, this map establishes a picture of the borough that local leaders can begin to create by channeling market forces in desired directions, as would result from the successful implementation of other recommendations in the plan.

Categories

Core character area

These parcels will be the most directly affected by the I-70 interchange reconfiguration, which represents an opportunity to introduce standards that will make the built environment more walkable and human-scaled. This area will continue to have more intense commercial uses, will require special attention to access/circulation and may be appropriate for performance-based zoning.

Key redevelopment area

These parcels are in a prime location for reinvestment, and they are situated to potentially accommodate a large-scale development. Uses in this area should reinforce the vitality of the core character area by supporting, not competing, with it.

Potential growth area

These undeveloped parcels are located in areas that could accommodate expected growth pressure, assuming that adequate infrastructure is available.

Public utility area

These currently undeveloped parcels are owned by the local wastewater authority.

Agriculture

Areas designated for preservation, specifically those with conservation easements or participation in public preservation programs.

Conservation residential

Residential plans in this area should be designed to allow for neutral housing unit density, but also encourage the preservation of open space to add value to the community. (Basically, to allow housing to be built at the density typically allowed in the area, but in reallocated designs that set aside valuable green space.)

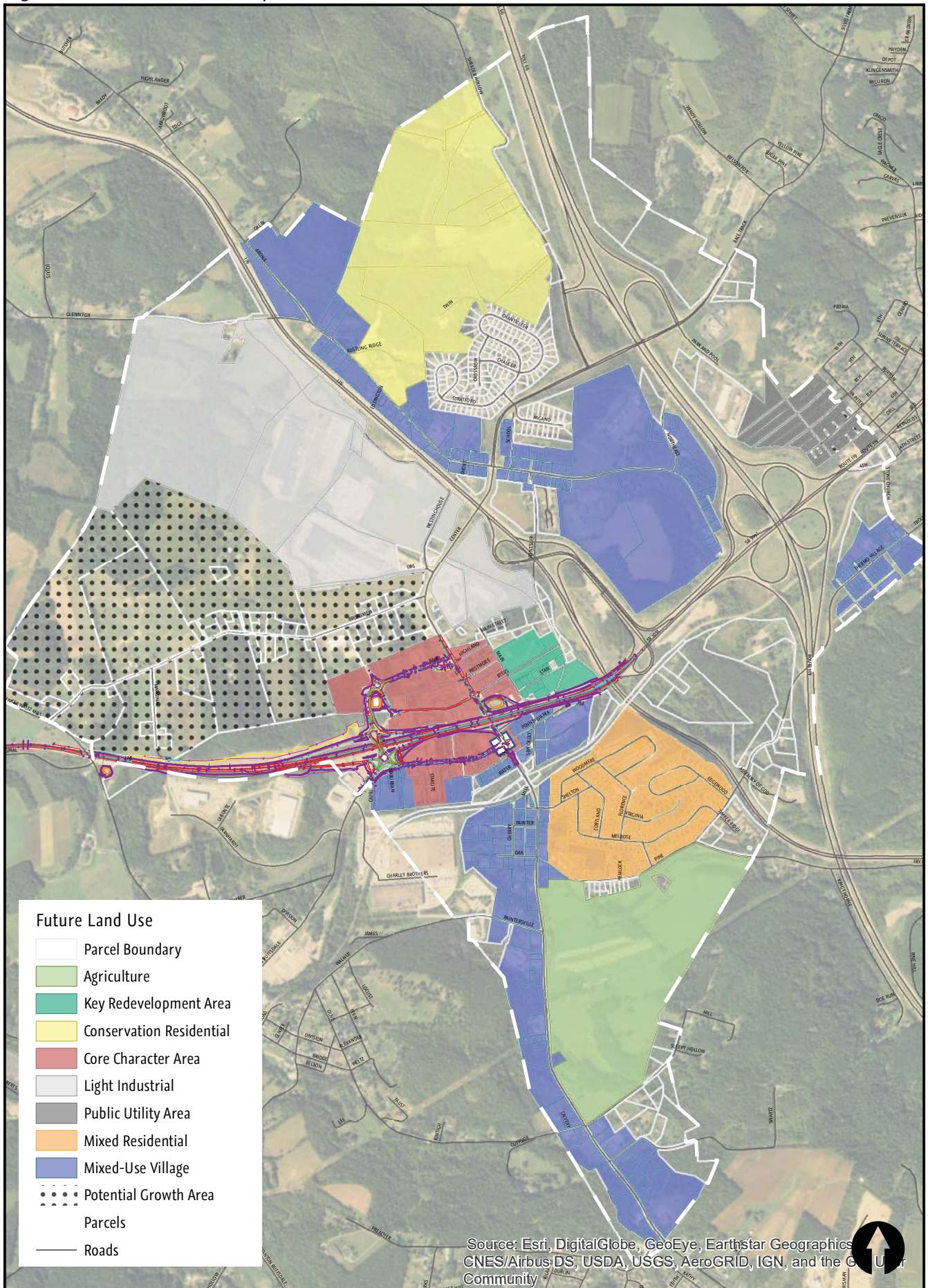
Light industrial

This area captures the existing concentration of light industrial activity and includes adjacent sites that could be suitable for similar use.

Mixed-use village

This area describes corridors where neighborhood-scale retail and homes already co-exist, which should continue to encourage flexibility for compatible uses.

Figure 12: Future Land Use Map



Summary of ordinance updates

Recommendations to update New Stanton's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) appear throughout the Comprehensive Plan according to the community development objective to which they are most relevant. These revisions should be made as part of a single update to both documents in order to ensure consistency and save costs. Therefore, this section includes all of the zoning and SALDO updates mentioned elsewhere, as well as additional recommendations to strengthen and clarify both documents.

Zoning

- Review the ordinance in light of the 2015 *Reed vs. Gilbert* court decision regarding sign regulations to ensure that it regulates visual clutter within the legal framework created by the case. While the ruling resulted in a variety of interpretations, clutter can most likely be regulated only by size, height, lighting, electronics and spacing requirements. Sign regulations from the standpoint of pedestrian and vehicle safety tend to be more defensible than regulations from the standpoint of aesthetics.
- Create sign regulations specific to the core area in order to promote an attractive downtown environment. For instance, pole signs are generally inappropriate in walkable downtown areas, while many communities encourage businesses to use a larger number of smaller signs (as opposed to one or two very large signs) to engage pedestrians, as well as other tools such as sandwich boards. The types and sizes of signs in a given area should correspond to the type and speed of traffic that is desired and appropriate there.
- The borough adjusted its parking minimums as part of a 2016 zoning amendment. The borough should keep an eye on supply and demand in the future to ensure that its requirements strike a balance that will result in the desired built environment and motorist behavior.
- The borough's 2016 update also allows for shared parking, which encourages destinations with different peak times (such as an office, a restaurant and a church) to use the same parking spots to reduce overall need. The borough should also consider a reserve parking option, which allows a developer to leave some required parking spaces as unpaved green space unless it's later determined that they need to be built (which, in practice, they nearly never are).
- Provide incentives (gross floor area increase, height increase or yard setback decrease) for surface parking areas located behind or beside buildings (as opposed to between a building and its street frontage).

- Focus design standards and guidelines specifically for the core area that address amenities such as street trees, wide sidewalks and building design standards. The standards should be consistent with best practices in urban design and downtown revitalization, creating conditions that foster retail prosperity and attract pedestrian activity. Sample ideas appear on page 46.
- Evaluate performance zoning in certain areas, which would allow land development to respond flexibly to market forces while preserving public interests. Performance zoning de-emphasizes the separation of specific uses and instead controls impacts on the environment, neighboring properties and public infrastructure. This could encourage the vibrancy characteristic of flexible downtown districts where many types of activities comfortably co-exist.
- Consider ways in which the ordinance could be made more flexible and business-friendly, within the context of the character the borough is working to create in its core and growth areas. This might include examining variance requests (if a type of variance is always granted, it should not have been prohibited), requiring only small setbacks between adjacent business uses and updating the use table and districts as appropriate to encourage compatible mixed uses.
- Incorporate Conservation Subdivision principles, possibly by creating an overlay district, to ensure that sites for additional large residential plans are designed in a way that preserves sensitive features and open space.
- Ensure that any adopted open space requirements create real benefits, requiring spaces that can be practically used, provide visual relief and/or protect sensitive features.
- Add a table of contents for reference and upload the ordinance to the borough website.
- Update the Community Development Objectives in §104. for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, perhaps by reference (for brevity).
- Review the intent of each district to ensure general consistency with the Future Land Use Map. Review the Use Table to ensure that what is permitted in each district continues to be consistent with the intent.
- The maximum density in R-2 Moderate Density Residential is equivalent to five dwelling units per acre, which is relatively low for this type of district. Given that this district currently includes large expanses of undeveloped space north of Broadview that will be of increased interest and market value very soon (if not already), the borough should determine the type and character of development it wishes to see materialize in the area and ensure that it is zoned accordingly.
- Generally, evaluate the Zoning Map to allocate the right amounts and locations of space to advance New Stanton's economic development objectives. Overzoning for any particular category has an opportunity cost, and in many cases it can depress land values.

SALDO

- Add a table of contents for reference and upload the ordinance to the borough website.
- Require that preliminary applications that involve grading on slopes greater than 25% are certified by a registered professional geotechnical engineer (re: the stability of finished slopes, measures to mitigate landslides, erosion/sedimentation, stormwater runoff and potential impacts on adjacent properties).
- In §503, Street Requirements, reconsider or clarify “F.2. Residential streets shall be so laid out as to discourage through traffic,” as something resembling a grid system would enhance the connectivity of the borough as it continues to build out. Closed loops and cul-de-sacs make for quiet but disconnected neighborhoods.
- Review §503, Street Requirements, to determine whether it would be appropriate to add flexibility for traffic-calming measures such as narrow lanes under certain circumstances. Verify with the Fire Chief that any new specifications would accommodate emergency equipment.
- Develop and adopt specific standards for design features such as lighting, fences and landscaping. (Currently, the zoning ordinance has relatively general requirements.) Within reason, the borough may specify size, scale, type and position of these features to ensure that land development advances community goals.

Many communities adopt design standards (required) as well as design guidelines, which are not required but contain more specific preferences for a given neighborhood (material types, color palettes, etc.). Cranberry Township’s SALDO has a particularly comprehensive set of design standards, as an example.

- Update §607 in regard to sidewalk requirements to add clarification and flexibility that will help developers provide what the borough needs, such as:
 - Requiring sidewalks along both sides of all roadways in commercial and industrial areas, along all arterials and collectors in residential areas, and along local streets with at least one unit per acre in residential areas
 - Requiring sidewalks along one side of the street in residential areas with less than one unit per acre
 - Requiring sidewalks in rural areas where the road changes from open swales to curb-and-gutter, except where traffic volume is less than 400 average vehicles per day
 - Allowing developers to propose alternative pathways, i.e. crushed stone/permeable material trails, in areas where sidewalks may not be necessary (low-density residential subdivisions, industrial parks, etc.)
- Allow for the design of streets that accommodate on-street parking in the core area.
- Add provisions allowing for low-impact development (“green infrastructure”) approaches and stormwater best management practices that work with natural features to manage stormwater as close as possible to the source. These might include such options as permeable pavement, green roofs, rain gardens and bioretention facilities.
- Leave the building setback requirements (§513.M) to zoning, setting minimums by district for principal and accessory structures. Consider smaller minimums in neighborhoods designed to be walkable.

Appendices



Residents enjoy the Annual Community Picnic, where they had the opportunity in both 2015 and 2016 to contribute to the Comprehensive Plan

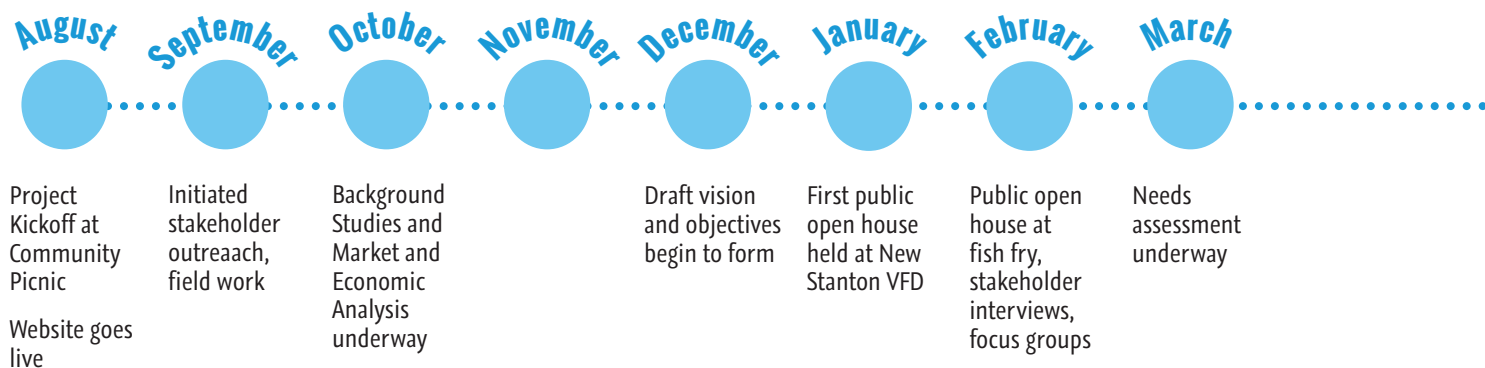
The Planning Process

Borough Council, staff, community leaders and the Westmoreland County Planning Division worked together on this update to the Comprehensive Plan with assistance from Mackin Engineering Company and 4Ward Planning. The project kicked off in August 2015 with an expected timeframe of 15 months. A timeline of project milestones appears below.

The borough undertook the plan as an update to its last Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2001, recognizing a need to proactively address development pressure and traffic pattern changes expected as part of a \$55 million I-70 interchange replacement project slated for completion in 2018, as well as other changes occurring in the borough. The plan was designed to result in practical strategies related to these and other issues:

- Sewer, water and stormwater infrastructure
- Community facilities and services
- Economic development
- Transportation improvements and traffic enforcement
- Land use ordinances

Timeline of milestones



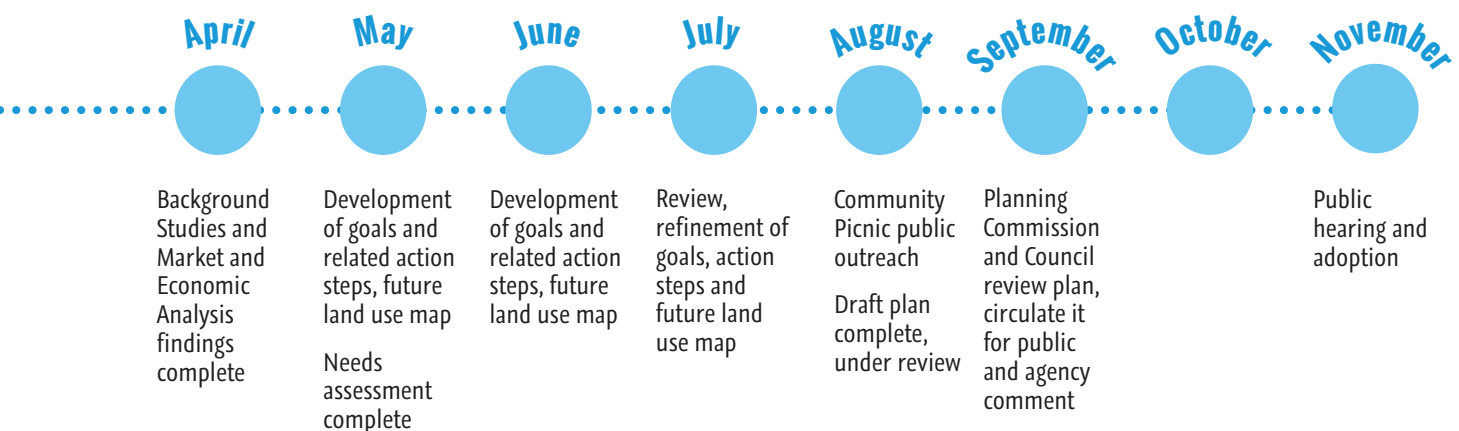
Following the borough's selection of Mackin as a planning consultant in Summer 2015, the project began as the Steering Committee identified a wide range of community stakeholders whose points of view should be reflected in developing an understanding of current conditions, developing community goals and devising practical, effective strategy alternatives.

Initial research included demographic and socio-economic analysis, an inventory of local resources and amenities and a review of previously adopted planning and regulatory documents for New Stanton, surrounding municipalities.

The Steering Committee drew upon information from elected and appointed municipal officials, staff, community leaders, business owners, students, the workforce and residents to develop a vision for the plan update. The vision was revisited throughout the planning process to ensure that it continued to reflect the input received. The vision was also used to prioritize recommendations and strategies developed during the planning process.

The input collected during public outreach, stakeholder interviews and focus group meetings was presented to the Steering Committee to help identify the key long-term issues or needs facing New Stanton and to guide recommendations that address each of the key issues. The strategies presented in this document were developed to provide guidance to municipal officials, to direct development / redevelopment to appropriate areas, and to plan for the future.

The information gathered through the visioning process helped to build the Future Land Use Map (page 75) that will direct development / redevelopment and conservation efforts for the borough as well as the priority focus areas. The priority focus areas (starting on page 17) represent initiatives that the borough recognizes as especially important undertakings in the short- to mid-term, while the additional actions (starting on page 57) are lower-priority steps the borough should implement as time and resources allow.

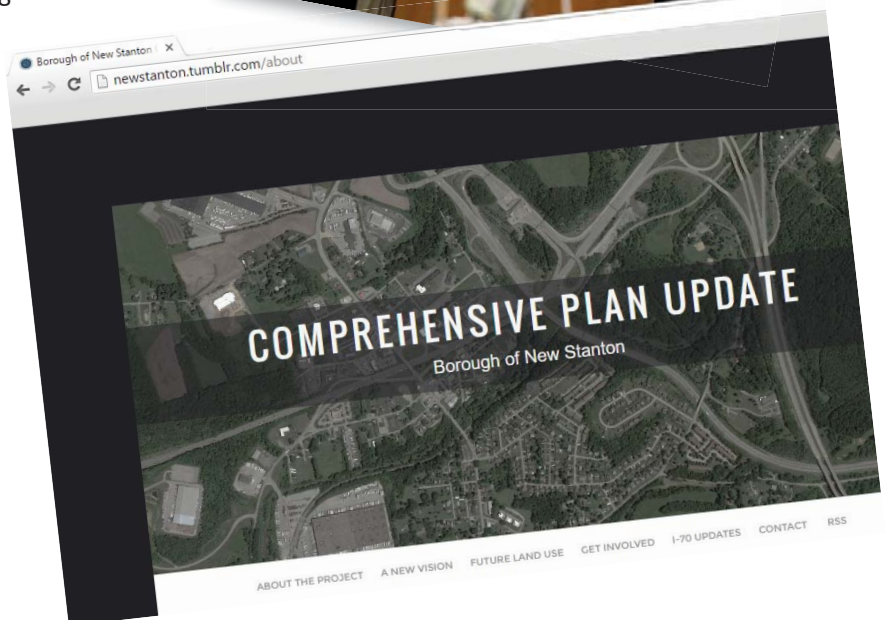


Public and Stakeholder Outreach

In addition to monthly Steering Committee meetings, the planning process included a variety of outreach methods designed to publicize the plan, generate excitement and get people involved in determining what New Stanton's future should be.

Stakeholders

The Steering Committee developed a list of more than 50 people they believed could provide insight and perspective on the plan, all of whom were contacted to participate. Some represented agencies (such as the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County, PennDOT, area school districts, Westmoreland County Transit Authority, Westmoreland Conservation District, the Turnpike Commission, etc.) while others were long-standing local business owners or community leaders. Others were large businesses with a stake in the borough's future development, such as FedEx Ground, UPS, Speedway, Supervalu and Westinghouse Nuclear. The primary goal of all stakeholder interviews was to collect information that would help the Steering Committee understand and prioritize local issues and formulate practical, well-calibrated strategies to address them.



Focus groups

The Steering Committee planned a series of focus groups to facilitate conversations about the plan among specific targeted groups. They included meetings of the New Stanton-Youngwood Rotary, local church leaders, two sessions of local business owners and a youth workshop.

Website

The project website, newstanton.tumblr.com, went live at kickoff and was updated as the project developed to provide information and solicit feedback. The website was advertised through the distribution of business cards with its address, such as those slipped into all to-go orders at the community fish fry.

Events

Three Comprehensive Plan events invited the entire community to participate live and in person via postcards mailed to each household. An initial evening public open house was held at the New Stanton Volunteer Fire Department in January; and a public open house was held at a Friday night community fish fry (also at the VFD) in February, both to ask residents about their vision for the future and key issues that need to be addressed. After the goals and future land use map were drafted, the Comprehensive Plan team appeared at the Annual Community Picnic to present them and solicit feedback, asking residents to vote for key priorities. This vote drove the selection of the plan's six priority focus areas.

Surveys

Online and paper surveys were distributed to the general public early in the planning process to gain information about key local priorities. A topic-specific survey (about bike-ped issues) was conducted online to collect opinions from the county bike-ped committee and the public. Finally, the draft goals presented at the Community Picnic were made available as an online survey to engage anyone who did not attend the event.



From top:
Community picnic attendees vote on top goals for the plan, residents complete plan surveys while waiting for dinner at the VFD fish fry, and Boy Scout Troop 457 marks up a map to show walk/bike routes and recreation attractions.

Additional Provisions

This section includes themes and language incorporated into New Stanton's plan to comply with Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The Code was the primary framework for the plan's formulation, and its process was designed to satisfy and exceed MPC requirements.

Adjacent communities

As per Article III, Section 301 (5) of the MPC, the relationship of the existing and proposed development in New Stanton should be analyzed in relation to the existing and proposed development in adjacent communities and the region. The planning process for New Stanton involved review and consideration of the following documents:

- "A Plan for Our Community: Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the City of Greensburg, Hempfield Township, and the Boroughs of South Greensburg and Southwest Greensburg" (Pashek Associates and URS Corporation, 2005)
- Hempfield Township Zoning Ordinance (2014)
- Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan (Mullin and Lonergan Associates, 2005)
- Westmoreland County Housing Policy and Plan (Mullin and Lonergan Associates, 2014)
- "Park Horizons: A Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan for Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania"
- "New Horizons: A County-Wide Greenways and Blueways Network for Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania (Environmental Planning and Design, 2008)
- "Our Future Youngwood Community Plan (DRAFT) (Westmoreland County Planning and Development, 2015)

Interrelationship

The synthesis of interrelated activities to resolve issues and problems is an important foundation to good community planning. In this regard, there are linkages among the elements, goals and action items of the New Stanton Comprehensive Plan. All are related and should further the overall vision, described on page 14.

State water plan

In recognition of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, Article III, Section 301 (b), the New Stanton Comprehensive Plan supports efforts to provide a reliable supply of water and provisions aimed at adequately protecting water supply sources. These should be developed in consideration of current and future water resources availability and its uses and limitations. The Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the Pennsylvania State Water and recognizes that:

- Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statutes regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.
- Commercial agriculture production impact water supply sources.

