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Easton Comprehensive Plan Rewrite 2035



EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ANALYSIS



PREPARED BY

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Metropolitan Urban Design Workshop

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KEY CONSULTING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

LOCAL AGENCIES

- Greater Easton Development Partnership
- Easton Recreation Bureau
- Easton Police Department
- Easton Housing Authority
- Easton Public Works Department
- Easton Parking Authority
- Easton Environmental Advisory Council
- Easton Historic District Commission

REGIONAL AGENCIES

- Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
- LANTA (regional public transit agency)
- Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- Easton Main Street Initiative
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership

- College Hill Neighborhood Association
- South Side Neighborhood Association
- Easton Business Association
- Coalition for Appropriate Transportation

INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

- Crayola Experience
- Lafayette College
- Grand Eastonian Hotel
- State Theatre

ELECTED OFFICIALS AND BODIES

- Mayor's Office
- Easton Planning Commission
- Easton City Council

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Historic Timeline

At the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers, the City of Easton occupies a uniquely strategic and beautiful location nestled across ravines and ridges carved out by river actions. Founded in 1752 and surveyed by Thomas Penn, son of William Penn, the plan of the City of Easton is contemporary with city planning techniques being applied to the nascent city of Philadelphia. The city plan is significant because it reflects the beginnings of what is a distinct American city form: a gridiron plan with two main streets intersecting at a central open square.

Easton's Centre Square has always been the middle of the city. It is noted for having been one of three locations in the United States where the Declaration of Independence was officially read aloud. Even today, this space remains at the very heart of the City as most roads that traverse the City pass directly through it.

Very soon after the City's founding, the Lehigh Valley emerged as a leading center for coal mining, and iron production. Easton's position on the Delaware River gave it direct access to New York and Philadelphia markets via a system of canals that included the Delaware Canal, Morris Canal and Lehigh Navigation. This network of waterways fueled many local industries along the Lehigh Canal and Bushkill Creek.

Easton emerged as a center of learning with the founding of Lafayette College in South Side in 1826. Shortly thereafter the college moved to its present location on College Hill overlooking the downtown. By 1857, it became the first American college to establish a chair for the study of literature and the English language. The college later offered courses in civil and mining engineering to reflect the growing importance of industry in the City's economy.

Railroads appeared alongside the canals, running along both the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers. Eventually, freight and passenger rail lines converging on Easton along the Lehigh Valley corridor would replace the canals.

Although the region is noted for anthracite coal and iron and steel industries, it was also, at one time, one of the world's leading producers of silk. These mills needed water power, and in Easton the Bushkill Creek was seen as the most reliable source. At its peak, the Simon Silk Mill could produce about 12,000 yards of silk / day.

The legacy of this industrial past and wealth it brought to the City yielded a trove of architectural gems from all eras, but the City is best known for buildings constructed between 1830 and 1910. The quantity of intact buildings from this era led to the entire Downtown being listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. College Hill Residential Historic District was listed in 1992.

Easton's commercial district began around Centre Square, but it grew linearly up Northampton Street and away from the river. It is here that one finds taller buildings and a more intense concentration of buildings. Downtown commerce continued to extend further from Centre Square, but with the advent of the automobile, the City began to sprawl outward very rapidly.

Palmer Park Mall (1972), Lehigh Valley Mall (1976) and Phillipsburg Mall (1989) all reflected this transition toward greater mobility. Their success highlighted the flaws in the old City as a retail center: an apparent lack of available parking spaces, few Downtown residents and a preference for newer, more spacious shopping venues. All of this, and the perception that cities were old and dangerous, led to an exodus of residents away from Downtown to the suburbs, and the subsequent diminishing of Downtown.

Despite this trend, the City was able to attract Binney & Smith (now Crayola) Company to open the Crayola Factory at Centre Square in 1996. Though this catered primarily to children and families, it effectively bolstered Downtown during a period when many retailers were unable to compete with suburban malls operating just outside City borders.

Recent initiatives to revitalize the City include the Silk Mill redevelopment along Bushkill Creek, expansion of the Farmers' Market experience in Centre Square, Main Street Program and a closer partnership with Lafayette College.



Map of Easton circa 1900

Source: Library of Congress

Pictographic Timeline of the City's Evolution

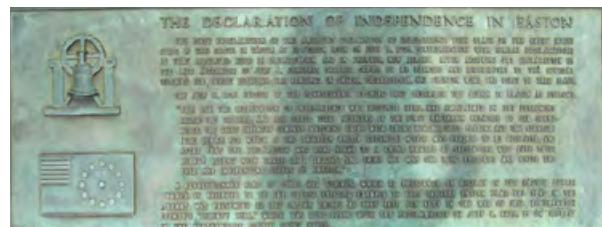
18TH CENTURY: CITY OF EASTON

1/ Thousand Acre Tract: *Place at the Forks*

Forks: Founded in 1752 by Thomas Penn. The town was laid out with the same innovative concept used in Philadelphia: a grid around a "Great Square."



2/ Declaration of Independence: Robert Levers reads the Declaration of Independence on the City's Centre Square, July 8, 1776. Easton is one of three places where this iconic document was announced publicly.



19TH CENTURY: THE CANAL YEARS AND THE INDUSTRIAL YEARS

3/ Transportation Center:

In the first half of the 19th century the City gained importance as a transportation and industrial center. The rivers and canals played significant roles in shaping the economic and social activity of the City.



4/ Educational Foundations: Lafayette College, founded in 1826, and State Theatre constructed in 1910, laid the cultural and educational foundations for the City.



5/ Railroads:

Four railroad lines built through Easton after the 1850s, and Easton prospered as a center for industry, manufacturing, commerce and culture at the Forks of the Delaware and along the great rail lines.



6/ Manufacturing Capital: Easton formed its first industrial association in 1883. Robert and Herman Simon Silk Mills located here and provided employment to 1,200 workers.



20TH CENTURY: ECONOMIC BOOM AND BUST

7/ Architectural Heritage: The economic success of Easton is reflected in architecturally rich buildings that exist in College Hill and were once concentrated in downtown and along Northampton Street.



8/ Commercial Downtown: Northampton Street emerged as the central commercial spine and shopping place for the City of Easton.



9/ Sprawl: Advent of the car and suburban lifestyles led to movement of people to outer city areas. Businesses followed the migration of people, and as in any other American City, this area too witnessed an era of sprawl.



10/ Suburbs+Shopping: Opening of Palmer Park and Lehigh Valley Malls led to the contraction of downtown as a retail center, and many businesses closed in the City.



PRESENT DAY: REVIVAL

11/ The Crayola Experience: In an effort to revive its vitality, the City made strategic investments such as the Crayola Experience in 1996, which have since attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors to the City.



12/ New Visions: Strategic investments such as Silk Mill development, Farmers' Market, Main Street Program and partnership with Lafayette College have initiated Easton's regeneration.



Regional Context

Regional Setting

The City is strategically located at the eastern end of the Lehigh Valley, where it shares a close allegiance with the cities of Bethlehem and Allentown. At the same time, it is also a part of the Delaware Valley, and is situated in the middle of what is now the Delaware Lehigh National Heritage area, which extends 165 miles and includes lands all along the former Delaware and Lehigh canal and rail corridors.

At the nexus of these two systems, Easton has been and continues to be an important destination in the region. Easton is relatively close to Philadelphia and New York City, both about an hour and a half away. Allentown, Bethlehem and Lehigh Valley International Airport are all within a half-hour drive from Easton's city center. This proximity to major urban centers has not gone unnoticed as the City is beginning to attract visitors from these surrounding regions.

Easton is deeply embedded in a network of towns and townships, to the degree that it is often difficult to perceive where one municipality ends and another begins. Fortunately, most of Easton's boundaries are well-defined by natural features such as rivers and ridge lines that help distinguish the City from its neighbors. The change in the color of street signs is also a clear indication that one is passing from one jurisdiction to another.

For most residents of Easton, however, adjoining communities and associated commercial centers are very much a part of Easton. Many residents make regular trips to commercial areas in Forks Township to the north, Palmer Township to the west; or to Phillipsburg, New Jersey, all of which are within a short 10 minute drive from Easton's city center.

All these adjacent shopping areas contain grocery stores as well as cinemas and other attractions missing in the City of Easton itself. As a result, the pattern of commercial activity in Easton is incomplete without taking into consideration large commercial centers tethered very closely to Easton but that exist just outside city limits. Essentially, Easton functions like a much larger city even though its jurisdiction covers only 4.3 square miles.

The close association, including those of commercial centers and live-work relationships, among Easton's neighboring communities, especially is reflected in the public transit system, which extends from the center of Easton outward to adjacent commercial centers and places of employment in all directions. Although Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) serves communities throughout the Lehigh Valley, the pattern of bus routes clearly favors an east-west orientation. While this provides direct access to Bethlehem and Allentown, access to Forks and Williams Townships to the north and south of Easton is somewhat limited.

The City of Easton has no passenger rail service, which is curious, given how well Easton was served by rail in the past. Today, the City falls just outside rail systems serving the New York and Philadelphia regions. The closest passenger rail station for the moment is in High Bridge, New Jersey, over 20 miles away.

Easton's historic Downtown and its industrial legacy make it a key component of the Delaware Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. This system of trails and parks follows the former Delaware and Lehigh canal and rail corridors of which Easton was a significant part. The National Canal Museum is located in Easton.

Rivers are fundamental to the history of Easton and define its character. Although beautiful, they are also part of a very large watershed system that affects the City directly when there is excessive rainfall. Portions of Downtown lie within the 100 year flood zone, and there have been more frequent floods in the last decade. To address this issue, the City needs to discuss stormwater management at the regional scale with communities situated within the watershed of the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers as well as Bushkill Creek. This is a vast watershed that converges at Easton's doorstep. With increased rainfall occurring in the Northeast, it is important to recognize Easton's position within this larger natural system of waterways.



Easton in its Regional Context

Legend: Major Roads

Administrative Boundaries

Destinations / Shopping Centers



Planning Context

As a part of the Comprehensive Planning Rewrite, the City of Easton Planning Bureau started a series of community outreach meetings, which led to direct feedback from Easton's diverse community and neighborhoods. While some of these inputs suggested citywide / neighborhood scale recommendations such as increasing walkability, others were more specific in terms of specific location. These specific recommendations are summarized in the map along with major capital projects and initiatives the City has undertaken in the past decade.

Major Capital Projects

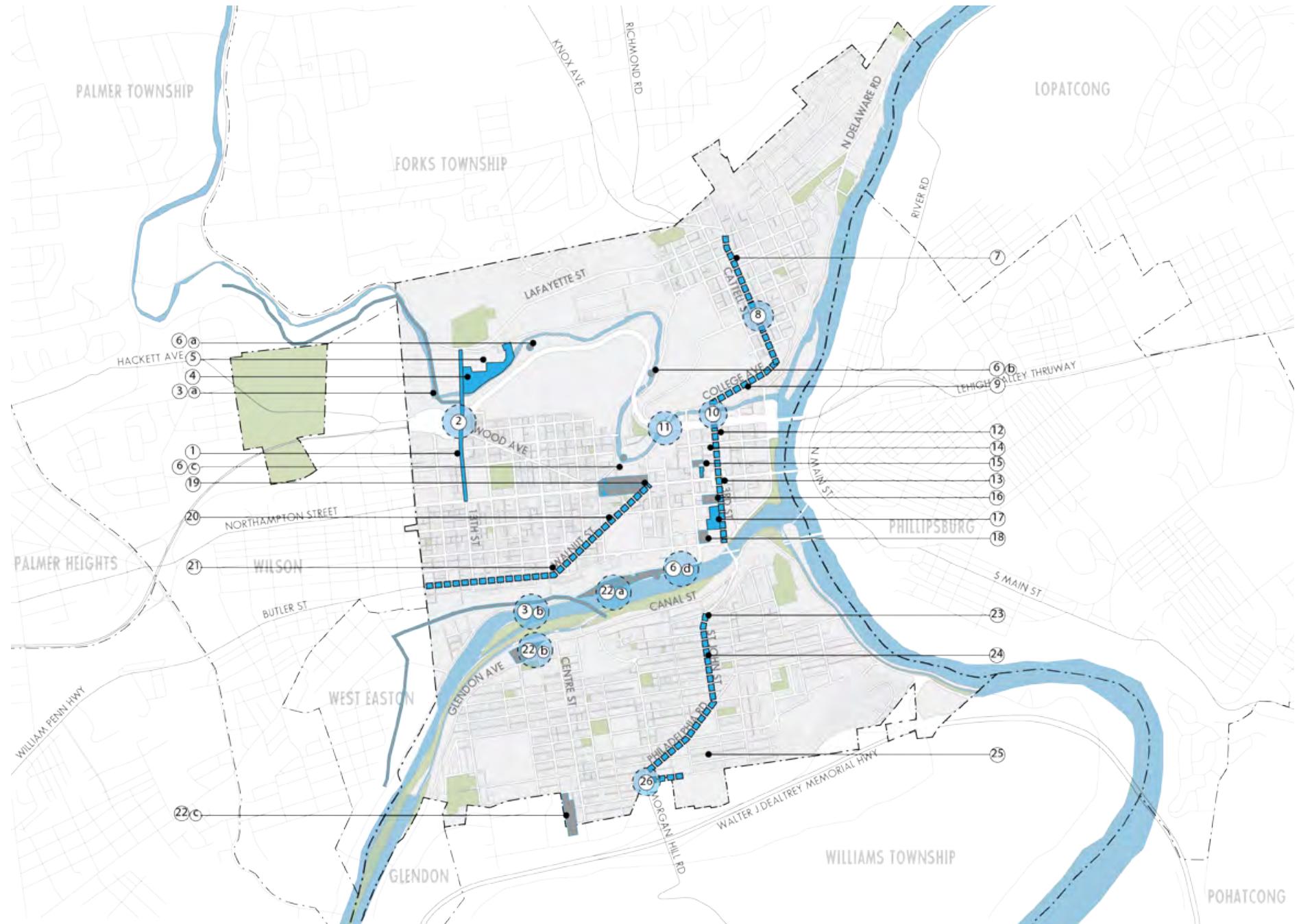
Silk Mill Project (under construction): The Silk Mill Project is an adaptive reuse of the old Simon Silk Mills into a mixed-use facility dedicated to development and advancement of creative industries in Easton. The Silk Mill Project will include the following components:

1. Community Arts Center involving gallery space, working artist studios, classrooms and community meeting rooms, shared production facilities, artist demonstration stages, and a possible art film theater.
2. Artists' Live-Work Facility providing affordable joint residential/studio space for qualified artists and their families.
3. Boutique hotel and conference center providing overnight accommodations for visitors.
4. Mix of market-rate retail, commercial, office, restaurants and production facilities catering to the creative industries.

13th Street Corridor (currently in the planning phase): The 13th Street Corridor development focuses on Complete Streets concept and will provide increased connectivity between West Ward and other neighborhoods of Easton and the Lehigh Valley Region. The corridor can be considered an integral part of the Bushkill Creek Corridor Improvements as it will provide increased access to the Silk Mill Project and Karl Stirner Arts Trail, which eventually connects with Lafayette College's Arts Campus on North Third Street, thereby providing access to the Downtown area and the civic amenities along the Delaware River.

Map Legend

1. 13th Street Corridor
2. U.S. 22 + 13th Street interchange design improvements
3. (3a) Proposed Bushkill Creek Regional Trail and (3b) Proposed West Easton Trail
4. Simon Silk Mill Redevelopment
5. Bicycle storage and parking facilities in new development
6. (6a/b/c/d) Proposed water access point
7. Lighting, landscape and other streetscape improvements and increased neighborhood retail on Cattell Street
8. Intersection improvement by Wawa (Cattell and High Streets)
9. Encourage businesses along the Cattell & Third Streets axis
10. Improve U.S. 22 underpass along North Third Street
11. Interchange design improvements (U.S. 22 and Snyder Street)
12. Lafayette College in Downtown - potential residential building with community space at street level
13. Downtown destinations (restaurants) for students
14. Acquire and develop Church and Fourth Streets site initially as surface lot and later as parking garage
15. Easton Indoor Public Market
16. Replacement Pine Street Garage
17. New Easton City Hall and Intermodal Transportation Center
18. Develop site one acre available land
19. Pedestrian friendly streetscapes
20. Restore Antique Armory, Jacob's Produce and Rickys Food & Tobacco buildings as gateways
21. Expanded street corridor overlay districts e.g., at Butler Street. Neighborhood grocery stores could serve as anchors
22. (22a/b/c) Potential recreational parcels
23. Define appropriate urban densities and multi-story buildings. Encourage additional development to enhance the City's river corridors
24. Encourage businesses along St. John Street & Old Philadelphia Road axis that will stop this traffic in the City
25. Area around C Town additionally identified as a potential industry site. Extend Line Street to provide access to I-78
26. City entrance from Morgan Hill Road interchange design
27. Streetscape improvements: consistent signage program, professional landscape design and application of complete streets principles



Existing Initiatives, Projects and Community Input

Legend: ● Capital Projects ● Strategic Initiatives ○ Community Initiative / Input



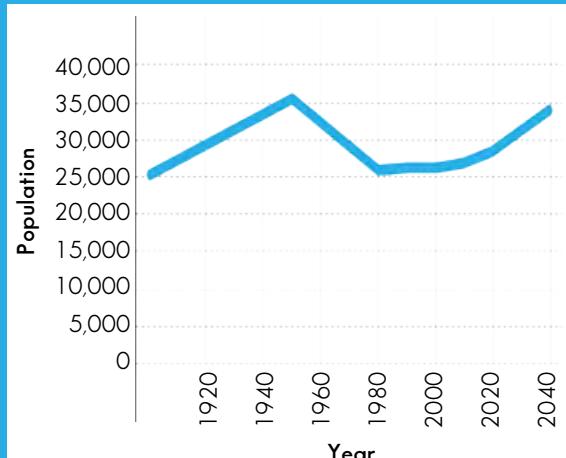
Demographics

Population and Growth Trends

Over the past 110 years, the City of Easton has gone through a cycle of growth and decline before reaching a stable population level. During the first half of the past century, Easton grew by more than 10,000 residents (41%) between 1900 and 1950. However, during the following post-war decades most of this gain was lost, and by 1980, Easton's total population had dropped to 1900 levels. Rising population numbers during the post-war period in the entire Lehigh Valley region suggest that many of those who left Easton settled elsewhere within the region, preferring a suburban lifestyle over the more urban feel of Easton. Similar to other parts of the country, where mass production of the automobile and desire for a single-family residence led to a massive population shift from the cities to suburbia, Easton also lost a major portion of its population during that period. With this population shift, some businesses were also forced to leave the City to be closer to their customers. The many suburban shopping centers that appeared since the 1980s, especially along I-78, illustrate that the population shift was accompanied by shift in businesses.

Between 1980 and 2000, Easton experienced a period of stabilization during which its resident population remained virtually unchanged, while the larger region continued to grow at 0.8% annually. During the period between 2000 and 2010, Easton continued to grow at a very

Between 2000 and 2010, Easton's population grew at double the pace as the previous 20 years, and by 2040, Easton is projected to reach its peak population of 1950

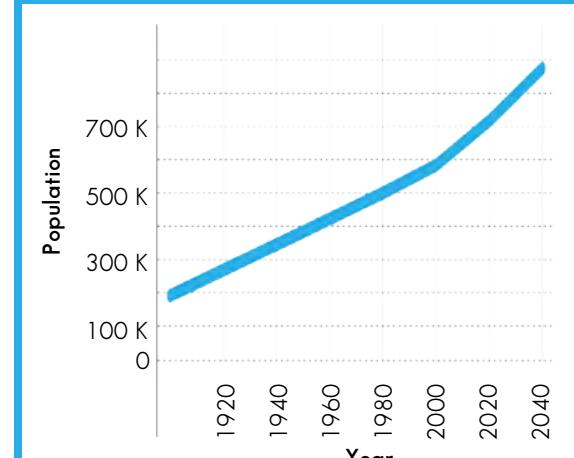


Easton Population

Source: Municipal Population forecasts for Lehigh and Northampton Counties, January 2013.

modest growth rate and increased by about 550 people over the 10-year period, which is equal to an annual growth rate of 0.2% vs. 0.1% between 1980 and 2000. However, the modest net gain in population was not evenly distributed within the City, with West Ward and South Side neighborhoods experiencing the most growth. These two neighborhoods had previously lost a major portion of their population between 1950 and 1980. While West Ward and South Side were able to attract new residents, Downtown Easton continued to lose a significant portion of its residents between 2000 and 2010.

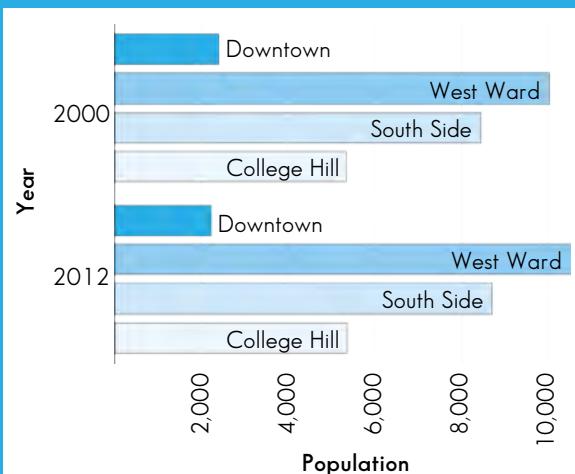
Population in the greater Lehigh Valley continued to grow, reflecting the growth of the suburbs



Lehigh Valley Population (Lehigh+Northampton Counties data)

For the future, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) projects continued population growth for the City of Easton. Based on its modeled forecast from January 2013, LVPC estimates that Easton's population will be 28,295 residents in 2020. This represents an increase of about 1,500 residents, or 5.6%, between 2010 and 2020. At an annual growth rate of 0.5%, Easton is projected to grow at half the rate as the population in the larger Lehigh Valley region. Between 2020 and 2040, LVPC projects another significant growth spurt for Easton. With a projected growth to a total of 33,858 residents in 2040, Easton is projected to reach its peak population count of the 1950s.

Most of the population growth occurred in West Ward and South Side neighborhoods of Easton



Population 2000 - 2012

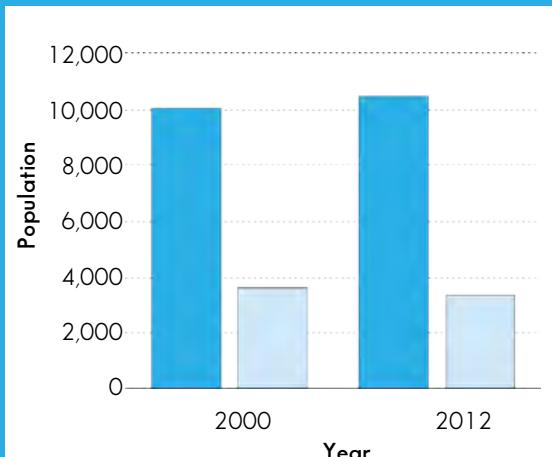
Source (All population data on current page) : 2000 Census; 2008-2012 American Community Survey

As indicated above, growth trends in the City of Easton differ greatly by neighborhood. For example, while the City's entire population grew modestly between 2000 and 2012 (by 622 people, or 2.4%) most of the growth occurred in West Ward and South Side neighborhoods, while Downtown lost about 7.5% of its residents. Household growth has remained almost unchanged, with the exception of West Ward, where the number of households decreased by 7.4% despite a significant increase in population.

Household

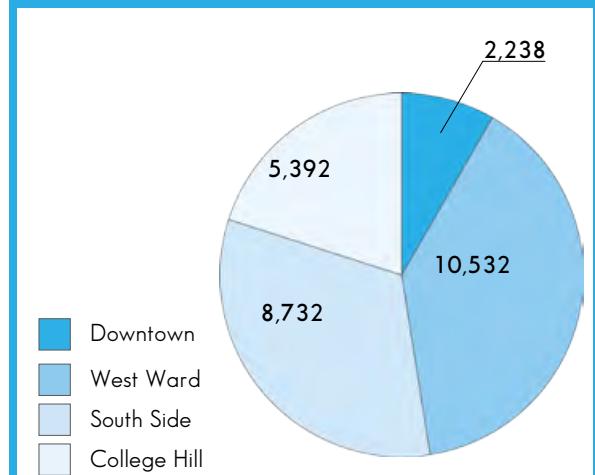
Based on the latest American Community Survey (ACS) data, Easton had a total population of

West Ward experienced a 7.4% decrease in households between 2000 and 2012, despite significant population increase



West Ward Population and Household Change

With approximately 2,240 residents, Downtown has the smallest population of all neighborhoods.

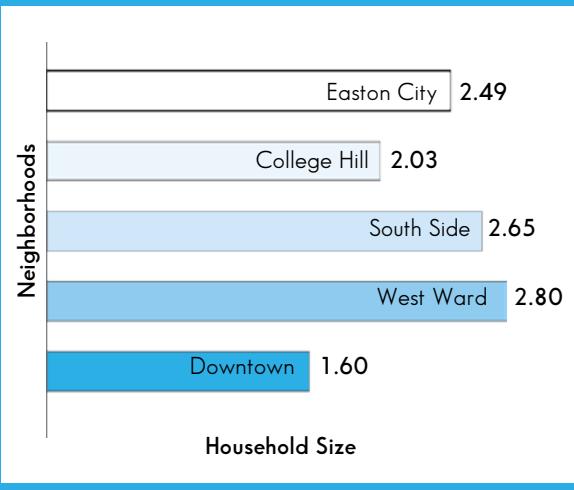


Easton Population Distribution by Neighborhoods

share of Easton's residents (8%).

The overall household size in 2012 in Easton was approximately 2.49 people per household, which is close to the average household size for the Lehigh Valley Region (2.54 people per household). However, there are substantial differences among Easton's neighborhoods. West Ward neighborhood has the largest average household size (2.8 people per household). It increased significantly between 2000 and 2012 (7.6%). Since the growth in population did not coincide with an increase in the number of households, this leads to the conclusion that existing households must have absorbed the new

Overall household size in Easton is approximately 2.49 but there are substantial differences among Easton's neighborhoods



Average Household Size, 2012

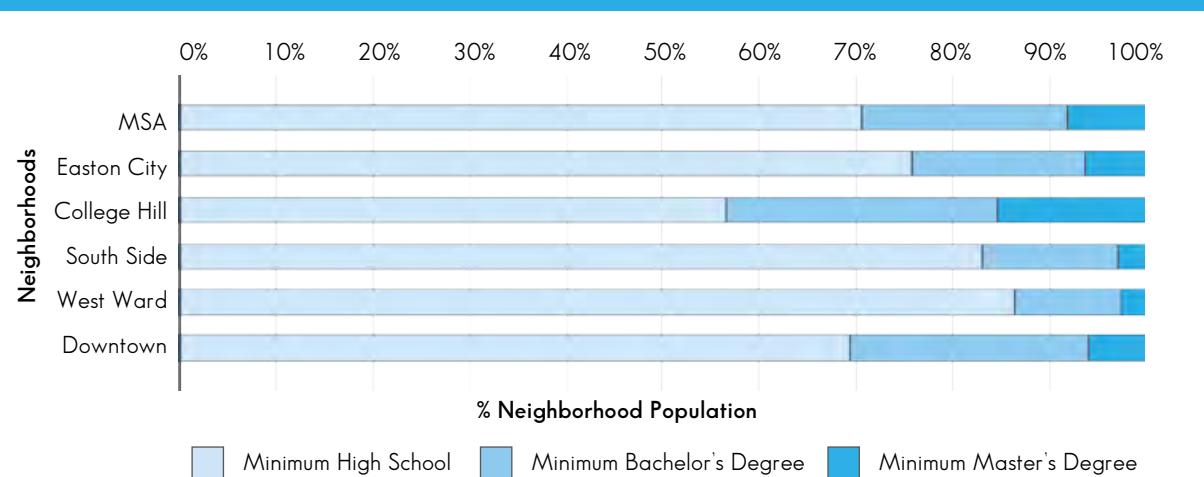
Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

population. Conversations with local community representatives support this finding, suggesting that increase in household size can be attributed to new residents joining existing family members in their apartments. Household size in Downtown, at 1.60 people per household, is far lower than Easton and Lehigh Valley averages. This low average is related to the fact that there are a large number of senior units Downtown, and that the Downtown environment is attractive to young professionals and small families.

Education

When compared to the MSA, Easton's population has achieved a lesser degree of

South Side and West Ward residents have a significantly smaller share of college graduates, and the combined share of graduates and postgraduates in Downtown is higher than that of the region



Educational Attainment 2012 (Population 25 or older)

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

formal education. While the share of high school graduates is comparable, Easton has a larger share of people who did not complete high school and smaller share of residents with graduate and postgraduate degrees. This composition can be observed particularly in West Ward and South Side neighborhoods. Reverse journey-to-work data indicate that the vast majority of Easton residents work in manufacturing and retail jobs in the region, sectors for which most jobs do not require higher levels of formal education.

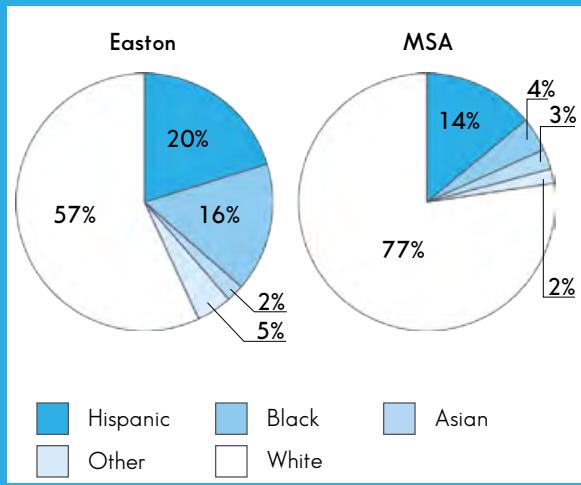
While educational attainment is expected to be high in the College Hill neighborhood, home

to Lafayette College, the combined share of graduates and postgraduates in Downtown is also higher than for the region. Recent interviews with local developers indicate that Downtown has become increasingly attractive to young professionals working in the region who tend to be college-educated.

Race /Ethnicity /Foreign-Born Population

Easton has a racially diverse population. When compared with the Lehigh Valley MSA, Easton's share of non-white population is nearly twice that of the region (43% vs. 23%). Approximately 20% of Easton's residents are of Hispanic origin, compared to only 14% in the

Compared to the MSA, Easton has a more diverse population



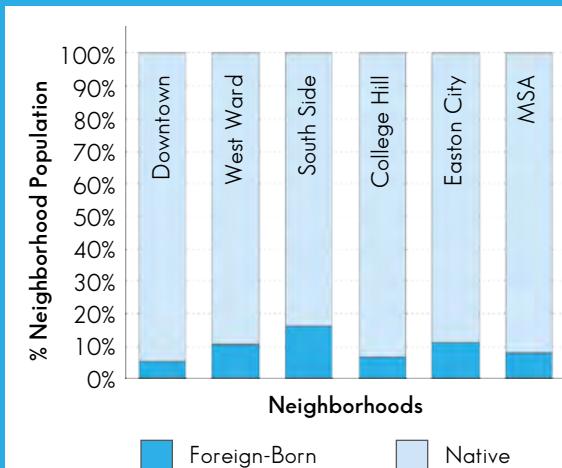
Race and Ethnicity in Easton and the MSA

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

MSA. Easton also has a higher share of African Americans or Blacks, accounting for 16% of the total population, compared to only 4% in the MSA. There are pronounced differences in racial composition among Easton's neighborhoods. Over the past decade West Ward has attracted new Hispanic residents, many of whom come from Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala, and has a total share of 26% Hispanic residents. South Side is home to the largest share of African American residents (23%).

The data on foreign-born residents supports the diverse character of Easton described above. Overall, approximately 11% of residents in

South Side has the highest share of foreign-born residents (16%) in Easton, and Downtown has the lowest (6%)



Native and Foreign-Born Population, 2012

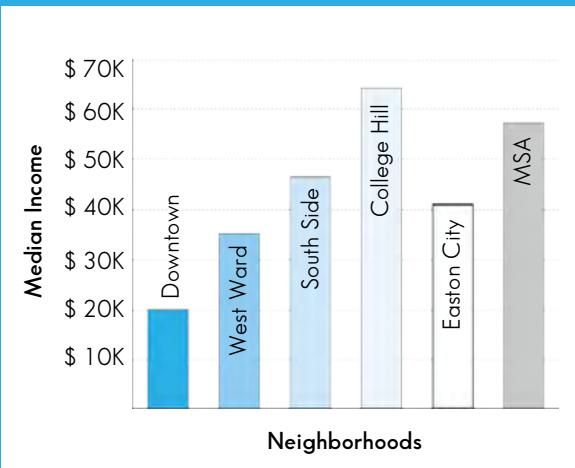
Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Easton are foreign-born, which is slightly higher than the share of foreign-born residents in the MSA (8%). As with the demographic variables above, there are substantial differences with regard to the diversity within each neighborhood. South Side has the largest share of foreign-born residents (16%), well in excess of City and Region's percentage share. In contrast, Downtown has only 6% foreign-born residents.

Income and Distribution

Household income for the City differs noticeably from the region, with the lower-income segments accounting for a much larger part of the pie. For instance, median household income in

College Hill's median household income is \$64,400, higher than all neighborhoods, Easton, and the MSA



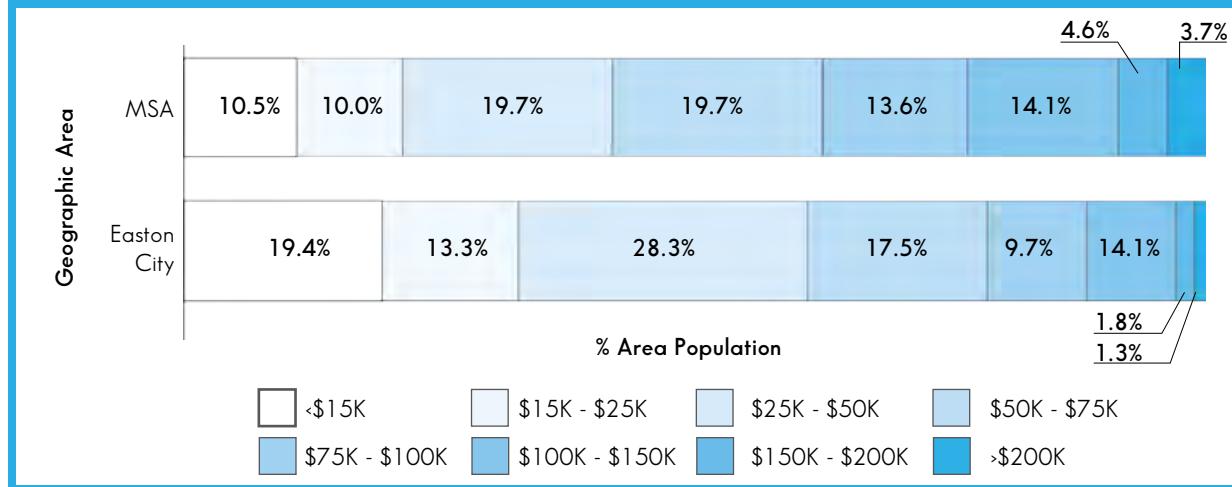
Median Household Income, 2012

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey *

Easton (\$41,000) is almost one third lower than for the MSA (\$57,350). College Hill, with a median household income of \$64,388, is the only neighborhood with a median value higher than that of the regional median value. Other neighborhoods, South Side (\$46,487), West Ward (\$35,099) and Downtown (\$19,898) have median income values that are significantly lower than the median value for the region. The low median income in Downtown may be attributed to the concentration of public housing for low-income seniors.

*U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for all Urban Northeast Consumers. Note: Income and Value data based on constant 2013 dollars.

Easton has a much smaller share of high-income earners than the region



Median Household Income as Compared to the MSA (2012)

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

According to the ACS, median household income has decreased in all four neighborhoods since 2000; most drastically in Downtown (-40%) but also in West Ward (-19%), South Side (-13%) and College Hill (-11%). The decrease in household incomes is especially concerning when considering the increase in median housing values, discussed later in the report. With the exception of South Side, housing values have increased substantially in all neighborhoods. Between 2000 and 2010 housing values increased by 32% in Downtown Easton, where the highest decrease in household income was observed.

The distribution of income paints an even more differentiated picture of the four neighborhoods. Overall, most of Easton's households are within low- and middle-income categories. Only about 20% of Easton's households earn \$75,000 or more per year, as compared to over 40% of households in the MSA. The majority of households (60%) in the City earn \$50,000 or less compared to about 40% of households in the MSA. The share of very low-income households (earning less than \$15,000) in Easton is also significantly larger, accounting for almost 20% of households.

Income bands in West Ward and South Side are consistent with earnings in (low-skilled) manufacturing and retail jobs (\$12 to \$25 per hour). Employment data by occupation shows that in South Side and West Ward neighborhoods more than 60% of residents are employed in blue-collar and service occupations, while white-collar occupations are dominant in Downtown (62%) and College Hill (70%).

Noticeable is the large share of very low-income households in Downtown Easton, which in 2012, accounted for over 40% of households in the neighborhood.

Economic Context

Employment by Industry

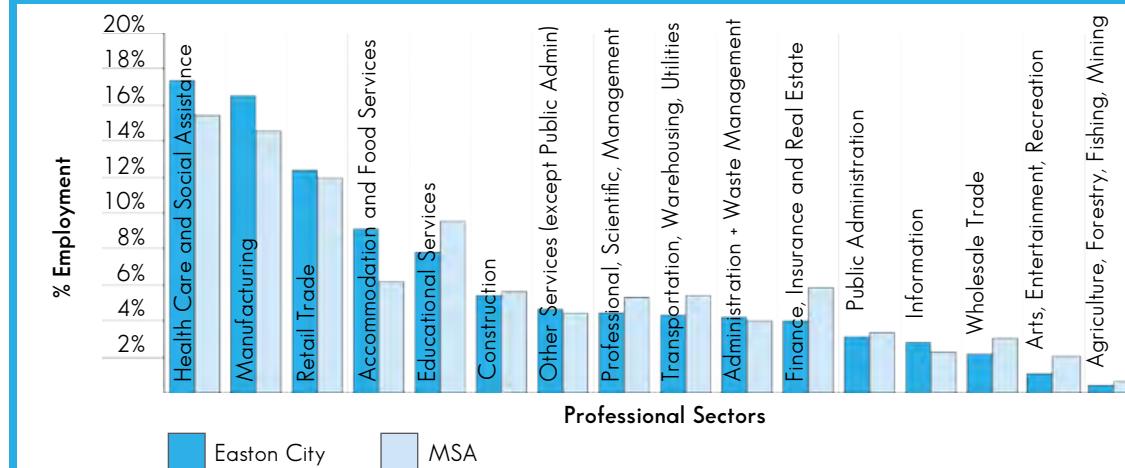
Easton's employment profile does not significantly differ from the larger Lehigh Valley Region, where four industries account for approximately half of jobs. Health care, manufacturing, retail, and accommodation and food services accounted for 55% of jobs in the City of Easton in 2012, and 48% of jobs in the MSA.

While overall employment distribution in Easton is similar to the greater MSA, the City has a higher proportion of jobs in health care, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services industries. High employment in accommodation and food services partially reflects the growing restaurant culture in the City.

Easton also has a higher proportion of jobs in health care and manufacturing industries as compared to the MSA. While the share of people employed in manufacturing is already substantially higher in the MSA than in the U.S. (where only 9% of people are employed in the sector), Easton's share is even higher at 16.5%. This high share is in line with education levels in Easton, which indicated a large working class population. A higher proportion of jobs in health care and social service jobs are likely related to services that serve the prison population and their families as well as nearby Easton Hospital.

At the same time, industry sectors that hire a larger share of college-educated employees

Compared to the MSA, Easton has higher proportions of jobs in health care, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services



Sector Wise Employment in Easton City and the MSA

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

such as education, finance and insurance, and professional services industry sectors are underrepresented in the City of Easton. Despite Easton's reputation as an attractive place for artists to live and work, the percentage of Easton residents employed in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector is half that of the Lehigh Valley MSA.

Employment by Neighborhood

The distribution of jobs by industry in Easton underscores citywide observations. The data points out high employment participation in health care, manufacturing, retail, and accommodation and food services sectors,

particularly in Downtown, West Ward and South Side neighborhoods. The graph also shows that in particular in West Ward and South Side, the share of residents working in manufacturing and retail jobs is higher than in the two other neighborhoods.

Downtown has a higher share of professional, scientific and management jobs (16.9%), reflecting its increasing attractiveness for young professionals. Downtown's share of people working in arts, entertainment and recreation-related activities is also much larger than in other neighborhoods.

College Hill has the highest proportion of jobs in the educational services industry (20.0%), suggesting many faculty living in the neighborhood and working at Lafayette College and March Elementary School.

Lafayette College in Our Community

Easton emerged as a center of learning with the founding of Lafayette College in South Side in 1826 by James Madison Porter. Shortly thereafter the College moved to its present location on College Hill overlooking Downtown. Lafayette College interfaces with the City and its social entities in a variety of ways. The student body, consisting entirely of undergraduates, is involved in over 250 clubs and organizations including athletics, fraternities and sororities, special interest groups, community service clubs and honor societies. Currently the student body is just over 2,500; however, there is a planned growth expansion for 2,900 students over the next six to eight years.

Economy: In 2015, according to the local real estate tax records, the College is the City's largest source of city tax revenue. Lafayette College is also the largest employer within the City. The Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation has estimated the College adds nearly \$58 million to the Easton area economy. In 2014 Lafayette paid close to 1 million in City development fees, permits, business taxes and utilities. In the last five years, Lafayette College has contributed close to \$0.5 million to the greater Easton Development Partnership (GEDP), principally for its Ambassador Program.

In 2014, the College also reported spending over \$3 million on supportive services from local businesses and vendors.

Volunteerism: Lafayette College opened the Landis Center in 1999 to have a place where students could come to find out how they could assist and volunteer services to the community. The Center offers students the chance to develop their leadership skills through service in three signature programs: Alternative School Break (ASB), MOSAIC (Making our Society an Inclusive Community), and the Pre-Orientation Service Program (POSP). In 2014, students:

- As Landis Center volunteers logged 8,803 hours
- Collected more than 300 gifts valued at \$12,600 for the Holiday Helpers program
- Provided more than 70 America Reads tutors to work with children in Easton area elementary schools to improve reading and math skills. This federally funded program is geared toward increasing the reading and math proficiency of America's youth in the Easton area. Tutors have the opportunity to work with a diverse population of children in ages 3-18 during regular school day hours or as part of an after-school program.

The Landis Center strives to support our community on a variety of levels. Students can participate in one-time service opportunities, co-curricular service-learning programs that run on a weekly basis, and through academic course with an integrated service component. Other community partners served are:

- The Boys and Girls Club of Easton
- The Center for Animal Health and Welfare
- Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley
- The Children's Home of Easton
- Communities in Schools of the Lehigh Valley
- Easton Area Community Center
- Easton Area School District
- Family Connections
- Housing Authority of the City of Easton
- Easton Main Street Initiative
- Northampton County Department of Corrections
- ProjeCt of Easton
- Salvation Army's Learning Zone
- Spring Garden Children's Center, Inc.
- Third Street Alliance
- West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
- YMCA
- Nurture Nature Center

Lafayette College is also a dedicated community partner, as evidenced by the many service projects spearheaded by its students, faculty and staff through its Community Outreach Center. In 2015, over 700 students contributed more than 15,000 hours of volunteer time.

Academics: Lafayette College, by 1857, became the first American college to establish a chair for the study of literature and the English language. In its early years, the College later offered courses in civil and mining engineering to reflect the growing importance of industry in the City's economy. Today, Lafayette offers a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in 37 fields and

14 Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees including 10 in areas of science and four in fields of engineering. These include the new global education initiatives and new multidisciplinary environmental studies. Celebrating 150 years of Engineering, Lafayette's engineering programs offer five concentrations: chemical, civil, electrical & computer, mechanical, and engineering studies. In 2012, 94% of Lafayette's candidates passed the Fundamentals of Engineering Examination. This is the first requirement toward getting a professional engineering license. The national average varies from 70-87% depending on type of engineering.

Growth Plans: Lafayette College encompasses a 340-acre campus that houses 69 buildings, comprising approximately 1.76 million square feet, which includes a 230-acre athletic campus located in Forks Township. Lafayette's campus buildings range in architectural style from Pardee Hall's Second Empire design and Hogg Hall's Collegiate Gothic, to the late modern architecture of the Williams Center for the Arts. Lafayette College strives to maintain a working and collaborative relationship with the City and its community. The College's master plan, prepared in 2009, gave way to many firsts for the College including: expanding campus boundaries to include property on the Bushkill Creek as well as North Third Street, pushing nonstudent activities such as administration and facilities to the edges of campus to maintain a strong student and faculty core, provide additional housing for an expanding student population, and create both needed and

wanted amenities for students and College Hill residents. Lafayette intends to grow its partnerships and relationships with the City by creating campus edge development.

Campus edge development initiates greater connections with the City. Such connections include the establishment of:

- **Bushkill Campus:** Lafayette College has purchased several properties located along the Bushkill Creek just south of its core campus. It intends to construct student parking and student housing, and relocate the facilities department. This will be done through a series of connectivity projects including pedestrian and bike paths and new direct pathways to its core campus.
- **Williams Arts Campus:** Located at the base of Lafayette College on North Third Street, a new arts building has been constructed and plans are for further expansion of such facilities along North Third Street. Much like the Bushkill Campus, Lafayette intends to construct new and more direct pathways to its core campus. The new arts complex serves as a gateway to the College, while housing academic space for theater and film and media studies departments. This portion of campus is strategically located along the Karl Stirner Arts Trail and forms a link between Lafayette College and the City of Easton.
- **Downtown Administration:** Lafayette intends to relocate certain administrative facilities and staff to Easton's Downtown. New pathway connections to Lafayette's

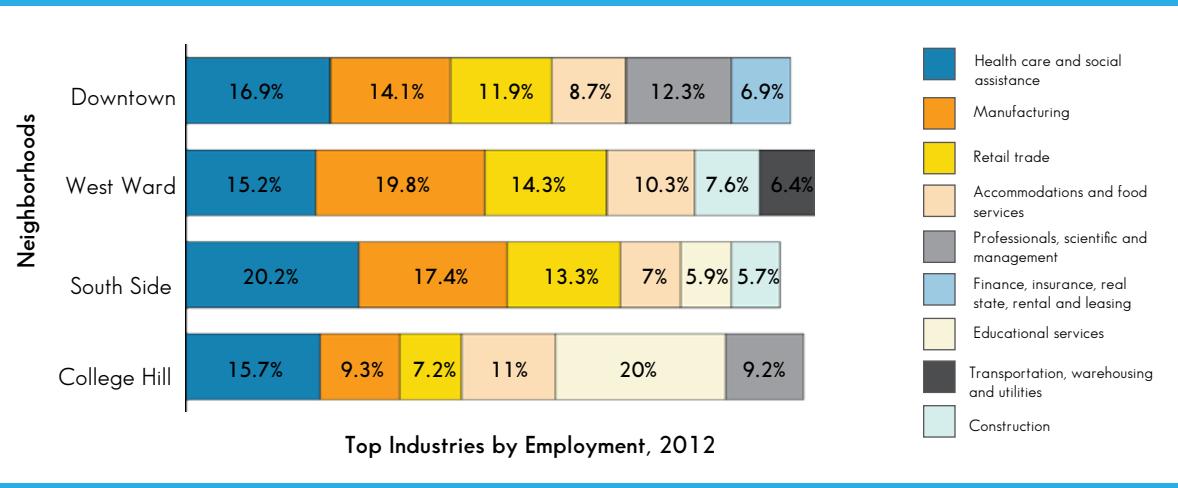
core campus will enable both students and faculty to live and work in the Downtown area.

- **College Hill Neighborhood:** College administration realizes that its students and faculty would like to live, shop, dine and receive their wellness needs from the surrounding College Hill neighborhood. Development of such amenities would occur on the edge of its core campus on McCartney and Cattell Streets. The College wishes to pursue the development of several privately operated uses including but not limited to a: bookstore, diner, health care clinic and pharmacy.

The College strives to keep City and neighborhood residents involved within its growth plans. In the near future, as the College grows, development of a variety of parcels will require collaboration with the City's Planning and Zoning Department. In order to move forward with its development plans, the College is reviewing the City's land use ordinances and evaluating current land use and parking codes, and has determined there is a greater need to work together.

Sources for section 'Lafayette College in Our Community'
1. <https://landiscenter.lafayette.edu/about-the-center/about/>
2. Sub-committee meetings held between Mar - Jun 2016
3. Planning Bureau of Easton

Employment distribution reflects manufacturing and retail in West Ward and South Side; the professional sector Downtown; educational services in College Hill



Sector Wise Employment Distribution for Easton

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Unemployment

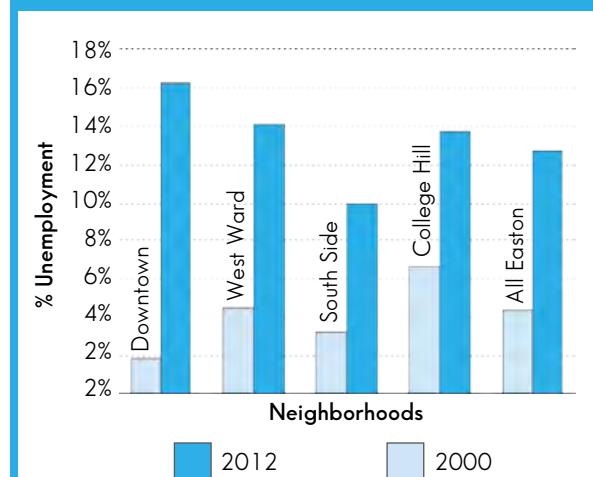
Unemployment has become a concern in Easton. In 2000, the City's unemployment rate was very low, at 4.3%. In 2012, unemployment had increased to about 12.7%. Unemployment increased in all four neighborhoods and reached challenging levels in Downtown, West Ward, and College Hill. This indicates that Easton households were hit hard by the Great Recession of December 2007-June 2009*. As described in detail below, many Easton residents work outside of Easton. Therefore, unemployment reflects loss of manufacturing and retail jobs throughout the Lehigh Valley region.

Residents' Place of Work 2002-2011

As indicated above, Easton residents are primarily employed by businesses located within the Lehigh Valley MSA. While this distribution has fluctuated between 2002 and 2011, in general, almost two thirds of Easton's residents commute to businesses within the region, while approximately 25% to 30% work in the New York or Philadelphia areas.

The total number of employed residents has generally increased between 2002 and 2008, from about 9,000 to approximately 10,000, with 2006 being the year when this number peaked at 10,085. During that period the total

In 2012, unemployment in Easton was about 12.7%, increasing in all four neighborhoods since 2000



Source: 2000 Census; 2008-2012 American Community Survey

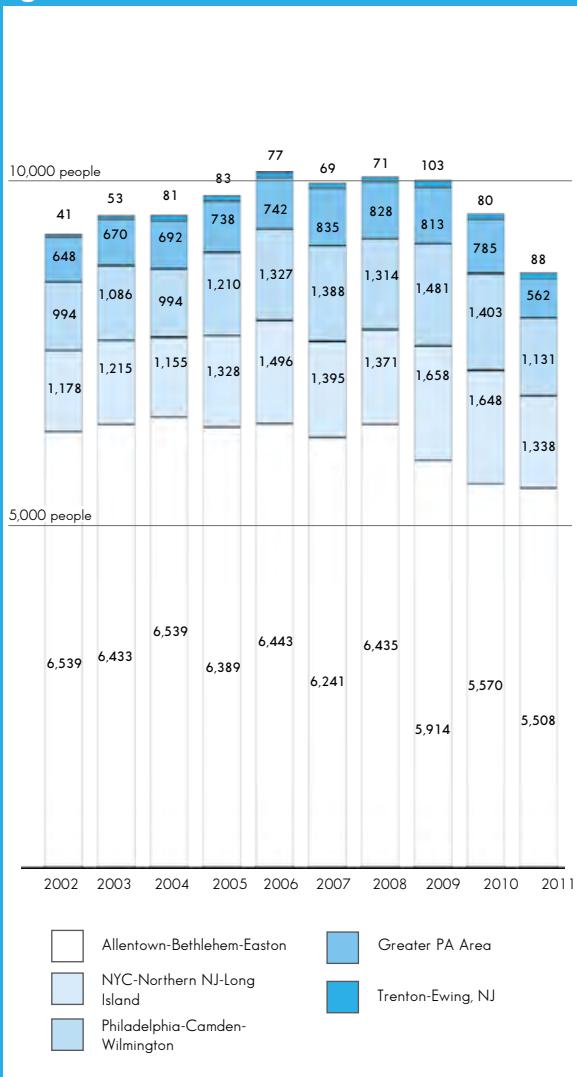
number of people employed by businesses in the Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton MSA remained fairly consistent at about 6,500.

The share and total number of residents employed in the Philadelphia and New York regions grew noticeably between 2002 and 2011 and accounts for most of total employment growth during that period.

Between 2009 and 2011, the number of employed residents in Easton decreased to about 8,600 due to the recession. Residents employed by firms in the Lehigh Valley Region were impacted particularly hard, and their

*National Bureau of Economic Research, <http://www.nber.org/cycles/sept2010.html>

While total employment has decreased between 2009 and 2011, the share of residents employed in the Philly and NYC regions has grown



Residents' Place of Work

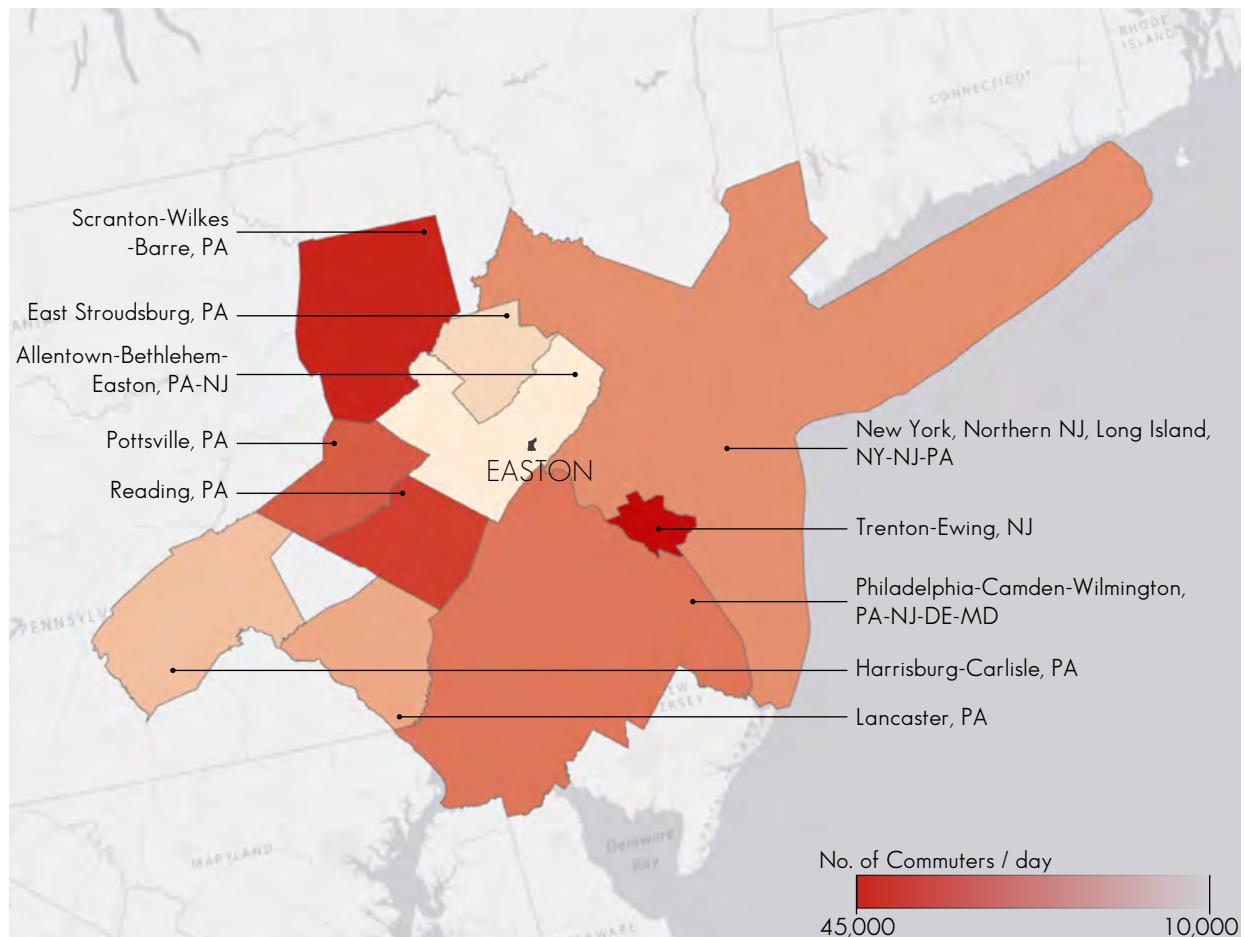
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

number decreased to about 5,500. Total number of people working in the Philadelphia and New York regions remains at a high level reflecting better commuting opportunities.

Businesses in Easton

The business environment in Easton is dominated by small businesses. Based on the City's tax roll,

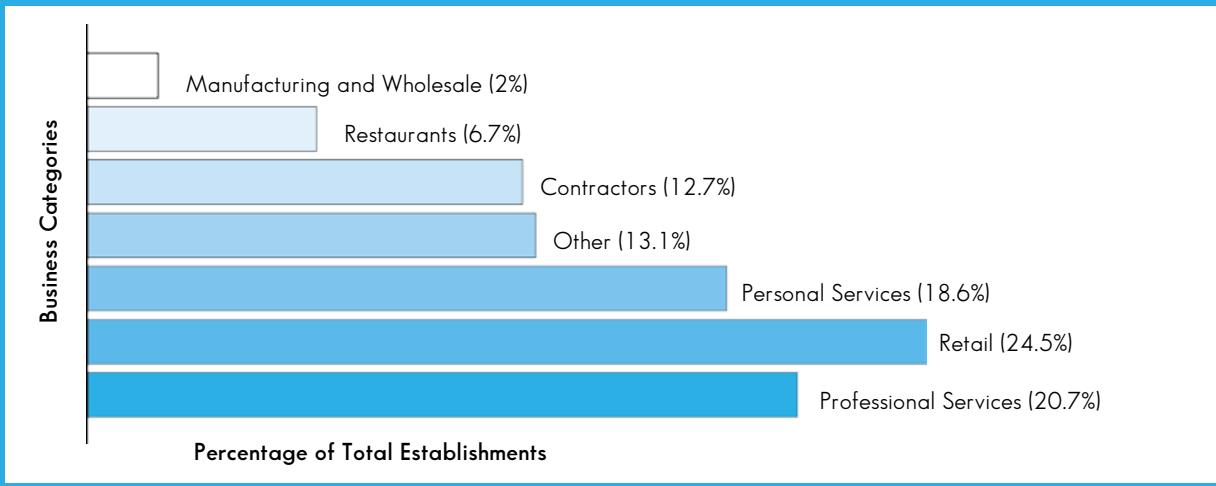
there are a total of 2,955 registered businesses in Easton. The largest segment (1,383) within the list consists of real estate businesses set up for the purpose of owning and managing a real estate asset such as multifamily rental buildings. Since these businesses typically neither sell goods or services nor do they employ staff, they were not included in the analysis.



Residents' Place of Work (showing location)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2011).

There are approx. 3,000 registered businesses in Easton of which 46% are real estate businesses (ownership and management)



Percentage Distribution of Businesses in Easton

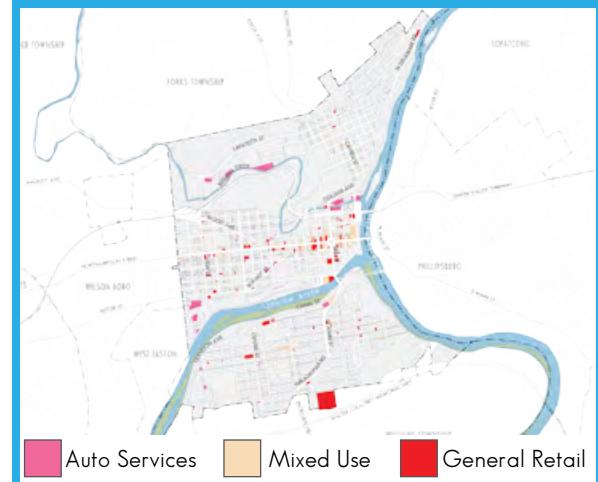
Source: City of Easton Department of Finance

The remaining 1,572 businesses are dominated by personal services, professional services and retail businesses, which together account for 965 establishments (61%). Most of these are located within the Downtown area. Contractors account for 203 businesses (13%), and restaurants represent 7% of all businesses (107 establishments). Manufacturing and wholesalers together account for only 33 businesses and are mainly located along the Bushkill Drive area. The largest private employers are Crayola and Lafayette College, while the County administration and School District represent the largest public sector employers.

Retail

Easton's long urban history and its limited availability of land have led to small parcel sizes unsuitable for uses that require a larger footprint. With a few exceptions along Bushkill Drive and I-78, larger office campuses and industrial production facilities have located outside of Easton. For this reason, retailers and other small businesses have become the backbone of Easton's economy. These small businesses are also one of the main drivers of Easton's renaissance and play a major part in creating a sustainable economic future for the City. In this retail-dominated environment, the Crayola

Businesses are primarily located on Cattell Street, Northampton Street, 13th Street, St. John Street and West Berwick Street



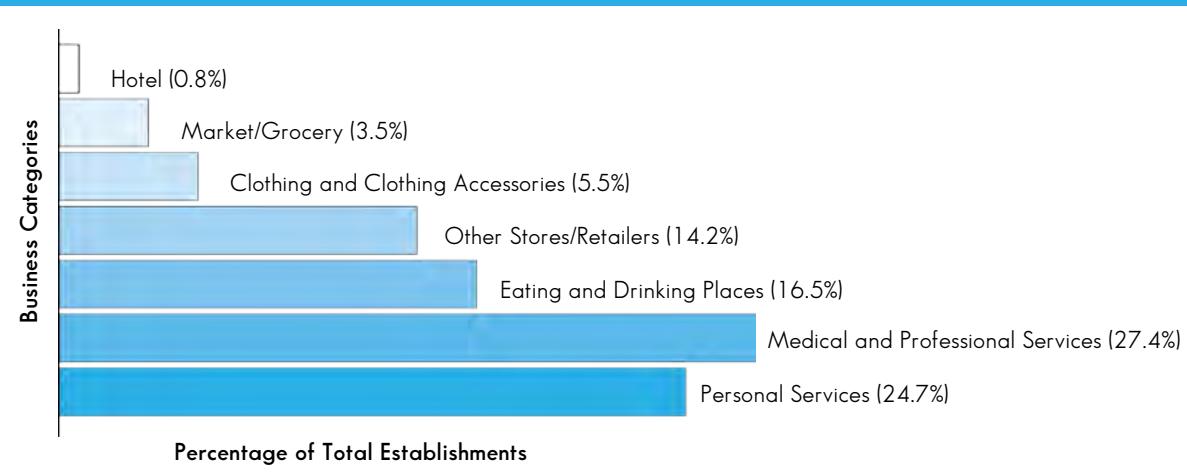
Concentration of Businesses

Source: City of Easton; ESRI; DeLorme; NAVTEQ

Experience, which occupies approximately 60,000 square feet in the center of Downtown Easton, is the notable exception.

The vast majority of smaller businesses are located within the main retail concentrations in Downtown and along Northampton Street, as illustrated in the graphic below. Smaller concentrations are along Cattell Street in College Hill, St. John Street and West Berwick Street in South Side, and 13th Street in the West Ward.

Retail stores, professional and personal service businesses account for almost 70% of all Downtown establishments



Percentage Distribution of Businesses in Downtown Easton

Source: Easton Main Street program

Downtown Businesses

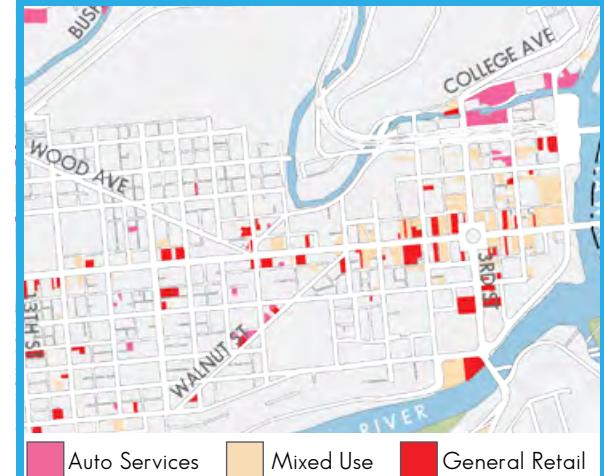
Downtown Easton has the largest concentration of retail business in Easton, which has played a crucial role in the current revitalization of the City. Retailers and restaurants have contributed to Downtown's reputation as a regional destination.

An inventory conducted by the Easton Main Street Program in 2014 accounted for 255 private sector businesses. The distribution of businesses in Downtown Easton mirrors the distribution observed for the entire City; retail stores, professional and personal service businesses account for almost 70% of all Downtown establishments. In particular, personal

and professional services, which include businesses such as financial and legal services but also barber shops and printing shops, have a strong presence in Downtown Easton. Service businesses are also the largest employment sector in Downtown Easton.

Full- and limited-service restaurants in the Downtown area represent a significantly larger share than in all of Easton, accounting for 16.5% of businesses Downtown. This particular segment has grown substantially over the past five years and contributed to Easton's reputation as a restaurant destination.

Businesses are primarily concentrated in Downtown



Concentration of Businesses in Downtown

Source: City of Easton; ESRI; DeLorme; NAVTEQ

While restaurants are thriving, retail stores are not quite as successful. A number of stores appear outdated and offer a product mix that may not be attractive to current visitors. In particular, a larger number of used merchandise stores (9 stores) sell products that may not be demanded by day-trippers. The City is also home to a number of tobacco stores that attract out-of-state buyers because of the lower tax burden on tobacco products in Pennsylvania.

Housing

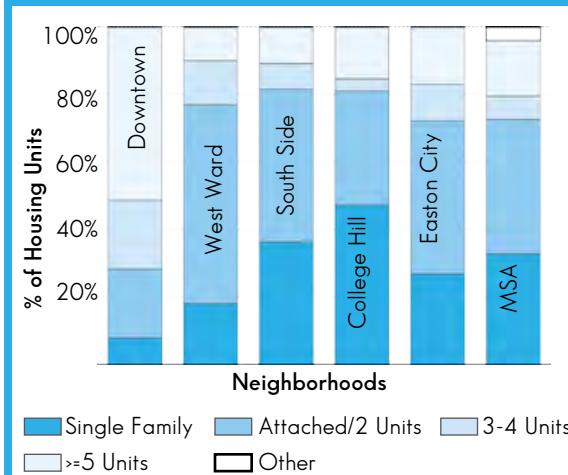
Housing Type

Easton's housing stock mirrors the MSA's as they are both largely composed of single-family, attached, and 2-unit structures. However, Easton has more buildings with 3 to 4 units, which largely characterizes the housing stock in West Ward and Downtown Easton neighborhoods.

As expected, Downtown Easton's housing stock differs from other neighborhoods in its higher concentration of buildings with 3 or more units. While these larger buildings make up 71% of the housing stock in Downtown, they only account for 28% of housing units in Easton and 23% of housing units in the MSA. College Hill, on the other hand, has the largest share of single-family homes in Easton. West Ward also has a large share of single-family homes.

The decrease in number of households is counterintuitive to the fact that there has been an increase in the population. Between 2000 and 2012, population in West Ward grew by approximately 500 residents, while the number of vacant housing units also increased by 400. Since only 80 new units were added to the housing stock, the neighborhood experienced a net loss of about 320 occupied units. Loss of units while the population was increasing suggests that many new residents moved in with existing households (i.e., with family or friends). Interviewees also indicated that some units may be neglected by absentee landlords and

40% or more of the housing in Easton and the MSA are attached or 2-unit housing units



Housing Types, 2012

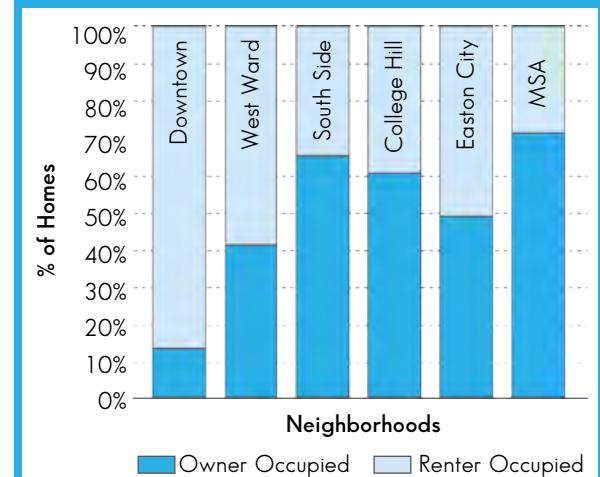
Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

unsuitable for residential use.

Homeownership

Homeownership rates in Easton are significantly lower than the Lehigh Valley MSA (49% compared to 71%, respectively). While homeownership rates in South Side and College Hill neighborhoods are close to regional levels, rates in Downtown and West Ward are far below the regional average. In Downtown the multifamily housing stock and lack of condominium product account for a small ownership share. In West Ward neighborhood the housing stock is more conducive to homeownership but ownership share is only

About 49% of homes are owned in Easton; Downtown has the lowest home ownership rate

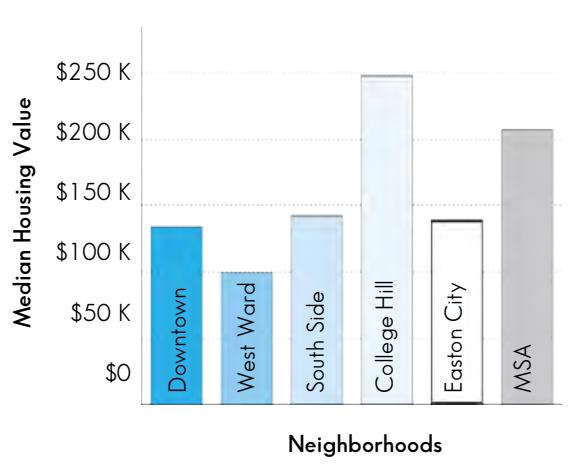


Housing Tenure, 2012

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

approximately 41%. In the past three years the Easton Redevelopment Authority had developed a process to decrease blight, decrease vacancies, increase ownership and stabilize the neighborhood. The Certificate of Blight Process is a two-phased process. In the first phase, a property can receive a Determination of Blight if it displays at least one blight characteristic. If the owner does not eliminate the cause for blight, the Easton Planning Commission can issue a Certification of Blight and pursue a broader range of blight mitigation action. (Refer to additional notes on Creating Ownership Options, page 67.)

Median housing value in Easton is one third lower than in the Lehigh Valley region; College Hill has the highest and West Ward the lowest median housing value



Median Housing Values, 2012

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey *

Housing Values

Housing values are depressed in most of Easton relative to the Lehigh Valley MSA. The overall median housing value for the City is approximately \$139,300, which is 33% lower than median housing value in the MSA (\$207,200). While the median housing value in Downtown and South Side are comparable to Easton's median housing value, College Hill's median housing value (\$247,800) is 78% higher than that of Easton as a whole.

With the exception of Downtown, most neighborhoods are characterized by single- and two-family units. However, the lowest median

Affordable Housing in Easton

57% QUALIFY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING ASSISTANCE

1,200 FAMILIES ON WAIT LIST FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

900 APPLICANTS ON WAIT LIST FOR SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

Snapshot of Affordable Housing in Easton

Source: Interviews conducted with Housing Authority

housing value was recorded for West Ward neighborhood (\$99,500), where it is 29% lower than median housing value for all of Easton.

In Easton as a whole, housing values increased by 25% between 2000 and 2012. In three of the four neighborhoods (Downtown, South Side and College Hill), median housing values increased by approximately 30%. Only in West Ward neighborhood did median housing values remain virtually unchanged between 2000 and 2012, increasing by only 0.3%. (Refer to Distribution of Housing Values, page 67 for further explanation for the wide range of housing values in Easton.)

Affordable Housing

According to Easton's Housing Authority, approximately 57% of its residents qualify for public housing assistance. Although demand for subsidized housing has fluctuated over the years, overall need for affordable housing has not significantly changed in the past decade. There are approximately 1,200 families on the waiting list for public housing units, and over 900 applicants on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers.

Easton Housing Authority is able to accommodate a limited number of residents in need of subsidized housing. It currently owns 368 public housing units, all of which are located in Downtown Easton. Of the 368 units, 238 are located in high-rise buildings dedicated to seniors. A recent integrity study revealed that many of the 50-year-old structures are in need of renovation. In addition to public housing, the Housing Authority manages Section 8 vouchers for 562 residents.

The City recently developed Homes at Neston Heights, a HOPE VI development in South Side neighborhood. The site was previously occupied by the Delaware Terrace housing project, which was notorious for gang and drug-related criminal activities. The Neston Heights project replaced 250 higher-density units with approximately 150 low-rise and townhouse units, consisting of 96 public housing units and 48 ownership units. (Refer to Housing Affordability, on page 68 for additional notes on need for moderate-income housing.)

*U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for all Urban Northeast Consumers. Note: Income and Value data based on constant 2013 dollars.

The Neston Heights project is an exemplary example of the City's efforts to create a mix of low- and middle-income housing units through mixed financing options that include public-private partnerships.

In addition to the Neston Heights project, the City also developed 110 family and senior units in West Ward that accommodate moderate-income households.

Housing Vacancy

Vacancy is a major concern in Easton and was raised as an issue by many parties interviewed for the study. It is considered to be one of the major obstacles to overcome in order to achieve sustainable growth in Easton. Vacant homes have a blighting effect that extends beyond specific properties and can radiate into a neighborhood. Vacant properties also attract squatters and crime, which is counterproductive to Easton's effort to change the City's image.

High vacancy was a concern identified in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, which recommended encouraging adaptive reuse of vacant structures to preserve historic buildings and accommodate economically viable new uses, where appropriate. However, the problem has persisted, in particular in Downtown and West Ward neighborhoods. While in 2000, overall vacancy rate for Easton was 9.5%, it surpassed 10% in West Ward and reached 15% in Downtown. By 2012, conditions worsened and residential vacancy reached 20% (312 units) in Downtown and doubled in West Ward,

Easton Housing Authority (EHA) owns and / or manages

368 PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS LOCATED IN DOWNTOWN EASTON

238 OF THE 368 ARE DEDICATED TO SENIOR CITIZEN'S HOUSING

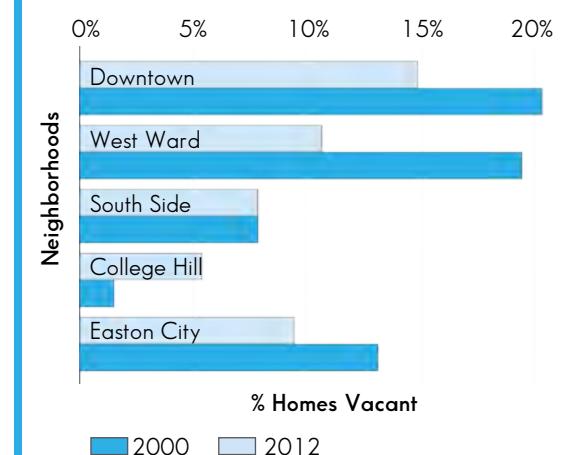
562 ADDITIONAL RESIDENTS ON SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

Snapshot of Public Housing in Easton

Source: Interviews conducted with Housing Authority

from 10.7% to 19.5% (897 units). In West Ward, disinvestment is likely related to a high share of absentee landlords and appears to be a major contributor to high vacancies. Vacancies in Downtown are of a different nature. While retailers and restaurants are thriving in the Downtown area, many of the second and third floor residential units above ground floor retail remain vacant. Interviewees attributed high vacancies in Downtown to the 'not-so-robust' market conditions and code requirements that can make adaptive reuse of these historic buildings an expensive affair for developers.

In 2012, residential vacancy in Downtown climbed to 20% and almost doubled in West Ward neighborhood



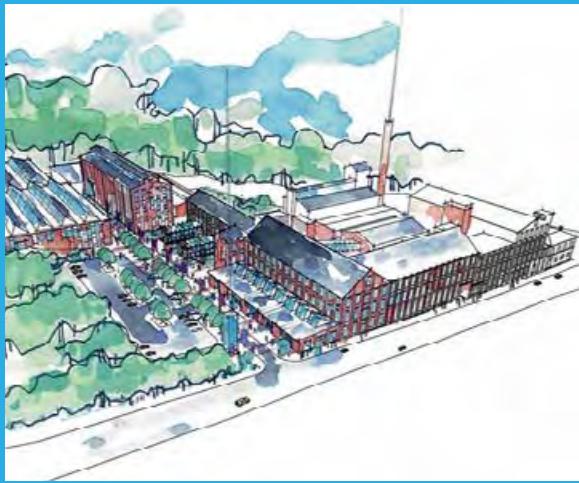
Vacancy Rates 2000 - 2012

Source: 2000 Census; 2008-2012 American Community Survey

While the City, through the Department of Planning and Codes and Redevelopment Authority, has initiated the Certificate of Blight Process, a program to reoccupy and potentially repossess vacant and blighted properties, the program has had a limited effect on conditions and has only converted four properties since its inception in 2011.

Between 2000 and 2012, conditions remained stable in South Side neighborhood where vacancy rates are at acceptable levels, indicating a closer equilibrium between supply and demand. Very low vacancy rates in College Hill suggest demand for more housing in that

The Silk Mill Project is a 15 acre property being transformed into a live-work space including lofts, studio and incubator spaces



Artist's impression of the Simon Silk Mill Project

Source: <http://www.easton-pa.gov/ced/silkmillfinalreport.pdf>

neighborhood. Increased demand could be related to Lafayette College's recent efforts to increase faculty and support staff. (Refer to additional notes on 'Housing and Vacancies' on page 68 for further discussion on strategies to attract new residents.)

Trends and Developments

Anecdotal information from active developer groups in the City suggests, there are primarily two demographic groups seeking housing in Easton: 25-35 year old young professionals, and 65-75 year old retirees who are downsizing their living space. Most of the young professionals tend to work elsewhere in the

The Wolf Building, a former government building, is now being converted into a residential property



The Wolf Building

Source: Easton Eccentric (<http://eastoneccentric.blogspot.com>)

Lehigh Valley region but prefer to live in Easton.

These demographic segments are driving demand for one- and two-bedroom rental units in Easton, specifically in and near the Downtown area. Part of the demand is being satisfied through conversion of upper floors of buildings with ground-floor retail space in Downtown. As the residential population in Downtown grows, demand for services and local-serving retail is growing as well.

The Silk Mill project reflects some of these emerging trends, specifically the younger demographic group. The project is a

collaboration among the Redevelopment Authority, the City, the County, the Delaware and Lehigh National Corridor, and other community partners. It involves redevelopment of the 15-acre site of the former Simon Silk Mill at 13th Street and Bushkill Drive with a variety of uses targeting a young, arts-centric demographic, including live-work loft and studio spaces, performing arts and theater space, and incubator space. The development will also contain retail, services and amenities that will make it largely a self-sufficient community. The development concept anticipates the proximity to Downtown via the Karl Stirner Arts Trail will encourage residents to commute Downtown to work and/or shop. Construction has started on Phase I, including demo and road work. Phase I will eventually include 33 apartments and retail space. Phase II has been approved and will include 90 apartments, office and retail space in four buildings.

Building on the success of the Pomeroy building and Pine Street Lofts - a two-phased mixed-use residential conversion in Downtown - the Wolf Building is a former government building being converted into residential units. These projects reflect the growing popularity of Downtown as a residential neighborhood.

Urban Design and Built Environment

Parks and Recreation

There are a variety of parks distributed throughout the City of Easton that offer different experiences catering to a variety of users. There are both passive and active parks that can also be categorized as either smaller community parks and playgrounds, or larger regional parks located at Easton's periphery.

Traditionally, local parks, community centers, places of worship and / or administrative buildings have structured communities and establish identifiable neighborhood centers and gathering spaces. However, in Easton, most local community parks are rather small and distributed throughout the City's neighborhoods. Larger regional parks are located away from the residential areas and tend to stand somewhat in isolation. Both Hackett Park and Hugh Moore Park are of this latter type and are generally visited only by those who have an automobile.

Distribution of park space and access to regional parks is not entirely equal between the different neighborhoods. South Side, for example, has a fairly even distribution of parks and open spaces. But in contrast, College Hill has less park space outside the Lafayette campus area. As well, there are areas of West Ward that have very little park space at all. In

some cases local parks are dedicated to a single use - such as a ball field - which makes them useful only to specific activities and a limited population.

Easton has a total of 152.7 acres of park space, so with a population of 26,000 persons, yields about 5.8 acres per 1,000 residents. This is rather low when compared with the 6.25 acres per 1,000 persons suggested by the National Recreation and Park Association. However, Easton has additional parks and open spaces in the form of County and State Parks and non-profit recreation-owned land, which pushes total park space to 211.9 acres, or over 8.1 acres per 1,000 persons. This is a helpful addition, but many of these larger regional parks are not immediately accessible from Easton's neighborhoods. Steep slopes along the rivers are an obvious obstacle to residents, and the larger parks outside the City proper can only be reached by automobile.

Larger riverfront parks are extremely beautiful, but it is the smaller neighborhood parks that undergo a more intense utilization by Easton's residents. These smaller parks will continue to need a greater investment in infrastructure and maintenance to keep them operating safely.

Active Parks

- 2 Sullivan Park
- 4 Bob Rute Fields
- 5 Jackson Street Park
- 6 Bushkill Street Park
- 7 Vanderveer Playground
- 8 Raspberry Street Park
- 9 Centennial Park
- 11 Condran Play Lot
- 12 Heil Park
- 13 Pioneer Playground
- 14 Cheston School
- 15 St. Joseph Street Park
- 16 Nesquehoning Street Park
- 17 Shull Field
- 18 Philadelphia Street Park
- 19 Milton Street Park
- 20 Lachenour Park
- 22 Municipal Beach
- 23 Eddyside Park & Pool



Active/Passive Parks

- 1 Nevin Park
- 3 Hackett's Park
- 10 Hugh Moore Park
- 21 Riverside Park





Parks and Recreational Areas

X Active/Passive Parks
 X Active Parks
 — Existing Trails
 ···· Pedestrian Connections
 ---- Proposed Trails
 ● Existing Water Access
 ○ Suggested Water Access

1,000 ft 2,000 ft

Community Facilities

Easton community facilities include police and fire protection, public library and the hospital. Easton also has many churches of various denominations, and these facilities are beginning to function more and more as community centers.

The City of Easton has sufficient police and fire stations distributed throughout the City to provide adequate emergency protection and quick response times for City residents. The Fire Department offers proactive education programs to reduce risk for fire, and the Police Department sponsors intramural basketball and volunteer programs to engage with the community. The main public library is located in Downtown, but its location at the end of Church Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets does not give it much visibility. There is a branch library on Northampton Street outside city limits and a small branch in the Shull Citizen Center in South Side. Lafayette College also contains a library and as an institution plays a significant role as a community asset. Easton Hospital is located outside city boundaries in Wilson Borough to the west of Easton. This is a 238-bed facility and major employment center. Easton contains more than 20 churches with more in surrounding boroughs and townships. These facilities very often serve as community facilities as they have the capacity to offer day care, classes, and can provide services for the poor and homeless. Curiously, emergency food kitchens listed for the Easton area are all located outside the City and appear to be predominantly located in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. There is perhaps a

greater role that churches in Easton could play in this regard since the need for these type of services is ongoing.

Wastewater Treatment and Service

Wastewater is handled through the Easton Wastewater Treatment Facility located at 50 South Delaware Drive in Easton. Management and operations of wastewater is administered by the City of Easton from a contract with the Easton Area Joint Sewer Authority (EAJSA). Information about treatment, the Authority Board, users fees, and permitting information can be found on the EAJSA website: <http://www.eajsa.com/index.html>

The City's Public Work Department provides staff oversight for daily operations of the plant. In recent conversations with the City's Public Works Director, as of 2016 there are no expansions necessary for the existing 10 million gallons/day wastewater treatment facility over the 20 year planning horizon applicable to this comprehensive plan. Plant operator manager reported the wastewater treatment plant is running at about one half its design capacity. In 2016 and 2017 the Authority will be rehabilitating and upgrading three pump stations. The City of Easton manages 60-70 miles of sewer service lines. Each year the City televises 4-5 miles of sewer service lines to determine problematic areas for future rehabilitation. A schedule of improvements is retained by the Department of Public Works.

Sources for section 'Wastewater Treatment and Service'

1. Sub-committee meetings held between Mar - Jun 2016
2. Planning Bureau of Easton

Institutions

- 1 March Elementary School
- 2 Lafayette College
- 3 Paxinosa Elementary School
- 4 Easton Catholic Elementary School
- 5 Easton Catholic School
- 6 Cheston Elementary School

Library

- 7 Skillman Library
- 8 Easton Area Public Library
- 9 Northampton Courthouse Law Library
- 10 Mary Meuser Memorial Library
- 11 Easton Medical Library

Hospitals

- 12 Bailey Health Center
- 13 Easton Hospital
- 14 Right at Home Assistance Facility

Police Station

- 16 Easton Police Station

Post Office

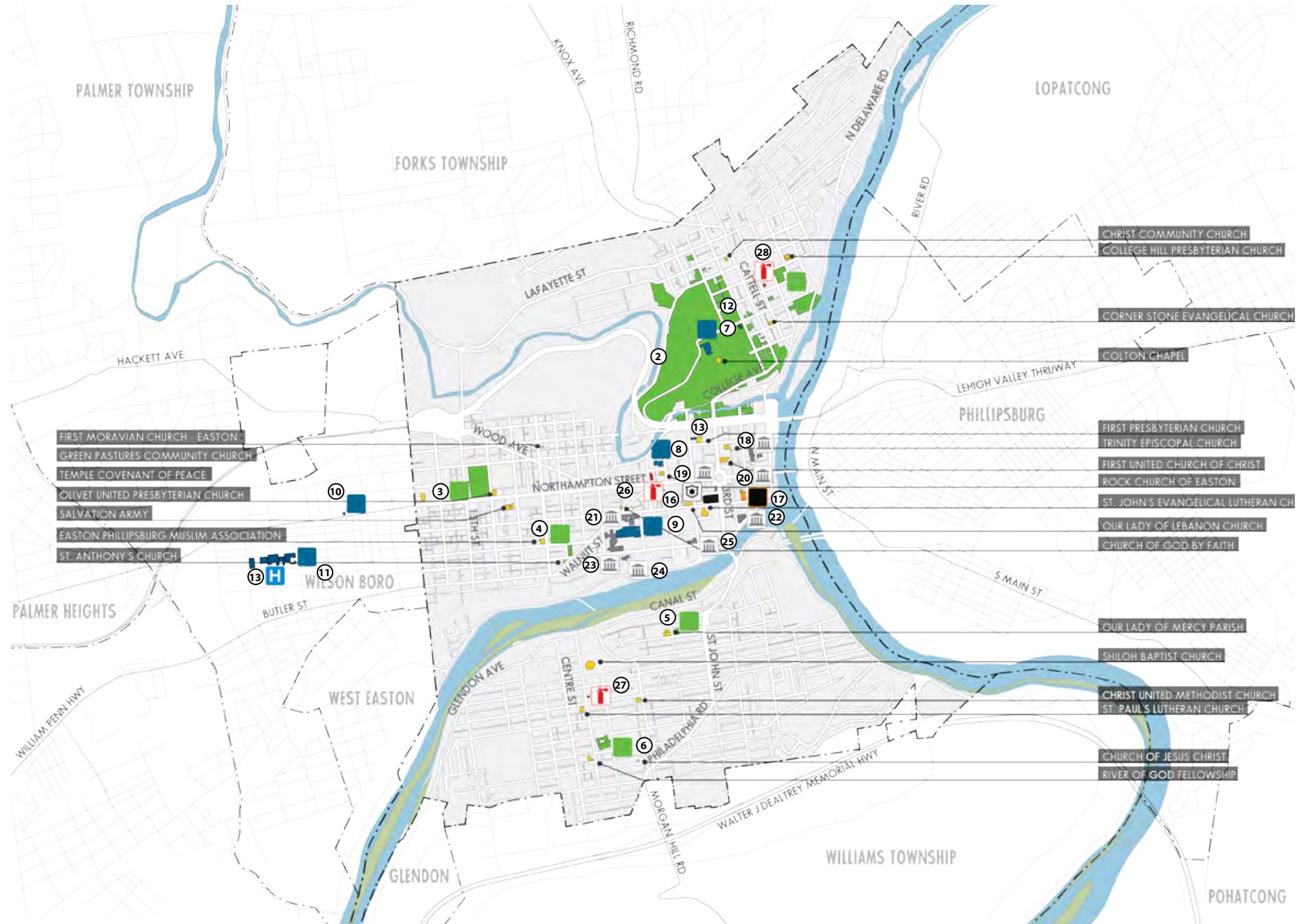
- 17 Easton Post Office

Government Buildings

- 18 Northampton County Veterans
- 19 Easton City Clerk
- 20 Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
- 21 Northampton County Juvenile
- 22 Northampton County Office - Public Service Dept.
- 23 Northampton County Real Estate Assessor
- 24 Northampton County Voter Registration
- 25 Easton Housing Authority

Fire Stations

- 26 Central Fire Station
- 27 South Side Fire Station
- 28 College Hill Fire Station



Community Facilities

Legend:



1,000 ft 2,000 ft

Historic Preservation

Easton's entire Downtown was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1983, which is indicative of the breadth of historically significant structures that exist throughout the City. Easton is best known for Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian and Beaux Arts style buildings constructed between 1830 and 1910, but there are several examples of Art Deco style buildings built more recently between 1920 and 1950.

In 1992, the College Hill Residential Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of the extensive collection of stately homes and mansions constructed between 1830 and 1940, including McKelvy House, designed in 1888 by the renowned firm of McKim, Mead and White.

More recently, in 2005, the City of Easton passed the Local Historic District Ordinance, which aims to protect significant historic structures and buildings through a review

process. The ordinance established a Historic District Commission that provides recommendations to the Easton City Council about issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness for alterations to buildings and structures and construction of new buildings within Historic Districts. This ordinance is designed to prevent the types of nonconforming structures that have appeared in the past such as the service station and drive-through restaurants built at the entrance to the City at Third Street and Larry Holmes Drive, both of which are completely out of step with the historic characteristics of Downtown architecture.

Notable buildings in the City include the Jacob Nicholas House built in 1807 and recently restored to illustrate the lifestyle of a typical working family from this era. Northampton County Courthouse was built to its current form in 1861 and continues to serve as a courthouse. The Governor Wolf Building was built in 1893 as a school and is currently occupied by



Nicholas House



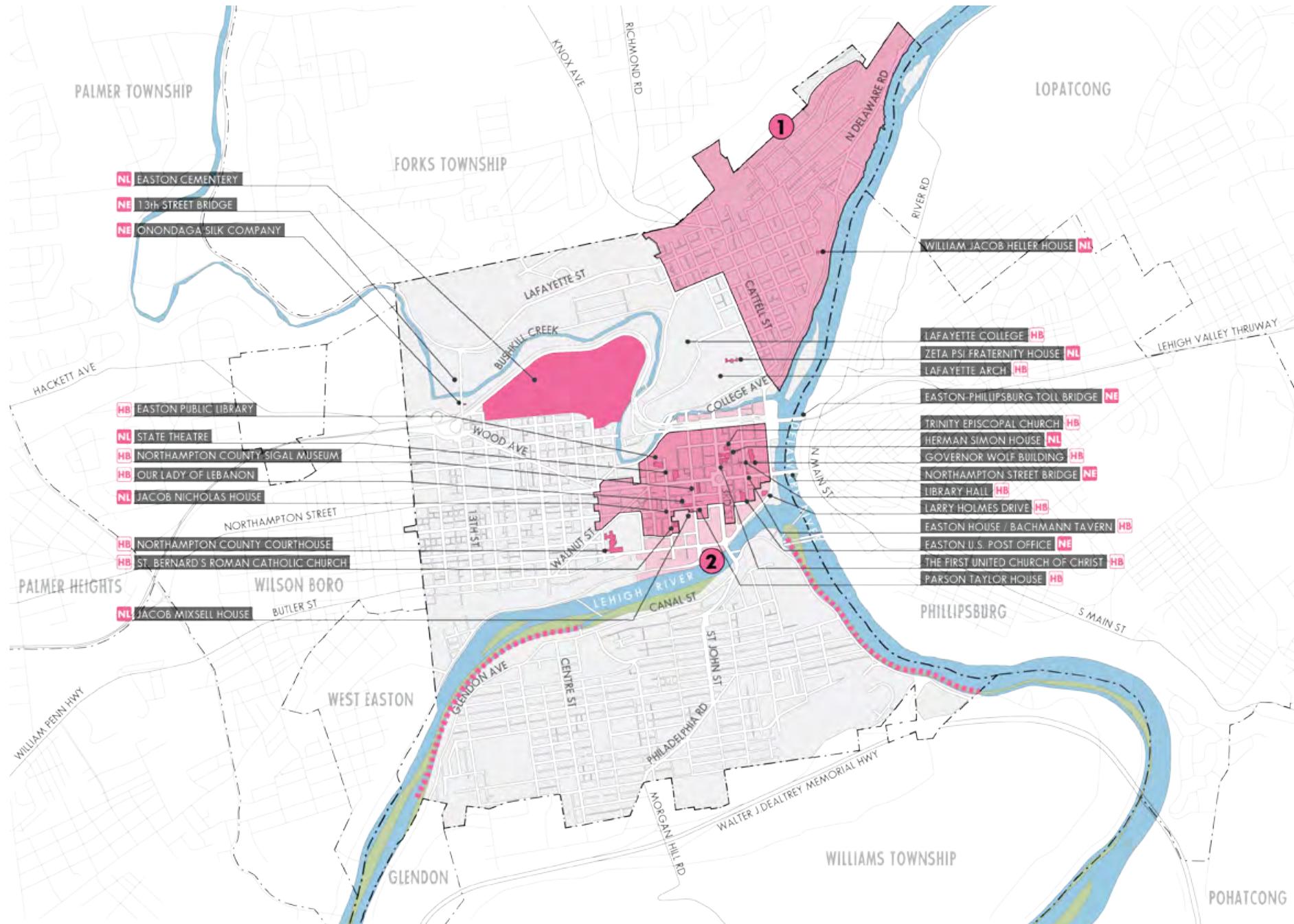
State Theatre

Northampton County Human Services. Easton Post Office, located at the corner of Second and Ferry Streets, was built in 1910. And State Theatre on Northampton was originally built as a bank in 1873 and then converted to a theater in 1910, maintaining the front facade and foyer. This early adaptive reuse of an architecturally significant building facade is notable for having been done at a time when selective retention of intact building elements was uncommon.

It should be noted that each building listed has undergone some form of expansion, adaptive reuse or a complete restoration, which is why the City of Easton contains such a rich collection of historic buildings at its core.



Governor Wolf Building



Historic Districts and Resources

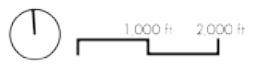
Legend: **HB** Historical Building of Local District

NL Building Listed National Register of Historic Places

NE Building Eligible National Register of Historic Places

① National Historic Register

② Local Historic District



Neighborhood Conservation

A similar attitude that led to creation of historic districts in Easton is at play in all neighborhoods. Residents in all areas of the City have expressed concerns about losing existing neighborhood character. The Easton zoning ordinance reflects this attitude and was written to encourage contextual development in each neighborhood.

The key to neighborhood conservation is not to prohibit new development or increase development density, but to shape new development in a way that it is compatible with existing vernacular building typologies. Use of materials, position of the building on the property and nature of the fenestration all contribute to design and feel of a street or public space. It is an attitude that has persisted in Easton since its beginning - a single building is actually part of an ensemble or group of buildings, and in this context must be designed accordingly.

Within this mindset, however, there is room for innovation and introduction of new elements. Evolution of an entire city is one where each successive wave of new development adds to and builds upon the existing city. This same attitude is alive today and if harnessed and properly guided could lead to a more active resident population contributing to dialogue about design of the city.

In addition to building form, neighborhood character is also largely shaped by design of public spaces. This includes landscaping of

streets and public spaces, light fixtures, signage, design and location of benches, street materials and design of all elements of the streetscape. The most famous and memorable streets have a consistent design despite idiosyncrasies of architecture.

Although it is possible to retain visual characteristics of an existing community, it is harder to mask changes that occur as an area grows more dense. This is a natural phenomena of cities and one that is made apparent by increased demand for parking space, additional cars on roads, crowds and generally more activity overall. It is this aspect of changing city that is the most frequent source of concern over loss of a familiar way of life. Very often greatest concern is not about higher development density, but about availability of parking spaces and traffic congestion. If these two problems can be addressed, then it is easier to imagine the possibility of filling in parking lots with new housing units or additions to existing buildings without harming the lifestyles of Easton's current residents.



Easton Neighborhoods

Major Attractions and Facilities

Many of Easton's retail and entertainment attractions are located in Downtown, with a dominant presence on Northampton and Third Streets. In addition to numerous shops, restaurants, theaters and galleries, the list of attractions includes the Crayola Experience, State Theatre, the future Silk Mill redevelopment and the new theater being built by Lafayette College on Third Street.

The map illustrates the tremendous concentration of these attractions in Downtown, but also particular areas at the center of College Hill and West Ward that are forming smaller community cores. It should be noted that each of these sub-centers is emerging on the extension of either Northampton or of Third Street into these parts of the city.

However, there is also an apparent lack of retail and entertainment facilities in South Side. Old Philadelphia Road, which is the obvious location for a sub-center, has very few attractions and nothing to resemble a sizable concentration indicative of an emerging neighborhood retail and entertainment center.

This is most likely due to the nature of Old Philadelphia Road. It is a wide and heavily traveled road with traffic entering the City from the nearby interchange on I-78. Unlike Cattell Street in College Hill, which is narrower and more conducive to pedestrian traffic, Old Philadelphia Road is predominantly a traffic artery that will not attract the sort of

pedestrian activity fundamental to creation of a neighborhood retail sub-center. The result is dispersement of commercial and cultural attractions in South Side to various locations in the neighborhood, and the inability to form a concentrated and defined middle to this community.



Major Attractions and Retail Facilities

Legend: ● Retail ● Entertainment ● Cultural Attractions

● Cultural Attractions



Land Planning

Zoning

The City's zoning map was designed to address unique land use and bulk characteristics of each of Easton's neighborhoods. Overlaid on this are commercial corridors and special districts that permit a concentration of uses, commercial activities and higher density development than would typically occur in a residential zone.

Although uses may be similar from neighborhood to neighborhood, regulations are aimed at affecting shape and character of buildings so they are compatible with existing neighborhood character. This is most evident when comparing different setback and height requirements for similar uses in different parts of the City. In this way, zoning attempts to promote contextual development throughout the City.

There are exceptions to this as there is a need to accommodate larger building types for commercial, industrial and institutional uses. The strategy in Easton has been to locate larger scale uses at the City's fringes, in areas that tend to feel outside the City. There is an Innovation District at the southern edge of the City near the Interstate that has been designated an Innovation Overlay district (IO), which is meant to encourage new industrial activity and permit larger size buildings.

Similarly, C-Town Shopping Center falls within an Expressway Transitional zone (ET). Located at

the southern edge of South Side neighborhood, it is a newer development positioned at the extreme edge of the City, and generally only accessible by automobile. The biggest single ET zone is at Hackett Park, which was designated in consideration of this area's more suburban nature.

The City has no specific industrial zoning district per se, but has instead created an Adaptive Reuse District (AR), which aims to promote redevelopment and revitalization of under-performing areas of the City with a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Although this will ultimately promote redevelopment, it will not protect these former industrial areas in the City if there is a financial incentive to build mixed-use development instead.

The River Corridors and other Green Areas District (RC) are designed to restrict development in order to provide adequate protection for waterways and natural resources, and to help establish areas for flood management and at the same time, create green open spaces for recreation activities. This in conjunction with the Steep Slopes Conservation overlay (SSC) and Flood Hazard overlay (FHI) districts, establishes a solid area designed to protect valuable natural resources and land forms that so strongly shape the image and character of the City.

Predominant Land Uses and Uses Permissible in Zoning Classification

Based on observations, it is apparent that the City's land use reflects circulation patterns and unique topographic conditions that have shaped the City. Access through and around the City is focused on several key corridors that have emerged into commercial strips and areas with a higher concentration of development density.

Downtown is a mixed use area where commercial and residential uses sit side by side or co-exist in single buildings. Generally, large commercial buildings are located on Third Street and Northampton Street, the primary cross axis of the city grid. On other streets of Downtown there is an assortment of commercial and residential uses in both converted and new buildings.

Downtown also contains a single large parking garage adjacent to Centre Square, the Pine Street Garage. This will soon be accompanied by the proposed intermodal garage that will contain a new bus terminal, parking and office space, allowing a greater concentration of uses to occur in Downtown.

With the exception of Lafayette College in College Hill and Northampton County Complex in West Ward neighborhood, the rest of the City outside downtown is primarily residential. However, each neighborhood has evolved with its own vernacular building types, street and block patterns, and development density that are products of the history and urban context.

Neighborhoods that evolved near industrial uses have smaller lots and more compact housing than areas where there was a greater concentration of wealth. The College Hill area, for example has much larger lots and houses than are found typically in West Ward.

Consequence of these patterns is that smaller, more affordable units may be less prevalent in some parts of the City than in others. This perhaps explains why larger homes have been subdivided, and why some areas of the City have experienced an increase in people, vehicles and activities.

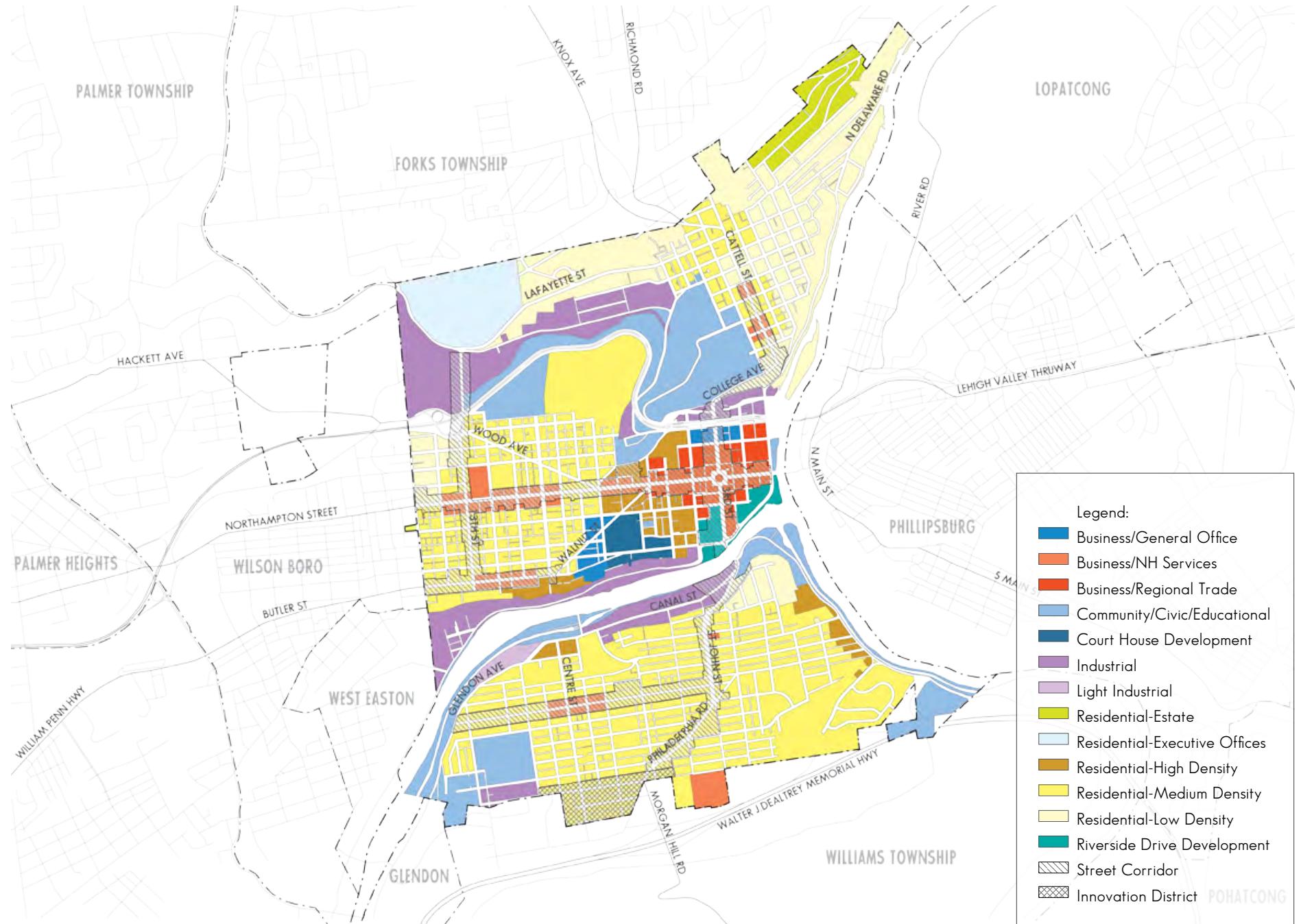
Industrial uses of the City remain along the waterfront where industry was originally established during Easton's early years. Bushkill Creek, for example, once supported several large mills, including the Simon Silk Mill at 13th Street. This particular mill is about to be converted to new uses, which is indicative of the City's attempt to promote redevelopment of underutilized properties with mixed uses.

Much of the City's retail is located along designated commercial corridors. The current retail stock generally consists of small- to medium-sized increments within older and historic buildings. There is an obvious lack of large-scale retail space anywhere in the city, except at its fringes such as C-Town Supermarket near Interstate I-78.

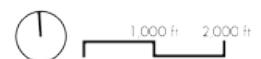
Lafayette College is a distinct, and high-profile institution that sits atop College Hill overlooking

Downtown. The college, which dates back to the beginning of Easton, is completely compatible in scale and character with the surrounding College Hill neighborhood. However, it generates a great deal of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on a daily basis.

At the north side of West Ward are Easton Cemetery and adjoining Easton Heights Cemetery, which form a large open space near Downtown. This place complements the open and vegetated character of the River Corridors and provides views out to surrounding landscape.



Permissible Uses based on Zoning District Classifications



Transportation

Motorized Circulation

Roads and Highways

The City of Easton has tremendous access to the region via State and U.S. highways and Interstate 78. Due to context however, most of this movement is in an east-west direction. There are north-south highways to the west of the City, such as State Route 33 and Interstate 476, but these would require a long westward trek before one can head north or south. There are smaller roads that run along the Delaware River, but the speed limit is considerably lower than on the highways. For the City however, State Route 33 serves more as a local highway providing easy north-south movement through Easton area suburbs, and is only a 5 minute drive from Downtown Easton via U.S.-22 west.

U.S. Route 22 and Interstate 78 are the primary roads serving Easton. U.S. Route 22 runs north of the City; Interstate 78 passes south of the City. U.S. Route 22 arrives at the City following the Bushkill Creek, so winds very sharply and has exits that terminate abruptly in the older part of the City. Traffic along Bushkill Street can be somewhat daunting as vehicles merge and turn on and off the highway. Interstate 78, by contrast, passes outside the City with the interchange located adjacent to South Side. This is the first exit when entering Pennsylvania from New Jersey, but it is also just past a toll booth, so to avoid the toll, one would need to have exited

one stop earlier and driven through Phillipsburg.

The only way to connect between Interstate 78 and U.S. Route 22 when arriving in Easton is to drive through the center of the City. In doing so, it becomes apparent that few roads actually cross the City.

Circulation through the City is limited to a few streets that bridge the rivers and climb steep slopes at the river edges. The original plan organization set down in 1752 is still the organizing pattern today with two cross streets: Northampton Street and Third Street, continuing out from Centre Square to outer areas of the City. These roads have long been the City's main streets and extend past city boundaries to destinations in adjacent townships.

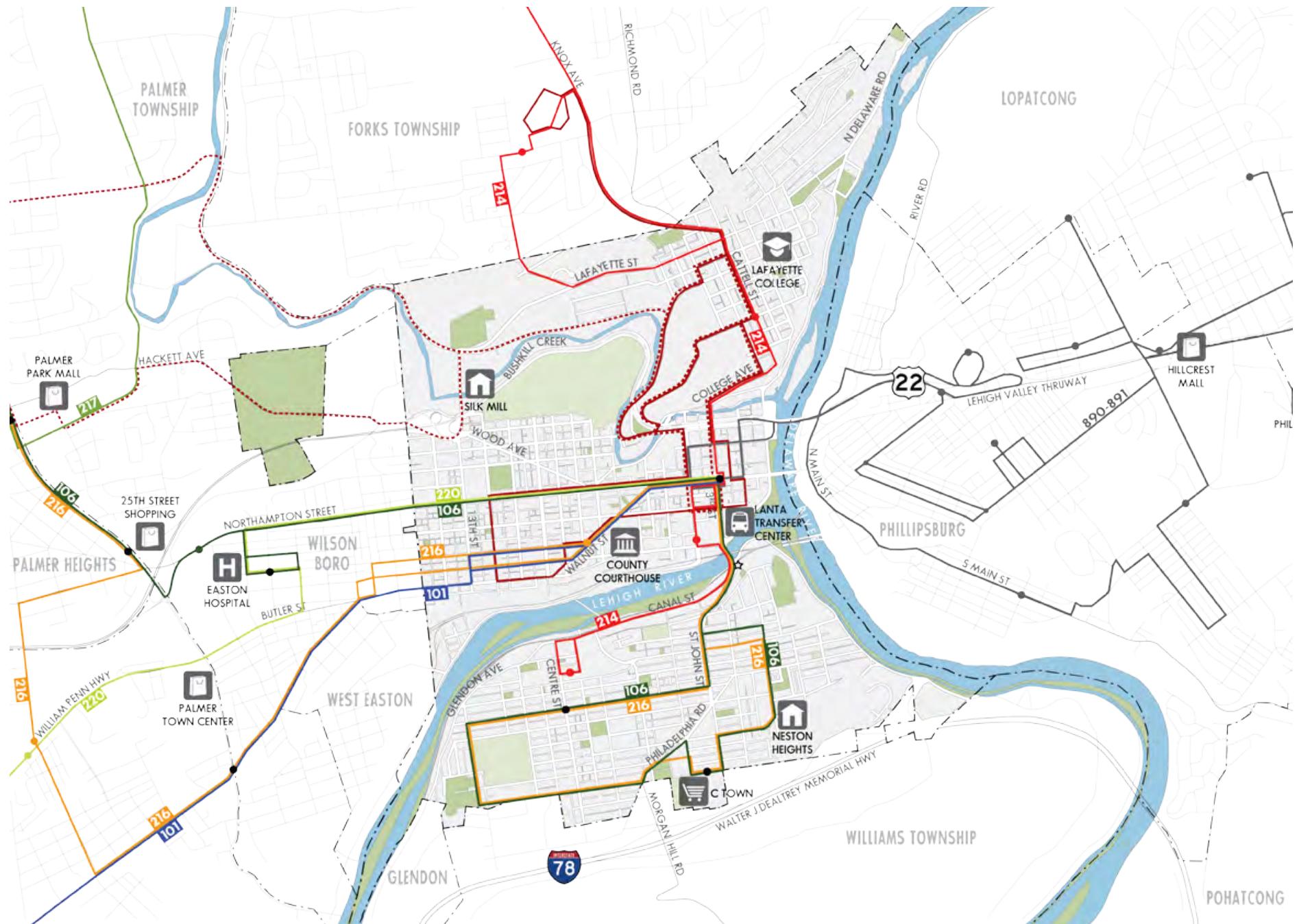
Consequence of this road organization is that all vehicular traffic must use these main streets to traverse the City. This can lead to congestion and pinch points along the way, so bypass routes have been introduced at some critical locations, such as around Downtown at the waterfront. In College Hill, Cattell Street and PA-611 / North Delaware Drive are natural extensions of Third Street, and all traffic passing in and out of the City must use these roads. Similarly in South Side, Old Philadelphia Road serves the same function, and substantial amounts of traffic move through the middle of the neighborhood to get to the Interstate.

Local streets in Easton are arranged in a gridiron formation in keeping with the original plan. This facilitates a quick understanding of layout of the City, but land forms have effectively interrupted the grid pattern to such a degree that what emerges are distinctly independent sections of the City. 13th Street, which crosses Bushkill Creek is one of the few streets that extends north and indirectly links West Ward to College Hill.

Within the grid pattern there are a few distinctly deliberate diagonal streets that cut through the fabric of right-angled streets and blocks. These streets include Old Philadelphia Road in South Side, as well as Wood Avenue, Walnut Avenue and one-block-long Prospect Avenue, all in West Ward. With the exception of Walnut Avenue, these streets appear to have been designed for vehicular movement as they all lead to highway entrances at the City edge. Walnut Avenue is an exception as it is not a major thoroughfare. It starts at the end of the original city grid at Northampton and Sixth Streets, and heads toward the County Court building at Gallows Hill. Its ultimate destination is unclear, but it does pass through an important neighborhood sub-district of government buildings centered around the old County Courthouse.

Railroads

There is no passenger rail to Easton, although old rail rights of way appear to be largely intact. Rail service was suspended in 1950s.



Existing Conditions and Analysis Report

Freight rail continues to pass through the City on the Lehigh Valley Line, operated by Southern Norfolk. The Odenwelder Branch, a short stretch of track along the north of the Lehigh River and operated by Belvidere and Delaware River Railroad, is in danger of abandonment from infrequent use.

Public Transit

LANTA provides bus service for the Lehigh Valley and Northampton County. The alignment of the three cities - Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton - are in an east-west direction following the Lehigh Valley, so bus service is more frequent and extensive in this direction. There are north-south routes leading to Forks Township north of the City and Williams Township to the south, but routes are fewer. All bus lines converge on Centre Square.

LANTA does not provide 24 hour bus service. Most routes stop running between 5 and 7 pm, which frustrates commuters who use the bus to get to work. Route 101, which runs between Easton and Bethlehem, operates from 7 am until 11 pm.

Because LANTA is not a city bus system, the service aims for destinations outside city limits. The consequence is that bus stops are widely spaced, and service runs primarily on main roads entering and leaving the City.

Bus frequency is approximately every hour, so unless arrival times are accurate, one risks

waiting a substantial time for the next bus.

There are also commuter buses that head to New York City and Philadelphia from the Easton bus terminal in Downtown. The terminal is serviced by a number of bus lines, including Trans-Bridge, Greyhound and Susquehanna Trailways. These carriers offer daily service to New York City and Philadelphia, along with Newark, Philadelphia, and New York-JFK airports, and points beyond.

There is also a free shuttle bus service for students operated by Lafayette College Area Transportation (LCAT). This provides access between the college campus and Downtown Easton. Most trips are destined to shopping centers outside the City including Forks Town Center, Palmer Park Mall, Walmart, Wegmans and Target.

The proposed Easton Intermodal Transportation Project (EITC) would be a 45,000 square foot complex with an attached garage. This project will not only be the spot for the EITC but also for Easton City Hall, a large parking deck, TransBridge and Susquehanna tour bus terminals and additional vendor space. Bike racks also would be provided for bicyclists using the facility.

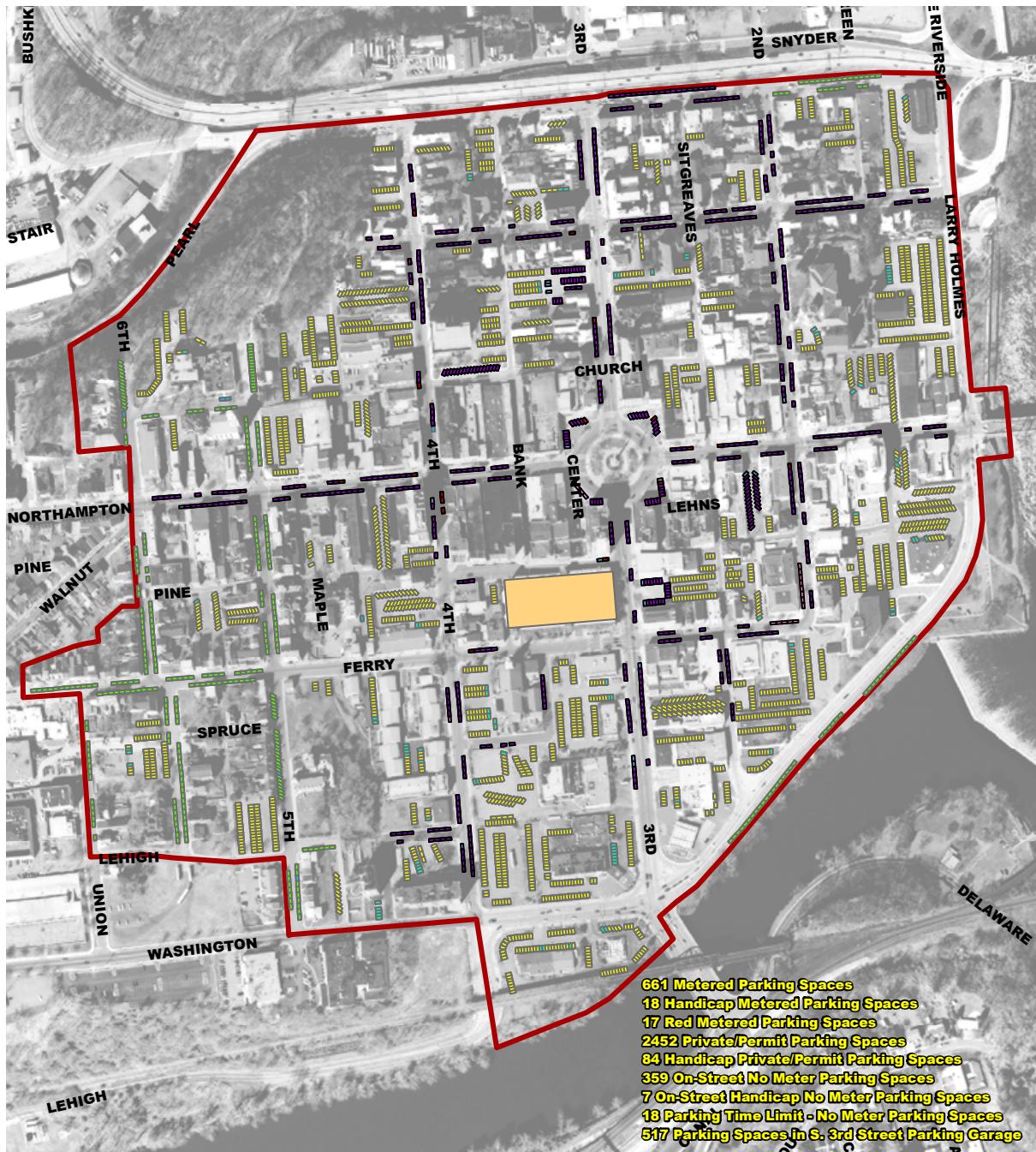
Non-Motorized Circulation

Bikeways exist in the City, on trails and in parks, however there are no designated bike lanes on city streets as of yet. Potential for increased bike ridership was sufficient for a private company

to recently launch Bike Share, which will position 22 bicycles at six locations throughout Downtown for rental periods of up to 24 hours.

Parking

The issue of parking is not only a problem of Downtown but throughout the City. Anecdotally, most of Eastonians feel that on-street parking is at a premium throughout West Ward and College Hill streets in immediate proximity to Lafayette College. Downtown, however, contains a higher concentration of uses, so parking, especially in front of one's destination, is not as easily obtained. A recent study of parking availability in Downtown pointed out that even at peak times, there are excess parking spaces throughout Downtown. In fact, it appears that over half the parking spaces either on-street or in the Pine Street Garage are unoccupied at peak times during the day. The new intermodal garage built in 2015 provides 325 additional parking spaces for Downtown.



Parking Survey of Downtown Easton

Source: Department of Planning and Codes, Easton, PA

Environment

Topography

The topographic map of Easton clearly illustrates why the City is composed of four separate neighborhoods. The tremendous steepness of some slopes leading to the river is why there are so few river crossings and why riverfront access for City residents has been so difficult to achieve.

Whereas the neighborhoods themselves are elevated above the rivers and have poor access to them, Downtown is clearly sitting on lower ground with its toes in the water, so to speak. From this vantage, it is easy to understand why Downtown is in a flood zone.

Aside from the rather dramatic and steep descents at river ravines, most of the City is situated on a gently undulating surface that includes hills, ridge lines, valleys and swales that all contribute to the diverse conditions existing in each neighborhood. Essentially, no two streets are exactly the same as a result of highly variegated and interesting topographic conditions.

Flood Plain

As seen on the topographic map, Easton straddles two major rivers and one small creek: Delaware River, the larger of the two rivers; Lehigh River, one of the Delaware's largest tributaries; and Bushkill Creek, which winds though the northern part of the City. These three watercourses, combined with the low elevation of Easton, expose parts of Downtown directly to flooding.

During floods, the normal river height of approximately 6 feet can rise to nearly 22 feet.

The first major flood that caused damage to the developed city of Easton was in 1903. On October 10, the water level in Easton rose to 38.10 feet, the second highest watermark in Easton's history. During the flood of 1955, the water level reached 43.70 feet, by far the highest level that ever hit Easton.

Easton has experienced three major floods in three consecutive years in the last decade. In 2004, the water level reached 33.35 feet; in 2005, the water level hit 37.20 feet; and in 2006, the water level reached 37.09 feet. These three floods were the third, fourth and fifth biggest floods in Easton's history, based on water levels.

Increased risk for flooding is a consequence of two related factors. First is an increase in the frequency of large storms in the Northeast during the last few decades; second is the sprawling suburban development that has



Topography and Major Drainage Areas - 5ft Contours

Legend: ⊕ Highest Point ⊖ Lowest Point

interrupted and eliminated natural drainage patterns and the absorptive capacity of the natural landscape. The result is that during these large inundations, water flows directly into streams and rivers and leads to a sudden surge of rising water that is compounded by lack of places for the water to go. At Easton, confluence of the rivers and tributaries exacerbates the problem as flow of water and compounding effects of intersecting watercourses effectively push water into the lower areas of Downtown.

A solution to the problem of floods is two-fold. First it will require a coordinated effort with surrounding municipalities and townships to restore and reconstruct natural areas and limit new development so that excessive stormwater can be stored and recharged into the soil before it enters the rivers. Second Easton will need to undertake some form of mitigation to structures and infrastructure situated in high-risk locations.

Stormwater

On December 5, 2013, EPA announced a new collaborative framework for implementing the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) program titled - A Long-Term Vision for Assessment, Restoration and Protection under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program. This program can be located at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/vision_303d_program_dec_2013.pdf.

The vision for the program details enhancements made to the CWA 303(d) program from

experience gained over the past two decades in assessing and reporting on water quality and in developing tens of thousands of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). A TMDL is the maximum amount of a specific pollutant that can be assimilated by a stream without causing impairment or violating water quality standards. The allowable amount takes into account all sources of that pollutant in a watershed, including point sources and non-point sources, and requires a portion to be set aside as a margin of safety. The City plans to begin preparation of a TMDL Plan specific to its waterways.

Preparation of a TMDL Plan will enhance overall efficiency of the EPA's CWA 303(d) program and in particular encourage a focused attention on priority waters, while creating flexibility in tools we use, beyond TMDLs, to attain water quality restoration and protection.

EPA recognizes there is not a "one size fits all" approach to restoring and protecting water resources. Easton will create tailored strategies that implement program responsibilities consistent with the City's water quality goals. EPA's Program will track our future success in these efforts to restore and protect Easton's rivers and lakes.

The City of Easton in the next two to three years is responsible for preparing and implementing a TMDL Plan. Planning and financing for the City's determined program must be assessed.



1955 Flood Diane: Hotel Easton on Northampton Street



September 2004: Route 611

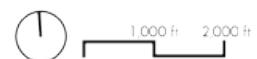
Sources for section 'Stormwater'

1. Sub-committee meetings held between Mar - Jun 2016
2. Planning Bureau of Easton



Flood Plains and Possibility of Flooding - FEMA Data, 2008

Legend: ● High - 100 yr Flood Plain ● Moderate - 500 yr Flood Plain ● Low - Outside Flood Plain



Tourism

Attractions

The presence of so many retail stores and restaurants is closely related to the City's status as a regional tourism destination. In particular, the diverse set of restaurants has helped to establish Easton's reputation as one of the restaurant destinations in the Lehigh Valley Region. High quality food and a historic setting has become very attractive to many residents in suburban communities of the Lehigh Valley Region and neighboring New Jersey. According to restaurant owners only about 20% of patrons tend to be from the City, while remaining guests tend to come from neighboring towns. Restaurants are highly frequented between Thursday and Sunday, when reserving a table can be a challenge. Sit-down establishments also benefit from many events conducted throughout the year, including the Farmers' Market and Spring into Easton.

Downtown businesses and restaurants also benefit from visitors who come to Easton's major assets. The Crayola Experience is without a doubt Easton's main generator of visitors. Established in 1997, it attracted approximately 250,000 guests annually in its early years. In 2013, the Crayola Experience expanded and restructured its operation and is projected to receive more than 400,000 visits. According to Crayola, the facility draws visitors from within a 150-mile radius, with its trade area extending into New York and Connecticut. The Crayola

Experience draws mainly young families with children to its 21 attractions, with an average party size between two and four members. In addition to the entertainment space, the Crayola Experience also offers food and beverages in a limited-service environment. Based on internal surveys, visitors to the Crayola Experience spend approximately \$25 per person visit. And while Crayola Experience has its own food service operation on-site, many visitors patronize nearby restaurants in Downtown Easton.

State Theatre is another major attraction in Downtown Easton. Originally opened in 1926 and restored in 1990, State Theatre includes approximately 1,500 seats and is located on Northampton Street between North Fourth and North Fifth Streets. While in previous years the

theater was able to attract more than 100,000 visitors per season, it recently has had to cut its number of shows, and now only attracts approximately 76,000 visitors per year. The theater experienced strong competition from events at the new Sands Casino in Bethlehem, which uses shows as an incentive to attract visitors to its gaming facilities. State Theatre estimates that approximately 40% of its visitors are Easton residents, and the vast majority of its patrons come from within a 50-mile radius. About half of its patrons frequent restaurants in Easton before or after seeing a show, creating a strong link between the Theatre and Easton's Downtown restaurant community.

Lafayette College is another major asset in Easton, located in the College Hill neighborhood,

Local Demand

	Local Demand	Spent Locally
Restaurants		(70%)
Full Service	\$8,450,690	\$5,915,483
Limited Service	\$8,533,178	\$5,973,225
Total Restaurant	\$16,983,868	\$11,888,708
 Retail (selected categories)		 (50%)
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$11,047,618	\$5,523,809
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$11,118,576	\$5,559,288
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$5,438,978	\$2,719,489
Total Retail	\$27,605,172	\$13,802,586

Source: ERSI Business Analyst Online and AKRF

north of Downtown. Currently there are approximately 2,400 students enrolled at the College, and it employs almost 1,000 faculty and staff. In addition, its many events, such as parent and graduation day, conferences, sporting events, and alumni reunions, create significant spillover effects that benefit Easton's businesses. At the same time, an active and attractive Downtown helps Lafayette College compete for first-class students and faculty in an increasingly competitive global education market.

Other assets such as the National Canal Museum, Sigal Museum, Heritage Corridor's Visitors Center, the aforementioned Farmers' Market, and many historic sites and places have

Visitor Demand

Restaurants

Restaurants	
Total visitors	838,200
# of activities per trip	2.3
Visitor trips	364,435
Spending per trip on food	\$19.98
Total demand	\$7,281,407

Retail	
Total visitors	838,200
# of activities per trip	2.3
Visitor trips	364,435
Spending per trip on food	\$28.86
Total demand	\$10,517,588

Sources: ERSI Business Analyst Online, PA 2013 Tourism Report; TIA 2007 and AKRF

created a critical mass of attractions that help draw many day-trip visitors from throughout the region.

Local and Visitor Demand

Together, residents and tourists create a very strong demand for goods and services from businesses in Easton. To quantify growth potential for restaurant food and retail business, AKRF compared demand generated by local residents and visitors to current supply. AKRF focused its analysis on restaurants and retail goods typically found in a downtown environment. Based on data from ESRI, a commercial data provider, AKRF estimated total demand for selected goods and services (\$17.0 million for restaurants and \$27.6 million for retail

goods and services).

To only capture true expenditure potential of local residents, the analysis assumed that local residents would only spend about 70% of their restaurant and 50% of their retail expenditures in businesses in Easton. Locals are likely spending remaining shares in one of many shopping centers in the region. This resulted in a local demand for restaurants of \$11.9 million and a local demand for retail goods and services of \$13.8 million.

Demand from visitors coming to Easton was based on a total of 838,200 visits, derived from combined visitation projections to the many attractions in Easton. Since many visitors visit a number of events/attractions as part of their trip to Easton, total combined trips were divided by average number of activities typically conducted on comparable trips. The average number of activities conducted is based on information from the Travel Industry Association (TIA). Dividing total number of visits to attractions by average number of activities conducted results in the number of unique visitor trips.

Pennsylvania Travel Bureau provides information on how much a person on a trip spends on food (approximately \$20) and retail goods and services (approximately \$29). Based on this information, demand for restaurant food is about \$7.3 million and demand for retail goods and services is about \$10.5 million per year.

Visitor Supply and Demand Gap

To quantify potential additional demand for restaurants and retailers in Easton, total demand generated by local residents and visitors was compared to current supply provided by retailers and restaurants. Supply is measured by actual sales generated by retailers and restaurants in Easton. In 2013, sales by restaurants in Easton totaled \$16.6 million and total sales by retail stores totaled \$11.3 million.

Deducting supply numbers from demand reveals demand currently unsatisfied by local retailers and restaurants. In terms of restaurant food, there is a demand of about \$2.6 million currently not satisfied by Easton's restaurants. Based on difference between total supply and demand for retail goods and services in Easton, the total demand gap is approximately \$13 million annually.

To better understand how the above dollar amount would translate into a number of additional restaurants the City could support, an average return for restaurant space of \$200 per square foot and an average restaurant size of 1,200 square feet were applied. Based on these assumptions, Easton could support an additional 11 restaurants.

It should be noted there is currently an unsatisfied regional demand of \$64 million for full-service restaurant food. The above calculation does not capture any portion of this demand surplus. If Easton could strengthen its role as a regional restaurant destination it could potentially attract a substantial share of this surplus (i.e., > 10%).

To quantify the number of retail shops that would be supported by demand surplus of \$16.6 million, an average return of \$400 per square foot and an average retail store size of 2,000 square feet was assumed, which results in a total retail demand for 16 additional retail stores in Easton.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis Charrettes

After completion of the Existing Conditions and Initial Technical Analysis, the Urban Matrix team gathered with the Planning Commission and the larger community to present some pertinent findings from this research. These findings, such as the fact that Easton's population is expected to increase by one-third its current population size within the next 15 to 20 years, presented an opportunity to take a fresh look at future development and needs of Easton, in light of this information.

Individual community charrettes including one-on-one conversations with key community members revealed a deeper understanding of each neighborhood and allowed the Urban Matrix team to gather granular level (anecdotal) information on a number of issues such as traffic, parks, quality of life, businesses, etc.

Charrettes started with a presentation of technical findings by the consultant group and brought the community up to speed with the latest data and analyses. The presentation then led to a series of interactive exercises that engaged the community in giving feedback on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that Easton faces, as it steps into the next two decades.

The Consultant team analyzed and consolidated these comments. Findings revealed commonalities, which were then organized into themes. These themes, detailed later in the report, represent desires and constraints of Eastonians. These themes are:

- A Strong and Healthy Core
- Growth Management
- Quality of Life
- Tourism
- Resiliency

The following pages go into details of these themes and feedback from the community, and organize this feedback for each of the emerging themes and neighborhoods.

QUALITY OF LIFE	DOWNTOWN					SOUTH SIDE					WEST WARD										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
STRENGTH																					
Historic Downtown in beautiful setting						X															
Access to natural resources (river, parks, & trails)																					
Galleries, Theaters, and other cultural institutions																					
Existing urban infrastructure (dense not sprawling)																					
WEAKNESS																					
The waterfront is difficult to access in Easton																					
Most local parks cater to younger children																					
Perception of crime																					
IN SUFFICIENT PUBLIC INPUT																					
<i>Insufficient public transportation</i>																					
<i>Mindset not Health Oriented</i>																					
OPPORTUNITY																					
Better integrate the Rivers and parks into existing infrastructure network (more accessible to residents and visitors)																					
Attract grocery stores to Easton neighborhoods																					
Reactivate the existing rail right-of-way for passenger service																					
Easton / Phillipsburg Trail connection across the Delaware																					
Promote 164 mile D&L Trail to residents																					
THREAT																					
Absence of quality housing (and attraction of housing in suburban areas) can draw population away from Easton																					
Lack of Entertainment Opportunities is an impediment to attracting targeted population segments (e.g. college students and young professionals)																					
ABSENTEE LANDLORDS																					
<i>Blighted and Vacant Housing</i>																					
<i>Lack of outdoor life activities</i>																					

Community feedback chart: QUALITY OF LIFE

Strength

- Existing urban infrastructure
- Access to natural resources
- Galleries, theaters and institutions
- Historic Downtown

Weakness

- Perception of crime
- Insufficient public input
- Parks catering to younger children
- Insufficient public transportation

Opportunity

- Reactivate passenger railway
- Integration of parks and rivers
- Neighborhoods to attract amenities
- Waterfront is difficult to access
- Easton/Phillipsburg Trail

Threat

- Absence of quality housing
- Absentee landlords
- Blighted and vacant houses
- Lack of entertainment opportunities
- Lack of outdoor opportunities

Strength

- **Historic Downtown**
- Great restaurants and retail
- Access to natural resources
- Close to NYC and Philly
- Galleries, theaters and institutions
- Large volume of visitors

Weakness

- **Lack of regional train service**
- Lack of complimentary tourist facilities
- Perception of crime
- Lack of quality hotel rooms
- Blighted fabric
- Inadequate parking

Opportunity

- **Integration of parks and rivers into existing networks**
- Integrate Easton into regional tourism network
- Growing artisan base
- Encourage adaptive reuse
- Capitalize upon assets and diversity

Threat

- Lack of entertainment opportunities
- Perception of crime
- Reduction of historic cultural assets
- Increased cost of traveling
- Social justice
- Blighted properties

	DOWNTOWN	SOUTH SIDE	WEST WARD																												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
Growth Management																															
STRENGTH																															
Diverse housing stock																															
Access to regional highway network																															
Engaged stakeholders (mayor, neighborhood groups, residents)																															
Existing urban infrastructure (dense not sprawling)	x																														
WEAKNESS																															
Physically separated neighborhoods																															
Inadequate parking system																															
Inadequate public transit																															
Strained fiscal situation																															
Building regulations (downtown)																															
Spatial constraints (lack of large development parcels)																															
Absentee landlords/low homeownership rate	x																														
High residential vacancy (blight)																															
Lack of large-scale employers																															
OPPORTUNITY																															
Capitalize on projected population growth																															
Attract population segments moving to urban areas (young professionals)																															
Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings																															
Capitalize on Population Diversity (attract more diverse set of visitors and businesses)																															
Capitalize on high population growth in the south side and west ward with infill residential and retail development																															
Attract desired population/businesses to existing vacancies																															
Capitalize on funding opportunities provided by the KOZ program																															
Retain graduating students																															
Convert properties owned by absentee landlords to ownership units with available rental apartments HOME OWNERSHIP																															
THREAT																															
Stagnating employment opportunities in Easton																															
Antiquated infrastructure could lead to disinvestment																															
Lack of affordable housing can destabilize neighborhoods																															
<i>Lack of Comprehensive Planning + Implementation</i>																															
<i>Non-Sustainable Growth Mindset</i>																															
<i>Blighted + Vacant Houses</i>																															

Community feedback chart: GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Strength

- Engaged stakeholders
- Existing urban infrastructure
- Diverse housing stock
- Access to regional highway network

Weakness

- Low home ownership rates
- Inadequate public transit
- Lack of large scale industries / employers
- Blight
- Strained fiscal situation
- Inadequate parking
- Physically separated neighborhoods

Opportunity

- Attract migrating population
- Convert absentee landlord units
- Capitalize on growing population
- Retain graduating students
- Adaptive reuse of buildings
- Attract businesses to vacancies
- Capitalize on available funding

Threat

- Stagnating employment options
- Lack of affordable housing
- Antiquated infrastructure
- Lack of comprehensive planning
- Blighted properties

Strength

- Engaged stakeholders
- Access to regional highway network
- Existing urban infrastructure
- Diverse population and housing stock

Weakness

- **Low ownership rates**
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of regional train service
- Inadequate public transit
- Strained fiscal situation
- Lack of parks and open space

Opportunity

- Convert absentee landlord units to ownership units
- Attract desired businesses to vacancies
- Develop former industrial fabric
- Capitalize on growing population
- Population diversity
- Promote adaptive reuse

Threat

- Lack of affordable housing
- Antiquated infrastructure
- Mega projects
- Building vacancies
- School system

	DOWNTOWN					SOUTH SIDE					WEST WARD																				
Strong and Healthy Core	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
STRENGTH																															
Galleries, Theaters, and other cultural institutions										X			X	X	X	X			3												
Access to regional highway network																															
Great restaurants and retail shops (downtown)	+		X				X					X																			
Reputable college (and related activities)				X																											
Government functions (County, City)																															
Existing urban infrastructure (dense not sprawling)			X			X							X																		
WEAKNESS																															
Lack of regional train service											X			X																	
Inadequate parking system													X																		
Perception of crime														X																	
Lack of large-scale employers	+	X		X			X																								
PED. INFRASTRUCTURE																															
OPPORTUNITY																															
Continue to integrate the college into downtown																															
Attract grocery stores to Easton neighborhoods																															
Harvest expenditure potential of students and visitors to the College																															
Retain graduating students																															
Continue to redevelop former industrial properties (opportunity for larger-scale development)																															
Connect individual activity centers/nodes to spur economic development/growth throughout the city	+																														
Restore Historic Housing																															
<i>Sustainability guiding factor</i>																															
THREAT																															
Stagnating employment opportunities in Easton	+																														
Competition from within the LeHigh Valley (larger employers, bigger tourist destinations)																															
INEFFICIENT TRANSIT																															

Community feedback chart: STRONG AND HEALTHY CORE

Strength

- Existing urban infrastructure
- Great restaurants and retail options
- Galleries, theaters, and institutions
- Reputable college and facilities
- Government functions

Weakness

- Lack of large scale industries / employers

- Lack of regional train service
- Perception of crime
- Pedestrian infrastructure
- Inadequate parking system

Opportunity

- Connect individual activity centers to spur economic development
- Attract grocery stores to neighborhoods
- Redevelop former industrial facilities
- Restore historic fabric
- Retain graduate students
- Expenditure potential of student population

Threat

- Stagnating employment opportunities in Easton
- Competition from within Lehigh Valley
- Inefficient transit
- Building vacancies
- School system

DOWNTOWN FOCUS GROUP

Community Feedback

QUALITY OF LIFE

Strengths and Opportunities

1. Easy transit (biking and walking). (Amy owns a car but likes walking everywhere. For her, growing up in a more rural area outside the city, this is a major attraction.)
2. Some parts of the waterfront (mostly east of Centre Square) are very walkable, but this is not apparent. People perceive it as far away. Part of overcoming the distance is being able to see it -- sight lines can change perception. Also signage/landscaping/treatment of roads are important.
3. Keeping roads activated with activities and also well lit.
4. Ferry Street is not well lit, not inviting.
5. Karl Stirner Arts Trail (KSAT) has mileage markers, and these are very helpful.
6. What about an app for way finding? Downtown already has its own app.
7. A map in the new parking garage could help - there is not one currently planned.
8. Farmers' Market for groceries and bodegas are on almost all corners.
9. A car share program would be great for Downtown.
10. Food trucks would be good for the waterfront since they are temporary and movable. This could activate the waterfront, draw people in for an event and show them the waterfront.
11. Amphitheaters are underused - Main Street uses it once a month in the summer for concerts.

Weaknesses and Threats

1. Downtown needs something keeping the city alive during the day, and then needs the retail to match the influx of office workers. As it is now, retail closes when restaurants are getting busy. This is the choice of the retailers, but they will do what their patrons want.
2. No pharmacy, no gym, no grocery. These are things that people ask about when they're thinking of moving to Easton.
3. Route 611 is dangerous for pedestrians.
4. You can buy a pass to the garage, but it doesn't guarantee you a specific space. Don't want office users to park on the street (these spaces need to turn over). There are rental spaces on several other properties.
5. Problems with the bus:
 - Stigma
 - Too many transfers, people get stranded (Kim's mom -- so this is inconvenient for seniors)
 - Slow, inefficient routes
 - Easton should have its own bus service, with smaller routes in condensed areas, maybe a loop route
6. The hill is an obstacle for college students. A regular shuttle (or even a funicular) would help. There are steps but they are tough.
7. Bushkill Drive is mostly industrial and treacherous for driving and walking.
8. Problems with Centre Square:
 - The square is physically limited by raised grass areas

- Concerns about building/infrastructure along the exterior, which doesn't present well

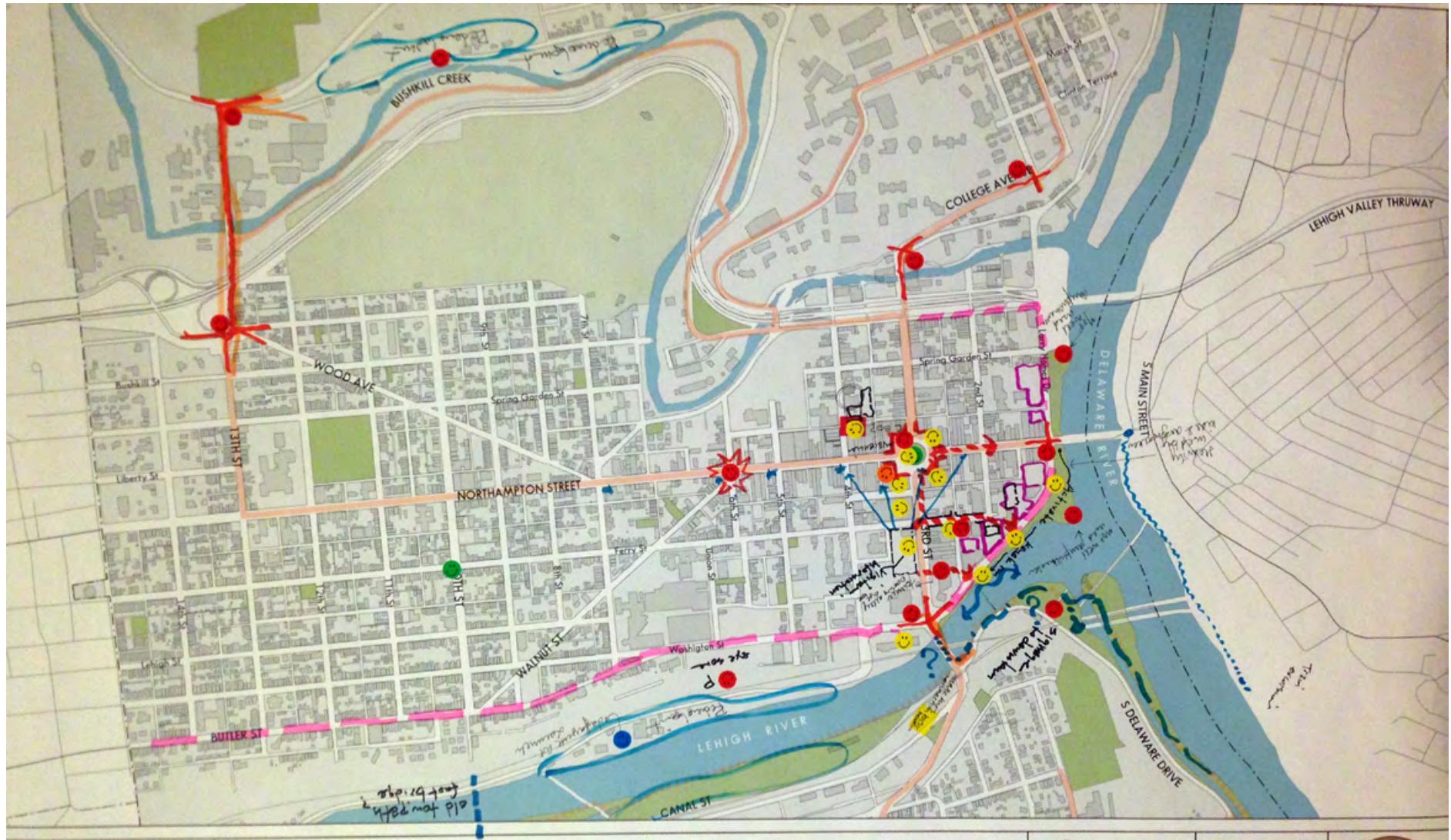
TOURISM

Strengths and Opportunities

1. Dam - what about converting this into a kayak route? There was a study of partial dam removal in the past, but this was a nonstarter because of the underwater utilities.
2. Food trucks would be good for the waterfront since they are temporary and movable. This could activate the waterfront, draw people in for an event and show them the waterfront.
 - Crayola
 - Biggest problem is that people don't come out of the building
 - Complementary commercial uses: toy store, Lego store, paint-your-own pottery
 - Other institutions could be complementary: science museum, something like the Museum of Play in Rochester or the Please Touch Museum in Philly
3. Visitors go to places like Dorney Park, the DaVinci Center, etc.
4. People come to the waterfront events, but there aren't enough. There's no one to coordinate/plan.

Weaknesses/Threats

1. There is definitely a need for hotels. People don't stay the night in Easton. People can't have events in Easton. Could also help if the



DOWNTOWN FOCUS GROUP

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Community feedback map: DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD



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Quality Inn was a higher quality hotel.

- Strip mall and Wawa are unattractive. The intersection has been improved but this is a bad gateway and not walkable.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Strengths and Opportunities

- Development opportunities on Larry Holmes Drive? There is currently no residential and only one restaurant.
- Lehigh Drive could be developed.
- There are 8 vacant or underutilized storefront spaces in Centre Square. The spaces are not built out for tenant needs and aren't marketable. They need renovations, but landlords aren't willing.
 - Next to the comic book store - vacant building with gutted interior
 - Drinky's has second floor opportunities.
 - Family Dollar building makes a dead corner
 - H&R Block shouldn't be on the main drag
 - Bixler building isn't active all year and has vacant upper floors
- Huge parking lots along the waterfront could be small decks and hidden (Amy). Problem is that you want to preserve the view.

Weaknesses/Threats

- Downtown's economy is led by tourism and restaurants. Allentown has bigger employers moving in because of tax incentives. What happens when City Hall leaves the Alpha Building?
- Parking to get to the waterfront is an issue.

(The new parking lot won't help because of the distance. This will serve Crayola and the waterfront.) People currently use the Governor Wolf Building lot, but this may change once it's redeveloped.

- Since 1996, there have been only three businesses that really benefit from Crayola's presence: the former Pez Museum, Bank Street Creamery and Cheeburger.
- Easton's commuter tax, earned income tax and street corridor overlay can push businesses away.

STRONG AND HEALTHY CORE

Strengths and Opportunities

- Easton could accommodate smaller offices, shared work spaces (there is one in Downtown).
- Wells Fargo, Verizon building, Express Times building, etc. - these buildings could accommodate them.
- Should market Easton to these companies (companies outside of Easton in general, and in Bridgewater, NJ, and NYC specifically, where Easton residents commute to work) as a place to work and live (and walk to work).
- A common requirement when moving to industrial parks is the idea of walkability within. The walkable size and nature of Easton could be marketed to attract companies and employers.
- There are 8 vacant or underutilized storefront spaces in Centre Square. The spaces are not built out for tenant needs and aren't marketable. They need

renovations, but landlords aren't willing.

- Next to the comic book store - vacant building with gutted interior
- Drinky's has second floor opportunities
- Family Dollar building makes a dead corner
- H&R Block shouldn't be on the main drag
- Bixler building isn't active all year and has vacant upper floors
- 6. Connection to South Side:
 - People go to South Side to shop at CVS
 - There's also a C-Town in South Side, but not many people go there other than South Side residents. They also market themselves in West Ward
 - I-78 kind of created South Side by cutting it off, but it also helps the South Side due to convenience (for people who work for Weyerbacher)

Weaknesses/Threats

- Easton is just not the first choice for large offices (no large parcels of land and lack of infrastructure).
- It seems that LVEDC is not working to get these types of businesses Downtown; instead they're looking at large industrial parks.
- LVEDC has a council that deals with this issue of attracting large businesses, but they're not as involved.
- 5 vendor spaces in Centre Square - one is leased in perpetuity (this is an issue for the Farmers' Market). Four others have the potential for this same situation to occur. Vendor leasing the space can override any event that is taking place. There is nothing to regulate/allow vending in other locations.

SOUTH SIDE FOCUS GROUP

Community Feedback

QUALITY OF LIFE

Strengths and Opportunities

1. People access the waterfront for swimming, fishing, biking, walking.
2. The train station should be redeveloped - at least as a storefront. The only issue is traffic here.

Weaknesses/Threats

1. Traffic:
 - West Berwick Street has bad traffic because it's the way in and way out of the city, and it has too many stop signs. From Downtown Easton people take another route
 - Residents use many shortcuts (e.g., CVS parking lot and C-Town parking lot)
 - Intersection at McDonald's is bad for pedestrians
 - City steps should have crosswalks
 - Iron Street and Berwick Street intersection needs a light
 - People cross the tracks at the Abbott Street Lock. This is the main access to the biking/walking path, and should be a dedicated crossing
2. Nesquehoning Street comes close to the waterfront, but Route 611 is too dangerous. Residents of the Highlands would maybe use access there.
3. Parking at the waterfront is also an issue.
4. Need to repair sidewalks.
5. Shiloh parking lot is large but private, and they won't let anyone use it.

TOURISM

Strengths/Threats

1. Parking: This is a problem in South Side (no street parking on Philadelphia Street; parking only on one side of Berwick).
2. Fire station:
 - It's old and too small
 - Administration seems to be hinting at moving to one central station for the City, but the neighborhoods want to keep their stations

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Strengths and Opportunities

1. SSCA is organizing flags for businesses for visibility - people don't know they're there
2. Shiloh Baptist Church:
 - Originally urban renewal, but sold to one developer
 - People wanted residential here
 - Church bought it from the bank when developer went belly up
3. Black Diamond Site:
 - Residents call it "Stewart" (because of the sign). Black Diamond Industries bought it.
 - Issues with the KOZ zone
 - Owner won't sell or develop it. He currently rents one corner of the site. The rest of the property is unsafe
 - Community would like to see housing (debate between rental vs. ownership units)

STRONG AND HEALTHY CORE

Strengths and Opportunities

1. Quite a few private social clubs (marked on the map). Some of these have event capacity

(weddings, etc.). Many of these have closed.

2. Need senior center back in South Side (could be located in the vacant grocery store).
3. No gas station or bank

Weaknesses/Threats

1. Past retail environment
 - There used to be corner markets all over South Side - not there anymore. These moved out likely because of the recession, and because children didn't take over the family business. Crime was also an issue
 - Used to be a movie theater on Berwick
 - Neighborhood bars everywhere
 - Small restaurants have also closed - now there are only two full-service restaurants

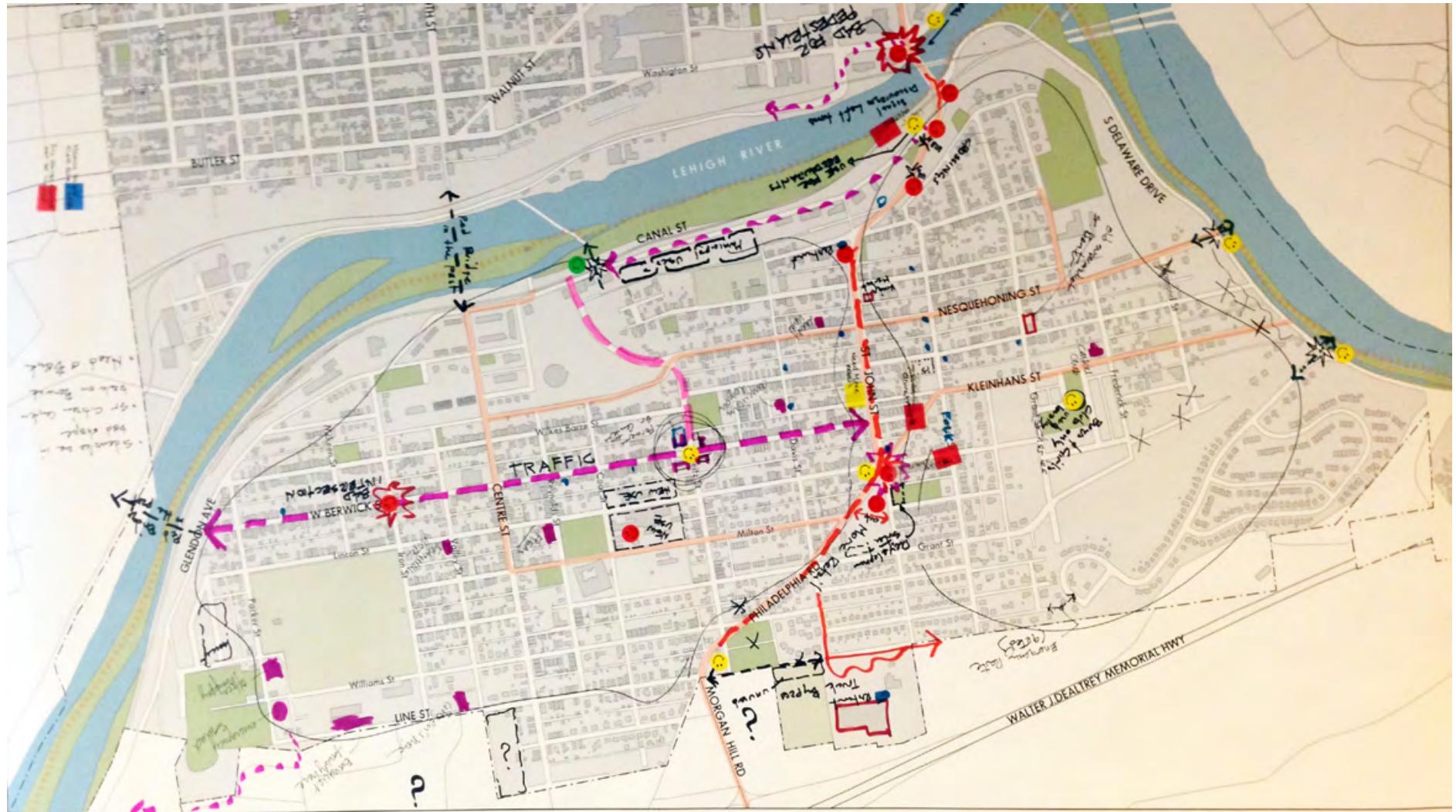
RESILIENCY

Strengths and Opportunities

1. The renaissance of Downtown Easton presents less of a draw for South Side residents.
2. Employment:
 - About 50/50 in terms of commuting to work outside of the city
 - Industrial use on the city boundary with Williams Township - should partner with them to build more

Weaknesses/Threats

1. Neston Heights
 - Helped crime in South Side, but may have increased it in West Ward
2. South Side has become more of a bedroom community recently because of the easy access. This is a noticeable transition in the neighborhood.



SOUTH SIDE FOCUS GROUP

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Community feedback map: SOUTH SIDE FOCUS GROUP



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WEST WARD FOCUS GROUP

Community Feedback

QUALITY OF LIFE

Strengths and Opportunities

1. West Ward should have a neighborhood conservation district - this requires less work than historic district.
2. Waterfront:
 - West Ward connects to the waterfront along the Lehigh River; however, this connection is not attractive or accessible
 - Existing 5 lane bridge could be redesigned for sharing. This would also slow traffic that comes into the city like an extension of the highway. 611 is still a problem because it is dangerous and needs better signage
 - Greenville, South Caroline pedestrian bridge as a good example. (<http://www.fallspark.com/pages/LibertyBridge.aspx>)
3. Need opportunities for teenagers who have nothing to do:
 - They go to the community center
 - There was a skate park proposed, but it needs to be in an area closer to some adults who would naturally police it
4. Also need more recreational facilities and/or pedestrian connection to South Side.
5. Armory building:
 - Has been on the blighted list for too long and nothing is going on
 - Owner should have taken advantage of tax credits
 - Talking about a full-service market and ethnic food

Weaknesses/Threats

1. Wood Avenue, Walnut Avenue and Ferry Street need improvements.
2. There need to be more bike/walking routes between Downtown and West Ward, specifically to these residential areas.
3. Difficult for some to get to Northampton to access the bus.
4. Easton needs city buses that circulate - current bus service is too infrequent.
5. Washington Street gets a lot of air quality problems because of the two-lane, one-way orientation.
6. There should be more four-way stops in West Ward.
7. West Ward gets traffic to and from the suburbs.
8. Idea that all West Ward streets should be converted to two way Streets
 - They were two way streets in the past
 - Problems - How does this affect bicyclists?
 - Streets are narrow, this is problematic in the snow
9. Football field:
 - During the daytime, the lot is used for parking for teachers
 - Also used for basketball
 - Playground not accessible to the public
10. Parking:
 - On-street parking is an absolute must
 - Idea of using diagonal parking on Northampton Street (10th Street has this)

TOURISM

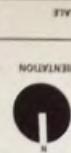
Weaknesses/Threats

1. Waterfront:
 - Definitely not enough happening there
 - Need to connect Karl Stirner Arts Trail from South Side to Downtown and West Ward (bike and pedestrian)

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Strengths and Opportunities

1. Two triangular park islands should be redeveloped in West Ward.
2. Butler Street:
 - This is a major gateway to the City for people traveling from Palmer
 - Should be an economic corridor from the City west to 13th Street
 - Currently in the Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District
 - Butler Street is one way and should be two way
 - There have been longstanding restaurants and bars on Butler at certain corners. They don't attract outsiders.
 - Also needs more street trees
3. Northampton Street:
 - 600 block of Northampton Street as part of Downtown?
 - Idea of mixed-use development (retail and either residential or office) all along Northampton Street



WESTWARD FOCUS GROUP



Community feedback map: **WEST WARD FOCUS GROUP**

- Overlay allows MU as a special exception, but this should be allowed as-of-right (Check this; it looks like “mixed residential/business” is a permitted use in the Street Corridor Enhancement Overlay District)
- In general, this district’s regulations need to be clarified. It’s confusing even Downtown
- Issue when people want to live in buildings that were historically residential and have been used for ground floor retail, and they have a hardship converting to residential

Weaknesses/Threats

1. Centre Square:
 - Too much deference to auto traffic
 - Should be reduced to one lane
 - PennDot has posed an issue in the past - too long to coordinate with them

STRONG AND HEALTHY CORE

Strengths and Opportunities

1. Street trees:
 - Idea of a tree farm along the river
 - Problem: the city makes the property owner responsible for maintenance of the trees
 - Dennis proposed a deferred public assessment policy. Property owners would have the option to pay for improvements up front, and would recoup the cost when they sell. This would be easier to implement over the long term. (Dennis wants to send economic data about this.)

Weaknesses/Threats

1. Public housing:
 - Located mainly in the southern portion of the neighborhood
 - Proposed three locations for HOPE VI, or HOPE VI-like projects
 - Public housing is somewhat isolate - they built a park near one of the projects and had some success drawing residents out
2. There are some problematic corridors but the problem is always moving. These corridors are targeted priorities by multiple organizations (redevelopment authority and WWNC). They are mostly residential, although there are some overlay districts.
 - 700 block of Ferry Street
 - Washington Street
 - Lehigh Street
 - Ferry Street (from 7th Street to 14th Street)

RESILIENCY

Strengths and Opportunities

1. Easy transit (biking and walking). (Amy owns a car but likes walking everywhere. For her, growing up in a more rural area outside the city, this is a major attraction).
2. Positive developments:
 - West Ward Neighborhood Partnership
 - Weed and Seed
 - Easton Promise Neighborhood (TBD)
 - Easton Area Community Center
3. They have programs for kids as well as adults.
4. The City needs workforce training. Allentown has a good example.

5. Can people be directed to jobs at the Silk Mill?
6. There are some light industrial areas just outside the City, but no transportation to these areas. This may make this more of a regional issue (for LVEDC, for example).

Weaknesses/Threats

1. Crime:
 - There are some random robberies, but it’s generally crime on crime.
 - Also a landlord issue
2. Absentee landlords/blight:
 - There should be a citizens’ bill of rights (Dennis)
 - Problem of LLCs owning the problem properties. They are protected, but there should be rules about how they operate (Dennis)
 - Landlord licensing law - problem was implementation, no communication between police and code office. (They were supposed to be handling complaints.)

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON HOUSING

Need for Multifamily Units in Downtown and West Ward

Long-term population projections for the City of Easton and currently generational trends, which have led to a resurgence of urban areas, suggest that demand for housing in Easton will be increasing in the near- to mid-term future. At the same time, space for developing single-family homes within Easton's city limits is very limited. Multifamily units offer a more efficient, urban housing option and can provide better and more effective access to public transportation. In addition, multifamily units, especially in a walkable downtown setting, create street-level activity, which in turn will increase the viability of local retail businesses. Multifamily units are also a real estate product that is more desirable for younger buyers and seniors who constitute much of the new demand.

Since 2008, the real estate market has turned around significantly. Multifamily units in particular have been in strong demand. The millennium generation that grew up in the suburbs is pushing into more urban areas where they are exchanging a single-family home for an apartment. Many prefer to rent, but a significant share is willing and able to buy. In particular, young professionals and seniors, downsizing from their large homes, are seeking new options in denser (urban) areas, where amenities are in walking distance. According to Ellen Shaughnessy, broker/owner of Free

Bridge Realty in Easton, downtown revitalization efforts in Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton are spurring new interest by [senior] buyers in urban properties. Perceived improvement in the cities' quality of life "has people wanting in for downtown condos and even higher-end apartments," she says.

Hyperlink:

[Lehigh Valley sales seen as 'healthiest' in the last 15 years](#)

In West Ward and Downtown Easton, multifamily housing also represents a better fit with the existing neighborhood context. The two neighborhoods currently have the highest share of multifamily buildings in the City of Easton. In West Ward, the building stock is mainly comprised of wood frame two- and three-family buildings. In contrast, housing stock in Downtown consists mainly of three- and four-story historic multifamily townhouse buildings, often with ground floor retail. New or renovated multifamily housing needs to be appropriate for each neighborhood and should take advantage of the vacant and underutilized housing stock.

Creating Ownership Options

While both rental and ownership housing should be developed in Easton, creating more ownership options should be strongly encouraged. In general, homeownership creates more stable neighborhoods where people

care more about their units and are vested in their respective neighborhood. A larger share of ownership units also makes neighborhoods less transient and strengthens the social fabric. To encourage affordable ownership housing opportunities, the City should consider programs that convert affordable rental units into ownership units, for example, through rent-to-own programs.

Distribution of Housing Values

There are a number of reasons for the wide range of housing values in the City of Easton. Homes in the College Hill neighborhood, for example, are mostly large, detached single-family houses. Historically, these houses were occupied by affluent families in Easton living in elevated neighborhoods overlooking the picturesque Delaware River valley. Today many of these grand homes are occupied by college employees or rented by students of the neighboring college.

Houses in West Ward are valued significantly lower than in neighboring areas. High vacancies, illegal conversions of single-family units to multifamily apartments and resulting overcrowding, and perception of crime in the area have depressed values in West Ward. In addition, the large presence of absentee landlords, who are unwilling or unable to adequately maintain their properties, has contributed to blighted conditions in some locations in West Ward. The housing stock in South Side has a larger share of smaller housing units (i.e., single- and two-family houses), which

are less prone to overcrowding. In addition, more homes in South Side are owner occupied than in West Ward and tend to be better maintained. Downtown Easton has the largest number of multifamily units (e.g., more than 50 percent of buildings have five or more units); at the same time homeownership is by far the lowest at about 13 percent.

Housing Affordability

The long waiting list for units available through the Easton Housing Department shows that significant demand for affordable housing exists. Almost one third of resident households in Easton earn \$25,000 or less per year and about 20 percent earn \$15,000 or less per year. The United States National Housing Act of 1937 established that households can devote 30 percent of household income to housing before the household is considered to be "burdened." Based on this assumption, the approximately 2,100 households earning less than \$15,000 cannot spend more than \$375 per month on housing before considered cost burdened. An additional 1,450 households earn between \$15,000 and \$25,000 and cannot afford units costing more than \$625 per month. Many of the public housing units in Easton target very low-income households while low- and moderate-income households are having difficulties finding adequate housing.

Housing and Vacancies

High vacancies and demand for multifamily housing are not necessarily contradicting findings. While in Downtown Easton vacancies have approached 20 percent, private developers have converted multifamily properties in Downtown that are fully occupied. Downtown with its historic structures, central location, and many amenities is very attractive to younger and older residents. However, current conditions and existing regulations make it difficult to attract new residents. Changes in regulations and incentives to private developers to acquire and rehab units would be important tools to reverse the process and attract more residents to Downtown Easton.

In West Ward, there is also a mismatch between demand and existing housing conditions. Blight, caused by vacant properties and badly maintained buildings, has created an atmosphere that is not conducive for families. Creating an environment that would attract more families would require the City to step up its efforts to change conditions in West Ward. For example, the City should strengthen its program to obtain properties from unresponsive landlords, create land use regulation that would legalize multifamily use in current single-family buildings, and remove blighted properties to curb their negative impact on neighboring properties.

CREDITS

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