

Schwenksville

Community Revitalization Plan



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Task Force Members:

Nathaniel Dysard, Schwenksville Borough Council
Michael Galla, Schwenksville Borough Manager
Joseph Giunta, Mayor of Schwenksville
Joseph Laird, Schwenksville Borough Business Owner
Kathy Miller, Schwenksville Borough
Lee Ann Miller, Schwenksville Borough Council
Joseph Nixon, Montgomery County Planning Commission
Pamela Ruoff, Schwenksville Borough Historic Preservation Committee
Gary Schneider, Schwenksville Borough Planning Commission
Glenn Umberger, Schwenksville Borough

Report prepared by:

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Montgomery County Courthouse
PO Box 311
Norristown, PA 19404

*All photos and graphics provided by MCPC or Schwenksville Borough unless otherwise noted

Schwenksville

Community Revitalization Plan

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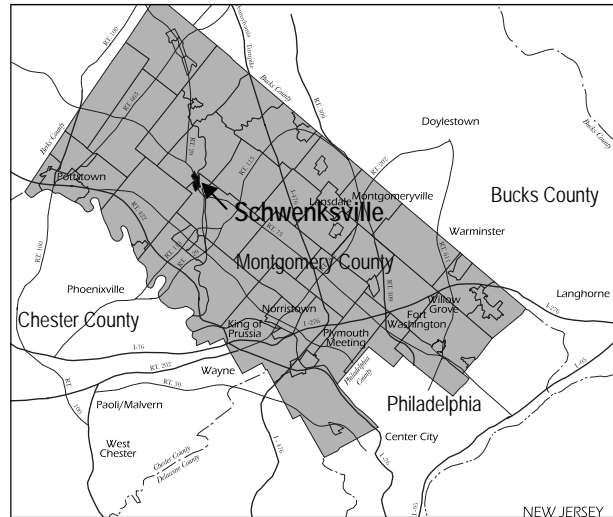
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Community Profile

Regional Setting

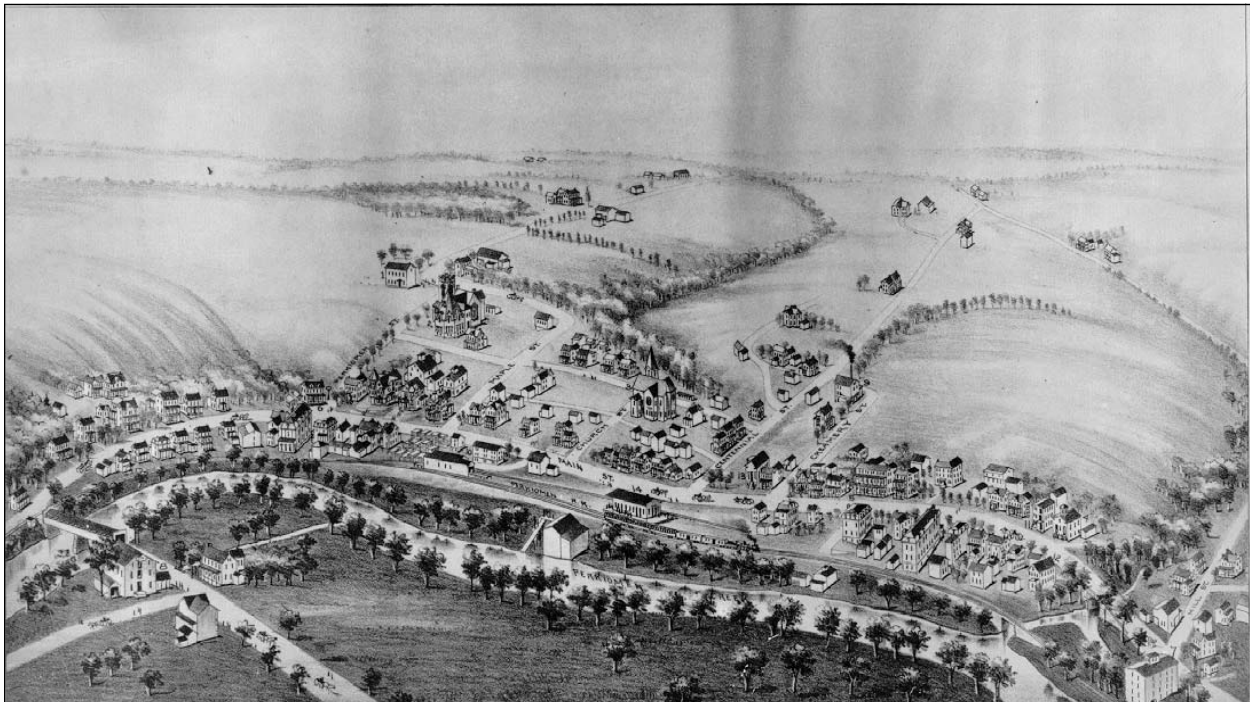
Schwenksville is part of the Central Perkiomen Valley Region, located approximately 35 miles northwest from Philadelphia in Montgomery County. The Region includes the three townships of Lower Frederick, Perkiomen, and Upper Frederick and the three boroughs of Collegeville, Schwenksville, and Trappe. Schwenksville is bounded by the Perkiomen Creek to the north, Perkiomen Township to the east, Lower Frederick Township to the west, and Upper Salford to the northwest. The Region is situated near U.S. Route 422 and Schwenksville itself is at the crossroads of Routes 73 and 29.

Over the past ten years, the Central Perkiomen Valley Region has experienced significant growth. While not anticipated to continue at this pace, the population of the Region is expected to continue increasing over the next two decades. The intent of the Region's 2005 Comprehensive Plan is not to stop this growth, but rather better manage growth by directing growth into areas that are well suited for a growing population, while being sensitive to those areas that are vulnerable.



Schwenksville's location in Montgomery County.

Schwenksville is located at the approximate midpoint of the 25.5-mile Perkiomen Trail and midway between Collegeville (six miles to the south) and Green Lane (six miles to the north). The Borough was the first Greenway Community in the State—a community that places a high value on



A historic map of Schwenksville in 1894.

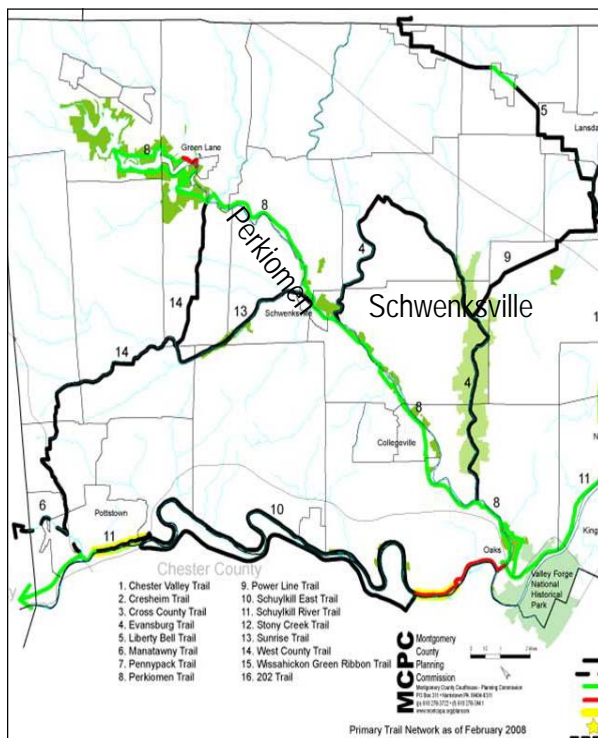
natural resources, open space and trails. Opened in 2003, the Perkiomen Trail connection formed the basis of the economic development strategy in the Borough's 2001 Revitalization Plan.

Historical Background

The Borough of Schwenksville was originally part of Perkiomen Township. Hans Michael Schwenk was the original settler early on, but it was not until the 1880s that a village was settled. Pennsylvania's first copper mine operated near Schwenksville prior to 1720. A flour mill and grist mill were established in 1730 and Peter Pennebacker built a mill in 1775 (which later became known as Pennypacker Mills). A store built in 1818 and a hotel built in 1845 were among the early businesses in the area (built by Jacob Schwenk the great-grandson). Later in the eighteenth century, icehouses, a creamery, and a clothing factory were established.

Bridge construction over the Perkiomen Creek in 1832 opened up the Village further, as did the construction of Gravel Pike, which connected Collegeville to Sumneytown, passing through Schwenksville in 1846. The railroad reached Schwenksville in

Location of Schwenksville Along the Perkiomen Trail



1869 making this area a resort destination. Schwenksville Borough was incorporated in 1903 from land from Perkiomen Township. In 1972, the Highland Terrace development was annexed from Lower Frederick Township.

Prior to the construction of these modern roadways, much of the Region was accessed via the Perkiomen-Sumneytown Turnpike and the Pennsylvania-Reading Railroad. It has been the Region's accessibility and optimum location along the Perkiomen Creek that has helped to define its rich history. Because of its proximity to Philadelphia, the Region played an integral part in the lives of many of the city's residents.

The Region was responsible for supplying much of Philadelphia's food products and its location along the Creek made the Central Perkiomen Valley ideal for mills and icehouses. The community was also a resort destination centered on the Perkiomen Creek and surrounding farms and woodlands. More recently, the Region has been defined as a "bedroom community" with many of its residents working in either the city or elsewhere in the surrounding Greater Philadelphia region.

With the dawn of the railroad, the Region became a resort destination for weekend and summer visitors from Philadelphia. The Village of Spring Mount, in nearby Lower Frederick, was the recreational and tourist center of the Perkiomen; vacationers stayed at the Zieglerville Inn and the Weldon House, as well as other lodging facilities. The Perkiomen Creek and nearby parkland, reminders of the Valley's past as a resort destination, are again becoming a destination with the development of the Perkiomen Trail. Winter sports are the main attraction at nearby regional ski resort Spring Mountain. The mountain features other outdoor experiences throughout the year such as a zip line Canopy Tour, rock climbing and hiking. Other regional attractions include: the Philadelphia Folk Festival held every August; the Pennypacker Mills Historic Site; Ursinus College; and Ott's Greenhouse.

Community Analysis

In an effort to illustrate the community's strengths, as well as its weaknesses, this will outline some of the main points regarding Schwenksville's population, housing, and economic trends. Information is largely drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census for Montgomery County, which is still applicable in terms of major trends and characteristics; more current information has been used wherever possible. Demographic characteristics provide insight when planning for economic revitalization.

Existing Land Use (2004)

Schwenksville is only 0.54 square miles in size and has little remaining land for new development. An estimated 60 percent (140 acres) of land in

Schwenksville is dedicated to residential uses. Schwenksville has long been a residential community with minimal-to-moderate amounts of land used for commercial and industrial uses. Schwenksville maintains a diversity of residential housing units, with the majority being multi-family buildings of at least five units and single-family detached units, as census data supports below. The two largest clusters of residential development are: in the northern area of the Borough, north of Game Farm Road; and, in the southern area, between Walnut Street and Schwenk Avenue (Spring Mount Summit and Highpoint Townhomes).

Commercial and office uses occupy six percent of the land in Schwenksville. Most of these uses are clustered around Main Street (Route 29). The Perkiomen Trail runs through the heart of the commercial district. The 15 acres of commercial development in the Borough contains all retail, office and mixed uses.

Industrial uses account for less than one percent of the total land use within the Borough and comprise 0.72 acres in two parcels clustered within the commercial district, along the eastern corridor of the Borough. In the past fifty years, Schwenksville's industry has sharply declined as many of its former businesses have been converted into offices or apartments.

At just under 31 acres, institutional land use is the second most common land use in Schwenksville, accounting for 31 percent of all land uses. Much of this land belongs to area churches and the Perkiomen Valley School District. All institutional land is clustered in the central and southern portions of the Borough, with general proximity to Second Street.

Parks and recreational areas account for eight percent of all land use in Schwenksville. The

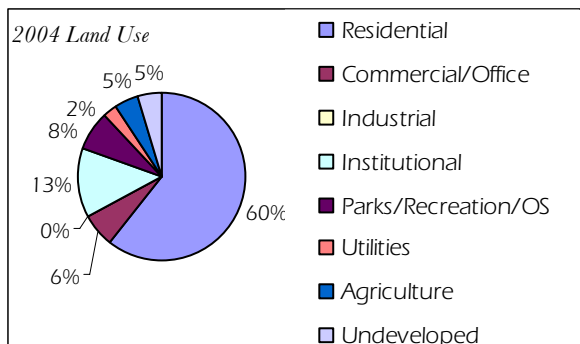


A historic home on Main Street in Schwenksville.



Below:
Land Use, 2004

Land Use	2004	
	Acres	% Total
Residential	139.72	60%
Commercial/Office	14.94	6%
Industrial	0.72	0%
Institutional	30.81	13%
Parks/Recreation/OS	17.63	8%
Utilities	5.64	2%
Agriculture	11.11	5%
Water	N/A	
Total Developed	220.57	95%
Total Undeveloped	10.59	5%
Total Acreage*	231.16	100%





Single family detached housing in Schwenksville.

Borough has gained park and recreation lands through the construction of the Perkiomen Trail, part of which threads through Schwenksville. Agricultural lands are clustered along the western edge of Schwenksville, on the border with Perkiomen Township. These lands total 11 acres (5%) of all land uses within the Borough.

Utilities account for two percent of land in Schwenksville, approximately 6 acres. These parcels are owned by entities such as Bell Atlantic and Philadelphia Electric Company. Other parcels of land used for utilities are owned by the Schwenksville Borough Authority. In addition, there are four cell towers in the Borough (on Borough Authority land) including one tower which is part of Montgomery County's 911 communication system.

Roughly eleven acres in Schwenksville are underutilized or undeveloped land. These lands, which account for five percent of all land uses in the Borough, are scattered throughout. Most of the undeveloped land is vacant residential lots that are privately owned. One significant parcel is the Clemens tract on Centennial Street.

As evident above, most of Schwenksville's land is developed. Therefore, any new development is ex-



An example of Schwenksville's historic architecture.

pected to be in the form of redevelopment. The Borough has placed a high value on its existing open spaces; open areas increase to 18 percent of all land uses when agricultural land and undeveloped land is added to parks and recreational uses.

Population

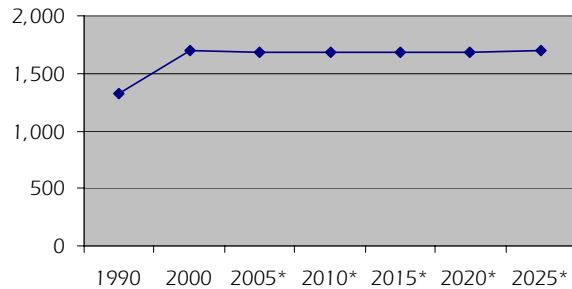
Schwenksville has been the smallest municipality in the Central Perkiomen Region since 1950 and has experienced less population change compared to other similar communities. From 1990 to 2000, the village experienced a growth rate of 28 percent, an increase of 367 people to its year 2000 population of 1,693. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) predicted Schwenksville's population would increase gradually in the future, at a rate of approximately 1% to 2%, with more growth predicted between 2000 and 2010 (4.8%).

Because a census has not been conducted since 2000, the exact current population of the Township is unknown; however, the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) has estimated the current population using known and occupied housing units built since 2000. This analysis shows that the 2008 estimated population is on track for—but will likely fall short of—the forecasted 2010 population of 1,397 persons. MCPC's estimates indicate a 2008 population of 1,365 persons, a two percent increase from the 2000 population. DVRPC forecasts a five percent population change between 2000 and 2010. However, the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Plan anticipates little or no growth in Schwenksville through 2020; growth is expected to be focused in other regional communities.

Household types in Schwenksville have changed notably since the 1990 U.S. Census Report. Single-person, non-family households increased by more than 80 percent; "other" family increased by 67 percent; and, single parent households increased by 59 percent. Although the latter two still represent a relatively small proportion of the population (six and nine percent, respectively), at 40 percent, one-person, non-family households are now the largest segment of Schwenksville's population. Married couples—with children (-24%) and without children (-8%)—decreased by more than 30 percent between 1990 and the 2000 U.S. Census Report. While this shift in household types resembles nationwide trends, Schwenksville's changes are more dramatic. Furthermore, the average household size has decreased from 2.6 persons to 2.2 persons in each household, the lowest household size of the region.

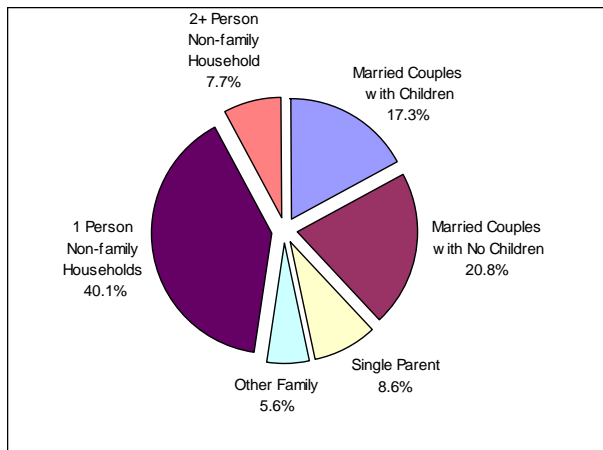
Population Growth and Projections

Year	Population
1990	1,326
2000	1,693
2005*	1,690
2010*	1,690
2015*	1,690
2020*	1,690
2025*	1,700



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 2000; DVRPC projections.

* Projected population



Changes in Household Types

Household Types	1990	% Total	2000	% Total	% Change
	Number		Number		1990 to 2000
Married Couples with Children	142	27.8%	108	17.3%	-23.9%
Married Couples with No Children	141	27.6%	130	20.8%	-7.8%
Single Parent	34	6.7%	54	8.6%	58.8%
Other Family	21	4.1%	35	5.6%	66.7%
1 Person Non-family Households	137	26.8%	251	40.1%	83.2%
2+ Person Non-family Household	36	7.0%	48	7.7%	33.3%
Total No. of Households	511	100%	626	100%	22.5%
Average People per Household	2.49		2.13		-14.6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

The largest segments of Schwenksville's population are those age 35 to 44 (16%), age 5 to 17 (13%), and age 25 to 34 (12%). However, The 25 to 34 year old age cohort experienced a 40 percent decline between the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census Report; this age group represented 25 percent of the Borough's population in 1990. The number of children under five decreased by 42 percent in the same time period. Combined with the very minimal population increase and the decrease in married couples discussed above, these trends indicate that Schwenksville is an aging population. The 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age cohorts both increased by 54% and 46% respectively. While still representing less than eight percent of the population, residents age 75 and older increased by 60 percent.

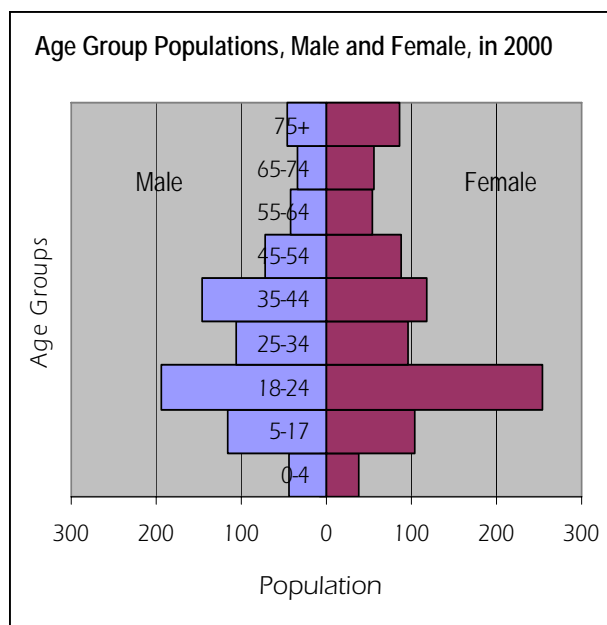
In the 2010 U.S. Census Report, the community expects to see an increase in younger, married couples with and without children. Anecdotal evidence indicates that this population is moving into Schwenksville in large numbers. This could be attributed to many things, including: a housing supply more affordable than surrounding communities; older residents leaving their homes due to passing on or moving into other living arrangements; and an attractive quality of life.

Housing

Schwenksville has a balanced and diverse housing stock. Multi-family housing units have made up more than 50 percent of the housing stock in Schwenksville since 1990. The ratio of all multi-family to all single-family housing increased from 51%:49% in 1990 to 56%:44% in 2000, representing a 35% increase in multifamily housing units (273 units). In fact, Schwenksville leads the Central Perkiomen region in multifamily housing units. Since 2000, however, the only new housing units produced were fifteen single-family detached units. Multifamily housing containing five units or more is the most prevalent housing type, at 40%. Single-family detached housing is the second most common housing type in the Borough (34%). Nearly 70 percent of the housing stock was built before

1970. While the Central Perkiomen Valley region has seen considerable growth in the last two decades, Schwenksville and Collegeville have seen the least housing unit growth in the region.

In 2000, the median housing value in the Borough was \$123,100, which is 78 percent of the median value for all of Montgomery County (\$158,600). The median gross rent was \$572. According to a report compiled by the Montgomery County Planning Commission using Board of Assessment data, the 2008 median sales price for a home in Schwenksville was \$129,750, an increase of 18 percent from 2000 values. The median sales price for the County was \$269,700 in 2008, which represents an increase of 70 percent over 2000 values. Median home values in Schwenksville are now half of the countywide median home value. In fact, Schwenksville is considered the 2nd most affordable community in the County, more expensive only than Norristown.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; *Census of Population and Housing, 2000*.

Within Schwenksville, only one percent of housing units were considered substandard in 2000. Substandard units are those properties that either lack plumbing or are overcrowded. All six of Schwenksville's substandard units (rental and owner-occupied) are overcrowded; no housing units in the Borough lack plumbing.

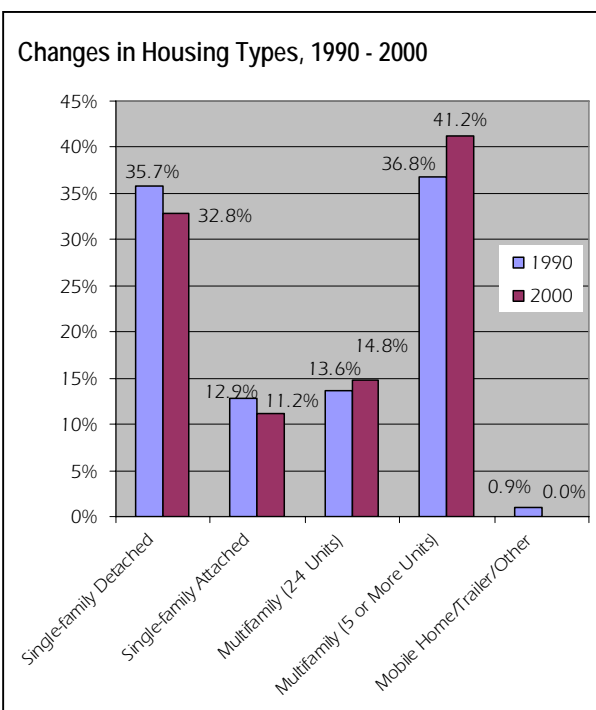
Education

The largest percentage of Schwenksville's population (38%) has graduated high school without any further schooling; however, this percentage has decreased two percentage points since 1990. The next largest segment of the population has some college,

but no degree (20%), followed by those who earned a bachelor's degree (15%). The largest changes between 1990 and 2000 are a 37 percent decrease in those with less than a ninth grade education; a 31 percent increase in those with some college and no degree; and a 27 percent increase in those residents with a graduate or professional degree.

Income and Employment

The median household income in Schwenksville increased from \$34,828 in 1989 to \$44,514 in 1999, an increase of 28 percent. Per capita income also increased during this time period, by roughly \$2,000 (33%) to \$19,679. It is possible that these changes in income levels may be linked to Schwenksville's education levels, as greater numbers of Borough residents are continuing their edu-



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; *Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000*.

cation beyond ninth grade, creating a more skilled labor force. Schwenksville's income figures are nearly half those of Montgomery County's median household income and per capita income for 1999, \$60,829 and \$30,898 respectively. Schwenksville's income figures are also considerably lower than median and per capita incomes in the Central Perkiomen Valley region. However, the Borough's income figures are similar to the statewide figures, at \$40,106 and \$20,880, respectively.

Schwenksville has a diverse mix of occupations among its working-age population. The total number of employed persons living in the Borough is 924; the majority of these are employed in the cleri-

cal/office (21%) and professional (20%) industries, together accounting for approximately 40 percent of the total work force. Nearly equal numbers of residents (70-100 persons) are employed in each of the following sectors: production/transportation (14%), services (12%), construction (12%), management (11%), and sales (10%). Less than one percent are employed by farming.

The total employed persons living in Schwenksville has decreased by three percent since the 1990 U.S. Census Report. DVRPC's employment forecasts indicate a continued reduction in the total work force living in Schwenksville through 2035, for a total decrease of eight percent compared to 1990 numbers.

Economic Development

Traditionally, the businesses in Schwenksville served the Borough as well as portions of the surrounding townships: Lower Frederick, Perkiomen, Upper Salford, Lower Salford, Skippack, Upper Frederick, and Limerick. Downtown Schwenksville has approximately twenty pedestrian-oriented retail businesses, including neighborhood serving retail and destination stores. Main Street currently has a significant amount of vacant or underutilized storefronts and second floor offices. The existing businesses are listed below.

In addition to vacant storefronts, many occupied buildings are in need of a facelift. There is a unique mix of older, historic buildings and newer buildings along Main Street. Both the older and the newer buildings are in need of cosmetic upgrades. Some businesses in Schwenksville, such as Tailwind and Moccia's Main Street Eatery, are doing and looking quite well. This plan will recommend assistance programs to business owners to help them maintain good existing conditions and improve deteriorating ones.

Infrastructure

Schwenksville's infrastructure quality is sufficient to meet the needs of the community. The Schwenksville Borough Authority—a public water supplier—currently provides water service to Schwenksville Borough, as well as parts of Lower Frederick and Perkiomen. 316 residential and 29 non-residential connections are served in Schwenksville. Water is supplied from groundwater from four wells within the borough and Lower Frederick Township. Public sewage disposal systems are available to Schwenksville Borough as well as small areas of Perkiomen and Lower Frederick Townships. These areas are served by the Schwenksville Borough Authority's Plant, which has a capacity of 0.3 mgd (as of February 2002).

Transportation

Roadway access to Schwenksville is excellent from all directions; Route 79/23, Schwenksville Road, State Farm Road, etc. For the most part, Schwenksville's human-scaled streets and architecture create

Largest Employers, 2005

Rank	Employer	Industry	Employees
1	Colonnade of Schwenksville	Retirement Community	160
2	Perkiomen Valley School District	Education	80
3	Liberty Ministries	Charity	42
4	PMA Medical Specialist	Medical Practice	25
5	Jerusalem Lutheran Nursery	Education	22
6	Louis P. Sigel & Son, Inc.	Insurance	15
7	Medical Component, Inc.	Manufacturing/Distribution	12
8	Schwenksville Borough Authority	Infrastructure	11
9	Robert Slater, Inc.	Excavating	10
10	Univest Corporation	Bank	7

Source: Borough of Schwenksville, 2005.

Changes in Educational Achievement Level of Residents, 1990 - 2000

Educational Level	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	1990-2000
Less than 9th grade	54	6.2%	34	3.6%	-37.0%
9th through 12th grade, no diploma	104	12.0%	120	12.7%	15.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	349	40.3%	360	38.2%	3.2%
Some college, no degree	144	16.6%	188	19.9%	30.6%
Associate degree	53	6.1%	54	5.7%	1.9%
Bachelor's degree	127	14.6%	141	15.0%	11.0%
Graduate or Professional degree	36	4.2%	46	4.9%	27.8%
Total Pop. 25 years and older	867	100%	943	100%	8.8%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Census of Population and Housing, 1990, 2000.

a pedestrian environment that should be comfortable and conducive to wide use by residents. Much of the Borough is considered very “walkable.” However, residents note that the sidewalk condition is poor, particularly along Main Street, and uncomfortable due to the speeds and nature of Main Street.

In a community survey, Schwenksville residents identified a lack of parking in the Main Street area and throughout the Borough as problematic. Residents also cited a lack of public transit options.

Main Street Businesses, 2009

Neighborhood Retail	
2	Personal service (barber & tattoo parlor)
1	Used clothing store
1	Liquor store
Neighborhood Services	
1	Laundromat
1	Food store
2	Insurance sales
1	Real estate office
1	Doctor's office
1	Electric supply
Neighborhood Dining	
1	Pizza shop
1	Cafe
Destination Retail	
1	Bicycle shop
1	Antique store
Other	
2	Banks
1	Gas station
1	Gold store

While on-street parking exists in the Borough, particularly along Main Street, it is considered dangerous to use due to its relation to the roadway.

Public Safety / Services

In terms of revitalization, the most pressing public safety issue in Schwenksville may be the traffic along Main Street. It operates at a high volume that is either speeding through the Borough or backed up, creating gridlock. The Borough no longer has its own police force, so enforcement of traffic control falls to the State of Pennsylvania, the owner of the roadway. State Highway Patrol vehicles have been patrolling the roadway regularly.






A residential section of Main Street.


This plan will offer recommendations to help control traffic with streetscaping and traffic calming. Other initiatives must be approved by Pennsylvania's Department of Transportation.

There has also been a slight vandalism problem in the Borough, particularly in Meadow Park. The park is dark and partially obscured by vegetation. Local teenagers have been using this area as a hang-out and have caused some damage to light fixtures and playground equipment. Regional attractions can be difficult to reach from Schwenksville without a car, leaving the teenagers in the Borough without many activities focused on keeping them engaged. This plan will propose after-school and summer time activities geared towards giving teens more options in the Borough.

Schwenksville:
Gateway to the Perkiomen Trail
Pennsylvania's First Greenway Community

Draft 12.05.01



Prepared by:
Simone Jaffe Collins Incorporated
Landscape Architecture

E. L. Crow Inc.
Economic & Marketing Consultants

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Recent Development and Planning Accomplishments

2001 Revitalization Plan Accomplishments

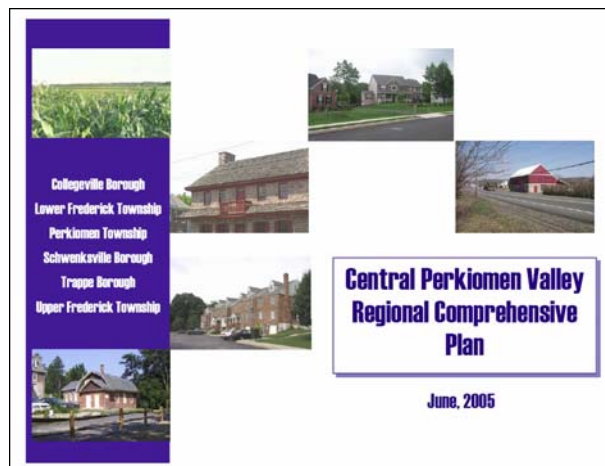
The vision of Schwenksville's 2001 Revitalization Plan was to "reinvent itself as a 'greenway community' in order to attract complimentary businesses and activities that will enliven and reenergize Borough lie while stimulating the economy." This vision was based largely on the Borough's location as the Gateway to the Perkiomen Trail, which opened through the Borough in 2003. Elements of this vision included capitalizing on: historic tourist/resort heritage; eco-tourism; natural resources; recreational opportunities; cultural institutions; and architectural heritage.

The Borough has seen some success implementing the 2001 Revitalization Plan. However, much of its recommendations were based on the redevelopment of a single, large property on Main Street that has yet to occur. Many of the previous plans recommendations have gone unfulfilled. Schwenksville has begun efforts to catalogue and preserve its historic heritage and was able to secure funding and build a trail gateway at the intersection of the Perkiomen Trail and Route 73 at the southern end of the Borough. Further, revitalization money was used to construct a sidewalk ramp to connect the trail gateway to the sidewalks on Main Street. The Borough has also implemented many of the zoning changes recommended by the plan that support a mixed use town center. This plan will include some elements described in the previous plan that are still relevant to Schwenksville's current revitalization efforts, particularly streetscaping and traffic calming.

Summary of Other Relevant Plans

2005 Central Perkiomen Valley Region Comprehensive Plan

The Region's Comprehensive Plan identifies Schwenksville as a Borough Conservation Area,



including also Collegeville, Trappe and a small portion of Lower Frederick, adjacent to Schwenksville. Historically, this area has been the economic and social center for the Region and was the original site of early development in the Central Perkiomen Valley. The area is primarily developed and characterized by a mix of land uses, existing public infrastructure, and a variety of housing types at varying densities. Future development in the Borough Conservation Area will be in the form of infill development and should be compatible with the character of the area and the heritage of the Region. Municipal codes should encourage new development in this area by providing for flexible standards that are supportive of infill development and that provide standards for the preservation of the existing character of the Boroughs. Infill residential development will be encouraged at 1 to 12 units per acre.



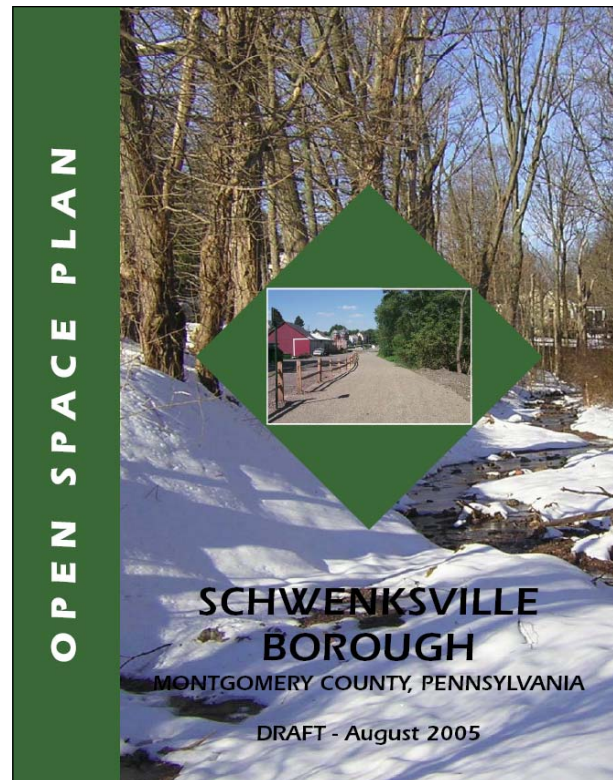
The new sidewalk ramp from the trail gateway to Main Street.

As a Borough Conservation Area, Schwenksville's revitalization efforts are encouraged by the plan as a benefit to the entire region. Additionally, the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Planning Commission has undertaken a Regional Transportation and Community Character Study that suggests a number of transportation improvements with the idea of enhancing the community character instead of detracting from it. For Schwenksville, the study endorses streetscaping, painting and providing signage for on-street parking, and signal enhancements at certain intersections, most notably a left turn arrow at the intersection of main Street and Perkiomen Avenue. The Transportation and Community Character Study was finalized in 2009 and has become an official part of the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Plan.

2005 Schwenksville Open Space Plan

In 2006 the Borough completed its Open Space Plan. The plan establishes the Borough's goals for the preservation of its natural features and potential open space and recreation opportunities. The Open Space Plan is especially relevant to Schwenksville's revitalization because the plan makes specific recommendations concerning the Perkiomen Trail, a major amenity and one of the Borough's biggest assets. The Borough has already used the plan to obtain funds from Montgomery County to improve certain areas around the Trail. It has used county funding to construct a new trail gateway at the intersection of Route 73 and the Perkiomen Trail at the southern end of the Borough.

Future work will center around Meadow Park and improvements to the areas around the Perkiomen Trail, which will have economic revitalization as well as open space benefits.



The new trail gateway area, looking from Schwenksville along the trail to the southeast.

By analyzing all of the information from the previous chapter, including demographic and historical trends, a clearer picture of Schwenksville's strengths and weaknesses emerges. As Schwenksville Borough looks to revitalize its Main Street it is important to examine these strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats facing the Borough as it revitalizes. This Revitalization Plan seeks to build on Schwenksville's inherent strengths and mitigate its weaknesses.

Strengths

Historic Architecture and Character. There are a number of historic Victorian homes and other buildings throughout Schwenksville. Many of these properties have remained well maintained since they were built at the turn of the last century. This unique historic and architectural heritage helps establish the Borough's identity as a destination.

Affordability. Significantly, many of these historic



The Perkiomen trail in Schwenksville.

homes and buildings are in good shape and remain affordable. It is easier to maintain a high quality of life in Schwenksville compared to the more expensive communities surrounding the Borough. Even with all its amenities Schwenksville has remained affordable for young families looking to own their first homes.

Main Street. Although commercial and dining opportunities are limited along Main Street, it remains a walkable, easily accessible commercial corridor lined with historic homes and structures with easy access to the Perkiomen Creek and Trail. This is an amenity the Borough should look to develop as it revitalizes.

Perkiomen Creek and Trail. Along with the Perkiomen Trail, the Perkiomen Creek runs along the Borough's eastern border. The Creek and Trail are natural amenities that provide opportunities for boating, fishing, hiking, biking, and other outdoor activities. The trail is 19-miles long and connects the Schuylkill River Trail to Green Lane Park. Not only does this amenity provide access to open space, but it also brings thousands of visitors a month through Schwenksville and along Main Street.

Existing Businesses. Although Schwenksville's primary commercial corridor is small, there are some businesses that are doing quite well. Tailwind Bicycles and Moccia's Main Street Eatery are two examples of Borough businesses that have thrived by marketing to Borough residents, trail users, and other visitors.

Philadelphia Folk Festival. This music festival held just outside the Borough attracts thousands of visitors every summer. The event features internationally known artists and performers for one of the most famous and well-attended music festivals in the region. The Borough could market to festival goers and promote its own mini concerts and events.



The Perkiomen Valley Library in Schwenksville.

Spring Mount Ski Area. This local attraction boasts year-round activities beyond winter sports. A summer zip line canopy tour, a fall hayride, haunted woods, and nature walks round out an all-year attraction. All of this is just outside the Borough, making Schwenksville the closest town with a definable Main Street.

Location. In addition to its proximity to regionally known events and amenities, there are a host of attractions surrounding Schwenksville. Otts Nursery is a popular plant store just outside the Borough with a distinctive greenhouse and a wide variety of exotic and domestic house plants. Penny-packer Mills is a regionally significant park and historical site located just across the Perkiomen Creek. Ursinus College, a nationally recognized institution, is also located nearby. The baseball fields located west of the Borough in Perkiomen Township have begun to draw many visitors for organized and unorganized games. Finally, Green Lane Reservoir and Park are located directly to the northwest of the Borough, offering boating, fishing, swimming, and other activities.

Market Area. Despite being a small borough, whose businesses largely serve the needs of the immediate community, Schwenksville is the only community center for many of the surrounding townships. Lower Frederick, Perkiomen, and Lower Salford Townships all lack a defined Main Street with a strong sense of place. Schwenksville Borough often meets the needs of these communities as a town center. This increases the potential market area from which local businesses can draw and should be a point of pride for local residents and businesses.

Unique Small-Town Identity. As a borough with a definable character, strong building stock, and aesthetic appeal, Schwenksville is poised to capitalize on its unique identity. Beyond its infrastructural bones, Schwenksville has an active and involved

population dedicated to the Borough's prosperity and successful future.

Active Community Institutions. There are a number of institutions in Schwenksville that contribute to its identity and strong sense of community. The Schwenksville Public Library has been highly active in the community, offering children's educational programs and several outreach projects. There are a number of churches throughout the Borough that are active in the community, running food pantries, festivals, and other activities. The Borough also has a Rotary Club and a Women's Civic Club that run the annual Community Day and Halloween Parade. Finally, the Borough has an engaged and active Fire Company that even has its own mini museum dedicated to historical fire fighting equipment.

Walkability. Schwenksville Borough is a small, compact community with sidewalks on most streets. It is an easy walk for almost every resident to reach schools, open space, shops, cultural events, or restaurants within minutes. This is an essential component of the Borough's small-town charm.

Weaknesses

Traffic. Although Schwenksville's location brings thousands of visitors to the Borough every day, there are some unintended consequences of being such a hub. For all the drivers who pass through Schwenksville on Main Street, most are doing just that, passing through. Many of these drivers consider Schwenksville a place to get through on their way to work or home and not a destination for dining, retail, or entertainment.

Because there is so much traffic on Main Street, many key intersections become choked with cars at



A historic photo of a home in Schwenksville.



The Schwenksville Lumber Yard Site on Main Street.

peak times, backing traffic up in both directions. Because of the physical constraints imposed by steep hills, the Perkiomen Creek, and existing businesses, improvements that could relieve this stress are difficult, if not impossible. This congestion detracts from the character and aesthetic quality of the Borough.

Attempts to relieve the congestion have resulted in some intersections that are especially unfriendly to pedestrians. There are a number of intersections along Main Street that do not have traffic lights. When cars and trucks are speeding along, these crossings can be particularly difficult for pedestrians (especially older or younger ones) to navigate.

At times when Main Street isn't backed up it often seems that people drive too fast through the Borough, enhancing the perception that Schwenksville is a place you pass through on the way to other places, not a destination in its own right. This also has the negative effect of making it seem unsafe for pedestrians to cross Main Street or cars to park there, further diminishing the Borough's small-town feel.

Existing Businesses. Although there are a few businesses along Main Street that are consistent with a viable downtown, there is a lack of options in certain areas. There is an opportunity for greater options for dining, entertaining, and boutique shopping in the Borough.

Signage. There is a definite lack of signage throughout Schwenksville. The intersection of Route 29 and Route 73 has been improved as a gateway, but signs or banners have yet to be added. There should be signs along Main Street celebrating Schwenksville's historic character, local businesses, attractions, natural amenities, and parking.

Pedestrian Crossings. As noted above, it can be confusing, difficult, or even dangerous to cross Main Street at certain places. Traffic calming efforts are needed to make these crossings safer. As a state-owned roadway, the ultimate decision for control of Main Street resides with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Parking. Most residents of Schwenksville feel there is a lack of parking for businesses along Main Street in the Borough. Certainly, visitors need to be made aware of parking the Borough has that is not immediately clear. Besides off-street parking, on street facilities are not marked, there is no delineation of parking spaces on the roadway and no signs directing visitors where it is or is not acceptable to park.

Main Street Design Issues. Although most of the historic buildings in the Borough are well maintained, there are a few older structures that are in a state of disrepair. Particularly along Main Street there are historic buildings that are empty or otherwise in great need of rehabilitation to make them more consistent with the character of a revitalizing Schwenksville. Further, there are contemporary buildings that are out of character with the rest of the Borough.

Analysis

Although Schwenksville is the closest town to several attractions and regional events, it faces some competition for the visitors to those destinations. Skippack Township has a number of restaurants and quaint shopping opportunities, it may draw some of the visitors that Schwenksville would like to attract. This competition may make it difficult to expand Schwenksville's restaurant and retail sector. Further, traffic volumes on Main Street make it difficult to create a safe and attractive commercial center. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation owns the roadway, meaning that any at-



The intersection of Game Farm Road and Main Street in Schwenksville.

tempt at traffic calming has to be approved by the state, a potential obstacle to the Borough's revitalization efforts.

Despite the challenges facing Schwenksville, there are a number of opportunities that will help the Borough revitalize. The redevelopment of the Lumber Yard Site in the heart of the Main Street Commercial area will allow for more retail and office space, in addition to attached residential uses.

Early plans also include restaurant space, a needed feature for the Borough and an immediate area that lacks dining options. Despite nearby competition, Schwenksville would like to establish its own niche, one that distinguishes it from other communities in the region.

There is also a tremendous opportunity to market the Borough to the events and attractions that surround it. The Perkiomen Creek and Trail, Spring Mount, Pennypacker Mills, the Green Lane Reservoir, and the Philadelphia Folk Festival all bring

thousands of visitors into the Schwenksville area. The Borough could make itself the place people automatically think to go after a day of skiing, fishing, hiking, biking, or enjoying any of the surrounding amenities.



Borough residents dancing during Community Day in 2009, a celebration of Schwenksville's small town heritage and charm.

3

Community Outreach

Community Outreach: Establishing a vision for Schwenksville's revitalization.

As Schwenksville reconsiders its revitalization priorities, it is essential to include a strong community outreach element. The vision for the community established by this plan cannot exist without significant input from community members. This is Schwenksville's plan for its future, its recommendations should reflect the desires and attitudes of borough residents.

To that end the Revitalization Task Force hosted a public visioning meeting and commissioned a survey to adequately gauge the community's attitude about itself and where the Borough needs to focus its attention.

Community Visioning Meeting

On January 25, 2010 the citizens of Schwenksville gathered to discuss a shared vision for the revitalization of their community. For a small borough attendance was high, with residents filling the large public room at the Perkiomen Valley Library. The evening started out with refreshments provided by Revitalization Task Force members and two exercises that encouraged residents to assess the aesthetic state of Main Street and its parking facilities and crossings.

A planner from the Montgomery County Planning Commission delivered a presentation about the Montgomery County Revitalization Program and the types of projects that are eligible under the program. Among other things, eligible projects include streetscape improvements, gateway/signage improvements, traffic calming, housing assistance programs, façade improvement grants, and marketing. This presentation also included some information on the achievements of the previous revitalization plan, completed in 2002.

The evening ended with an extended question and answer period that provided residents a chance to respond to the presentation and express concerns

about Schwenksville's direction. It is during this process that a vision for the Borough begins to take shape. There is a strong sense of pride among residents about their town and its potential to revitalize, even in these tough economic times. Combined with the survey and exercises described below there is a sense that the Borough needs to improve its physical appearance before it can expect to attract new businesses that will help to make it a regional destination. Fortunately, many of the eligible projects covered under the Montgomery County Community Revitalization Program are intended for exactly this kind of physical improvement, in addition to economic incentive projects that can help attract the type of businesses the Borough finds desirable.

Visual Assessment Sticker Exercise. Residents were asked to examine several large, poster-sized photographs of locations along Main Street and assess the elements they thought were working well and those that were not. The photographs featured scenes of Main Street from the intersection with Perkiomen Avenue to the intersection with Park Avenue. Red dots were given to them to mark the problem areas and green dots to signal what they liked. Additionally, members of the Revitalization Task Force were stationed around these displays to answer any questions and get a sense of why people placed the dots where they did.

Green stickers were predominantly placed on the more attractive elements of Main Street. The bench and flag depository box in front of Borough Hall was well liked, and most participants also liked the façade of Tailwind. Historic homes and buildings were rated well, showing a great deal of pride among residents for the Borough's historic character.

Red Stickers were most often found on deteriorating sidewalks, the overhead power lines, traffic, and intersections with poor pedestrian circulation. This seems to show a strong interest in sidewalk improvements and other physical elements that are typically recommended to be improved by revitalization plans. These results are echoed in the responses received by the Community Revitalization Survey discussed below.

Main Street Crossings and Parking Exercise. The Revitalization Task Force was also interested in getting a better idea of how residents felt about the condition of on-street parking along Main Street and the locations most community members used to cross Main Street and access the Perkiomen Trail. A large aerial photograph of the Main Street area was placed on a table. Attendees were instructed to mark parking areas with blue dots and Main Street crossings and trail access points were marked with yellow dots. A member of the Task Force was stationed with the map to answer any questions about the exercise and note comments from respondents.

For residents crossing Main Street and accessing the Perkiomen trail, the intersections of Main Street with Church Street, Centennial Street, and Park Avenue/Game Farm Road seem to be the most common. The most important location for trail access improvements seems to be at Park Avenue and Main Street. Respondents noted the lack of sidewalks leading to the trail despite the fact that it is a primary access point for many residents, especially those in the northern section of the Borough.

Comments about the on-street parking situation reflected a desire to see safer, more easily distinguished parking areas along main Street. There is a significant desire to retain on-street parking, despite the impression that it may not always be safe to park your car on Main Street because of heavy, fast-moving traffic. This lends support for the Borough's desire to pursue traffic calming initiatives and better define on-street parking.



Sidewalks along Main Street are often too narrow or in poor condition, a major concern among Borough residents.



Park Avenue between Main Street and the Perkiomen Trail is a significant access point to the trail for Borough residents. The area is lacking sidewalks and signage to identify it as an entrance to the Borough and the Perkiomen Trail.

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

In January, 2010 Schwenksville launched its Community Revitalization Survey. The survey was available online until April 1, 2010 and several hard copies of the survey were distributed at the Community Visioning Meeting on January 25, 2010. A link was placed from the Borough's website to the survey and flyers were sent out along with Borough service bills to generate interest and responses.

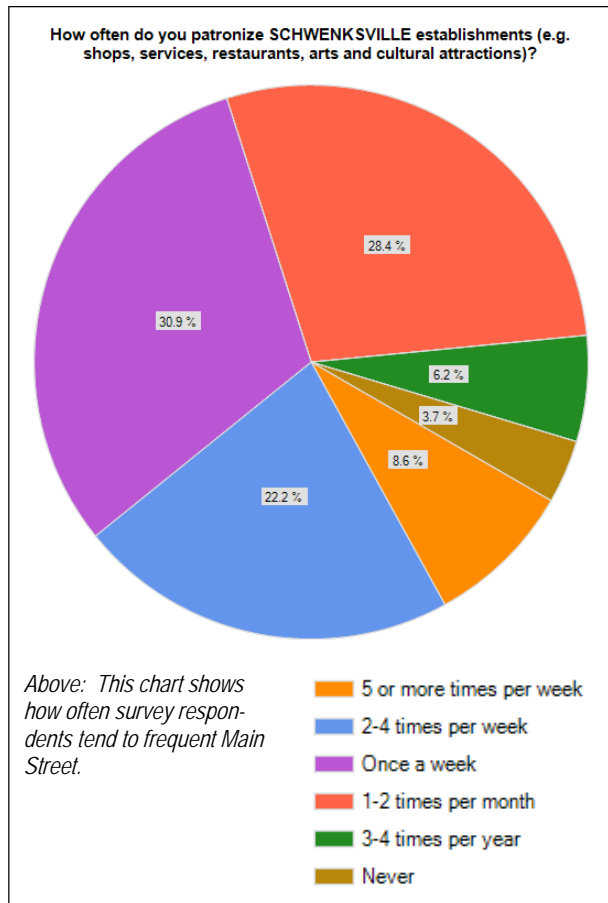
The survey asked several questions about resident's opinions of quality of life in Schwenksville and the kinds of improvements they would like to see. The state of Main Street and ways to improve it were also a major focus of the plan. Although there have been a high number of respondents for such a small community, it is important to note that these results are not scientific. In an attempt to net a large number of respondents, the Task Force could not control the sample size or control groups that are needed for a truly scientific survey. What the survey does provide, though, is a snapshot of how residents are feeling about Schwenksville at the current time. The results can still inform the goals and objectives in the following chapter because they provided Schwenksville a chance to comment on itself and direct its own future.

The survey reveals that many residents feel there are numerous aesthetic and infrastructural challenges facing the Borough. Chiefly, Main Street is considered to be "run down" looking and in need of "cleaning up" according to survey responses. Further, based on the responses to the survey, the Borough's business district is frequented mostly by locals looking for convenience. Although Tailwind, Ortino's, and Moccia's Main Street Eatery do get

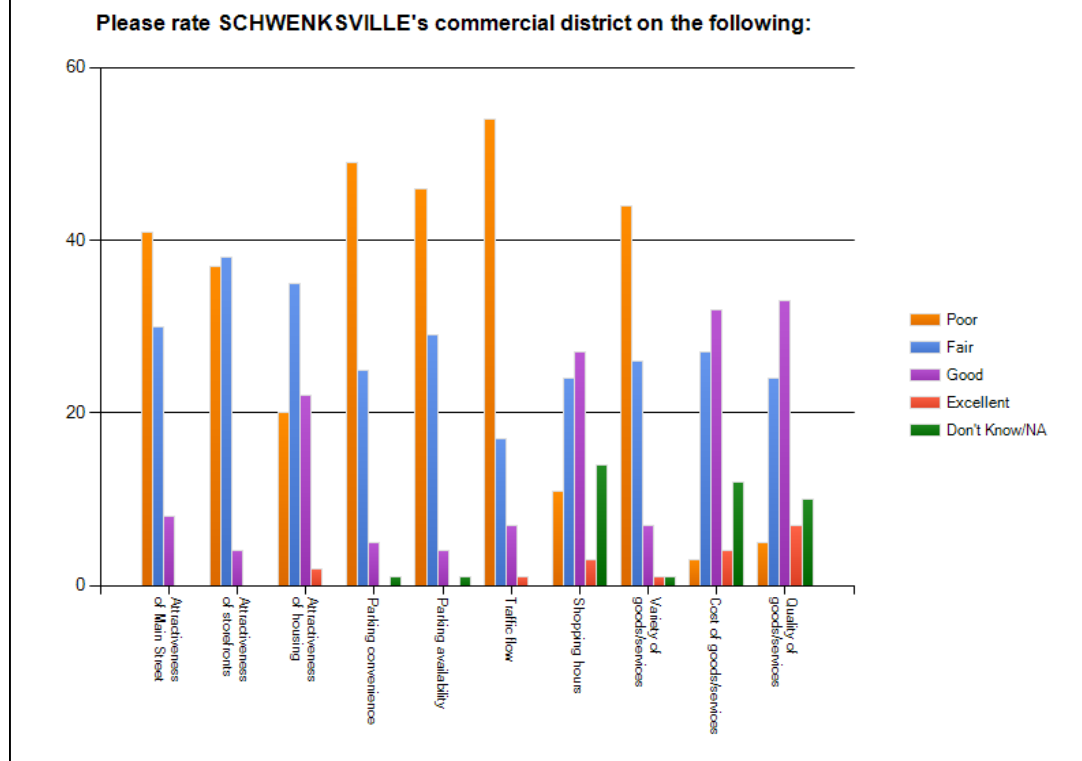
explicitly mentioned by respondents, these are the only businesses that may be of interest to outsiders or visitors.

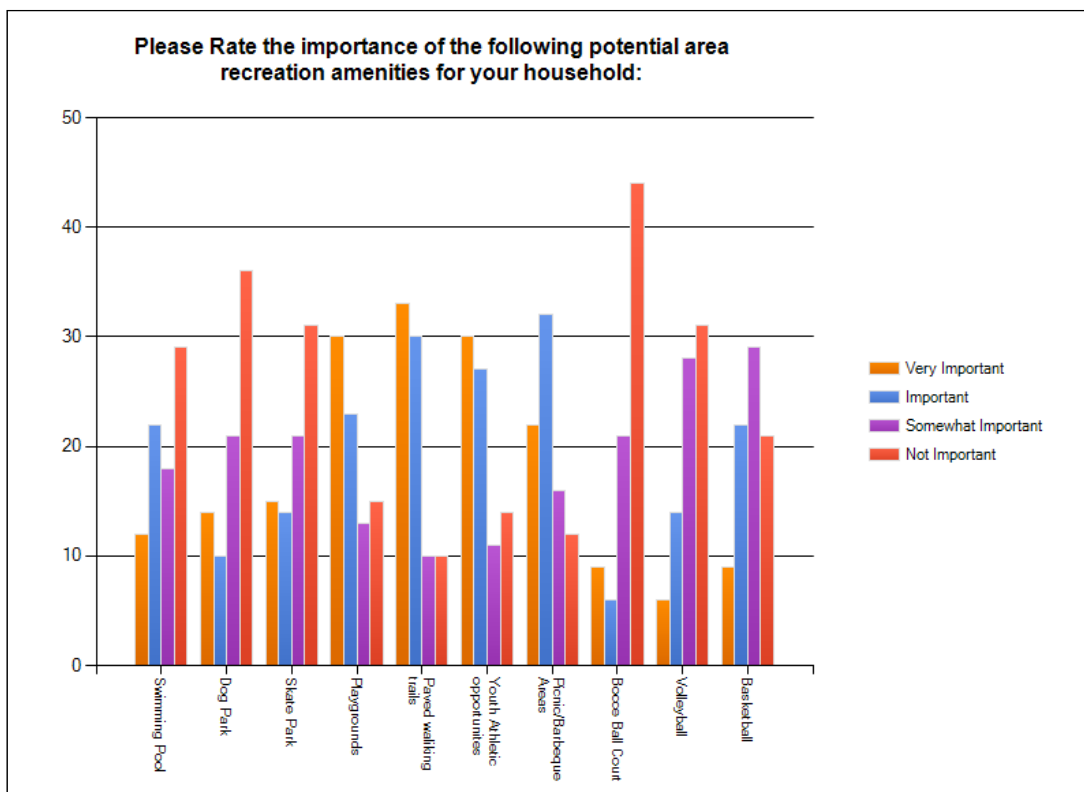
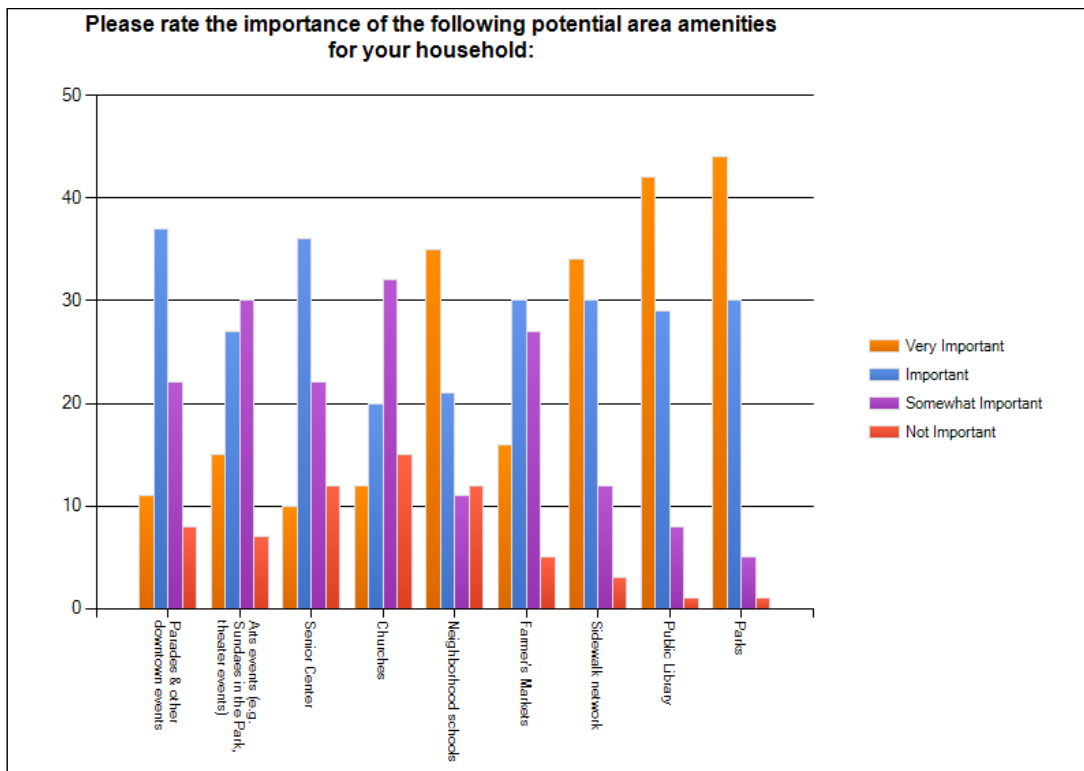
The most frequently mentioned reason for visiting Main Street is convenience, it is closer than most other shopping areas for Borough residents. Also, the types of shops available are mostly geared towards providing for basic services. These services are convenient, but only because areas with greater variety are harder to get to or not worth the trip for someone running out to pick up milk or gas up their car. In fact, this lack of variety is the single biggest reason that people do not visit Main Street, even among residents for whom it is convenient. According to the survey, even among Schwenksville's primary market area, most respondents do not frequent Main Street more than a few times a week.

These responses are telling a story of a community in need of revitalization. When asked to rate certain features of Main Street it became apparent that the look of downtown is a primary concern. The attractiveness of Main Street and its storefronts was largely rated as poor or just fair. This signifies a good deal of support for streetscape and façade improvements that will be suggested later in this plan



Below: Respondents were asked to rate certain aspects of Schwenksville's commercial core. Traffic and parking were clearly the biggest issues.





These charts show survey respondents preferences for existing and potential amenities in the Schwenksville Area.

More significantly, traffic and parking concerns seem to be the biggest issues with residents. The heavy traffic running through Schwenksville creates the feeling of Main Street as being unsafe or unwel-

coming to pedestrians and the lack of parking limits its convenience. Many of the suggestions listed in this plan were developed specifically to tackle these issues. Traffic calming, enhanced crossings, and

sidewalk improvements can be done concurrently and will do much to alleviate these problems.

The survey also asked residents to rate the importance of existing and potential amenities in the Schwenksville area. Walking trails, playgrounds, and youth athletic opportunities were rated as the most important potential recreational amenities. Recreation facilities like dog parks, bocce ball courts, and swimming pools were not highly rated.

In terms of overall area amenities parks, the public library, and neighborhood schools were considered the most important amenities. It should be noted that sidewalks were also highly valued by respondents. Arts events and senior centers were somewhat less favored, but it is important to note that almost all of the options presented in this question were rated at least “important” by a majority of respondents.

This summary does not represent the full scope and breadth of the complete survey. Although they are not all represented here, the responses from all questions greatly informed the goals and recommendations of this plan. The full survey is available as an appendix to the Schwenksville Community Revitalization Plan. Complete responses to the survey will be available at Schwenksville Borough Hall.

The Vision

The Borough would like to see itself become a lively community with an attractive downtown that is supported by businesses that make the town a fun place to live or visit. Residents seem to recognize that this has not yet been achieved, with shops that cater to mostly local conveniences and a Main Street that feels “run down.” When asked if there was one thing they could change about the Borough’s commercial district, there were three responses that were most often mentioned: 1) clean up Main Street, 2) provide more retail variety, and 3) provide more restaurants and bars.

In order to achieve this vision of a lively and attractive downtown, the Borough is going to focus its attention on reviving the physical environment, by seeking funding to make streetscape and pedestrian safety improvements, as well as parking improvements. Recruitment of appropriate business will be a concurrent step. Finding enterprises that fit this vision, while being willing to assist the Borough in



A historic photo of the First Bank of Schwenksville Building on Main Street. The stately building is highly valued by community members.

its revitalization efforts may take some time, and no community can afford to wait. Finally, the Borough will attempt to support the businesses it already has. Residents do not want to lose the conveniences that they already enjoy, and loyalty to certain businesses—including Tailwind, Moccia’s Main Street Eatery, Ortinos, and the barbershop—is quite high. These businesses should be supported as they help the Borough expand its commercial options and build on its charm.

Other recommendations are intended to further establish this lively atmosphere. Sidewalk improvements to side streets throughout the Borough will help residents and visitors easily walk to destinations. Historic preservation will help to improve the look of the town and distinguish it from other communities that lack true historic resources. Housing assistance programs will help to improve the look of the residential areas and help potential new homeowners achieve their dream.

These community outreach activities have been essential to the formation of Chapter 3: Goals and Objectives. The input from the citizens of Schwenksville have provided guidance and direction to the Revitalization Task Force as the plan has been assembled. Although there are many challenges facing the Borough in its revitalization efforts, there remains a sense of hope and pride among its residents. Most residents are fully invested and engaged in realizing the Borough’s potential. This document will provide a plan to help it achieve its vision.

4

Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives

By examining the key issues and challenges facing Schwenksville, as well as the results of the Community Outreach Survey and town meeting, the Revitalization Task Force has established the following goals and objectives to steer the Borough's revitalization efforts. These goals are meant to build on and enhance the Borough's unique identity, history, and cultural and natural amenities, while providing a path towards future development and prosperity.

Goal 1: To maintain the economic viability of Schwenksville while making physical changes that build on its existing small town character.

Objective 1: To improve the streetscape along Main Street by promoting or installing attractive and effective lighting, signage, pedestrian facilities and sidewalks, street furniture, plantings, and traffic calming devices.

Objective 2: To improve overall pedestrian safety and connectivity. There are many gaps in Schwenksville's sidewalk network. Improvements to sidewalk facilities will enhance the ability of residents to easily reach the business, cultural, and natural amenities that are some of the Borough's strongest assets.

Objective 3: To enhance connections to open space from the Main Street commercial corridor. Signage and improved sidewalks will help connect residents and businesses to the Borough's open space.

Objective 4: To control the speed and volume of traffic moving through Schwenksville. Although Main Street is owned by PennDOT, there is still a great deal the Borough can do to slow traffic moving through Schwenksville. Traffic calming and streetscape improvements along Main Street will aid the Borough's efforts to improve safety and aesthetics.

Objective 5: To improve parking facilities for Borough businesses that is consistent with the small town character of Schwenksville. Signage and markings directing visitors to existing park-



A historic home on Main Street in Schwenksville.

ing facilities are a good first step to wards providing parking for residents and shoppers. Further, encouraging new parking facilities to the rear of buildings and clearly marking available on-street parking will enhance the Borough's small-town appeal.

Objective 6: To establish a historic architecture review board and preserve the historic buildings throughout the Borough with appropriately sited development that builds on Schwenksville's history and identity.

Objective 7: To improve signage for businesses in the Borough. It can be easy for commuters passing through the Borough to be unaware of all the attractions in and around Schwenksville. Better signage for businesses and directional signage for Borough amenities and events will alert new visitors to all the possibilities in Schwenksville.

Objective 8: To establish information kiosks at all important entrances to the Borough, particularly ones located on the Perkiomen Trail.

Goal 2: To provide a broad array of commercial and retail options within the Borough's commercial districts.

Objective 1: To retain and attract businesses that provide necessary services to the Borough. Convenience stores, hardware stores, and personal service shops that provide essential services to Borough and area residents are facing stiff competition from businesses outside the Borough.

Objective 2: To enhance existing entertainment and dining options to include evening activities. The Borough has very few restaurants and no bars, major elements to creating an exciting downtown area. The next step may be to encourage more dining options and businesses that cater to after-dinner activities, such as a coffee shop.

Objective 3: To foster the redevelopment of historic properties. The Borough includes a number of historic properties deserving of renovation and reuse, a vital element to the revitalization efforts of many historic town centers.

Objective 4: To promote a greater diversity of uses along Main Street, including residential apartments above businesses fronting on Main Street.

Goal 3: To market the Borough to appropriate businesses that will thrive in Schwenksville's small-town atmosphere.

Objective 1: To encourage businesses that cater to users of the Perkiomen Trail. Tailwind, a bicycle shop on Main Street that abuts the Perkiomen Trail has been very successful. Other businesses could target hikers, runners, and pet owners that regularly use the trail.

Objective 2: To commission a market study that effectively determines Schwenksville's needs and market possibilities.



Historic architecture and charm accentuate Schwenksville Borough Hall and businesses on Main Street in Schwenksville.

Objective 3: To begin a marketing campaign that utilizes local or self-generated media to advertise Borough events, activities, parades and amenities.

Objective 2: To market the location of the Borough as a selling point to potential businesses.

Objective 3: To continue the work of the Revitalization Task force as a promoter and organizer for Schwenksville and its future revitalization efforts.



Community Day in Schwenksville, 2009.

Goal 4: To increase the number of activities and events occurring in the Borough.

Objective 1: To provide after school programs and activities for area children and teens that could be sponsored by or partnered with area businesses and educational institutions.

Objective 2: To promote Schwenksville with more festivals, like Community Day, that celebrate its history and community spirit.



The opening of the Schwenksville portion of the Perkiomen Trail, one of the Borough's biggest assets.

5

Physical Improvements

Physical Improvements: Enhancing Schwenksville's Economic Viability by building on its Small-Town Character.

Schwenksville Borough is looking to revitalize its core business districts by building on its unique character and history. As the Revitalization Task Force reviewed its revitalization options, two main aspects of revitalization emerged: Physical Improvements and Economic Incentives.

This chapter will examine the physical improvements the Task Force recognized as vital to their revitalization efforts. The decision to pursue these improvements grew out of the goals and objectives described in the previous chapter and the Community Outreach described in Chapter 4. They were chosen because they represent the Borough's best opportunity to fulfill its goal of revitalization through investment in Schwenksville's history and identity. They will be achieved using a combination of public and private investment. Private developers, government agencies, public and private institutions, and the Borough itself will all be needed to accomplish these tasks.

As Schwenksville Borough looks to revitalize and promote new development, it cannot ignore its unique identity as a historic town. In fact, this sense of place is an asset that, along with the Borough's key location, will be essential in attracting new businesses and visitors to Schwenksville. The following physical improvements are opportunities for the Borough to shape its physical presence with a combination of public and private investment.

Streetscape Improvements

Main Street in Schwenksville is currently not living up to its potential. It is lined with historic homes and buildings that are full of charm and grace, but they are not being supported by a streetscape that builds on that atmosphere. Sidewalks are often too narrow and in poor condition. Crosswalks at key



South Main Street in Schwenksville.

intersections are faded and do not do enough to announce the presence of pedestrians, leading to potentially unsafe conditions. These are only some of the conditions that Schwenksville Borough is looking to correct. Main Street is heavily travelled by automobile and truck traffic and the sidewalks feel like they are right on top of the roadway, creating an uneasy experience for pedestrians. Creating the feeling of a buffer between pedestrians and traffic is vital to making the Borough more inviting. With landscaping improvements, defined on-street parking, and traffic calming measures that slow traffic the Borough can begin to reinvent itself as a destination.

In the survey discussed in Chapter 4 “cleaning up downtown” and “making Main Street nicer” are two priorities that get repeated several times by

community members. There is a sense that these aesthetic improvements would be the first step in bringing visitors and businesses to Schwenksville. The added bonus of these improvements is that they may make Main Street safer, as well. Aesthetic improvements and safety improvements often overlap; an important selling point when pursuing funding options. These shall be considered together as a high priority recommendation.



Sidewalks are in disrepair in many locations along Main Street.

Sidewalk Improvements – There are several locations along Main Street where the sidewalks are in poor condition. In addition there are areas, most notably along the frontage of the old Lumber Yard, where the sidewalk is far too narrow. The Borough’s Zoning Ordinance requires a sidewalk width of at least four feet; there are a few locations where the sidewalks do not come close to meeting that standard. Correcting these issues should be the first steps the borough makes. In fact, there may be opportunities to correct this situation as properties redevelop in the future by enforcing the minimum standard of the Zoning Ordinance.



A good example of streetscape improvements in East Greenville, PA.

Beyond making basic improvements, the Borough will also consider making aesthetic updates to the sidewalks along Main Street as well. Brick pavers, planted curbing strips (where space permits), and stamped or decorative concrete are all alterations that will help the Borough declare that this is a place to visit with character and charm, complementing Schwenksville’s historic assets.

Lighting – Lighting along Main Street consists mainly of typical streetlamps designed to illuminate the roadway, not to facilitate pedestrians or the community atmosphere. The Borough will pursue funding to purchase and install decorative lighting fixtures designed to match the Victorian architecture that lines Main Street. These aesthetic touches will not only enhance the Borough’s character, but make the pedestrian spaces safer by directing more attention to the sidewalks. The lights should be made of decorative wrought iron, or a similar substitute, and between nine to ten feet in height to keep them on a human scale.

Wayfinding Signs – In conjunction with the entrance gateways to the commercial center of the Borough, wayfinding signs throughout the Borough will help to direct visitors to local attractions. These signs can point out local businesses, Meadow Park, the Perkiomen Trail, civic and educational institutions, and historic buildings. They can be part of a coordinated effort to create a walking tour of significant buildings, or just a commercial marketing effort to increase the awareness of local businesses. The signs should be in keeping with Schwenksville’s small-town charm, looking like a natural part of the Main Street streetscape. Materials should include wood, wrought iron, stone, or materials made to resemble wood, wrought iron or stone.

Street Furniture – Benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bike racks, and decorative planters all fall under the category of street furniture. Benches help older or infirmed pedestrians who may need a break while walking down Main Street. The bike racks outside of Tail Winds Bike Shop have been popular and it makes sense for a community so connected with the Perkiomen Trail to cater to trail users, making it easier for them to store their bikes while they visit shops in Schwenksville. If space on the sidewalks is an issue, there are spaces in existing parking areas that could be converted for bike rack use. These are the types of street furniture found in many revitalizing communities looking to create lively downtowns that use their sidewalk spaces as public space to be enjoyed. The Borough will look to add these streetscape elements itself, but it may also include requirements for some of these fea-

tures in its Zoning Ordinance as part of enhanced design requirements discussed in Chapter 6.

Traffic Bollards – There are a number of bollards along Main Street to protect pedestrian areas in locations where roads terminate at an intersection with Main Street. These are most often located in places where the street meeting Main Street is coming down from one of the steep hills on the western flank of Main Street, for example, the intersection of Main Street and Perkiomen Avenue.

These bollards are often rusted or otherwise discolored and should be replaced as part of the Borough's streetscaping plans. If space permits they could be replaced with planters that would add a greening element to Main Street while maintaining the pedestrian safety aspect of the bollards. In areas where sidewalk space is at a premium the bollards could be replaced with decorative ones that mimic wrought iron hitching posts, a nod to the Borough's historic heritage. At the very least, these bollards should be painted to blend in with the surrounding character of downtown Schwenksville.

Parking – Parking is allowed on much of Main Street, but it is not well marked and often seems dangerous due to the many cars and trucks that speed through the Borough on Main Street. Clearly marking areas where street parking is allowed is crucial. Signage and painting these spaces will make it clear where parking is allowed and may make drivers along Main Street more aware of cars parked on the street. This should have a calming effect on traffic because the roadway will seem narrower, making it even easier and more inviting to park along Main Street.



A curb bulb-out, like this one in Jenkintown, PA, slows down traffic and makes it easier for pedestrians to cross the street.



These traffic bollards could be replaced with planters, historic hitching posts, or simply repainted.

Traffic Calming, Crosswalks and Bulb-outs – In order to further define the pedestrian and on-street parking spaces the Borough will investigate the installation of curb bulb-outs. These features extend sidewalks into the roadway to help block parking areas from incoming traffic and reduce the distance pedestrians have to travel to cross the street. Because they make the road feel narrower, traffic slows as it becomes less comfortable to travel at higher speeds. This makes conditions safer for pedestrians, drivers, and parking motorists.

As part of this effort the Borough will enhance or install new striping at its fading crosswalks. Additions such as brick pavers or decorative stamped asphalt will make the presence of crossing pedestrians more pronounced. It will also help to emphasize the small-town character, differentiating Schwenksville from surrounding communities that are crossed by Route 29. These improvements should make passers-by take notice of the Borough as a different kind of place and slow down or decide to visit a local business. Signs, either permanent or temporary, that direct drivers to brake for pedestrians could also be used to improve safety. These signs and crosswalks should be placed at all intersections along Main Street, but special attention should be paid to locations most used by pedestrians and best able to provide access to local businesses and the Perkiomen Trail. These areas were identified during the Community Outreach meeting as the Church Street, Centennial Street, and Park Avenue/Game Farm Road intersections with Main Street.

Street Trees and Planters – Green improvements are an important component of any streetscape, aiding in the development of a welcoming atmosphere. Although space may be too limited on the eastern side of Main Street for street trees, opportunities may exist on the western side. There are several homes with wide lawns that may support several

street trees. Further, as properties redevelop on the eastern side of Main Street, trees could become an element of new design regulations.

In areas where space will remain a problem even after redevelopment the Borough should consider requiring decorative plantings as a design feature on all new developments on Main Street. This could include hanging baskets with flowering plants or more substantial fixtures. Further, the Borough could use planters to replace unsightly safety devices, such as the bollards along the eastern side of Main Street at the intersection of Main Street and Perkiomen Avenue.

Murals – As part of the Borough’s efforts to beautify its Main Street and improve pedestrian facilities, it should consider art installations on blank walls along Main Street and the Perkiomen Trail. These can add color and vitality to Main Street and bolster Schwenksville’s distinct identity. They could depict historic scenes of Borough locations or vintage advertisements, similar to those in Pottstown. A mural program could be initiated as part of a larger public art program that will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Defined Entrances to the Borough and Its

Commercial core – In order to make Schwenksville’s presence more obvious to motorists the Borough should pursue more defined entrances to its commercial core. Gateways could be developed that utilize public space, art, greening elements, signage, and street furniture to mark the beginning of a close-knit commercial community. The intersection of Main Street and Perkiomen Avenue is a prominent corner that could use some of these elements to produce a gateway effect. Banners welcoming visitors and wayfinding signage to direct them to local businesses or institutions would make a dramatic impression as one enters Schwenksville from the west.

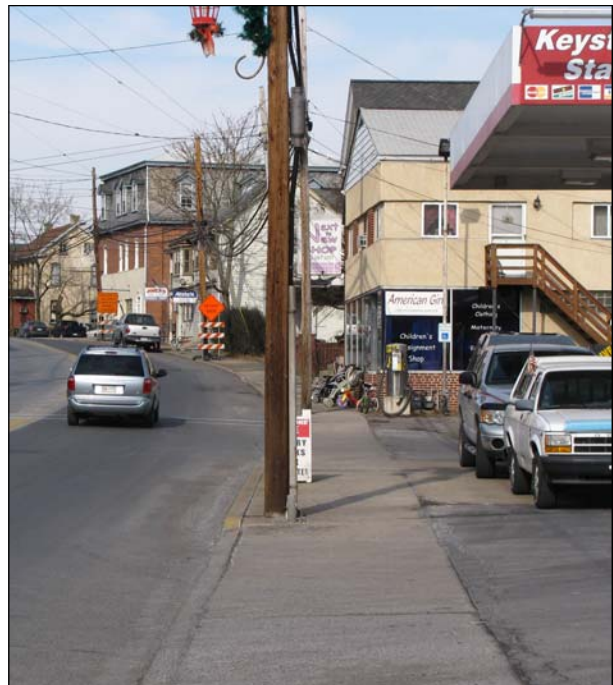
The Borough has experience creating similar gateways thanks to its successful gateway at the intersection of Route 73 and the Perkiomen Trail. Translating those elements and experiences to the commercial core will benefit the Borough, its residents, and its businesses. The intersection of Main Street and Park Avenue, in partnership with a nearby trail gateway as suggested above, would make an impact at the northern entrance to Schwenksville.

Other locations, such as the intersection of Route 73 and Main Street, Route 29 just south of Spring Mount Road, and at Limerick Road near Perki-

omen Valley Elementary School would be good locations for “Welcome to Schwenksville” signs. These are prominent entrances to the Borough that handle a great deal of traffic. They do not have to be as elaborate as the other gateway locations, but welcome and wayfinding signage would be an asset to the Schwenksville and help define its sense of place from its surroundings.

Defined Driveway Entrances – Walking along Main Street there are several locations where the sidewalk dips to allow for driveway entrances for local businesses that span the entire length of their parking lots. This is not a condition that is conducive for a unified Main Street that supports pedestrian facilities. The Borough should work with local businesses to create defined driveway entrances to these businesses and extend curbing and sidewalks along the lots. Properties with this issue include the Fire House, the apartment building on Main Street, the gas station, Moccia’s Main Street Eatery, and convenience store. These are shown on the Pedestrian Improvement Priorities Map at the end of this chapter. Some locations, such as the Fire House, may be able to make the argument that they need the wide driveway entrance. In this case crosswalks or decorative paving may be an option to maintain the integrity of the pedestrian experience along Main Street.

The Borough should investigate grant funding for making these improvements in partnership with local businesses. Similar to a façade improvement



A defined driveway at the gas station on Main Street would improve pedestrian safety, reduce traffic confusion, and improve the look of Main Street.

grant, these funds could be used as part of a Borough program to improve safety and the look of downtown Schwenksville. These improvements could also become requirements of the Borough's Zoning Ordinance.

Extend Sidewalk Facilities

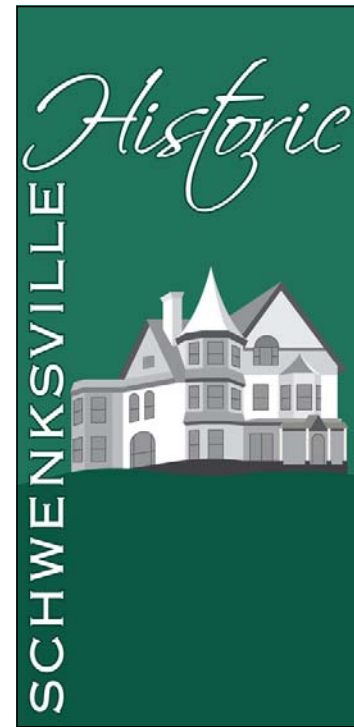
One of the main objectives of this plan is to increase overall pedestrian connectivity. Although most of the streets in the Borough are lined with sidewalks, in many places conditions are poor and there are several important locations in the Borough that lack sidewalks.

As previously discussed the condition of sidewalks along Main Street needs to be addressed. In many locations they are too narrow or even deteriorating. This is a key priority for the streetscaping effort. Additionally, the Borough should begin to analyze the streets that serve residents of the Schwenksville looking to walk to downtown or the Perkiomen Trail. In the Community Revitalization Survey discussed in Chapter 3, the Perkiomen Trail was one of the most common reasons respondents gave for liking Schwenksville. Many of these people are not adequately served by sidewalk connections from their neighborhoods to the trail. Further, Trail users who may want to visit a shop or historic location in the Borough may find it difficult without adequate sidewalks.

The first priority should be to install sidewalks along roads immediately adjacent to Main Street that are not currently served by them, as shown in the Pedestrian Improvement Priorities map. In particular, Park Avenue and Game Farm Road need greater sidewalk facilities. The next stage would be to construct sidewalks along larger roads, like Summit Ave, throughout the Borough, especially in the northern section of Schwenksville. Then, focus on smaller side roads that do not handle as high a level of car and pedestrian traffic as the larger ones. This is a high priority recommendation.

Signage

Schwenksville can always benefit from increased awareness among motorists and trail users. Thousands of people drive through the Borough every day along Route 29/Main Street. The Perkiomen Trail has only grown more popular since its opening in 2001. There is no shortage of potential visitors to Schwenksville's shops, amenities, and historic attractions. The goal is to get these potential visitors to stop and no longer think of Schwenksville as a place to pass through or as a traffic bottleneck, but a destination.



The design for the banners that could be placed in the gateways suggested by this plan.

Signs that advertize the Borough's presence along Main Street would be a big help. Welcome to Schwenksville Borough banners could be placed at Borough entrances as part of larger gateways. Signs directing patrons to local amenities like the Perkiomen Trail, local businesses, and historic sites create the feeling of a unified commercial corridor that is actively working towards revitalization. Some of this signage could be used as part of a walking tour of the historic homes in Schwenksville.

Increased awareness creates a feedback loop where visitors coming to the Borough for one reason are enticed to stay longer or return for another reason. For instance, a trail user may not be aware of a program at the Perkiomen Valley Library until she sees a sign along the trail advertising Borough programs. On her next trip to Schwenksville she visits the library and notices a sign for a local restaurant she would like to try. This time she brings several friends and they make a night of it, enjoying what Schwenksville has to offer. The first step in that cycle is to make visitors aware of all the amenities the Borough already has to offer. This is a high priority Recommendation

Parking

Schwenksville has long wanted to expand its available parking, but there are several factors that have limited its ability to do so. There are physical constraints, like the hills that rise sharply from Main Street and the Perkiomen Creek, which make adding parking facilities particularly difficult. Parking is allowed along much of Main Street, but there is a



An example of an improved parking lot in East Greenville, PA. There are several parking lots in Schwenksville that could benefit

great deal of traffic on Main Street at peak times and some curves in the roadway that make parking feel risky. This can be addressed as part of the Borough's overall streetscaping and traffic calming goals. Curb bulb-outs that shrink the distance that pedestrians need to cross the street also help to protect cars parking on the street by giving them a defined parking area. Further definition through painting helps to clearly establish the on-street parking areas along Main Street.

There are a number of off-street parking lots for local businesses and institutions, but they may not be being used at their full potential. For instance, Univest Bank and the Post Office both have hours of operation primarily in the day time. An evening-oriented business, such as a bar, restaurant, or café might be able to use the bank and Post Office lots with little to no conflict. These shared lots should also be clearly marked and advertised along Main Street with attractive signage to direct visitors to the lots. The Borough needs to take the lead on exploring these options and making them available to businesses that decide to locate in Schwenksville. In fact, it can be a selling point, since the new owner would be able to provide more parking at no additional cost. It may be that much of the Borough's parking needs can be met with safer, more attractive on-street parking and clearly marked shared parking agreements.

The Borough should also take the lead in helping business owners improve the look of their parking facilities. Grants should be pursued that could be used to provide assistance to business owners making aesthetic improvements to their parking lots. Lots that are visible on Main Street should be buffered or screened with vegetation and/or a fence or wall that obscures the lot. The fence or wall should be stone, brick, wood, wrought iron, or materials

that simulate those materials in order to match the existing character of Schwenksville. Further improvements could include brick pavers or pervious pavement for a stormwater management benefit.

The Borough should also investigate assistance programs to help new and existing business comply with Borough regulations for aesthetic improvements and screening of parking visible from the street. Lots that may be important to this effort include the "Spillane Lot" at 96 Main Street, the Sewer Authority's property at Schwenk Avenue, the Main Street Market, the lot south of Valley Electric, and the Liberty Ministries Lot. This is a high priority recommendation.

Trail Corridor Parking Initiative

In order to provide legal access and parking to several businesses on Main Street the Borough will pursue funding to construct a roadway running parallel with the Perkiomen Trail and main Street from 128 Main Street to the former lumber yard site. This will service Borough Hall and several retail and residential properties that lost parking and access when the Perkiomen Trail was installed.

This project will also include parking spaces along the alleyway allowing for shared parking between property owners. Not only will these efforts enhance access to these properties and amenities, they are also intended to bolster the appearance of these areas. They are currently characterized by gravel driveways and parking areas and are in need of more defined, paved parking spaces and driveways. Landscaping will also be installed to act as a buffer between the alleyway and the trail. This is high priority project will greatly strengthen the character



The Perkiomen Trail in Schwenksville, an enormous asset to the Borough.



Meadow Park, one of the Boroughs biggest assets, is due for some upgrades and improvements.

and appeal of Schwenksville's business district and its connection to the Perkiomen Trail. This is a high priority recommendation.

Meadow Park

Meadow Park is one of downtown Schwenksville's best assets, but it is not being utilized to its full potential. It is centrally located along the Perkiomen Trail in Schwenksville and is adjacent to the commercial and cultural heart of the Borough. It is the site of Schwenksville's successful Community Day Celebration and other events that celebrate the Borough. However, it has some serious issues with flooding and drainage that make it difficult to use as an active recreation site. Located on the Perkiomen Creek the land in the park actually slopes away from the creek towards the Perkiomen Trail, where it slopes back up again. This creates a gully where water collects, leaving the ground very wet and unappealing.

Grading the site so that water drains toward the creek is one option but may be cost prohibitive. Also, the agencies that have grant funding available are often wary of projects in floodplains that simply propose grading as the solution; preferring more innovative approaches. Further, because the entire park sits in the floodplain of the Perkiomen Creek, getting permits approved may be difficult without using innovative stormwater management techniques. Other improvements could include a parking lot with pervious paving and stormwater control features on the gravel lot behind the fire hall, more active recreation facilities, and a more developed gateway to the park with banners, wayfinding signage, benches, and lighting.

The Borough will explore design options for this site with help from the Montgomery County Planning Commission and pursue funding options for implementation of the concepts discovered in the

design process. Current upgrades being pursued by the Borough include a mini-museum at the old post office and parking improvements to the lot behind the Fire Hall. This lot will serve the park and the trail, providing much needed parking for both amenities and community events held in the Borough. This is a high priority recommendation.

Align Moccia's Main Street Eatery Driveway With Centennial Street

The entrance to the parking lot for Moccia's Main Street Eatery is at a zigzag from Centennial Street. The Borough will work with the owners of the Gas station and Moccia's to provide an aligned intersection at this location. The entrance is owned by the gas station, making this an opportunity to create a more defined entrance into that business, an issue raised earlier in this plan. The Borough should investigate putting curbing and sidewalks along the gas station's frontage along Main Street in addition to the aligned intersection.

The safety benefits of aligned intersections are clear, they are less confusing and make it easier for pedestrians and drivers to navigate the crossing. This plan has already described the benefits of defined driveway entrances for drivers, pedestrians, and business owners. This represents an opportunity to improve both safety and aesthetics along Main Street. This is a medium priority recommendation.



The intersection of Park Avenue and Main Street. This location could become a gateway to the commercial section of the Borough, with new signs, landscaping, and realigned intersection.

Align Game Farm Road/Park Avenue at Main Street

It has previously been proposed to align Game Farm Road and Park Avenue at their intersection with Main Street. These roads currently create a zigzag that worsens traffic congestion and may be unsafe for pedestrians and drivers alike. The Borough should investigate the feasibility of purchasing

the property on the southeastern corner of the intersection in partnership with the State of Pennsylvania in order to achieve a realignment of this intersection. This would require the demolition of the existing buildings. The Borough should determine whether or not the existing building is historic and businesses located in them should be relocated to newer facilities in the Borough. Perhaps, if a developer is interested, a new building could be built on the site to accommodate the businesses.

There are no sidewalks to connect Main Street and the Perkiomen trail at this critical intersection. Sidewalks should be installed along with enhanced crosswalks that have a decorative element to further improve pedestrian safety. The property could then be converted into a municipal lot with parking for trail users and a small gateway plaza with wayfinding signage, benches, period lighting, and street trees. The lot could also be used to house a new or existing business. The parking lot should be constructed with decorative and/or pervious pavers or pavement and should be screened from the plaza and Main Street with a low fence, wall, or landscaping as described previously in this plan. Any new buildings should be consistent with the character of surrounding buildings and Schwenksville's small town charm. This is a low priority recommendation that will take a great deal of coordination between the Borough, property owners, and PennDOT.

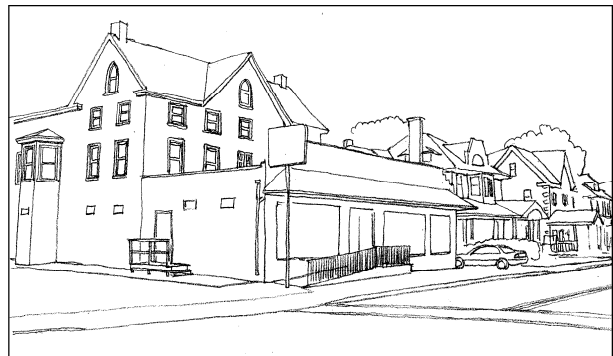
Trail Gateway

As mentioned previously, Schwenksville is interested in creating a trail gateway at the northern end of the Borough. The trail runs parallel with Park Avenue at its northern entrance to the Borough, a terrific location for a gateway. The gateway should mirror the one the Borough constructed at the intersection of Route 73 and the Perkiomen Trail, complete with signage, benches, brick pavers, and period lighting. Further, it should include wayfinding and welcome signs that announce to the trail user that they have arrived in Schwenksville. Not only is this a logical location for a trail gateway, but it was specifically mentioned by residents during the Community Visioning meeting as a perfect location for trail access improvements. This is a medium priority recommendation.

Renovate Historic Properties for Reuse

As the Borough reconsiders the design regulations in its Zoning Ordinance, special attention should be paid to the historic properties in Schwenksville. These lie throughout the Borough, but with a significant concentration along Main Street. The Bor-

ough should actively promote the reuse and revitalization of these buildings because they are central to maintaining the character and sense of place that the Borough has established over the decades. This is a low priority recommendation.



Above: A historic home in Trappe Borough converted to a commercial use.



Two design alternatives for that building in Trappe Borough that retain the building's original historic charm and a commercial use. Many commercial buildings in Schwenksville could benefit from this design approach as the Borough revitalizes.



There are several commercial properties along Main Street that could benefit from a historically appropriate facelift. The Borough has been very active in promoting the historic character of the Borough; the Borough will consider assisting property owners renovating key historic proper-

ties in Schwenksville that are too important to risk demolition. Assistance programs will be further discussed in the following chapter. In combination with efforts to recruit, site, and assist appropriate businesses in the Borough, these efforts to promote the rehab of historic buildings should be increased. This is a low priority recommendation.



Historic commercial buildings in Schwenksville that would benefit from redesign approaches similar to the ones displayed to the left.

PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES



6

Economic Improvements

Economic Incentives: Promoting New Development and Investment into Schwenksville.

This chapter will explore possible economic incentives that will help the Borough to encourage new development and public investment into Schwenksville. Not only do these initiatives represent opportunities to make Schwenksville more attractive to new businesses, they also work as tools to help the Borough's existing businesses and homeowners thrive in a competitive environment. Community outreach efforts have revealed that residents want economic revitalization, but also to maintain the character and charm of small-town life. These options were chosen because they are geared toward improving and assisting the Borough's commercial sector without sacrificing Schwenksville's unique character and heritage.

Zoning Changes

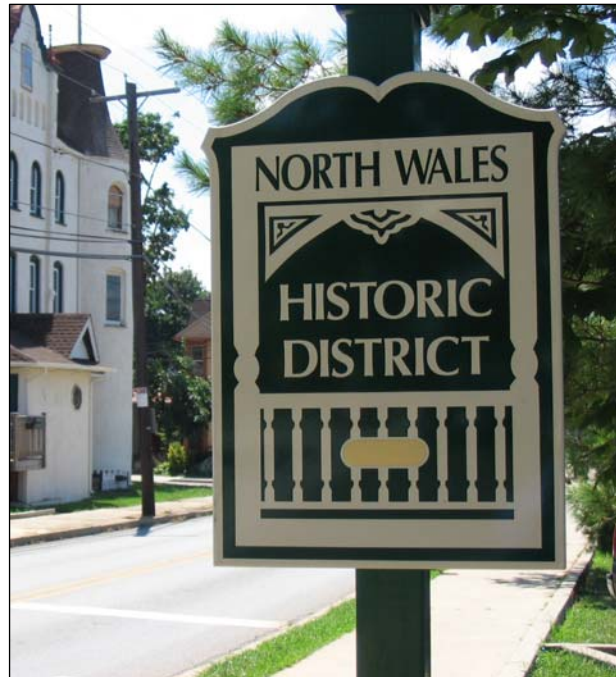
There are a number of changes the Borough may need to make to its Zoning Ordinance. The following recommendations are intended to make it easier for new businesses to invest in Schwenksville and existing businesses to revitalize. At the same time, these suggestions are meant to continue the Borough's efforts to maintain its small-town charm and community character. For reference to specific zoning districts, a map of Schwenksville's Zoning is provided at the end of this chapter.

Parking. As noted in previous sections, the Borough feels it needs more parking facilities to meet the demands of current and future visitors to Schwenksville. Providing the off-street parking required by any ordinance in a borough setting can be difficult for new businesses because of the confined space along Main Streets and the cost of providing parking in that environment. It is especially difficult in Schwenksville because of the physical constraints imposed on Main Street by the Perkiomen Creek to the east and steep hills to the west. The Borough already allows for shared parking, but it should also examine allowing new businesses on

Main Street to use on-street parking within a certain distance to count towards the parking required by the Zoning Ordinance. This eases the burden of providing parking in a constrained area and helps to encourage a lively commercial corridor.

Design Standards. To compliment the physical improvements to the streetscape currently proposed in this plan, the Borough should enhance its design standards for its VC2 Village Commercial 2 District. Regulations that include standards for building massing, placement of windows, pocket park standards and requirements, and decorative elements like awnings, kiosks, lighting, and ornamental architecture will help Schwenksville guide its built environment.

By making these design standards part of its Zoning Ordinance, Schwenksville can ensure that new development in its commercial heart will include design elements that are in keeping with its character. This will help to maintain downtown



A sign in North Wales Borough introducing its historic nature. Similar attractive and appropriate signs could be used in Schwenksville to promote its heritage and direct visitors to its historic resources.

Schwenksville with attractive designs and decorative elements long after the life of this plan and independent of Borough financing opportunities.

Village Commercial Districts. The Borough may need to reexamine the Village Commercial Districts. The VC-2 District should be expanded north to include areas where many of the buildings are already used for commercial uses. These areas are currently Zoned VC-1, which allows commercial uses only as a conditional use. This puts an obstacle in the path of new businesses looking to locate in Schwenksville. The Borough should investigate the possibility of expanding the VC-2 district and possibly merging much of it with the existing VC-1 district. This is intended to make it easier for commercial development to move into the community.



Moccia's Main Street Eatery on Main Street, a successful Borough Business in the VC-2 Village Commercial 2 Zoning District.

Further, there are a number of dimensional requirements in the Village Commercial Districts that may not be suitable to a small borough with limited space. The Borough should examine its dimensional standards within the context of revitalization.

- Building height restrictions: remove requirement that building height shall not exceed the greater height of the buildings on either side of the property.
- Minimum lot areas: The five thousand square foot minimum may be too large for most small lots along Main Street. The Borough should examine its existing lots, if the requirement does not match reality, it should be amended.

Institutional Setbacks. The front and side yards for institutional uses may be too high and in need of amending. In order to assess the relevance of these requirements, the Borough should examine

whether or not these setbacks are too restrictive based on existing conditions.

All of the above Zoning recommendations presented in this plan are medium priority recommendations.

Signage Assistance Program

Signage was discussed earlier in this plan as part of the physical improvements Schwenksville needs to help it revitalize, but it is worth mentioning as an economic improvement as well. The lack of promotion for local businesses is noticeable. The Borough should erect signs to advertize local businesses and direct potential patrons to them. While this is a physical improvement, it is also an economic assistance measure that will increase awareness of Schwenksville's commercial corridor.

The Borough has sign regulations in its Zoning Ordinance that require businesses to erect attractive signs using certain materials that complement the community's character. The problem has come in enforcing these regulations. A signage assistance program would allow the Borough to work with these violators to improve the look of the Borough. Some business owners may be reluctant to change their signs or erect signs that meet Borough standards, but the assistance and incentive program would make it easier for them. The Borough will need to determine a cap for individual business owners seeking this assistance. This is a medium priority recommendation.

Marketing

In addition to increasing awareness among people already familiar with Schwenksville, the Borough should expand these efforts throughout the region. The Schwenksville area is already known as the location of the Philadelphia Folk Festival and Spring Mount Ski Area. The Borough should capitalize on these regionally-known activities. Walking tours of the town's historic architecture, nature programs along the Perkiomen Creek, leisure activities, and local businesses that cater to trail users and niche visitors could be used to promote Schwenksville's entire business district.

Although the Folk Festival is only one weekend of the year, it draws thousands of music lovers who may also be interested in other amenities in the Borough, and Spring Mount Ski Area now offers year-round activities that attract visitors to the region. The Borough should commission a marketing study to establish its true market area and how best to capitalize on the benefits of its location.

The Borough could also seek assistance in marketing itself through the Classic Towns Program run by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). This program identifies “classic towns” in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and assists them with marketing their assets to potential businesses and residents. Selected towns are almost exclusively boroughs offering regional amenities and distinctions. With its historic architecture, the Perkiomen Trail, active Main Street, and location, Schwenksville may be a competitive applicant for this initiative. The Borough should pursue this option immediately to be included in the next round of participants. This is a medium priority recommendation.

Retail Business Recruitment

Once the Borough has established its market area and begun to promote itself throughout the region, it should consider its niche and the kinds of businesses that will fill that niche. Recruitment of appropriate businesses that compliment existing businesses and Borough amenities is essential. Antique stores, boutiques, and collectables may be a good fit for the Borough, with its small-town character and historic heritage.

Additionally, the Borough should actively pursue the expansion of the Schwenksville’s dining and entertainment options. Restaurants, coffee shops,



An example of public art used in Rochester, NY to decorate their downtown. A public art program in Schwenksville would help to enhance its sense of place.

or small bistros are all appropriate businesses for Main Street that help to support the rest of the district. As the Borough’s streetscape plans are enacted, recruiting businesses should become easier because Schwenksville will have a new, attractive setting that builds on its considerable charm.

Finally, Schwenksville should actively recruit businesses that cater to users of the Perkiomen Trail. Thousands of visitors pass through Schwenksville on the trail, a unique opportunity for the Borough. Businesses that market to dog walkers, bicyclists, walkers, runners, and other outdoor activities are ideal. This medium priority recommendation is a unique opportunity that not many revitalizing communities share.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a useful tool for municipalities looking to revitalize certain areas of their communities. The Borough should approach the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority to begin the TIF process. This will involve hiring a consultant to conduct a blight study, and having certain areas of the Borough declared blighted. Despite the negative connotation of the term “blight”, this designation will open up new sources of revenue that will aid Schwenksville’s revitalization efforts and help attract new businesses to the Borough. Areas in Schwenksville that may benefit from this approach include areas with significant vacant commercial properties. Unfortunately there are a number of these along Main Street. This process will involve the participation of several local and regional entities, such as Montgomery County, the Borough of Schwenksville, and the Perkiomen Valley School District. This is a low priority recommendation.

Public Art Program

As part of the Borough’s efforts to beautify its Main Street and improve pedestrian facilities, it should consider art installations along Main Street. These can add color and vitality to Main Street and add to Schwenksville’s distinct identity. Murals were mentioned earlier in this plan; this art program would be broader, involving the entire community in the creation of the public art. Students from nearby Ursinus College and other educational institutions could provide this public art at little to no cost to the Borough, giving the students a chance to display their work while enhancing Main Street at the same time. Local churches and civic groups could also take part, providing artwork or fundraising. Maintenance could be provided through volunteers or paid for with the fundraising efforts of local institutions and civic organizations.

Similar programs, such as the Art Walk in Rochester, NY, unveil this public art as part of an outdoor celebration and street festival. Public art programs enhance community identity and help to draw attention to commercial areas. The Borough should coordinate this effort with sponsorship from local businesses. This is a medium priority recommendation.

Farmers' Market

The Borough should consider founding and promoting a farmer's market in Schwenksville. Farmers' markets are good ways to attract visitors to the Borough and promote local businesses. By partnering with local farms, this event also helps to support the preservation of nearby farms. Farmers' markets are typically held through the months of June to October, in a space adequate to house the produce for sale and the potential shoppers. Because farmers' markets are such a draw, local businesses like Tailwind or an antique shop could set up stalls alongside the produce, creating an event that transcends healthy eating to include the entire borough business community.

Meadow Park might be the best location, particularly when the Borough makes improvements to the park and expands parking facilities. Otherwise, there are several neighborhood churches with parking lots that may be able to accommodate a farmers market. The Borough should investigate and organize this activity with support from local businesses. This is a low priority recommendation.

Celebrating Schwenksville

Civic events and celebrations honoring Schwenksville's unique history and identity should be encouraged. Civic events, celebrations, and street fairs attract new visitors to the Borough and build on its customer base by reinforcing the perception of Schwenksville as a lively town with an active business community. These events could be hosted by

the Borough, local businesses, civic and educational institutions, or a combination of these entities. Such events could be used to promote Borough activities, local businesses, or historic resources in the community, such as the fire house's mini-museum. The Borough and its Activity Committee should coordinate and promote these community days and outdoor festivals to reinforce the role of the commercial areas as the social and civic heart of Schwenksville. This is a medium priority recommendation.

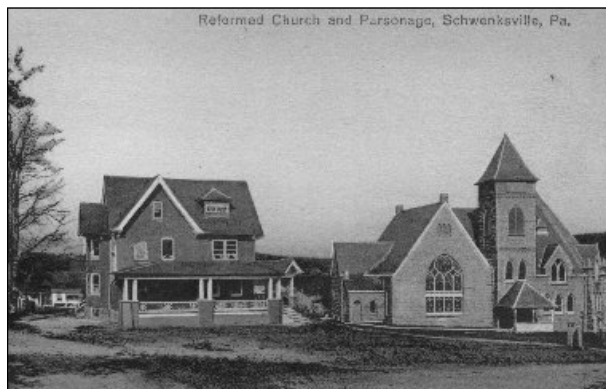
Historic Heritage Preservation

Schwenksville has begun to make efforts to preserve its unique historical assets. It has investigated being registered as a historic place by the Pennsylvania's inventory of National Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. These organizations help communities preserve their historic resources through grants and administration programs. Further, Schwenksville has already formed the Schwenksville Historic Preservation Committee to catalogue historic properties and investigate means of preservation. Although the Borough was not recommended to be part of the National Historic Register, it is considered to be a good candidate for a local historic preservation district.

The Borough should continue these efforts and investigate other grant opportunities. Restoration of historic structures can be difficult and expensive; assistance from the Borough could mean the difference between preservation and demolition. Schwenksville could also provide assistance in the form of a list of preferred contractors who have a proven record of appropriate renovations and other information that takes some of the guesswork out of these projects. This is a high priority recommendation.

Walking Tour

To further promote Schwenksville's historic character, a walking tour could be established that features some of the Borough's many significant buildings. The Borough has begun similar efforts in fits and starts over the years, but this may be a unique opportunity as other revitalization initiatives are enacted. The Schwenksville Historic Preservation Committee will continue its efforts to catalogue historic properties and collect photos that depict the Borough in its early years. This information could be used to assemble a walking tour of Schwenksville. The Schwenksville Historic Preservation Committee should publish a pamphlet with a map to lead the tour along with information about the Borough and the structures along the tour.



A historic photo of Reformed Church and parsonage in Schwenksville.

Signs will also be an essential element of the tour. Signage at the new gateways proposed in this plan along the Perkiomen Trail and Main Street will make visitors aware of the tour. Wayfinding signs will aid the maps to direct them along tour. Information signs will give background information and possibly display a historic photo of the building. These initiatives will help to create the lively atmosphere the Borough is looking to enhance as well as help to preserve historic buildings through increased awareness. This is a low priority recommendation.

Merchant Outreach Association

As part of the Schwenksville's attempts to recruit businesses and promote its assets it should form a merchant outreach association. This organization will give assistance to new businesses in the Borough and help them secure financial assistance. This organization could also provide them with information to help them maintain compliance with Borough Zoning Ordinance standards and help to negotiate shared parking agreements. This could be the primary Borough organization dedicated to coordinating and administering all Borough assistance programs recommended in this plan. A community of businesses has a much better chance at



Storefronts and buildings along Main Street. Proposed assistance programs may help to fill vacant storefronts and redevelop them to take advantage of the Borough's historic assets and small-town charm.

revitalizing than individual businesses operating without help. Special attention should be paid to assisting existing businesses. This is a medium priority recommendation.

Teen Activities

As mentioned earlier in this plan, there is a problem with vandalism and minor destruction of public property in certain areas in the Borough where local teens tend to hang out. There is an impression that there is not enough for these teens to do in the Borough.

The Borough will address this issue by providing more activities that will appeal to local teens. This will primarily be achieved by offering more recreation areas that include active recreation. Basketball

courts, a skate park, or other sports facilities would be more attractive to teens and give them something to do in the park besides "hanging out." This may also include after-school and summertime activities that include educational components.

Music, art, or science and nature programs with volunteer student teachers from Ursinus College or other educational institutions could also capture their attention. The Perkiomen Valley Library already has programs geared towards teens and pre-teens, these initiatives could be expanded.

Clearly, not every activity is going to appeal to every teen, but there are creative ideas that could help make the Borough a more fun place for them to spend their time. This is a revitalization issue because the damage caused by the teens detracts from the usefulness of Meadow Park, a major Borough asset. Another benefit to these programs is that they can be sponsored by local businesses that could provide funding, advertising, or meeting space. This will increase awareness of these businesses among the teens and their parents. This is a high priority recommendation.

Façade Improvements Program

This plan has talked a great deal about historic preservation and streetscape improvements. Part of these efforts should be to aid home and business owners to spruce up their façades along Main Street. Although the main focus of these programs would be Main Street, they could extend beyond Main Street to include homes and businesses throughout the Borough. As mentioned earlier,



The old Schwenksville Fire Company was housed in what is now a liquor store. That business may relocate in the future, leaving this building open for revitalization.

community outreach has revealed a great deal of pride among residents of Schwenksville and awareness that the Borough needs an upgrade. A Façade Improvement Program will aid owners who may

not have made renovations without assistance. Typically, individual property owners are limited to \$10,000 in assistance through these programs. This is a high priority recommendation.

Homeowner Assistance Programs

Schwenksville Borough has a healthy combination of renters and homeowners throughout its borders. Although renters can be a valuable addition to a small town, the Borough has expressed a desire to increase home ownership. Schwenksville can assist potential homeowners through programs that assist new owners to purchase and upgrade homes in the Borough. Schwenksville should pursue grant funding opportunities to start a homeowner assistance program. This is a low priority recommendation.

Joint Main Street Opportunities

Schwenksville Borough is a member of the Central Perkiomen Valley Regional Planning Commission, a regional body that is dedicated to helping its member municipalities plan for the future through regional cooperation. This cooperation should be expanded. The Borough should meet with neighboring municipalities to determine the possibility of a joint Main Street Program.

The Main Street Program is an initiative of the State of Pennsylvania to assist older, Main Street commercial areas to compete with other commercial areas that have taken much of the market share over the last few decades. Schwenksville alone does not qualify for this revenue source, but it may be able to partner with neighboring municipalities to create a Joint Main Street program. If the areas of Zieglerville in Lower Frederick Township or Greetersford in Perkiomen Township are amenable

and eligible, this could open up a new source of funding for Schwenksville's revitalization. The Borough should investigate this opportunity and reach out to neighboring municipalities if they meet the State's criteria. This is a low priority recommendation.

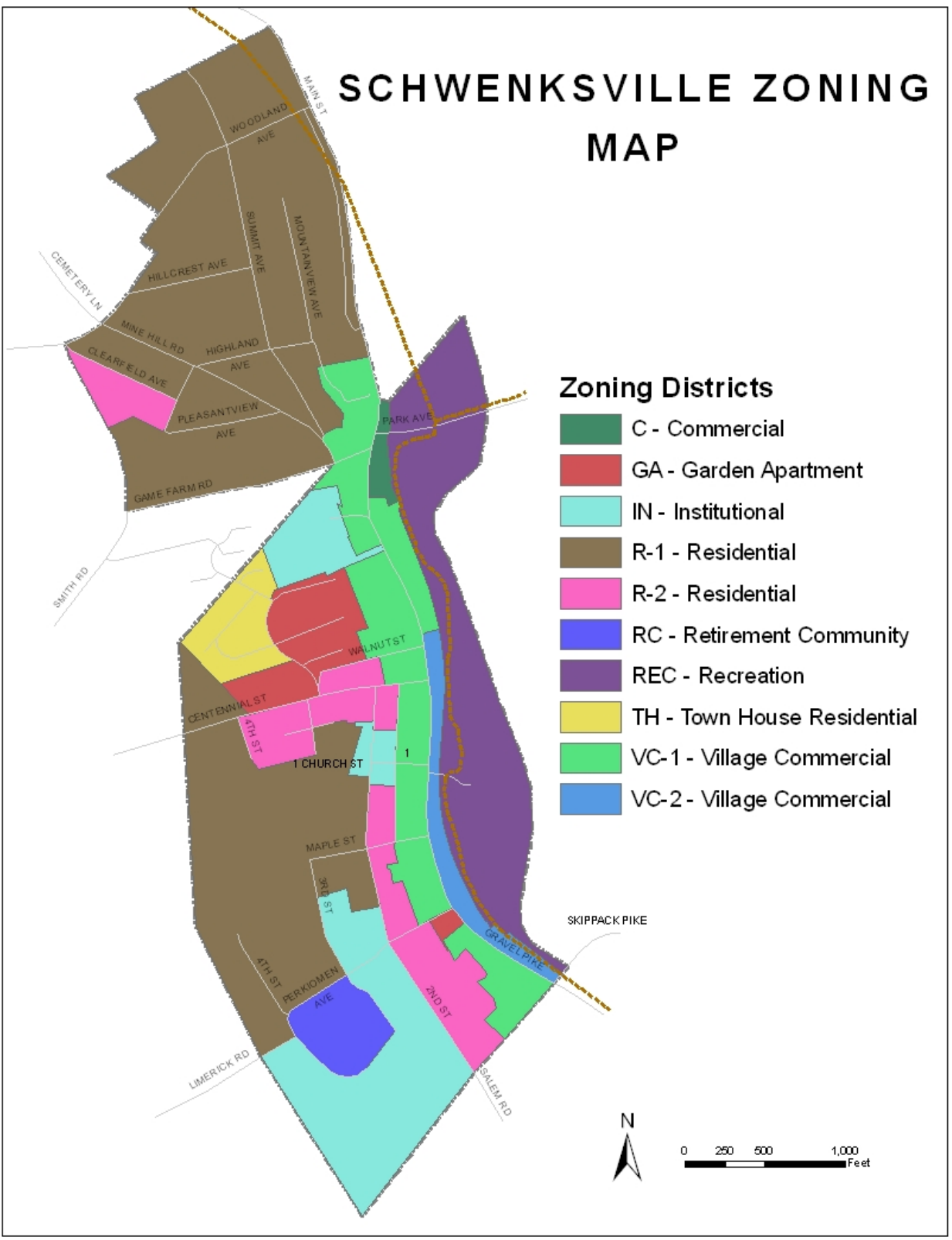
Website Redesign

Schwenksville has begun a comprehensive redesign of its website. The new site will include links to Borough programs and activities being offered by the Borough and other institutions. The new site could also include information about the programs, activities, and changes recommended by this plan. Beyond municipal information, the site could be used as a marketing tool to keep residents, visitors, and potential investors up to date on all changes and opportunities in Schwenksville. Schwenksville should continue this redesign and continue to maintain an attractive, user-friendly website into the future. This is a low priority recommendation.



Community Day in Schwenksville, 2009. This plan recommends more festivals like this one to enhance community spirit and increase awareness of Schwenksville and its businesses.

SCHWENKSVILLE ZONING MAP



7

Implementation

The recommendations in this plan are intended to assist the Borough in its revitalization efforts over the next eight years. During that time the Borough may amend this plan from time to time in order to take advantage of new ideas and capitalize on new potential funding sources.

The following implementation matrices list all the recommendations described in this plan and include a priority ranking, potential funding sources, potential partners, cost estimates, and a time frame for implementation. The cost estimates and time frames may change over time due to changing conditions and economic circumstances. The matrices should be used by the Borough to match up potential sources of funding and expertise, as well as a guide to planned revitalization projects.

In addition, the following contacts are provided as potential sources of funding and expertise in this plan. The information is current as of this writing.

Montgomery County Revitalization Program

Contact: Brian O'Leary, Section Chief of County Planning, 610-278-3728

Email: boleary@montcopa.org

Website: planning.montcopa.org

Program Goals: Strengthen and stabilize older boroughs and townships in Montgomery County.

Community Revitalization Program

Contact: PA Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center, 1-866-466-3972

Website: www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=72

Program Goals: To create and/or retain jobs, utilize vacant properties, and spur additional development.

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)

The following are funded by the State of Pennsylvania, but administered by DVRPC:

Classic Towns Program

Contact:

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
190 N. Independence Mall West, 8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106
215-592-1800

Email: classictowns@dvrpc.org

Website: www.classictowns.org

Program Goals: Assist communities in the Philadelphia region with marketing and advertising to create vibrant, thriving downtowns.

Home Town Streets and Safe Routes to School

Contact: Ryan Gallagher, Assistant Manager, Office of Project Implementation

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
190 N. Independence Mall West, 8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Email: rgallagher@dvrpc.org

Website: www.dvrpc.org/saferoutes/

Program Goals: Provide assistance grants to communities with neighborhood schools to extend sidewalks and crosswalks. Additionally, provide funding for street furniture and streetscaping in neighborhood downtowns.

Elm Street Program

Contact: PA Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center at 1-800-379-7448

Website: <http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/funding-detail/index.aspx?progId=74>

Program Goals: To protect and enhance residential neighborhoods adjacent to revitalizing downtowns.

First Industries Fund - Tourism

Contact: 717-787-7120 (Planning Grants); 717-783-5046 (Loans); 717-783-1109 (Loan Guarantee)

Website: www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=47

Program Goals: Provides planning grants and low interest loans to promote tourism and agriculture.

Main Street Program

Contact: PA Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center, 1-866-466-3972

Website: <http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/funding-and-program-finder/funding-detail/index.aspx?progId=79>

Program Goals: Provide grants to municipalities to hire a main street manager, perform planning studies, historic preservation, downtown façade improvement programs, streetscape improvements, and business recruitment and retention.

Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative

Contact: 1-800-635-4747

Website: www.phfa.org/forms/hcp/NRI.pdf

Program Goals: Provide grants to support and encourage neighborhood and community revitalization efforts through the development and renovation of existing structures and construction of new infill development.

PECO Green Regions

Contact: Elizabeth Robb, Administrator, 610-353-5587

Website: www.natlands.org/categories/article.asp?fldArticleID=113

Program Goals: Provide grants to assist with open space plans, habitat improvement, and improvements to passive recreation space.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)

Contact: Cindy Adams Dunn, Deputy Secretary for Conservation and Technical Services
717-787-9306

Website: www.dcnr.state.pa.us

Program Goals: Provide grants for communities seeking to preserve open space, greenways, and natural areas.

PHMC - Certified Local Government Grant Program

Contact: 1-800-201-3231

Website: www.artsnet.org/phmc/grants_certified_local_govern.htm

Program Goals: Historic preservation and enhancement.

TreeVitalize

Contact: Patrice Carroll, Project Director,
215-988-8874

Website: www.treevitalize.net

Program Goals: To increase tree coverage in southeast Pennsylvania.

Urban Development Program

Contact: PA Department of Community and Economic Development Customer Service Center, 1-866-466-3972

Website: www.newpa.com/programDetail.aspx?id=81

Program Goals: Grants for marketing, workforce training, site preparation, public safety, and building renovation.

Physical Improvements Matrix: High Priority Recommendations						
Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Trail Corridor Parking Initiative</i>	Along the Perkiomen Trail behind the area from 128 Main Street to Meadow Park	Improve access and parking for residents and businesses along this area of Main Street	Short Term (0-3 Years)	\$150,000 to \$200,000	MCRP, DVRPC, Community Revitalization Program	Main Street Residents and Property Owners, MCPC, Borough Planning Commission
<i>Meadow Park</i>	Open space located between the Perkiomen Trail and the Perkiomen Creek between the Sewer Authority site and Park Ave	Improve drainage in the park with innovative, “green” control measures, improve access with new parking facility with a new lot at the Fire Company, improve entrance with new gateway and signage	Short to Mid Term (0-6 Years)	\$50,000 for park gateway, \$150,000 for parking improvements, \$200,000 to \$400,000 for drainage and recreation facility improvements	PA Department for the Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR), MCRP, Montgomery County Growing Greener Program, DVRPC, Treevitalize, PECO Green Regions	Schwenksville Borough Sewer Authority, MCPC, Borough Planning Commission, Montgomery County Parks and Heritage Services
<i>Signage</i>	Wayfinding signs throughout the Borough, Historic markers at relevant buildings, Gateways indicated on the Pedestrian Improvement Priorities Map	Increase awareness of the Borough among passing motorists and trail users with signage that directs visitors to local businesses, amenities, and events.	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable; \$10,000 to \$50,000	MCRP, DVRPC	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Local Business Owners
<i>Parking</i>	On-street parking areas along Main Street and certain locations near Main Street	Clearly define on-street parking areas and expand off-street parking with new lots and shared parking agreements	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable; on-street parking included as part of streetscape improvements; new off-street \$5,000 per space; no cost for shared parking agreements	MCRP, DVRPC	Main Street Property Owners, MCPC, Borough Planning Commission

Physical Improvements Matrix: High Priority Recommendations						
Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Streetscape Improvements</i>	Entire stretch of Main Street with special focus between Perkiomen Avenue and Game Farm Road/Park Avenue	The streetscape improvements described in Chapter 5, Physical Improvements. Elements include street crossings, sidewalk upgrades, signage, street furniture, and on-street parking	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable, depending on extent of improvements; \$300,000 to \$500,000 per block	Montgomery County Revitalization Program (MCRP), Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)	Main Street Property Owners, Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC), Borough Planning Commission, DVRPC
<i>Extend Sidewalk Facilities</i>	Specific locations indicated on the Pedestrian Improvement Priorities Map and other areas in the Borough lacking sidewalks	The sidewalk extensions described in Chapter 5, Physical Improvements.	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable, \$50,000 (per location)	MCRP, DVRPC, Safe Routes to School	Main Street Property Owners, Homeowners, MCPC, Borough Planning Commission

Physical Improvements Matrix: Medium Priority Recommendations						
Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Trail Gateway</i>	Intersection of Perkiomen Trail with Park Avenue as shown in the Pedestrian Improvement Priorities Map	Construct a gateway to the Borough similar to the one at the intersection of the Perkiomen Trail and Route 73 with pavers, signage, benches, and a kiosk.	Mid Term (0-6 Years)	\$40,000	MCRP, Montgomery County Growing Greener Program	MCPC, Borough Planning Commission, Montgomery County Parks and Heritage Services
<i>Align Main Street Eatery Driveway with Centennial Avenue</i>	Intersection of Main Street and Centennial Avenue	Improve pedestrian and driver safety with an aligned intersection that would serve Centennial Avenue, the restaurant, and the gas station.	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	\$150,000	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), MCRP, DVRPC	Schwenksville Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Affected Business Owners, Local Residents

Physical Improvements Matrix: Low Priority Recommendations

Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Align Game Farm Road/Park Avenue at Main Street</i>	Intersection of Game Farm Road/Park Avenue with Main Street	Improve Pedestrian and Driver safety with an aligned intersection. Demolish existing building and replace with plaza or pocket park and landscaped parking for the Borough and the Perkiomen Trail	Long Term (6-10 Years)	\$700,000	PennDOT, MCRP, DVRPC, Montgomery County Growing Greener Program	PennDOT, MCPC, Borough Planning Commission, Affected Business Owners, Local Residents, Montgomery County Parks and Heritage Services
<i>Renovate Historic Properties for Reuse</i>	Various buildings throughout the Borough. Buildings along Main Street are a higher priority	Provide assistance to property owners looking to renovate and reuse historic buildings; Borough initiated reuse and renovation of vacant commercial properties	Long Term (6-10 Years)	Variable: Assistance programs between \$50,000 to \$150,000; Individual purchase and/or renovations between \$10,000 to \$500,000	MCRP, DVRPC, State and National Historic Preservation Departments, Property Owners, Various Non-Profit Groups and Historical Societies	Borough planning Commission, MCPC, State and National Historic Preservation Departments, Borough Historic Preservation Commission, Various Non-Profit Groups and Historical Societies

Economic Improvements Matrix: High Priority Recommendations

Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Historic Heritage Preservation</i>	NA	Continue efforts to create a local Historic Preservation District; promote preservation throughout the Borough; assistance programs for historic preservation	Short Term (0-3 Years)	\$50,000 to \$150,000 for assistance programs	MCRP, DVRPC, State and National Historic Preservation Agencies, various Non-Profit Groups and Historical Societies, PHMC, First Industries Fund	Borough Planning Commission, Schwenksville Historic Preservation Committee, MCPC, State and National Historic Preservation Agencies, various Non-Profit Groups and Historical Societies
<i>Teen Activities</i>	NA	Provide educational and recreation activities to keep local children and teens occupied with music, arts, nature, and sports programs and amenities	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable, depending on availability of volunteers and donated space	NA	Perkiomen Valley School District, Ursinus College, Local Residents, Local business Owners, Perkiomen Valley Library, Local Churches
<i>Façade Improvement Program</i>	Main Street Commercial Properties, program may extend to homeowners on Main Street and other locations in the future	A program to provide grants and/or loans to improve the look and marketability of buildings along Main Street in Schwenksville Borough	Mid to Long Term (3-10 Years)	\$200,000 over a 3 to 10 year period. Property owners will be eligible for a maximum of \$10,000 in assistance	MCRP, DVRPC, Community Revitalization Program	Borough Planning Commission, Local Business Owners, MCPC

Economic Improvements Matrix: Medium Priority Recommendations

Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Zoning Changes</i>	VCI Village Commercial 1, VC2 Village Commercial 2, and Institutional Zoning Districts	Various Zoning changes as described in Chapter 6	Short Term (0-3 Years)	NA	NA	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Local Property Owners
<i>Signage Assistance Program</i>	VCI Village Commercial 1 and VC2 Village Commercial 2 Zoning Districts and other areas along Main Street	Assist local businesses to provide signs that compliment the small-town character of the Borough	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	\$10,000 to \$30,000	MCRP, Community Revitalization Program	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Local Business Owners
<i>Marketing Study</i>	NA	Market the Borough to Trail Users, Festival Goers, and other potential visitors throughout the Borough; conduct a marketing study to determine market area and potential niche	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	\$25,000	MCRP, DVRPC, Urban Development Program	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, DVRPC, Local Business Owners

Economic Improvements Matrix: Medium Priority Recommendations

Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Public Art Program</i>	Along Main Street and the Perkiomen Trail	Artwork from local artists and/or students would be used as part of streetscaping efforts	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable, Depending on scale of work and maintenance agreements	MCRP, Various Non-Profit Organizations	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Ursinus College, Perkiomen Valley School District, Local Artists, Local Business and Property Owners
<i>Celebrating Schwenksville</i>	NA	Plan more local parades and events, like the Halloween parade and Community Day, that celebrate and compliment Schwenksville's heritage and small-town charm	Short Term (0-3 Years)	Variable, depending on volunteer efforts and scale of event	Borough of Schwenksville	Borough Planning Commission, Schwenksville Women's Civic Association, Schwenksville Borough Historic Preservation Committee, Central Perkiomen Rotary Club
<i>Retail Business Recruitment</i>	NA	Recruit businesses that compliment the character of the Borough and cater to Trail Users, skiers, Festival Goers, and other niche shoppers	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	NA	NA	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Local Businesses
<i>Merchant Outreach Association</i>	NA	Establish a Schwenksville Merchant Association to aid new and existing business owners with marketing, business recruitment, Borough Assistance Programs, and compliance with Borough codes	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	NA	NA	Local Business Owners, Borough Planning Commission

Economic Improvements Matrix: Low Priority Recommendations

Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Website Redesign</i>	NA	Continue efforts to redesign the Borough Website with active links and information concerning Borough activities, events, and redevelopment opportunities	Short Term (0-3 Years)	NA	NA	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC
<i>Walking Tour</i>	Historic buildings throughout the Borough	Establish a walking tour to promote historic architecture with informational pamphlets, advertizing, and signage	Short Term (0-3 Years)	\$10,000 to \$50,000 for signage, pamphlets, and advertizing	MCRP, DVRPC, State and National Historic Preservation Agencies, various Non-Profit Groups and Historical Societies, PHMC, First Industries Fund	Borough Planning Commission, Schwenksville Historic Preservation Committee, MCPC, State and National Historic Preservation Agencies, various Non-Profit Groups and Historical Societies
<i>Tax Increment Financing</i>	Specific areas of the Borough's Commercial districts to be determined as part of the TIF process; usually ones with high vacancy rates	Funding for the redevelopment of portions of the Borough's commercial corridor that are determined to be blighted	Mid Term (3-6 Years)	NA	NA	MCPC, Montgomery County, Borough Planning Commission

Economic Improvements Matrix: Low Priority Recommendations

Project Title	Project Location	Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Potential Funding Sources	Potential Partners
<i>Farmers' Market</i>	Meadow park, or any central location with enough room for vendors and parking	Sell locally grown produce in a marketplace setting	Mid to Long Term (3-10 Years)	NA	NA	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Area Farmers, Adjacent Municipalities, Local Property and Business Owners, First industries Fund
<i>Homeowner Assistance Program</i>	Residential properties throughout the Borough	Assist homeowners to make façade improvements to their homes with loans or grant programs; assist potential homeowners purchase homes in the Borough	Mid to Long Term (3-10 Years)	\$300,000	MCRP, Community Revitalization Program, Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative	Borough Planning Commission, MCPC, Local Residents and Homeowners
<i>Joint Main Street Opportunities</i>	Main Street in Schwenksville and Route 29 in Lower Frederick and Perkiomen Townships	Explore the possibility of teaming up with neighboring municipalities to qualify for the Pennsylvania Main Street Program	Long Term (6-10 Years)	NA	Main Street Program, Elm Street Program	Borough Planning Commission, Neighboring Municipalities and Planning Commissions, Main Street Program, MCPC

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Appendix

In January, 2010 Schwenksville launched its Community Revitalization Survey. The survey was available online until April 1, 2010 and several hard copies of the survey were distributed at the Community Visioning Meeting on January 25, 2010. A link was placed from the Borough's website to the survey and flyers were sent out along with Borough service bills to generate interest and responses.

A description of the survey and an analysis of selected responses is available in Chapter 3, Community Outreach, of this Plan. The full responses will be available at Schwenksville Borough Hall for public viewing. The full survey is reproduced on the following pages.

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

1. Introduction

Schwenksville is in the process of updating its Community Revitalization Plan, which will create a vision for the Borough's future and provide detailed implementation projects and strategies so that the Schwenksville can apply for grants and other funding. It will also provide inspiration and concrete ideas to private citizens, developers, and businesses who wish to invest in the community.

We are currently prioritizing the goals of the plan, and developing a list of potential revitalization projects and strategies. Your input is vital.

Click "Next" to get started with the survey. If you'd like to leave the survey at any time, just click "Exit this survey". Your answers will be saved.

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

2. Respondent Information

*** 1. What is your interest in SCHWENKSVILLE Revitalization? (please choose just one)**

- ☐ I live in Schwenksville Borough
- ☐ I live in Schwenksville zip code (19473)
- ☐ I live in the Schwenksville area
- ☐ I work/volunteer in Schwenksville
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

3. SCHWENKSVILLE Residents' Quality of Life

Please answer the following questions for your household. (If you do not live in Schwenksville Borough or zip code, you may skip this section.)

1. What do you most enjoy about living in SCHWENKSVILLE?

2. Please rate the importance of the following potential area amenities for your household:

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Arts events (e.g. Sundaes in the Park, theater events)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farmer's Markets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neighborhood schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parades & other downtown events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sidewalk network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

3. Please Rate the importance of the following potential area recreation amenities for your household:

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Swimming Pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skate Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paved walking trails	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Athletic opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picnic/Barbeque Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bocce Ball Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volleyball	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basketball	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Baseball	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Soccer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

4. Are you satisfied with the housing options in SCHWENKSVILLE?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you responded 'No,' please explain:

5. Do you currently own your own home?

☐ Yes

☐ No, I rent

☐ Other

6. If you could change one thing about SCHWENKSVILLE to improve the quality of life for you (and your household), what would it be?

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

*** 7. Do you currently volunteer with any community organizations in SCHWENKSVILLE?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, but I would like to
- ☐ No, not interested/don't have time

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

4. SCHWENKSVILLE Commercial District

For the following questions, please answer based on your knowledge and perception of SCHWENKSVILLE's commercial establishments and its "town center" commercial district, centered on Main Street. Please do not include businesses outside the Borough (for example, south of Route 73 in Perkiomen).

1. How often do you patronize SCHWENKSVILLE establishments (e.g. shops, services, restaurants, arts and cultural attractions)?

- ☐ 5 or more times per week
- ☐ 2-4 times per week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 1-2 times per month
- ☐ 3-4 times per year
- ☐ Never

2. What are the top three reasons you visit SCHWENKSVILLE's commercial district (e.g. specific establishment or activity)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3. If you do not typically visit SCHWENKSVILLE'S Commercial District, what are the top three reasons (e.g. parking or safety concerns)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

4. Please rate SCHWENKSVILLE's commercial district on the following:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Don't Know/NA
Attractiveness of Main Street	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attractiveness of storefronts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attractiveness of housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parking convenience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parking availability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traffic flow	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping hours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of goods/services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of goods/services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of goods/services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety of commercial district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Walkability of downtown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

5. Which improvements do you think would be most beneficial to SCHWENKSVILLE's commercial district revitalization (choose five):

- ☐ Renovation of key buildings
- ☐ More arts and cultural establishments
- ☐ More public art
- ☐ Improvements to housing on Main Street
- ☐ Traffic improvements at key intersections
- ☐ More parking/changes to existing parking
- ☐ More crosswalks/pedestrian crossing signs
- ☐ More benches on Main Street
- ☐ Commercial facade improvements
- ☐ Improved streetscaping
- ☐ Preservation of historic buildings
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

6. If you feel more businesses are needed in the Commercial District of Main Street, what types of businesses would you most prefer to see in SCHWENKSVILLE (choose 5):

- ☐ Barber Shops/Beauty Salons
- ☐ Bars
- ☐ Restaurants
- ☐ Gift Boutiques
- ☐ Antique Shops
- ☐ Clothing/Retail Shops
- ☐ Bookstore
- ☐ Offices (Doctor, Lawyer, Travel Agent, Etc.)
- ☐ No additional businesses are needed

Other (please specify)

7. If you could change one thing to improve SCHWENKSVILLE's commercial district, what would it be?

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

5. Demographic Information

Please provide us with some basic information about you and your household.

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-44
- ☐ 45-64
- ☐ 65 and over

3. What is your household status?

- ☐ Single, living alone
- ☐ Couple, no children in household
- ☐ Family with children under 18
- ☐ Family with children over 18
- ☐ Two or more unrelated adults in household

Schwenksville Community Revitalization Survey

6. Thank you!

1. Additional comments or questions? Please contact the SCHWENKSVILLE Borough Manager at Borough Hall, or leave feedback below.

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Montgomery County Court House
PO Box 311, Norristown, PA19404

www.planning.montcopa.org