

**Application of Pennsylvania-American Water Company for Acquisition of Assets of  
The Municipal Authority of the City of McKeesport  
66 Pa. C.S. §1329  
Application Filing Checklist – Water/Wastewater  
Docket No. A-2017-\_\_\_\_\_**

22. Other requirements. Demonstrate compliance with the following:
- e. Provide evidence the filing is consistent with the affected municipality and county's comprehensive plans.

**RESPONSE:**

- e. See enclosed Comprehensive Plans and see below for additional information and references to websites regarding Comprehensive Plans. See also Direct Testimony of David R. Kaufman, Vice President – Engineering, on behalf of Pennsylvania-American Water Company, PAWC Statement No. 3, enclosed at Appendix A-14.

Plan

Website

Allegheny County:

[http://www.alleghenyplaces.com/comprehensive\\_plan](http://www.alleghenyplaces.com/comprehensive_plan).

The Executive Summary is enclosed.

City of McKeesport:

The City of McKeesport and Duquesne completed a Joint Comprehensive Plan in July of 2015. The plan is enclosed. The plan is not posted to their websites.

Duquesne:

The 2008 plan is enclosed and available at <http://elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/AlleghenyCounty/64:%20Duquesne%20City/4200320432mcp.pdf>.

Dravosburg:

Dravosburg follows Allegheny County's Comprehensive Plan.

Port Vue:

Port Vue follows Allegheny County's Comprehensive Plan.

RECEIVED

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ALLEGHANY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*City of Duquesne*  
*Comprehensive Plan*

*Adopted*  
*July 12, 2000*

*Prepared By:*

*Mackin Engineering Company*

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## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The area that is now the City of Duquesne was originally part of Mifflin Township, Allegheny County, which covered much of the area south of the Monongahela River. The city has often been described as a "steel town", and in fact the steel mill pre-dated the city itself. Construction on the steel plant began on May 28, 1885, and by the spring of 1886, the Duquesne Steel Company was producing steel. In 1888, Allegheny Bessemer Steel Company purchased the mill, but the plant was dealt a blow when the workers went on strike in April 1889. The plant was shut down for more than five months and was on the verge of closing for good when the Carnegie Steel Company purchased it.

With the advent of the mills came an influx of people into what was still largely a rural area. The population rapidly increased in 1891 and the decision was made to incorporate Duquesne as a city. This was accomplished in September of that year and the first election was held in February 1892. By 1916 the population had expanded to 19,000 people, making Duquesne the fourth largest city in Allegheny County.

The premier amenity of the city at this time was the Carnegie Library, the third built in the Monongahela Valley, and one of hundreds to be built around the country from money provided by Andrew Carnegie. The \$300,000 library was a huge structure that also housed a gymnasium with an Olympic-size swimming pool and a music hall. It was torn down in 1968 because it had become too expensive to operate.

As the steel business boomed during and after World War I, so did Duquesne's population. It eventually reached its peak of 21,396 in 1930. During the Depression, the population dropped slightly, but by 1950, it was still over 17,000. About 16 percent of the population was foreign-born residents, reflecting the large number of immigrants who flocked to the mill town. Success of the city was generated by the success of its steel mills. In 1948, the United States Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation employed over 8,000 people at its National Duquesne Works.

Unfortunately, the fortunes of the city remained closely tied to those of the Duquesne Works through the latter half of the twentieth century. The mill began a slow decline in work force and production in the 1960s that became a rapid slide in the 1970s. After nearly a century of service, the mill closed its doors for good in 1980, throwing the city's economy into a tailspin from which it has yet to fully recover. The people of the city would have to learn to live without the mill that had forged its very existence.

In recent years, the City of Duquesne has continued to reshape itself by embarking upon many positive initiatives. In 1990, the Regional Industrial Development Corporation began development of the mill site by demolishing many of the buildings, cleaning up environmental hazards and enticing new firms into the site. The site is rebounding so much that it was chosen as the location for swearing in of Allegheny County's first county executive on January 3, 2000.

Loam soil association is present. This soil, where it occurs in abundance, is considered to be of statewide importance due to its agricultural fertility.

**WETLANDS**

The Department of the Interior has determined that the Monongahela River (Riverine) and Thompson Run (Pasturine) are the only two wetlands located within Duquesne. These waterways are protected as warm water fisheries by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Chapter 93 Water Quality Standards. This designation indicates that these waters maintain the propagation of fish species and additional flora and fauna that are indigenous to warm water habitat. Thompson Run, which flows through the CSX rail yard, appears to have been relocated through much of its lower length and has been channeled at the point that it enters the Monongahela River.

## POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

A study of the socio-demographic characteristics of the City of Duquesne was undertaken as part of the population and housing analysis. This information serves to profile changes, trends, and future expectations for the city. The information was gathered using: 1990 U.S. Census, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development and the City of Duquesne as sources.

The City of Duquesne has experienced a considerable loss in population since it peaked at 21,396 in the 1930s. There has been a general trend of population decline in Allegheny County, but not as drastic as that seen in Duquesne. Census data indicated that Duquesne's total population had dropped by approximately 60 percent between 1940 and 1990, while the population of Allegheny County had decreased by only 5 percent in that same time period. From these statistics, it can be concluded that the City of Duquesne has been losing nearly 2,500 people per decade since 1940.

The City of Duquesne witnessed the loss of over fourteen percent of its population in the 1950's, twenty years before the county began to lose population. Duquesne's greatest population loss was from 1960-1970 (-24%), whereas Allegheny County's greatest loss was from 1970-1980 (-9.8%). (See Table 1)

**TABLE 1  
TOTAL POPULATION CHANGE  
BY PERCENTAGE 1940-1990**

YEAR	Allegheny County	City of Duquesne	West Mifflin Borough	City of Clairton	City of McKeesport
1940-1950	7.3	-14.9	106.5	20.0	-4.2
1950-1960	7.5	-14.8	51.7	-6.4	-14.2
1960-1970	-1.4	-24.0	2.9	-18.2	-16.5
1970-1980	-9.7	-11.5	-6.4	-19.5	-18.3
1980-1990	-15.5	-15.5	-10.0	-20.3	-16.1

Source: 1990 Census

The largest population concentrations in the City of Duquesne are in the age groups of 5-17 and 25-44. The age distribution for the City of Duquesne experienced an increase in three age groups from 1970-1990: ages 25-44, ages 65-74, and ages 75-84. Duquesne's total population has been decreasing every decade, and a shift in age distribution is also occurring. The largest shift was in an increase of people ages 75-84 years. This indicates that the city's population is aging (Table 2).

A positive trend in population was revealed between the ages 25-44. From 1970 to 1990 there was a continued increase in this age group. Although it was only at a rate of 6 percent, this was a positive shift for Duquesne because people included in this age group were of working age.

**TABLE 3  
RACIAL COMPOSITION**

YEAR	CITY OF DUQUESNE				ALLEGHENY COUNTY			
	% White	% African American	% Other*	% Total Minority**	% White	% African American	% Other*	% Total Minority**
1940	91.8	8.2	<1	8.2	93.6	6.4	<1	6.4
1950	90.6	9.4	<1	9.4	92.5	7.5	<1	7.5
1960	85.7	14.3	<1	14.3	91.7	8.2	0.1	8.3
1970	83.5	16.2	0.3	16.5	90.7	9.0	0.3	9.3
1980	75.9	23.5	0.6	24.1	88.7	10.4	0.9	11.3
1990	68.2	31.1	0.7	31.8	87.5	11.2	1.3	12.5

Source: United States Census, 1990.

\* *Other* Includes Asian Americans and American Indians where separate data are available.

\*\* *Minority* Includes all non-whites.

**Fire Protection**

In 1995, the Duquesne City Volunteer Fire Department was formed with thirty charter members. Prior to 1995, the city was one of the last municipalities in western Pennsylvania to have a full-time paid fire department. The Fire Chief is the only remaining paid fire fighter in the city.

The fire station is located at 12 South Second Street on the ground floor of City Hall, in the same location as the former paid fire department. The volunteer fire department sponsors educational programs aimed at fire prevention and fire emergency procedures. Fire calls are dispatched through the Mon Valley 911 Center.

**Ambulance Service**

The Duquesne's Emergency Medical Service located on Clark Street provides ambulance service. This facility is staffed by certified ambulance personal 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Emergency patients are typically transported to McKeesport Hospital, which is less than 3 miles from the city.

**Public Works**

Currently, the City of Duquesne has a full-time Public Works Department located in City Hall. There are eleven full-time employees in the department. Typical duties consist of street maintenance, snow plowing, park maintenance, storm sewer catch basin cleaning, maintenance of water lines, building maintenance, and the overall maintenance of all public property within the city.

***Post Office***

The Duquesne Post Office is located at 11 South First Street and serves the entire community. It is centrally located and serves a large pedestrian population. The post office offers a full range of services.

**HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

Due to Duquesne's aging population, and their demand for health care services, health care facilities are an important commodity in the city. At this time, two major health care facilities are located within a five-minute drive of the city.

***UPMC McKeesport***

Located at 1500 Fifth Avenue in the City of McKeesport, this is the largest hospital in the Mon Valley. In fact, with over 400 beds, 250 doctors, and 300 nurses, UPMC McKeesport Hospital is one of the largest hospitals in the Pittsburgh region.



***The City of Duquesne School District***

The Duquesne School District serves the city exclusively. There are approximately 950 students in the City of Duquesne School District. This school system is one of the smallest and most financially stressed in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Due to the city's eroding tax base, the school district has eliminated several academic and athletic programs to accommodate for lost revenue.

***Duquesne Elementary, Middle, and High School***

This building is located at 28 South Third Street in the city. The school houses grades K-12. Built in 1920, the building was recently renovated. Renovations were completed for the beginning of the 1998 school year. The school district employs 75 people including five administrators, 53 teachers, six secretaries, and 11 custodians.

***Duquesne Catholic School***

This is the only private/parochial school in the City of Duquesne. Located at the corner of Grant and Norman Streets, the school was formed in 1969 through a consolidation with Saint Joseph's Holy Name and Holy Trinity. School enrollment is usually around 100 students per year and serves grades K-8.

***Serra Catholic High School***

Located in the City of McKeesport, about eight miles from the City of Duquesne, this Catholic high school is the only remaining in the Mon Valley. The school has an enrollment of approximately 300 students and offers several extra-curricular activities to its students.

***Wilson Christian Academy***

Wilson Christian Academy is located in West Mifflin at 1900 Clairton Road. The school has an enrollment of approximately 475 students in grades K – 12. The Academy offers a "readiness program" to prepare 4 year olds for kindergarten.

## RECREATION

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Parks and recreational facilities are necessary for all persons regardless of age or physical impairment. The City of Duquesne has neighborhood and community parks that are well maintained and within walking distance for most residents. See Figure 3.

### ***Duquesne Place***

Containing approximately four acres, this park is located on Overland Street in the eastern end of the city, near the West Mifflin border. The park has undergone a variety of improvements over the past three years, funded by the city's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. This park includes a Deck Hockey Court, two basketball courts, a baseball field, the school districts football stadium, large playground area, and several benches and shade trees. Overall the park is in good condition with only seasonal maintenance needed.

### ***Polish Hill Park/Playground***

Located in the northern section of the city adjacent to the Duquesne High School Athletic Fields, this is the second largest park in the city. The park is about three acres in size and contains new park equipment. This park offers several recreational facilities such as a tennis court, basketball court, two ballfields, playground equipment, picnic tables, benches, and shade trees.

### ***Hamilton Avenue Playground***

Located between Second and Third Streets along Hamilton Avenue this park is about a quarter acre in size. The playground underwent a complete renovation in 1992, funded by CDBG. A small grassy area located adjacent to the playground complements the equipment and park benches.

### ***City Park***

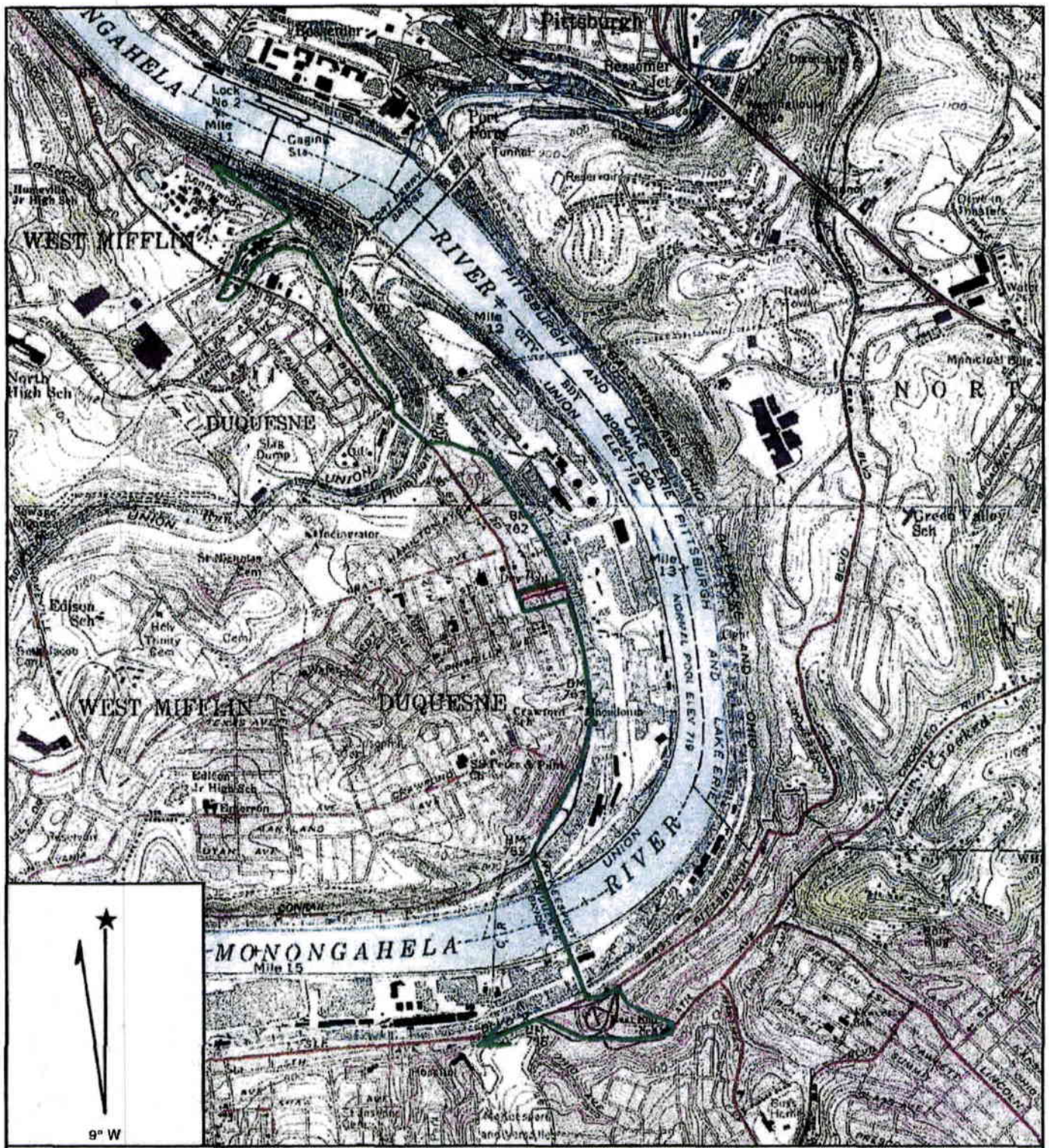
Duquesne's City Park is located adjacent to the Duquesne City Hall at the corner of Second Street and Grant Avenue. This facility is a predominantly passive recreation facility, seeing significant use during warmer months. The park contains benches, pavilions, and shade trees. It is in good condition needing only seasonal maintenance.

### ***Wylie Avenue Park***

About 1/2 an acre in size, this park is located at the corner of Wylie Avenue and Elm Street in the southeastern section of the city. In 1992 the park underwent an equipment upgrade. The park contains a basketball court, play ground equipment, tot lot, pavilion, benches, and shade trees. The park is maintained by a joint cooperative effort between the City of Duquesne and the Macedonia Baptist Church.

**REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES**

There is an abundance of regional recreational facilities within a fifteen-mile radius of Duquesne. These facilities include: the Pittsburgh Zoo; Three River's Stadium; the Civic Arena; Kennywood Park; Schenley Park; Carnegie Science Center; Carnegie Museum; Phipps Conservatory; The National Aviary; The Pittsburgh Children's Museum; Sandcastle Water Park; White Oak County Park; and Clairton City Pool.



Name: MC KEESPORT  
 Date: 1/5/100  
 Scale: 1 inch equals 2000 feet

Location: 040° 22' 19.5" N 079° 50' 45.5" W  
 Caption: PROPOSED STEEL INDUSTRY HERITAGE TRAIL

Figure 4

***Duquesne Redevelopment Authority***

In 1995, the City of Duquesne Redevelopment Authority was created to acquire and dispose of vacant property, underwrite new development, leverage new funding for development projects, and develop tax increment financing for development projects. The authority is comprised of a five-member board with each member serving staggered five-year terms.

***Planning Commission***

The Duquesne City Planning Commission is a ten-member board appointed by city council. Members are appointed to four-year terms, on a staggered basis, no more than two new commission members can be appointed in a given year. The planning commission is responsible for updating the Comprehensive Plan, reviewing site plans and subdivisions, annual reports and other planning activities.

***Zoning Hearing Board***

The Duquesne Zoning Hearing Board is comprised of three members appointed by city council for three-year terms. The terms are staggered so that one member's term expires each year. The Zoning Hearing Board listens to variance requests and has the authority to grant or deny such a deviation from the city's zoning ordinance. The board also hears the appeals of aggrieved parties where it is alleged that an officer of the city misapplied an ordinance provision.

***Building Inspector***

The building inspector is appointed by city council, he or she reviews and issues zoning permits. The officer also has enforcement responsibilities under the city zoning ordinance and may institute civil enforcement proceedings as a means of compliance.

**OTHER NON-MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

***Steel Valley Council of Governments***

Formed in 1973, the Steel Valley Council of Governments is a non-profit community development organization based in Homestead, Pennsylvania. The Steel Valley Council of Governments has a full time staff and provides street sweeping service to the city.

***Duquesne Business Advisory Corporation***

City officials who wished to examine the possibility of improving conditions along West Grant Street established the Duquesne Business Advisory Corporation (DBAC) in 1978. The DBAC has become very active in economic and residential development throughout the city, by operating several programs including the Enterprise Zone.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

This section of the background study will describe each public utility individually to establish current providers and the state of Duquesne's utility infrastructure.

### **WATER**

At the time of the study the entire City of Duquesne was serviced by public water provided by the Westmoreland Water Authority. A master meter at a pump station meters the water. Water lines in the city are very old and in need of repair, the city is planning to repair the residential water distribution meter system to correct this problem.

Prior to buying water from the Westmoreland Water Authority Duquesne's water was supplied through a series of 10 to 20 wells. These wells are no longer in service and they have been capped; however if future use demands, the wells could be put back into use.

### **WASTEWATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT**

Except for a handful of on-lot systems, the entire City of Duquesne, approximately 2,700 customers, is served by public sewer. The collection system was constructed at the turn of the century, and has a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. This system has four overflow regulators that are permitted by the Department of Environmental Protection. At this time the plant operates at sixty (60) percent of capacity. Because the system appears to be adequate for current needs, the city is exploring the possibility of expanding lines.

### **STORM SEWER**

The majority of the storm sewer system is combined with the sanitary sewage system. However, in some areas, the storm sewer system stands alone. No apparent drainage problems exist in the City of Duquesne at this time.

### **CABLE TELEVISION**

TCI of Pennsylvania provides Cable Television on citywide basis. TCI maintains both fiber-optic and hybrid fiber coaxial cable lines in Duquesne. In 1996, TCI completed a total rebuild of the cable lines in Duquesne.

### **ELECTRIC**

Duquesne Light Company provides electric service for the entire city of Duquesne. No major expansion or upgrades are planned for the city. Duquesne Light's electric rates have been frozen until the year 2000.

The city is currently entertaining offers from Allegheny Energy for electric service.

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

There were 4,100 housing units in Duquesne consisting of a mix of housing types including: single family dwellings, duplexes, multi-family structures, senior citizen high rises, and manufactured homes. The variety in housing provide housing opportunities for all income levels. Many of the housing units are single-family dwellings that have been divided to accommodate two families. In the last several years Duquesne has demolished between 400-500 blighted homes.

### HOUSING OCCUPANCY

Eighty-seven percent of Duquesne's total housing stock is occupied, leaving 13% vacant. Of the occupied units, 57 percent are owner occupied while 43 percent were rental units. Vacant housing is a vexing problem in Duquesne. Rental rates of less than \$300.00 per month account for nearly one-third of the rental units in Duquesne. The median gross rent was \$404.00 per month.

### CENSUS TRACTS

The number of housing units in each census tract (see Figure 5) is shown in Table 4 by occupancy and tenure. Nearly 50 percent of the housing units in tract 4867 were occupied. This geographic area has the lowest number of housing vacancies in Duquesne. Two reasons for the lower vacancy rate may have been due to the good-to-excellent condition of owner-occupied housing, and the close proximity of shopping and public transportation to the rental units. (Table 4)

**TABLE 4**  
**HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE 1990**

TENURE	TOTAL UNITS	PERCENT OF TOTAL	CENSUS TRACT 4867	CENSUS TRACT 4868	CENSUS TRACT 4869
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	4106	100	1630	1160	1316
<b>Occupied</b>					
Owner	2035	49.6	664	680	691
Renter	1540	37.5	775	316	449
<b>Total Occupied*</b>	<b>3575</b>	<b>87.1</b>	<b>1439</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>1140</b>
<b>Vacant</b>					
Homeowner Units	110	2.6	27	50	33
Rental Units	205	5	79	56	70
Other	226	5.5	92	61	73
<b>Total Vacant*</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>176</b>

\* - Numbers may not add up due to Census allocation procedures. Source: 1990 Census.

for future occupancy.

**Table 6**  
**Housing Units by Year Structure Built 1990**

Year Structure Built	Total		CENSUS TRACT 4867		CENSUS TRACT 4868		CENSUS TRACT 4869	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1989-1990	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1985-1988	8	0.2	---	---	8	0.7	---	---
1980-1984	148	3.6	86	5.3	58	5.0	4	0.3
1970-1979	407	9.9	371	22.8	21	1.8	15	1.1
1960-1969	207	5.0	104	6.4	64	5.5	39	3.0
1950-1959	477	11.6	160	9.8	97	8.4	220	16.6
1940-1949	762	18.6	268	16.4	155	13.4	339	25.6
1939 or earlier	2097	51.1	641	39.3	751	65.1	705	53.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4106</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1630</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1154</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1322</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1990 Census.

#### TERM OF RESIDENCY

Duquesne's residents can be grouped according to the year they took occupancy of their homes. Basically, there are two distinct groups of residents in Duquesne — those who moved into their own houses prior to 1980 and those who moved into rental units after 1970. The city's residents are nearly evenly divided between these two groups.

Table 7 displays that 79 percent of the owner-occupied housing units were occupied prior to 1980. In contrast, 74 percent of the renter-occupied units were occupied since 1980. The marked difference between the term of occupancy for owner-occupied housing units and renter-occupied units demonstrates the diversity between the groups of residents.



**TABLE 9**  
**RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS BY GROSS RENT 1990**

Gross Rent (\$)	Renter-Occupied Units	Percent of Total
No Cash Rent	82	5.3
Less than 100	142	9.3
100 to 199	348	22.7
200 to 299	279	18.2
300 to 399	341	22.2
400 to 499	194	12.6
500 to 599	114	7.4
600 to 749	33	2.2
Total	1533	100.0
<b>Median Gross Rent: \$288</b>		

Source: 1990 Census.

## HOUSING COMMUNITIES

### *Grant Towers*

Located at 100 Grant Avenue in the center of the Duquesne, this privately owned high-rise is managed by the Boston Financial Management Company. Grant Towers contains 60 efficiency units and one-bedroom apartments and is primarily occupied by the elderly. Residents of Grant Towers have convenient access to the National Steel Workers Old Timers Foundation, which provides both activities and meals for the elderly, as well as transportation to shopping and medical care at Duquesne Plaza. Grant Towers is a Section 236 HUD property with some Section 8 housing. Currently, the management maintains a 99% occupancy rate.

### *Harry S. Truman Tower*

Located on Second Street, this 62-unit high-rise was built in 1974 for elderly residents over 62 years of age. In the past, there was a five-year waiting list; today, there is a high vacancy rate. To live in the Towers, residents must be self-sufficient. This fact, coupled with the lack of a central dining hall, may contribute to the high vacancy rate. Rent in the Harry S. Truman Tower is based on income.

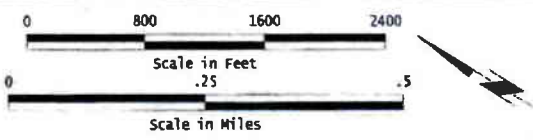
### *Parkview Manor and Hilltop Apartments*

Located at the northern end of Duquesne, Parkview Manor and Hilltop Apartments are both privately owned subsidized apartments. Although the apartments are identified by different names, they share a common driveway with access from Commonwealth Avenue and utilize common internal roads and facilities. There are eight buildings in Parkview Manor and eight buildings in the Hilltop Apartment complex. In total, there are 332 units, providing one, two and



**LEGEND**  
**4868** 1990 Census Tract Number  
 ..... 1990 Census Tract Boundary

**Mackin**  
 Mackin Engineering Company  
 R.I.D.C. Park West  
 117 Industry Drive  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15275



**CITY OF DUQUESNE**  
 Allegheny County, PA  
 January, 2000

Figure 5  
**CENSUS TRACTS**  
 This project was financed by Act 47 funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

included Grant Avenue, Commonwealth Boulevard, Spring Avenue, Oliver Avenue, and Library Place. At the time the study was prepared, none of these intersections were experiencing a deficient level of service (LOS) during peak traffic hours. A level of service equal to a C rating was given to the intersections in the study area. In 1996 the average daily traffic (ADT) at the Rt. 837 and Grant Avenue intersection was 1,775 vehicles and the ADT at Rt. 837 and Commonwealth totaled 1,970 vehicles per day.

Figure 6 illustrates areas of traffic concerns in Duquesne.

### **AIR TRANSPORTATION**

Air transportation is essential to an intermodal transportation system. Many businesses utilize air transportation as a mode of travel. There are two airports, Pittsburgh International and Allegheny County that service Duquesne businesses and residents.

#### ***Pittsburgh International Airport***

Located approximately eighteen miles from the City of Duquesne, access to the Pittsburgh International Airport via the yellow belt was a concern. Automobile travel from Duquesne to the airport is through the City of Pittsburgh where traffic congestion is a problem during peak travel hours. This traffic congestion problem should be corrected with the development of the Mon/ Fayette Expressway. The airport is a full service international airport that acts as a hub for business and travel between the East Coast and the Midwest.

#### ***Allegheny County Airport***

This airport is located on Lebanon Church Road, is approximately 4 air miles and 5 road miles from the City of Duquesne, in West Mifflin Borough. The Allegheny County Airport is the second largest airport in southwestern Pennsylvania. The facility handles commercial and recreational air traffic.

### **PASSENGER RAIL**

The nearest Amtrak station is located approximately ten miles from Duquesne at the intersection of Penn and Liberty Avenues (adjacent to the Pennsylvania Building) in downtown Pittsburgh. Amtrak provides rail service for commuters and freight throughout the United States and into Canada and Mexico. Amtrak is open twenty-four (24) hours a day everyday of the year.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

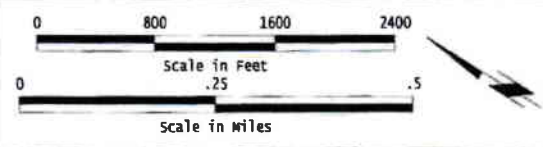
Port Authority Transit (PAT) service, available throughout Allegheny County, had several stops in Duquesne. In 1999 PAT paid \$195,000 for land on Library Street and built a Park and Ride Lot that was dedicated on December 6, 1999. It should be noted that Duquesne was one of only twenty-eight (28) municipalities in Allegheny County to experience an increase in the percentage of persons in the workforce using public transportation to travel to work. The Port Authority of Allegheny County also offers an ACCESS program that provides door-to door service for people with disabilities who cannot use PAT buses and



**LEGEND**

- ① Route 837 pedestrian access
- ② Traffic light needs replaced
- ③ one-way traffic pattern needed
- Arterials
- Local Collectors

**Mackin**  
 Mackin Engineering Company  
 R.I.D.C. Park West  
 117 Industry Drive  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15275



**CITY OF DUQUESNE**  
 Allegheny County, PA  
 January, 2000

Figure 6  
**TRAFFIC CONCERNS**  
 This project was financed by Act 47 funds  
 through the Pennsylvania Department of  
 Community and Economic Development

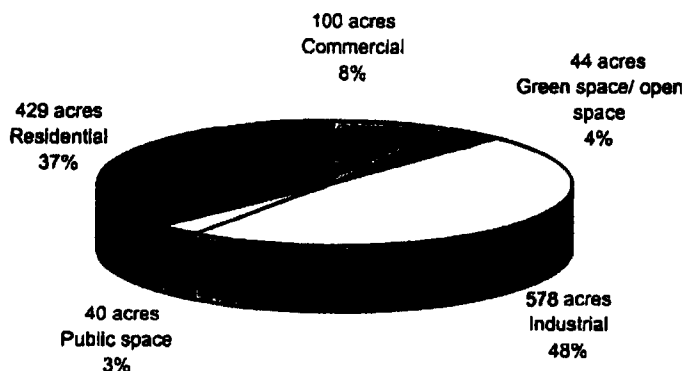
C:\pgh\img\pgh\basemap\cityofduq\00010001.apr

LAND USE	ACREAGE	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Commercial	100 acres	8 %
Industrial	578 acres	48 %
Public space/Quasi-Public	40 acres	3 %
Green space/ Open Space	44 acres	4 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,190 acres</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: 1997 Field Survey

### EXISTING LAND USE, 1997

Graph I- J,1 Existing Land Use



#### ***Residential***

The residential land use category includes all land associated with the various living arrangements. Residential land was comprised of property utilized for single family dwellings, multiple family dwellings, group quarters, nursing homes, senior citizen living complexes, mobile home parks, and planned residential developments (PRD's). It represented 37 percent of the city's total land area.

Most of the residential development within the city was situated in high-density developments including very densely developed single-family housing

park as improved transportation to the facility becomes available. The timely construction of the Mon/ Fayette Expressway, with a ramp for direct access, will enhance development at the City Center.

Additional industrial land such as the Union Railroad property was located on a strip of land between the Monongahela River and PA Route 837 at the northern end of the city. Other small industries were also found scattered throughout the city.

***Public and Semi-Public***

The public/semi-public land use category accounted for three percent of the total land in Duquesne. There was a proliferation of old schools, religious buildings, and social clubs, throughout the city, which fall under this category.

The majority of the land classified as public/semi-public is not subject to property tax and thus, poses a concern to the elected officials and residents of Duquesne. Any increase in this category, other than for city-related recreational facilities, is not desirable because of its ineffectiveness to produce revenues for the city.

***Open Space***

Four percent or 44 acres of the city's land can be defined as open space. This classification primarily consisted of forested areas that had not been developed because of steep slopes. An increase in this category is needed to enhance the residential character of Duquesne making it a more attractive place to live.

***Vacant Space***

There was very little vacant land remaining in Duquesne, but over time with the demolition of dilapidated housing many lots are becoming available. In particular, land on Kohler Street could be developed for housing as well as Second Street and Viola Street to Third Street. There is one significant vacant parcel that is owned by Allegheny County at the site of the former Cochrandale housing development. This site was demolished in February of 1998 and a redevelopment plan was initiated in early 2000. See Figure 7

## City of Duquesne Strengths and Weaknesses Report

The community's strengths and weaknesses were created at a public meeting held in November 1997. The residents and municipal officials attending the meeting were divided into three groups to generate opinions on the strengths and weakness in Duquesne for the community facilities, public utilities, housing, land use, and transportation plan elements. The conclusions are as follows:

### Community Facilities

#### Group 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Available Land	• Under-Utilization
• Successful Volunteer Fire Department	• Lack Of Community Involvement
• Good Infrastructure	• Limited Programs
• Senior Citizen Center	• Not An Adequate Library
• New Facilities	• Lack Of "Full-Family" Facilities
• Potential River Access	• Lack Of Sponsorship For Programs

#### Group 2.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Remodeled City Hall	• No Community Center For Youth
• New Refreshment Stand At Little League Field	• City Hall Is Not ADA Accessible
• Rehabilitated All City Parks	• No Library
• Walking Trail At Polish Hill	• Poor School System
• Community Involvement To Upkeep Facilities & Streets	• Updated Facility For Volunteer Firemen
• New Memorial Adjacent To City Hall	• No Social Service Center
• Senior Citizen Facility	• Need For More Community Effort
• Various Family Support Centers/Social Services	

#### Group 3

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Well Placed Recreational Facilities	• Community Library
• Near Kennywood & Sandcastle	• School System
• Bike Trail (Proposed)	• Movie Theater
• Proposed Renovation Of JFK School into a Community Resource Center	• No Access To River
	• Pavilion At Memorial Field

## HOUSING

### Group 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Affordable housing	• School System
• Rehab for Resale Program	• Age of homes/ deteriorating condition
• Single-family housing stock	• Public housing
• Paint Program	• Section 8 housing: too much of it
• Sidewalk Program	• Absentee landlords
• Neighborhood Restoration efforts	

### Group 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Old, well constructed houses in good shape	• Low tax base
• Reasonably priced housing	• Absentee landowners
• Good rehabilitation program	• Abandoned & vacant homes
• Vacant Property Program	• Public housing
• Assisted housing	
• Senior citizen housing	

### Group 3

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Good, but limited brick housing stock	• Frame housing is in poor condition
• Rehab for Resale Program	• Lack of modern housing
• DBAC	• Vacant Properties
• Full-time building inspector	• Lots are too small for good new housing
	• Large amount of Section 8 housing
	• Absentee landlords/ code violations



## TRANSPORTATION

### Group 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Good bus service	• Need access to river
• Good streets for the most part	• No rapid transit exists
• Good street maintenance during winter	• Intersection of 2 <sup>nd</sup> and Rt 837 is dangerous
• Access to transportation for senior citizens	• Rumble strips are a nuisance
• Proposed Mon/Fayette Expressway	• No direct access to main roads

### Group 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Good streets	• Old street plan (very local)
• Good bus route access	• Possibly too many one-way streets
• Proposed Mon/Fayette Expressway	• Train crossing at City Center entrance
• Extensive paving program	• Sidewalk conditions
• River and rail access	• Poor off-street parking
• Close proximity to county airport and Pgh	

### Group 3

Strengths	Weaknesses
• State highway Rt 837	• Need for more bus routes
• Public transportation	• North 2 <sup>nd</sup> at Rt 837
• Street identification by signs	• Access to Rt 837 hurts business community
• Close proximity to county airport	• State maintenance of Rt 837 is poor
• Rail & river Accessibility	• Access to City Center
• Condition of city streets and alleys	• Relationship with PennDot
	• State assistance with street lighting on Rt 837
	• Street ownership between city, county, & state

## Housing

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**1. GOAL: Encourage the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock**

- A. Objective:** Focus efforts of Rehab for Resale program to target redevelopment areas. Develop a 5-Year Action Plan that sets and prioritizes redevelopment areas.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; Planning Commission; building inspector, DBAC; Duquesne Redevelopment Authority

**Priority:** High

**Potential Funding:** HOME Program (DCED); Communities of Opportunities Program (DCED); Action Housing; Community Revitalization Program (DCED)

- B. Objective:** Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock in Duquesne by providing access and information on programs (e.g. weatherization).

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; local residents; DBAC

**Priority:** High

**Potential Funding:** Allegheny County weatherization program; Habitat for Humanity; HOME (DCED); Communities of Opportunities (DCED)

- C. Objective:** Begin a program to help paint the homes of the elderly or financially insecure. This will add to the overall maintenance of the housing stock.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; DBAC; volunteers

**Priority:** High

**Potential Funding:** Donations by paint or home supply stores, volunteer labor (students, Duquesne Teen Council, civic and service organizations)

- D. Objective:** Provide readily accessible information about low interest housing loans and mortgages and how to access them. Feature programs in newsletter and literature.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; local banks; DBAC; Action Housing

**Priority:** High

**Potential Funding:** Home Investment Partnerships Program, Action Housing, Fannie Mae & Freddie

**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** Planning and Land Use Technical Assistance Program (DCED)

**3. GOAL:** Develop zoning regulations which favor housing that would attract new families to Duquesne. This would require amending the zoning ordinance.

**A. Objective:** Amend zoning and land use regulations to ensure standards that encourage, not discourage, redevelopment.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; zoning consultant  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** SPAG, Planning and Land Use Technical Assistance (DCED)

**B. Objective:** Amend zoning ordinance to include clustering provision that are consistent with goals of the community, such as application process and procedures, bulk and area requirements.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; Planning Commission  
**Priority:** Low  
**Potential Funding:** SPAG, Planning and Land Use Technical Assistance (DCED)

**C. Objective:** Amend zoning and building code regulations to allow for manufactured housing units as an affordable alternative to in-fill development.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; consultant  
**Priority:** Low  
**Potential Funding:** SPAG Grant, City revenue

**D. Objective:** Review and amend zoning ordinance as appropriate to ensure lot coverage requirements are consistent with community goals.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; Planning Commission; consultant  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** SPAG, City revenues

**E. Objective:** Review and amend zoning and land use regulations to allow mixed-use provisions such as second floor apartments over retail shops in commercial district.

## Land Use

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**1. GOAL: Preserve and promote community businesses and the development of the Central Business District (CBD)**

**A. Objective: Continue and expand the role of the DBAC**

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; DBAC; Planning Commission, Redevelopment Authority

**Priority:** High

**Potential Funding:** N/A

**B. Objective: Organize festivals and local functions to attract people into the community (e.g. street fairs, cultural events, church and house tours).**

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; volunteer committee

**Priority:** Medium

**Potential Funding:** Fund raising

**C. Objective: Try to incorporate specialty commercial businesses and services into the CBD to contrast and compliment the highway commercial along Rt. 837. This may involve marketing strategies through DBAC and the Redevelopment Authority.**

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; DBAC, Redevelopment Authority

**Priority:** Medium

**Potential Funding:** N/A

**D. Objective: Develop a spur trail from the Steel Heritage Trail into the business district.**

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; a regional trail group

**Priority:** Low

**Potential Funding:** City revenue; a regional trail group

**E. Objective: Utilize LERTA program (which uses a tax abatement strategy) to attract new businesses to Duquesne's business district.**

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council

**Priority:** High

**Potential Funding:** LERTA Program (state)

- D. **Objective:** Profile existing volunteer or service groups that are active within the community in each newsletter, provide a contact name, number and recent projects that have been completed in the community by volunteers.

**Responsibility:** City staff  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding::** N/A

**2. GOAL: Provide more activities for Duquesne's Youth**

- A. **Objective:** Expand the Boys/Girls program hours and activities.

**Responsibility:** Program staff  
**Priority:** Medium  
**Potential Funding:** CDBG; Community Revitalization Program (DCED)

- B. **Objective:** Create a police athletic league and programs (ex: basketball, softball, etc.). These programs will encourage police-youth interaction and mentorship, supporting crime prevention and community cohesion.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City staff; police department  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** Sponsorship; Fund raiser; Community Revitalization Program (DCED)

- C. **Objective:** Create a youth center to encourage productive and supervised programs that will provide structured alternatives for youths. *The Wall* in Butler is an example of this idea and could serve as a prototype for a similar program in Duquesne. *The Wall* offers programs in art, theater, music, and social activities. It operates its own building which has a small restaurant, cafe, and stage.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; residents; a religious organization; Duquesne Teen Council  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** Private foundations; donations

**3. GOAL: Create a community library.**

- A. **Objective:** Form an Ad Hoc library feasibility board to explore space and funding issues. The committee should establish an Action Plan based on articulated goals. Ad hoc committee should consider reuse of and existing building, use of the senior center or municipal building as a start up location.

**Potential Funding:** City funds; service organizations  
(Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Jaycees)

- D. **Objective:** Work with RIDC to establish boat/ramp access to the Monongahela River.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; RIDC  
**Priority:** Low  
**Potential Funding:** RIDC; new businesses; private investor

**6. GOAL: Improve overall quality of the Duquesne School District**

- A. **Objective:** Explore opportunities for a school merger (West Mifflin, Woodland Hills, McKeesport, Steel Valley).

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; School Board  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** N/A

**7. GOAL: Clean-up the image of Duquesne**

- A. **Objective:** Implement an "Adopt a Highway" program at the municipal level.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City staff, Citizens  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** City revenue

- B. **Objective:** Implement an "Adopt a Lot" program.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; Duquesne  
Redevelopment Authority, Citizens  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** City revenue; volunteers; Teen Council

- C. **Objective:** Explore youth organizations for social service projects such as "Adopt a Lot"; tutoring; food drives; home improvement and weatherization.

**Responsibility:** City staff; Parks & Recreation Board  
**Priority:** Medium  
**Potential Funding:** N/A

- D. **Objective:** Encourage high school student government organizations to participate in community involvement programs (tutoring, playground maintenance, sports, etc.).

**Potential Funding:** Infrastructure Development Program (DCED); PA Infrastructure Investment Authority (DCED); CDBG

C. **Objective:** Nurture an on-going relationship with Penn DOT to keep abreast of projects in the district.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** N/A

**2. GOAL:** Pursue alternative transportation opportunities that may positively impact the community.

A. **Objective:** Support the Mon/Fayette Expressway as a priority project in the region through maintaining open and active communication with SPRPC, legislators, and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; residents; DBAC; RIDC  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** N/A

B. **Objective:** Promote the possibility of including a fly-over to City Center in the plan for the Mon/Fayette Expressway.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; residents; DBAC; RIDC  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** Tea 21

C. **Objective:** Encourage the expansion of the ML King Busway into the City of Duquesne.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; residents  
**Priority:** Medium  
**Potential Funding:** N/A

**3. GOAL:** Improve the city's pedestrian circulation system

A. **Objective:** Construct an additional walkover from City Center to Grant Street that would provide pedestrian access to the city's commercial area.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; consultant  
**Priority:** Low

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; business owners;  
DBAC, Redevelopment Authority  
**Priority:** Medium  
**Potential Funding:** N/A

- E. **Objective:** Establish a Main Street Manager Program that will oversee the community goals of economic revitalization, generate employment within the Central Business District, promote the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures, and develop public-private partnerships.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; business owners  
**Priority:** Medium  
**Potential Funding:** Pennsylvania Downtown Program (DCED)

- F. **Objective:** Create a Businessmen's Association which will provide both technical and organization support, and will maintain information regarding potential funding opportunities for small businesses.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; business owners  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** Small Business Resource and Development Center (DCED); Women and Minority's Business Advocate (DCED);

## **Public Utilities**

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**1. GOAL: Enhance and update the existing water system**

- A. **Objective:** Repair leaks in the distribution system and develop a program to update the old water lines systematically.

**Responsibility:** Mayor; City Council; public works department  
**Priority:** High  
**Potential Funding:** Infrastructure Development Program (DCED); PA Infrastructure Investment Authority (DCED); CDBG; Community Revitalization Program (DCED), Westmoreland Water Authority



residents. In some cases, a community may experience an exodus of people moving out of the area or sending their children to private schools. In Duquesne, many of the residents send their children to private schools outside the district. In other instances, a substandard level of education can continue for so long that the children in a community can not compete fairly with surrounding areas, thereby disadvantaging those children in college and future job opportunities.

The residents of Duquesne are greatly concerned with rectifying the issue of their problematic school system. Providing Duquesne's children with a quality education in a safe and up-to-date facility is a priority. Likewise, residents are concerned about retaining the existing residents and securing the image of Duquesne as a good place to live and raise a family. The group exercise identified support for the idea of merging the City of Duquesne's School District with one of the adjacent districts. The school board should explore this idea. School districts that are close to Duquesne include: Steel Valley, McKeesport, and West Mifflin. McKeesport and West Mifflin are the two more likely choices because of their approximate location, capacity, and student demographic profile.

## 2. Community Involvement and Volunteerism

Due to the apparent or perceived decline in community involvement over time, it is the goal of the Future Plan to develop avenues for community participation. Encouraging volunteer activity through the local media is one way to accomplish this feat. To supplement this, a board may be established to pursue issues that relate to community facilities. The creation of a Parks and Recreation Board, for example, would establish a group with an outreach agenda. Their role would be to encourage sponsorship for recreational teams and activities in the City of Duquesne.

Volunteer activity was an important area of interest during the strengths and weaknesses exercise with the community. In order to increase the level of volunteer activities in Duquesne, it is suggested that the local newsletter and senior center be used as vehicles for achieving this objective. The marketing and announcing of volunteer opportunities in Duquesne is a way to spur involvement. It is suggested that a city newsletter or community paper be used as a vehicle for profiling volunteer activities and furthering outreach. A strategy for attracting attention to volunteerism is to bring outside volunteers into the community to spark interest. One example of an outside partner is Habitat for Humanity, an organization devoted to housing rehabilitation through the use of volunteer efforts. Another place to search for potential partners is at the many local universities. University fraternities and sororities, social clubs, academic organizations, and religious groups are active participants in volunteer and philanthropic events. Contacting a local university regarding a project in Duquesne may lead to a productive partnership between residents and outside volunteers.

The senior center was identified as a strong and successful community facility within the city. It is suggested that the center be used to assist in the effort to get more people active in local projects. The senior center, and possibly the seniors who attend, may be candidates for constructing articles or announcements regarding volunteer operations and contact persons. The staff at City Hall is another logical choice for this task.

Upgrades to City Hall can be factored into the city's Capital Improvement Program and funds can be applied for from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) through the Community Revitalization Program, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, and Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program.

#### 6. Recreational Facilities

Improvements to the city's recreational facilities are focused on diversification. The goal behind this is to diversify the types of recreational opportunities in the city, which will better serve all age groups for the future. Expanding the current state of recreation facilities in Duquesne includes creating a recreation center, supporting the construction of bike trails in the area, building a new pavilion at Memorial Field, and building a dock for river access.

It is suggested that establishing a recreation center be pursued in coordination with the community library. Adaptive reuse of an existing building would be an efficient use of structures and space. The construction of a pavilion at Memorial Field should be researched and planned for in the city's Capital Improvements Program. Funds for recreational projects can be secured through DCED, however private donations and corporate sponsorships should also be explored.

The future goals for recreation are suggested in accordance with regional recreation projects, namely the Steel Industry Heritage Trail, a bike trail that is proposed to traverse the City of Duquesne along Route 837. Supporting the bike trail has a two-fold purpose: it will bring recreational users through the city as they use the trail, and it will introduce a new form of planned recreation into Duquesne. The planned Steel Industry Heritage Trail will be constructed at no cost to the City of Duquesne, however it is recommended that the city use this opportunity to develop a spur trail of its own that would attract bicyclists from the Steel Heritage Trail into the community. A spur trail that feeds into Grant Street will draw people into the commercial district of Duquesne. It could be completed at minimal cost to the city by utilizing existing sidewalks or streets, and marking them with proper signs.

Another diversification strategy for recreational opportunities includes activities related to the river. It is recommended that future recreation plans look into river access points and boat docks. The development of river access should be done with the future goal of allowing people to boat, fish, or canoe from the RIDC site in City Center. A cooperative effort between the City Council and RIDC will lead to the most successful type of recreational project, one that can easily be used by Duquesne residents as well as people working at City Center. If this river access point were to be incorporated into walkways in the City Center, users would be more inclined to view the river as a recreational opportunity.

#### 7. Improving the Image of the City of Duquesne

Improving the image of Duquesne must be an on-going project. It is the responsibility of City Council, the Planning Commission, and residents to take stock in their community and put forth an effort for continual improvement.

# RECREATION PLAN

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## Introduction

Recreation is a key component to overall community development. It is important to recognize that all age groups require a variety of active and passive recreational facilities and programs. This section of the comprehensive plan will make recommendations regarding the city's parks and recreation facilities and programs.

**City Parks:** Each city park was refurbished during the 1995 construction season. The total improvements totaled about \$300,000.00. During this process old, unsafe equipment was removed and new handicapped accessible equipment was put in its place. The following is a listing of city-owned parks and recommendations on making them more beneficial to city residents:

### *Duquesne Place*

#### Recommendations:

- Shade trees at playground
- Benches and shade trees along walking track

#### Potential Funding Sources:

- Keystone Recreation Park and Conservation Fund (KEY '93) through the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR)
- CDBG program through the Steel Valley Council of Governments
- Heinz Foundation
- Hillman Foundation
- Mellon Foundation

### *Polish Hill Park/Playground*

#### Recommendations:

- Drinking fountain
- Walking track

- CDBG program through the Steel Valley Council of Governments
- Heinz Foundation
- Hillman Foundation
- Mellon Foundation

***City Park***

**Recommendations:**

- Develop park for cultural events (concerts, etc.)

**Potential Funding Sources:**

- KEY '93 through PA DCNR
- CDBG program through the Steel Valley Council of Governments
- Heinz Foundation
- Hillman Foundation
- Mellon Foundation

***Wylie Avenue Park***

**Recommendations:**

- More shade trees strategically located
- Drinking fountain
- Replace stone surface with one that meets safety standards

**Potential Funding Sources:**

- KEY '93 through PA DCNR
- CDBG program through the Steel Valley Council of Governments
- Heinz Foundation
- Hillman Foundation
- Mellon Foundation

- Hillman Foundation
- Mellon Foundation

**Recreation Commission** Currently, Duquesne does not have a recreation board or commission. There is a need for this type of volunteer board in the city. A significant portion of the population is under eighteen years old. Another significant population group in need of recreational program planning are city residents age 65 and older. Due to the fact that there are few indoor recreational facilities in the city, there is a need for coordinated recreation programs during the winter months.

Recommendations:

- Form a city recreation commission
- Develop a citywide parks and recreation master plan

Duquesne can expect an increased demand for park facilities and recreational programs based on the existing population and demographic conditions. In particular the elderly and very young will strain the existing recreational facilities and services.

Currently, the city lacks a recreation commission and any formalized recreational programs aside from little league baseball, midget football and cheerleading. A structured recreation program for all age groups would be beneficial to the city and its residents.

It is recommended that the city investigate the potential of working with the local colleges and universities to develop recreation programs and plans.

## HOUSING PLAN

**"Housing is the mortar that holds the bricks of our society together" - Senator John Heinz**

Senator Heinz's statement carries several home ownership connotations with it. The connotations, stated below, have been proven to be correct:

- Through home ownership, a family invests in an asset that can grow in value and generate future financial security
- Home ownership enables people to have greater control over their living environment
- Home ownership stabilizes neighborhoods and communities

5. Work with the DBAC and the Redevelopment Authority on creating a marketing plan for vacant lots and structures
6. Revise the City's Zoning Ordinance to encourage adaptive reuse and infill development

### **Rehabilitation**

The City's residents, with incomes below the poverty level, occupy many housing units. These units are in generally poor condition, and are located throughout the city. Existing housing units should be preserved and rehabilitated wherever possible through a combination of building code review and enforcement, and affordable financing for remodeling.

Allegheny County Government is involved with housing rehabilitation programs. The city should meet with Allegheny County on a regular basis to determine what, how many and which programs could be put into place in Duquesne.

The following is a step-by-step process for implementing affordable housing, housing rehabilitation, and home ownership:

1. Identification of vacant structures by map, lot and block number, and owner
2. Determine which should be demolished and which could be rehabilitated
3. Develop a block by block housing plan
4. Work with DBAC and the Redevelopment Authority on marketing rehabilitated structures
5. Establish an affordable housing program aimed at increasing the number of owner occupied rehabilitated housing units.

***Allegheny County Department of Economic Development:*** Allegheny County's IMPACT Housing program operates a Home Improvement Loan program through the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. This program provides funding for the improvement of existing owner occupied housing units and attached dwellings having no more than four units. There are income limits with the program. Generally, a person can make up to 115% of the median per capita income and qualify for a loan. Eligible improvements include the following:

- Electrical and Plumbing
- New bathrooms and fixtures
- Room additions
- Heating and Cooling Systems
- Windows
- Accessibility modifications for the physically challenged

IMPACT Housing has several low interest loan programs for housing improvements in owner occupied dwellings. These loans have interest rates of 3%, and are written by a participating lender (local banks). Loan amounts are capped at \$20,000 with a twenty-year repayment schedule. The following are the loan programs offered through the IMPACT Housing Program:

Economic Development. Partial funding comes from the United Way. The program is designed to assist low-income households lower their fuel bills by reducing fuel consumption. Income levels determine the amount of funding an applicant may receive. Action Housing is located at two Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1499.

***Duquesne Business Advisory Corporation (DBAC)*** This Duquesne based agency acts as a local community development corporation. Established in 1977 by a group of business leaders and city officials who wished to examine the possibility of improving conditions along West Grant Street. The DBAC is now entering its twentieth year of operation.

The DBAC operates several programs in the city, including the Enterprise Zone. The Enterprise Zone was established to attract businesses and stimulate redevelopment of the city. The enterprise zone has three primary objectives. They are the following:

- Expanding the existing tax base
- Diversifying the local economy
- Increasing employment in Duquesne

There are several financial incentives and programs associated with the Duquesne Enterprise Zone. These include:

DBAC is also involved with several housing initiatives in Duquesne.

Neighborhood Assistance Enterprise Zone Tax Credit Program The purpose of this program is to encourage private investment and promote job growth and economic development in the designated Enterprise Zone. The program gives tax credits against certain Pennsylvania taxes to private companies that make qualified investments that promote economic development by improving buildings or land in an enterprise zone. These tax credits may be as high as 20 to 30 percent of the total private funds invested.

Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) The NAP offers tax credits to low-income communities but it differs from the Enterprise Zone Tax Credit Program because it is administered by the state rather than the city and it offers tax credits that reach beyond Enterprise Zones. The NAP offers tax credits of \$16.5 million in the following three areas:

1. **General Credits** (\$10.5 million) for low-income areas. Tax credit is 50 percent for charitable contributions to 501-c-3 organizations. Activities include:
  - Services
  - Education
  - Job training
  - Crime prevention

private property owners. This will help to ensure efficient government action and expenditures, create desirable residential communities, and benefit property owners.

**Housing Agencies and Programs** There are several public and private non-profit agencies in Allegheny County that address housing. Most of these agencies are responsible for administering federal and state-funded programs at the local level. The following is a listing of the housing agencies and programs that are available to City of Duquesne and its residents:

***Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED):*** The DCED has a regional office in Pittsburgh that oversees a variety of federal and state housing programs. The DCED office is located at 300 Liberty Avenue, Suite 413, Pittsburgh, PA 15219, 1-(412)-565-500. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The programs include the following:

**HOME** The HOME Investment Partnership Program provides funding for first time home buyers, rental housing development and purchase or rental assistance, as well as home rehabilitation monitored by local agencies. Local Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are encouraged to submit HOME applications to address the housing needs of the local municipality or neighborhood. In City of Duquesne's case the DBAC would be the logical local agency to act as the CDC for a HOME project.

**HCDC:** The Housing and Community Development Corporation (HCDC) program has been established to provide financing and start up money for local housing and community development corporations to be created. A local housing and community development corporation would be able to carryout specific housing programs to do the following:

- Encourage first time home ownership
- Encourage home ownership for the elderly
- Encourage home ownership for low to moderate income persons
- Educate low income home owners on funding sources for housing conservation, rehabilitation, and weatherization

***Community Reinvestment Act (CRA):*** The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) was adopted by congress in 1977. The CRA requires federally insured lenders (banks and savings and loans, but not mortgage banks or credit unions) to help meet the needs of their entire communities, including low to moderate income neighborhoods, with safe and sound operation.

Initially, many communities believed that the CRA regulations were too time consuming, cost prohibitive, and ineffective. As a result, new CRA regulations were created out of a call to



achieve that goal, the City of Duquesne Planning Commission has made the following recommendations:

- Identify senior citizens who own their own homes to direct them to appropriate housing agencies
- Identify low to moderate income citizens who own their own homes
- Rehabilitate housing units through the Allegheny County Redevelopment Authority's Weatherization program
- Require any major subdivisions to set aside a certain number of units for affordable housing
- Create a reference library of home ownership and housing programs at the City of Duquesne Municipal Building

#### **Block-By-Block Neighborhood Enhancement Program**

Approaching the redevelopment of commercial and residential areas on a block-by-block basis will highlight the successful results of a neighborhood enhancement area. Aside from individual housing rehabilitation, other neighborhood improvements such as sidewalk repair, planting of shade trees, and street restoration need to be incorporated into redevelopment and neighborhood enhancement programs. It is recommended that the city designate areas for redevelopment on a block-by-block basis.

- List and map all blighted and vacant structures on a lot by lot basis
- Target blocks that have blighted structures and vacant lots adjacent to existing sound housing units
- Utilize CDBG funds to demolish five blighted structures per year on a specified block
- Purchase all lots with back taxes in a tax forgiveness program (back taxes of less than \$ 1,000 could be forgiven by the city in exchange for ownership of the lot)
- Sell all vacant lots adjacent to existing structures for \$ 1.00 (this puts the lot back on the tax rolls)
- Have the DBAC target its programs to the designated block that is being redeveloped
- Utilize funding sources from county, private, and state agencies for establishing a home ownership program for households renting single-family detached dwelling units
- Allow for larger houses on smaller lots as part of this neighborhood enhancement program
- Use CDBG funds to reconstruct sidewalks in income eligible blocks
- Promote the DBAC Sidewalk Improvement and Fresh Start Paint programs in neighborhood enhancement areas that are not eligible to use CDBG funds
- Install shade trees as part of the sidewalk or street reconstruction
- Reconstruct any streets that are in poor condition in neighborhood enhancement areas

- Require any new subdivisions to provide a pedestrian transportation network
- Continue the sidewalk replacement program through the DBAC

**Public Transportation** According to the 1990 U.S. Census about 40 percent of the households in the city had no automobiles making public transportation a major mode of travel for city residents. Currently, there are twelve bus stops located throughout the city. While additional bus stops do not appear necessary at this time, the capacity of the buses serving Duquesne need to be monitored. If the number of zero car households increases, additional capacity may be needed on the Port Authority Traffic (PAT) buses that service Duquesne.

***Recommendation***

- Contact should be made with PAT to evaluate the locations of existing bus routes and stops, their accessibility, the frequency of buses and the ridership volumes generated by the City of Duquesne.
- Monitor the ridership numbers for the city and increase bus capacity if necessary. Consider developing bus re-routing to accommodate potential use.

**Roadway Lighting** Street lighting is an important issue in the City of Duquesne. Lighting of intersections and major roadways is necessary to ensure safety for both drivers and pedestrians. Consider guides for roadway lighting criteria: AASHTO, an Informal Guide for Roadway Lighting. In particular the following intersections and roadways should be considered for lighting upgrades:

- Duquesne Boulevard and Grant Avenue
- Duquesne Boulevard and Library Place
- Duquesne Boulevard and Wyley Avenue
- Grant Avenue and Second Street
- Grant Avenue and Cochran Avenue
- Duquesne Boulevard and Patterson Avenue
- Second Street and Duquesne Boulevard

TABLE # 12

City of Duquesne Road Improvement Chart

Name	Right of Way	Cartway	Surface Type	Notes
1st Street N.				Does not exist
1st Street S.		Standardize at	Pave brick sections	
2nd Street N.				
2nd Street S.		Standardize at		
3rd Street N.				
3rd Street S.				
4th Street N.			Pave with Asphalt	
4th Street S.		Standardize at		
5th Street N.				
5th Street S.				
6th Street N.	Increase to 50'			
6th Street S.	50	Standardize at		
7th Street S	50			
Antwerp Ave.	Increase to 50'			
Arch Street	Increase to 50'			
Aurilles Street	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Bach Ave	Increase to 50'			
Barbara Street	Increase to 50'			
Belmont Ave.	Increase to 50'			
Burns Ave.		Standardize at		
Burns Heights				
Camp Ave.				
Carbon Street				
Catherine Street	Increase to 50'	Increase to 18'	Pave with Asphalt	
Cedar Street	Increase to 50'		Pave with Asphalt	
Center Ave.	Increase to 50'		Pave with Asphalt	18% Grade
Chestnut Street	Increase to 50'			
Church Street	Increase to 50'			
Clark Street	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Clear View Ave.	Increase to 50'			
Clommel Street	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Cochran Ave.	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Commonwealth Ave				
Crawford Ave.				
Dell Street	Increase to 50'			
Donard Way	Increase to 50'			
Doney Street	Increase to 50'			
Dunblane Street	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Duquesne Blvd.				
Duquesne Place Dr.				
Earl Street	Increase to 50'			
Edith Ave.		Standardize at		
Elm Street	Increase to 50'			
Erwin Street	Increase to 50'			
Fairmont Ave.				
Fern Alley	Increase to 50'			

Priscilla Ave.				
Randolph Street	Increase to 50'			
Richford Ave.	Increase to 50'			
Ross Street	Increase to 50'		Pave with Asphalt	
Rossner Street	Increase to 50'			
S. Linden Street				
S.R. 2042				See Kennedy Ave.
S.R. 2044				See Commonwealth Ave.
S.R. 2077				McKeesport-Duquesne
S.R. 8057				McKeesport-Duquesne
Savey Street	Increase to 50'			
Seward Street	Increase to 50'			
Sherman Ave.	Increase to 50'		Pave with Asphalt	
Short Alley				Paper Street
Spring Ave.	Increase to 50'			
St. Clair Street	Increase to 50'			
State Street	Increase to 50'			
Stockton Way	Increase to 50'			
Troy Street	Increase to 50'			
Union Street				
Victory Street				
Viola Ave.	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
W. Oliver Ave.				
Walnut Ave.	Increase to 50'			
Whitfield Ave.	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
William Ave.	Increase to 50'	18		
Wilmot Ave.	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Wool Street	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Wylie Ave.	Increase to 50'	Standardize at		
Zewe Alley	Increase to 50'			

Source: Mackin Engineering Company August 1, 1996

### ***Recommendations***

**Pavement Management Plan** Development of a pavement management plan for the city is recommended. This should be done as a follow up to the 1995/1996-road improvement program. The plan should contain a schedule of regular street maintenance as well as a project priority list based on the average daily traffic counts of each road and accident history.

The pavement management plan should follow these steps:

1. Create a road list (done as part of this *Comprehensive Plan*)
2. Develop a street rating system based on existing surface conditions, volume of traffic, and number of accidents.
3. Include the City engineer when preparing the annual pavement management plan
4. Perform a cost analysis for each proposed project of the pavement plan

the city. These land use controls are the means in which community development goals and objectives, and the future land use plan are implemented. The following is a summary of what can be done to the three land use control instruments found in Duquesne.

***Zoning Ordinance*** A zoning ordinance describes what can be built on a parcel or parcels of land. The zoning ordinance is a tool to be used by municipalities to regulate land uses and the intensity of developments. A zoning ordinance is usually established to protect and promote the general health, safety, and welfare of a municipality's residents. In recent years zoning ordinances have been designed to include the protection of the environment.

Article VI of the PAMPC describes the powers and provisions of a municipal zoning ordinance. The zoning ordinance must cross-reference its community development goals and objectives with those of the comprehensive plan. Also, Article VI of the PA MPC contains the procedures for enacting and amending zoning ordinances, non-conforming uses, publication of zoning ordinances, appointment of zoning officers, and enforcement of the zoning ordinance.

#### Recommendations

- Prepare a new city zoning ordinance
- Prepare a new city zoning map
- Create a mixed use commercial/light industrial zone where the Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) Park can make the highest and best use of its lands
- Create infill development standards to be incorporated into the zoning ordinance

***Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance*** A subdivision and land development ordinance describes how land will be developed. Article V, PA MPC describes the following provisions of a subdivision and land development ordinance:

- Grant of power
- Jurisdiction of county planning agencies
- Contents of a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance
- Water supply
- Completion of improvements (bonding requirements)
- Release from Improvement Bond
- Modifications
- Recording of plats and deeds
- Effect of plat approval on Official Map
- Penalties
- Preventive remedies

Section 402 also requires the official map to be filed with the County Recorder of Deeds within 60 days of adoption.

Section 403 of the PAMPC details how approved plats affect the official map. Basically, the section states that any future public improvements made after the adoption of the official map will require amendments to the map.

Section 404 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 of 1968, as amended by Act 131 of 1992) describes how the official map affects mapped streets, watercourses, and public grounds. The section states that the municipality does not assume responsibility for the developing a paper street or a watercourse.

Section 405 of the PAMCP addresses buildings in mapped streets, watercourses or public grounds. This section of the PA MPC indicates that no building will be permitted within the boundaries of a mapped street, public ground or watercourse. Provisions are made for permitting certain building activities on public grounds.

Section 406 of the PA MPC dictates the time limitations on reservations for future takings. Section 407 deals with the release of damage claims or compensation. And, section 408 describes the notification process when adopting an official map.

#### Recommendations

- The city should adopt an official map that identifies future public projects such as street openings and closings. It illustrates where open space and public lands are located
- Duquesne needs to update its Zoning Ordinance to encourage redevelopment in the city
- Land in the RIDC Park needs to be zoned for flexibility in land use (Do not be too restrictive)

**City of Duquesne, Allegheny County**  
**RESOLUTION NO. 297**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF DUQUESNE, COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING THE CITY OF DUQUESNE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, JULY 12, 2000 AS PREPARED BY THE CITY OF DUQUESNE PLANNING COMMISSION AND COUNCIL, AND FACILITATED BY MACKIN ENGINEERING COMPANY, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III OF ACT 247, AS AMENDED, OF THE PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE.

**WHEREAS,** A copy of the Comprehensive Plan, which includes text, maps, charts and any other items which form the whole of the Comprehensive Plan is attached hereto as Exhibit "A"; and

**WHEREAS,** the Comprehensive Plan was reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission on April 24, 2000; and

**WHEREAS,** the Comprehensive Plan was sent to the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development for review and comment by May 16, 2000; and

**WHEREAS,** the Comprehensive Plan was sent to the contiguous municipalities for review and comment by May 16, 2000; and

**WHEREAS,** the Comprehensive Plan was sent to the school district for review and comment by May 16, 2000; and

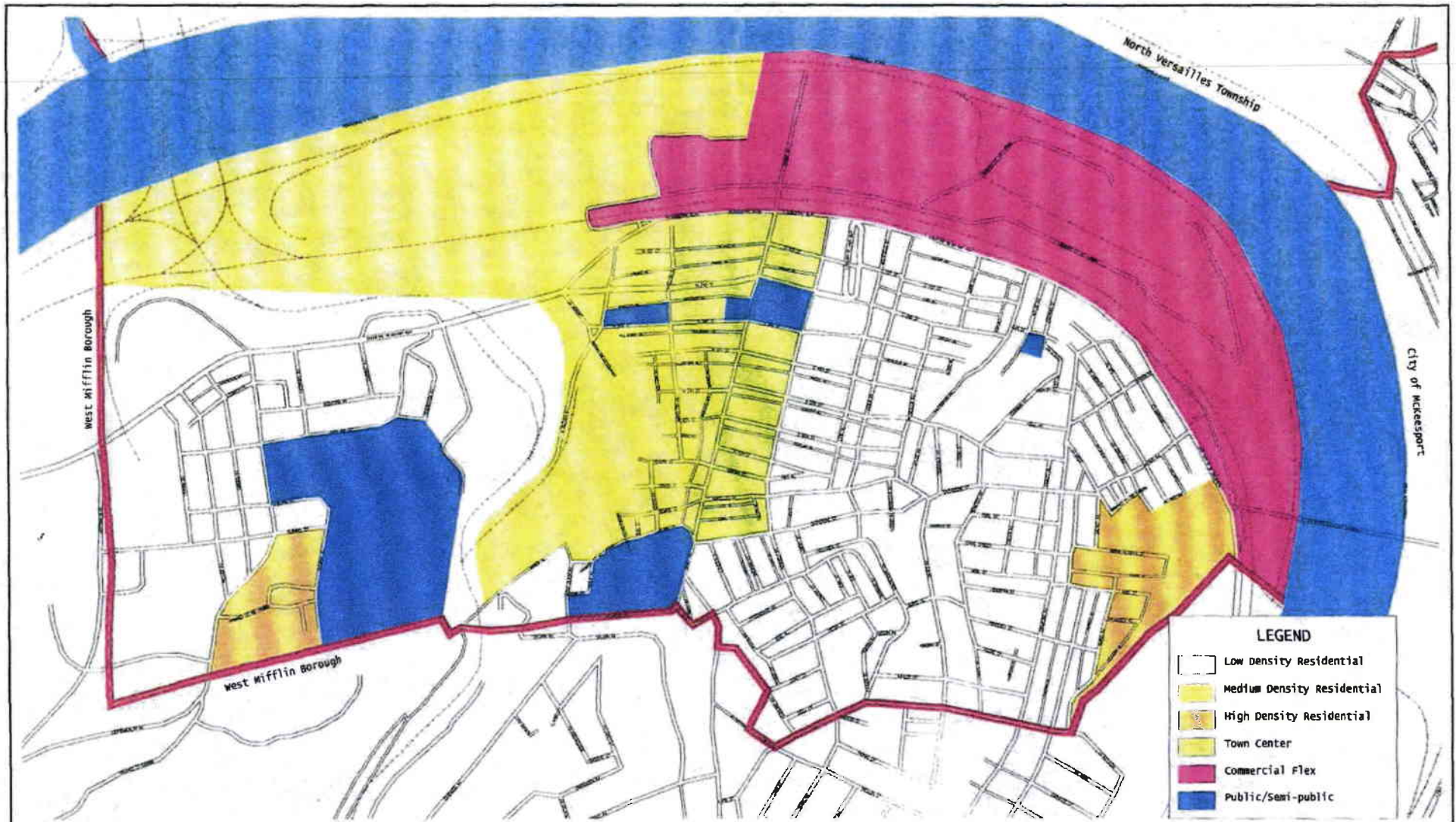
**WHEREAS,** the Comprehensive Plan had been made available for public review in the City Building; and

**WHEREAS,** the City of Duquesne Council held a public hearing on May 17, 2000 to hear and consider public comments; and

**WHEREAS,** the City has found that the Comprehensive Plan is beneficial to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the City.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF DUQUESNE COUNCIL,** and it is hereby resolved and enacted by the authority of the same:

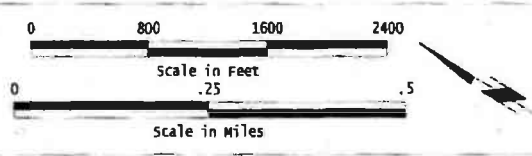
**SECTION I.** The City Council, by this resolution, adopts the Comprehensive Plan, as attached hereto as Exhibit "A", pursuant to Article III of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.



**LEGEND**

	Low Density Residential
	Medium Density Residential
	High Density Residential
	Town Center
	Commercial Flex
	Public/Semi-public

**Mackin**  
 Mackin Engineering Company  
 R.I.D.C. Park West  
 117 Industry Drive  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15275



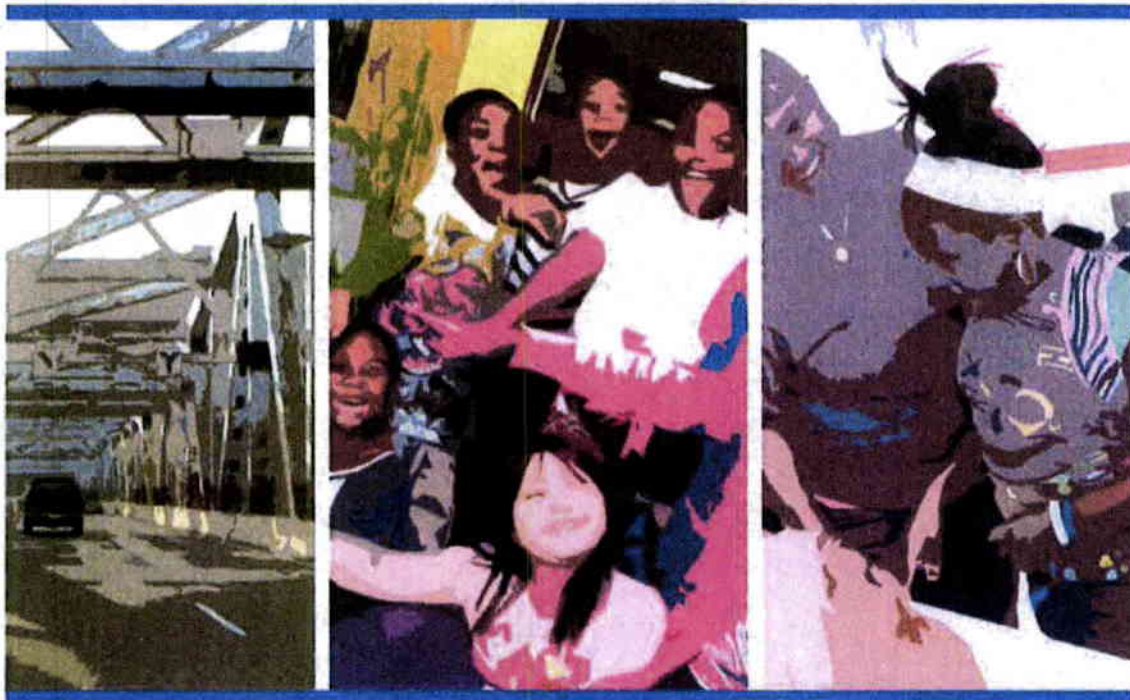
**CITY OF DUQUESNE**  
 Allegheny County, PA  
 January, 2000

Figure 8  
**FUTURE LAND USE**  
 This project was financed by Act 47 funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

10/18/99 10:00 AM 10/18/99 10:00 AM



# Joint Comprehensive Plan for the Cities of **Duquesne & McKeesport**



July 2015

*"Duquesne and McKeesport are dynamic cities of enduring value, committed to a future of new opportunities and discovery."*

## Acknowledgements

The strength of this plan lies in the hands of those who have shaped it. Countless residents have played a part in the process. Those who were formally involved include the following:

### *The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee*

#### **CITY OF MCKEESPORT REPRESENTATIVES**

Michael Cherepko, Mayor  
Chris House, Building Inspector/  
Zoning Officer  
Alfred Tedesco, Community Development Director  
Angelia Christina, Fair Housing Officer  
Keith Soles, Councilman  
Matt Gergely, City Administrator

#### **CITY OF DUQUESNE REPRESENTATIVES**

Phil Krivacek, Mayor  
Frank Piccolino III, City Manager  
Scotty McCrimmon, Building Inspector/  
Code Enforcement Officer

#### **ALLEGHENY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVE**

Kay Pierce, Planning Manager

#### **TWIN RIVERS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTATIVES**

John Palyo, Executive Director  
Carla Barron, Community Development Coordinator

---

*This plan was made possible through a grant from the Allegheny County Economic Development Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund, overseen by the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County*

## *Assistance in Plan Preparation*

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**TWIN RIVERS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSULTANT TEAM**

**Environmental Planning & Design, LLC**

100 Ross Street, Suite 500

Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Civic Square**

**Urban Partners**

**Push Studio**

**ASPECT Data Driven Planning**

*Unless otherwise noted, images were provided courtesy of the Daily News*

*City of Duquesne Resolution Adopting Plan*  
To be included in final plan after adoption

*City of McKeesport Resolution Adopting Plan*  
To be included in final plan after adoption



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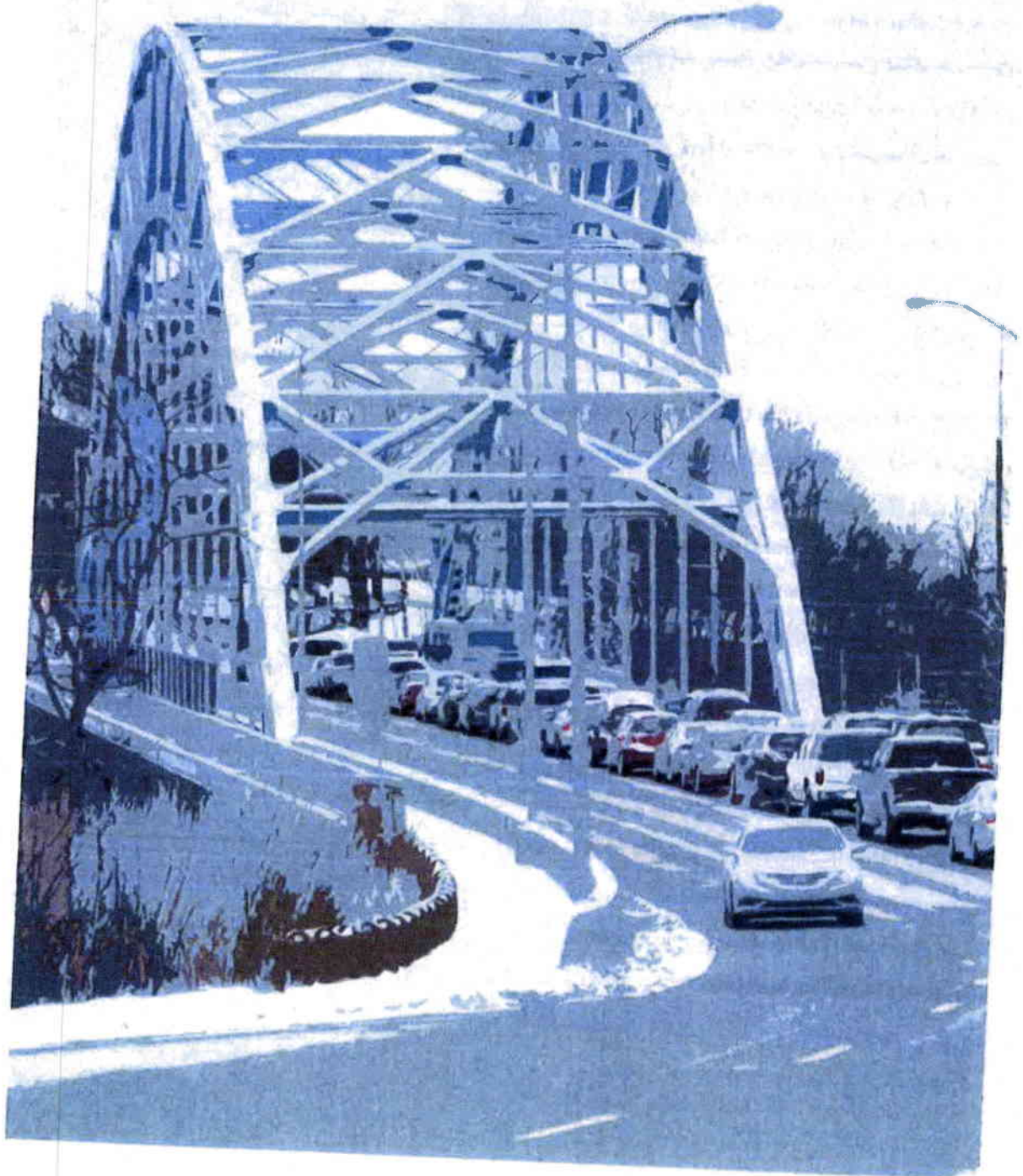
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## Foreword

For generations, the Mon Valley was the economic engine that drove the Pittsburgh economy. The cities of Duquesne and McKeesport were key players and prime communities for good paying industrial jobs, attractive residential neighborhoods, and vibrant shopping destinations. However, as most people in this region are well aware, over the past four decades the Mon Valley's industrial base has been virtually decimated. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, US Steel, Westinghouse Electric, WABCO, Union Switch and Signal, and Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel all closed major manufacturing plants in the area. Some sources indicate that as many as 175,000 jobs were collectively lost in the region when these plants closed. Major industrial sites occupied nearly 1,000 acres of land, and as landowners, the corporations were major taxpayers. Without these tax revenues, communities in the Mon Valley were hard pressed to provide and maintain the same level of services that residents were accustomed to. People moved out, and the area's role as the engine of the regional economy was lost.

Allegheny County's comprehensive plan, *AlleghenyPlaces*, identifies McKeesport as an Urban Neighborhood and Duquesne as a Community Downtown. Through decades of change, Duquesne and McKeesport have retained a unique character, which they can build upon and leverage to realize future success. Each city has continued to be a community with an accessible central core of commercial and community services, residential units and recognizable natural and built landmarks and boundaries that provide a sense of place and orientation.

The traditional downtowns remain the center of each community and those centers create the defining characteristic of each city, both for residents and for outsiders. Many of the recommendations focus on helping to strengthen the center of the community—from housing to intersection improvements. This defining characteristic, along with a shared history and collective memory tie Duquesne and McKeesport together.

The two communities continue to be a regional hub for the Mon Valley. The regional Great Allegheny Passage Trail passes through both cities. McKeesport is turning its focus to the river for recreation and potential development, as well as continued growth on the industrial areas. Duquesne has one of the

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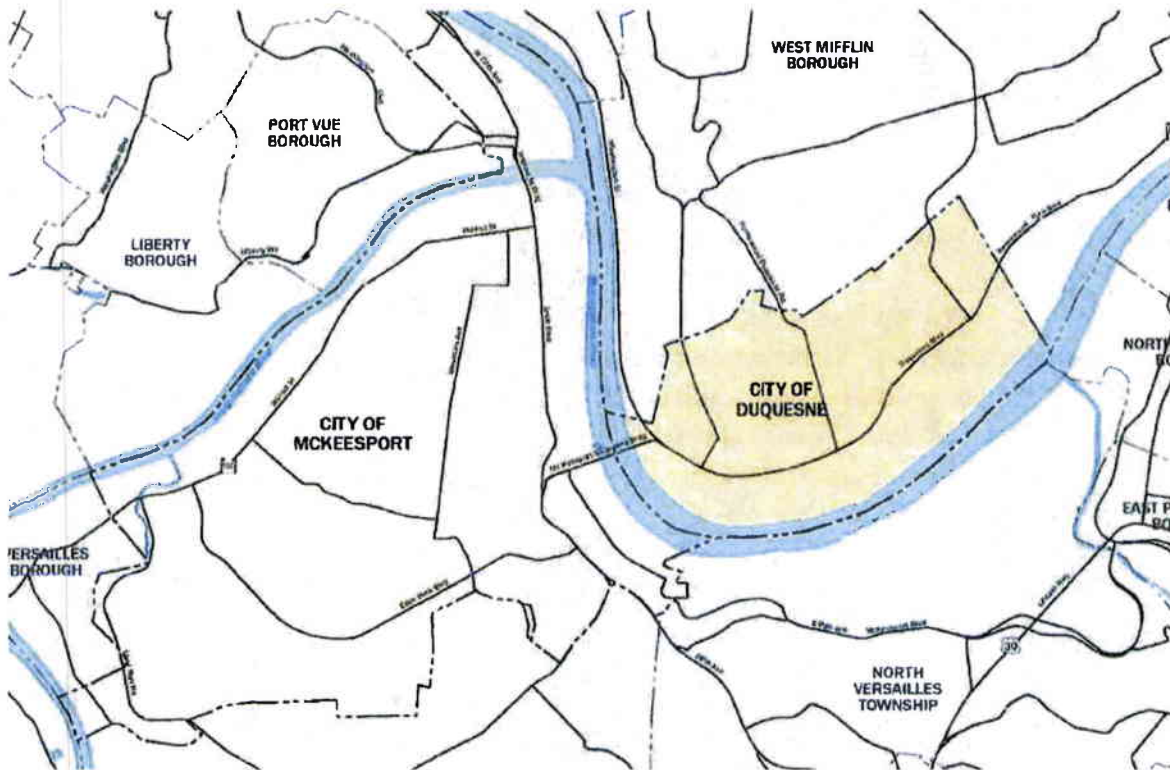
*The real voyage  
of discovery  
consists not in  
seeking new  
landscapes but in  
having new eyes.*

*Marcel Proust*

---

last remaining viable and developable industrial river shipping ports. That important infrastructure cannot be easily replicated elsewhere. Because of the railroad junction, there is a unique junction of rail and river transportation in Duquesne that makes it a regional industrial transportation center.

*Regional Location Map*

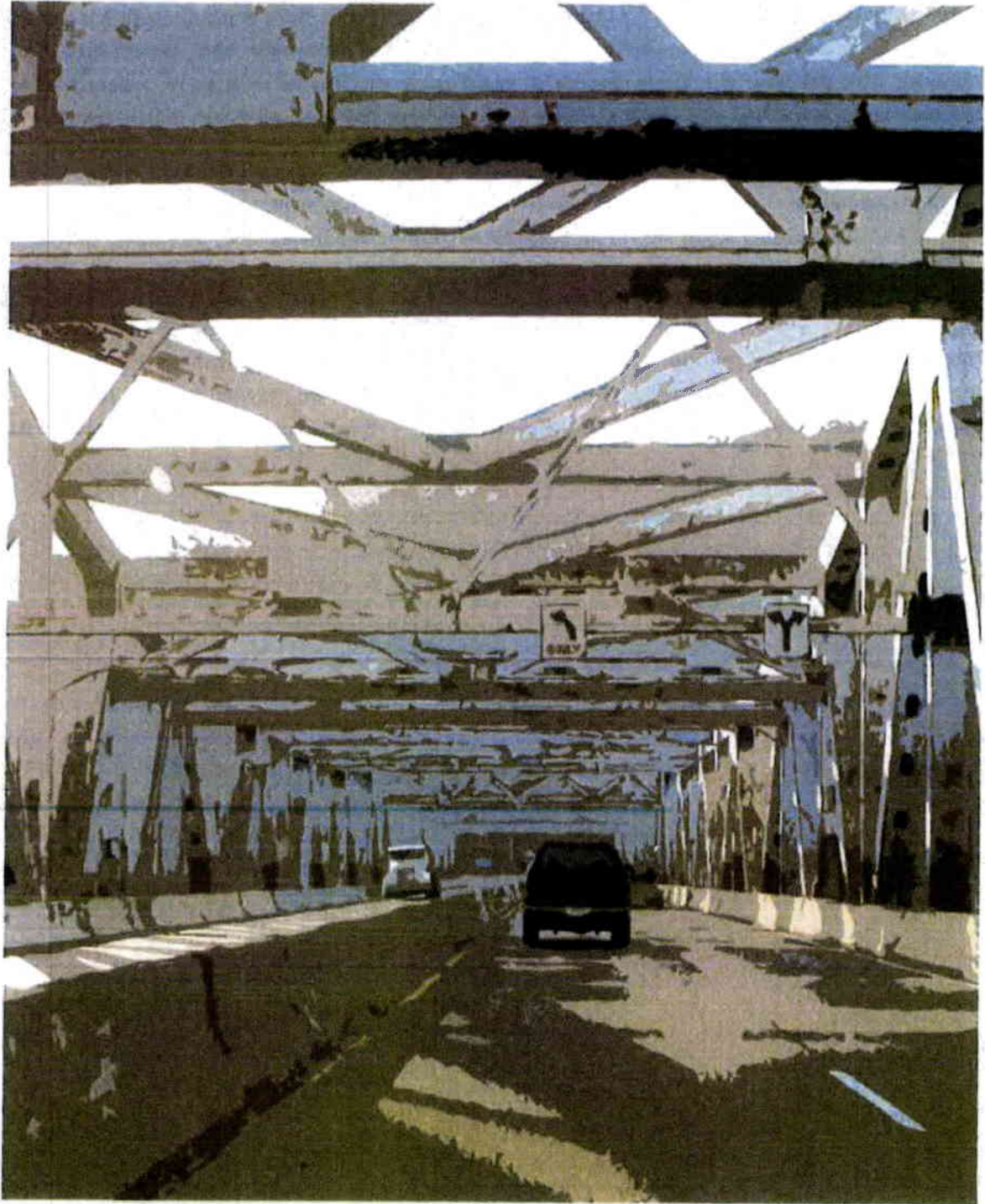


Despite being separated by a river, Duquesne and McKeesport have many common issues and opportunities. Each is a community in its own right but together they make up a central part of the Mon Valley, a regional community. They have a distinct character that is shaped by their place in the region. They maintain largely separate infrastructure and services—a function of the fact that their shared border is under the Monongahela River. However, they do utilize a larger regional authority for wastewater treatment as well as a regional EMS provider.

Today, Duquesne and McKeesport are looking to the future. The cities have worked together to jointly complete a comprehensive plan that lays the groundwork for reinvention and revitalization. The following joint planning document consists of plans for both cities as well as an action plan to implement each individual plan and to leverage opportunities/benefits of collaboration/joint efforts.

This plan—informed by the public, many community partners, the technical planning team and the Steering Committee—lays out a framework for the long-term future of both cities. It honors the region’s industrial history while setting the stage for expanding opportunities by leveraging the many social, economic and environmental assets of the area.

As you read this plan, seek to understand the process, but also focus on the roles you and the organizations you are involved with can take to move strategies and initiatives forward. This document contains ideas, achievable steps and useful tools to further the vitality and substance of Duquesne and McKeesport as they move into the future.



## Overview

The simplest way to approach planning is a process – an organized way of thinking about the future. Generally, a comprehensive planning process consists of making surveys, analyses and projections; defining problems, setting goals and objectives; formulating alternative ways to reach objectives; choosing among alternatives; implementing decisions; experiencing outcomes; and finally evaluating those outcomes and updating goals and/or methods.

The vehicle through which this process is initiated and formalized for the guidance of officials and the understanding of the general public is the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is a document that is designed to establish several community development oriented policies and to guide future growth and development of the community. It carries no weight of law and contains no rules or regulations, but it defines documents the vision and aspirations of a community and outlines a roadmap to assist decision makers. It is broad in scope, examining the physical, social and economic characteristics, but it seeks to apply this knowledge to the future. It speaks to various issues in general terms, but it also makes specific recommendations. The comprehensive plan is, in part, a factual report that examines how the past has led to the present, as well as a report that can be used to chart the community's path into the future.

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*The ancestor of  
every action is a  
thought.*

*Ralph Waldo  
Emerson*

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The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as amended, mandates that the comprehensive plan contain certain basic elements including the following:

- A statement of community development goals and objectives;
- A land use plan;
- A housing needs plan;
- A transportation and circulation plan;
- A community facilities and utilities plan;
- A statement of plan component interrelationships;
- A discussion of short and long range implementation strategies; and
- A statement of the relationship of the community's future development to adjacent areas.
- A plan for the protection of natural and historic resources.
- A plan for the reliable supply of water.

*The comprehensive plan is by no means limited to these elements, nor should it be.*

In preparing the plan, studies must be conducted on various subjects, including the existing conditions within the community and the prospects for future growth. Usually, these studies include such items as a history, existing land use, transportation and circulation, community facilities, socio-economic analyses, natural features, population and housing.

The studies conducted in the areas previously mentioned attempt to objectively analyze the community from a number of different perspectives. Each individual study takes an in-depth look at a topic. When completed, each study will then lend support to the development of the plan. Various studies must be utilized to gather the data necessary to prepare the studies. From these sources, facts and trends can be assimilated and used to develop the basic assumptions and forecasts necessary for the development of the plan.

## How to Read This Plan

This plan lays out a strategic direction for Duquesne-McKeesport through achievable approaches and steps for implementation. The plan document itself is the final element of a planning process. After the studies have been completed and a factual base exists from which to make decisions, and after the community development goals and objectives have been stated to guide future decisions, a preferred course of action will form the foundation for the community's future growth.

*Overview:* The opening chapter of this plan lays out its purpose and explains the process of engaging community members, elected leaders and technical experts to develop the plan's major goals, strategies and initiatives.

**Foundations:** Foundations contains a brief description of existing conditions in the communities along with an outline of issues and opportunities that were identified during the planning process. Expanded discussions of these items can be found in the Background Studies and Trends chapter.

**Vision:** The next chapter introduces the overarching vision of the plan along with the accompanying goals that can move the region towards its vision. Following this overview of vision and goals is a short discussion of each plan element:

- Land Use, Redevelopment and Economic Development
- Housing
- Transportation, Assets and Amenities
- Government, Outreach, Services, Infrastructure and Energy

**Plan Elements:** These two chapters—one for each city—contain more in-depth discussions of plan elements, goals and actions. Accompanying each goal is at least one key initiative. Each initiative supports multiple goals and strategies, that, when executed, will provide meaningful, measureable progress. Each initiative is, in turn, a collection of implementation steps that can be carried out at the local or regional level. The initiatives are lofty but achievable—asking the communities to think about the big picture and stretch their horizons towards the future. The plan also begins to outline potential champions and partners and key steps to bring the plan to fruition.

**Action and Implementation Plan:** This chapter is a consolidated plan for implementation of the plan’s action steps and a discussion of short and long range implementation strategies. Key partners are identified as well as timeframes. All too often, the implementation of plans like this falls to government. Rarely do they target action from individuals, business leaders and civic groups. This chapter provides ways to involve all stakeholders. The true strength of the plan is that it was developed with public support and its success depends on continued public involvement.

This piece can be a key tool in future evaluation and benchmarking of plan implementation.

**Cooperation, Collaboration and Interrelationships:** This chapter outlines strategic ways that the cities can work together to reach a common vision.

**Background Studies and Trends:** This chapter contains expanded discussions on topics like issues, opportunities and influencing factors. It also contains technical documents and other resources that will help to guide implementation.



## Plan Terms and Concepts

The high-level goals and supporting objectives outlined on the following pages work as a system to direct Duquesne and McKeesport toward a vibrant future of lasting value. Any one of the individual recommendations and key initiatives can simultaneously move a variety of these goals forward.

***Vision*** conveys the cities' hopes for the future.

***Goals*** are broad aspirations for the region and each city individually.

***Actions*** are steps that Duquesne and McKeesport will undertake independently or collaboratively to achieve their goals. The sections are generally directed to specific areas within the community (such as Grant Street in Duquesne or the area around the Marina in McKeesport) or specific individual situations that are unique in each community (such as Duquesne's ability to control water or the presence of a Penn State branch campus in McKeesport).

***Key Initiatives*** are collaborative ideas that are essential for implementing the plan's top priorities; these initiatives range from short to long-term for implementation but are high priority actions and should be approached simultaneously for implementation with other key recommendations.

***Case in Point*** provides examples of relevant planning efforts and initiatives to further explain the plan's recommendations.

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **EXAMPLES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE REGION AND AROUND THE COUNTRY**

*Testing ideas is an important strategy for understanding outcomes and moving forward in a positive manner. For actions that require more than a minimal input of resources, reaching out to communities where the concepts have already been tested is a good way to “test” the strategy, ask questions about pitfalls to avoid, special circumstances and lessons learned. Many of the key actions found in this plan feature examples of communities that have implemented the same or similar measures. They are identified with gray boxes and labeled “Case in Point.”*

*Many of the examples come from Pittsburgh and the surrounding region while others draw on a more national perspective. None are exact parallels for Duquesne or McKeesport but the examples offer a unique perspective on planning concepts. The communities identified in the “Case in Point” discussions are perceived as successful today but they were chosen, in part, because they are **not overnight successes**. They have taken decades of work to get to this point, led by active, persistent, dedicated community organizations and government support that catalyzed them to become advocates for their communities. For example, the Pittsburgh neighborhoods of Lawrenceville, East Liberty and Mount Washington were in a situation not unlike Duquesne and McKeesport 20 years ago. Coordinated efforts over the past two decades have made them into the successes that they are today. The intention of the “Case in Point” discussions is not only to celebrate successes but also to identify examples and potential resources for Duquesne and McKeesport—communities that can help them to understand how transformation happened and what factors contributed to it. Generally, the “Case in Point” discussions center on a few broad themes:*

- *Identifying, building on, and promoting the assets that are unique to the community*
- *Creating redevelopment plans for specific areas of each community*
- *Making sure that redevelopment plans have realistic time frames for implementation*
- *Engaging community stakeholders to help to develop and promote the plans and the communities*

## Planning Approach and Process

This plan was launched early in 2014 and began by understanding background information, demographics, physical infrastructure and related planning efforts. The Steering Committee diligently worked through this information over the course of several months to gain a broad understanding of the factors that are influencing each city. Throughout the summer of 2014, public input was solicited through a community survey and several public outreach events.

During the fall of 2014, the Steering Committee turned their attention to the future and began the work of defining achievable recommendations. All of the goals, strategies and initiatives described in this plan were informed by the many dialogues among the planning team, the public and stakeholders from the region.

---

*Simple, clear  
purpose and  
principles give rise  
to complex and  
intelligent  
behavior.*

*Dee Hock*

---

## *Community Engagement*

Planning is the forum for an engaged discussion about the future. As a process, a plan is only as successful as the commitment of the participants who help form the concepts, believe in the vision and further the recommendations towards implementation. To this end, the planning team led an evolving participation and outreach process that used a variety of in-person and virtual modes of communication. The goals for the participation and outreach process were to engage, educate and elicit feedback from residents, elected officials and business and civic leaders.

---

*The best way to  
get a good idea is  
to get lots of  
ideas.*

*Linus Pauling*

---

## *Stakeholder Interview and Outreach*

A key strength of this plan has been the ability to draw upon existing resources. The team spent time at various points during the planning process to reach out to stakeholders from a wide variety of sectors to understand issues like water systems, conservation and parks, education, economic development, arts and culture.

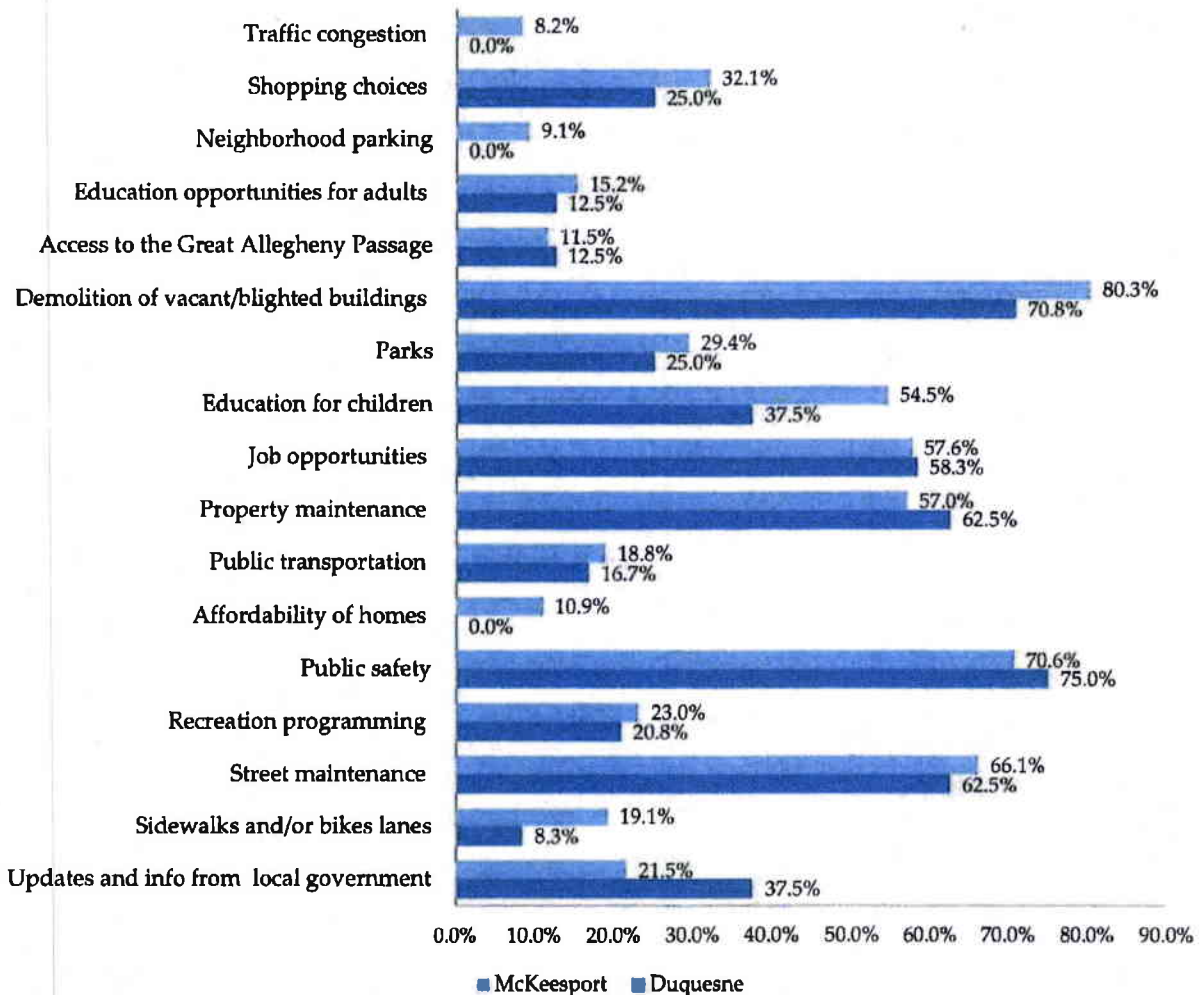
## *Outreach Events and Presentations*

Public meetings and outreach events were key opportunities to gather input and feedback as well as go into depth on important issues. At various points, the team synthesized and incorporated public feedback into ongoing content development as well as the design of the planning process.

## Community Surveys

As part of the Community Engagement Process, a community survey was developed to gather information from the community defining vision, values, goals, policies and priorities. Information was collected regarding potential issues and opportunities relating to the Comprehensive Plan, particularly population, economic development, natural and cultural resources, community services, housing, land use, transportation, and intergovernmental coordination. This survey captured results through an online website-based survey and paper surveys made available at key locations in each City. Full survey results can be found in the Appendix. With some exceptions, the survey results from Duquesne and McKeesport indicate a high level of consistency in terms of priorities and issues in both communities.

Survey Question #2: Which of These Are Most Important to You and Your Family?



## Penn State Greater Allegheny Outreach

**Your community. Your future.**

Please join us to help shape your community's plan and share your thoughts

# DESIGN WORKSHOP

What should McKeesport look like in the future?

What is your preference for new development?

Thursday September 18 - drop in any time from 2pm-6pm

Penn State University Greater Allegheny Campus  
4000 University Drive

Ostermayer Room

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

**Your voice matters. Tell us about the community you want.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

April Belback, program director of the campus Center for Academic and Career Excellence at Penn State Greater Allegheny, worked with 13 students in a spring civics/community engagement course to develop two brief surveys geared toward the student body, faculty and staff. Not only did students want to give something back to the community that hosts their campus, they wanted an outlet for students and staff to share their thoughts on how to make McKeesport more welcoming or more sustainable. "I enjoyed getting to work with the city of McKeesport," said student

Shar Cobb, who came to Penn State Greater Allegheny from Ohio. "I think our survey could cover a lot of different aspects of the work they're trying to do here." Student Lauren Antosik of Elizabeth said she is proud that Penn State is involved in gathering data for McKeesport's comprehensive plan. "This shows that our students have the talent to create something like this survey and the ability to ask the right questions and get the word out," she said. "We have to create a campus and a community that's better for future students."

Penn State Greater Allegheny hosted two events to promote the survey and gather data for the plan. Mayor Michael Cherepko addressed Penn State students and faculty about the direction McKeesport is taking with economic and social change. He encouraged them to take part in campus surveys related to perceptions of the City of McKeesport. As vice president of the Lion Ambassadors, Antosik said the campus is finding new ways to reach out to the community and participation in the survey will help bridge the gap.

Students and faculty weighed the concepts of McKeesport being a destination versus encouraging passing traffic to stop and stay for a while. "I drive through McKeesport to get to the South Side, the Waterfront or Century III," student Sam Durant said. "Maybe if some of those things were closer, or if they were here, people would stay here." Attendees suggested that McKeesport needs retail options outside of pharmacies and dollar stores, more restaurants and a better nightlife. Artist movements and youthful energy made the list.

### PSU campus gathers data for McKeesport plan



Program director April Belback and student Shar Cobb participate in the design workshop at Penn State Greater Allegheny.

By Jennifer R. Venable  
Daily Mail 12/21/14 12:00pm



As an integral part of the comprehensive plan, Penn State Greater Allegheny hosted two events on Thursday to gather data for the city's new comprehensive plan.

Mayor Michael Cherepko addressed Penn State students and faculty about the direction McKeesport is taking with economic and social change. He encouraged them to take part in campus surveys related to perceptions of the City of McKeesport.

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## Foundations

Factors such as changing demographics and the ever-increasing influence of global economics complicate planning for the future while making it all the more necessary. Regardless of where a city is or how successful it has been in the past, change is an inevitable factor in the life-cycle of any community. In short, the foundation is constantly shifting. Change is driven by factors within the city itself, such as evolution of businesses and employers, resident attitudes and desires, or shifts in administration. Change is driven by factors external to the city, such as transportation corridors, demographic shifts, changing technologies, demographic changes and policy changes at the county, state and federal level.

These internal and external drivers force cities to respond by altering to the way they provide services to their businesses and residents. Depending on how cities react to these drivers, these changes can help them progress. When it comes to transforming cities, many different factors have to be considered:

- *Cities are complex.* Even small cities are multi-faceted and interconnected with their regions and markets in multitudinous ways.
- *Change affects different layers of the city.* Change affects everything: revenues and costs, the utility of various authorities and committees, the amount of traffic passing through streets and the success of local businesses.

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*Change is inevitable.  
Growth is optional.*

*John C. Maxwell*

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- *Change affects the hard and the soft.* Next to “hard” tangible aspects of a city (like roads and pipes), the even more important “soft” aspects of change need to be considered: cities are made and kept alive by people, and our emotions often run high when it comes to change.
- *Change does not always start at the same place.* Change is often not initiated by top-management or city government. Depending on the driver for change and the current situation a city is in, changes ripple up, down and sideways (e.g. the internet and mobile communication giving rise to new ways of working and doing business).

Taken together, these factors mean that even cities that are impacted by similar regional factors may react to the same drivers in completely different ways. To maintain success, it is important to know where the community is coming from, to be clear about where it is heading, and to have a sound approach to maintaining quality-of-life issues and managing the transformation. Communities must understand past change, key trends, influencing factors, issues and opportunities before strategizing to create achievable recommendations that will guide successful implementation.

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*The knowledge that we consider knowledge proves itself in action. What we now mean by knowledge is information in action, information focused on results*

*Peter F. Drucker*

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## Key Trends and Physical Conditions

Full documentation of demographic data, physical conditions and issues and opportunities can be found in the Background Studies and Trends chapter.

### Regional Context Map

#### Allegheny County

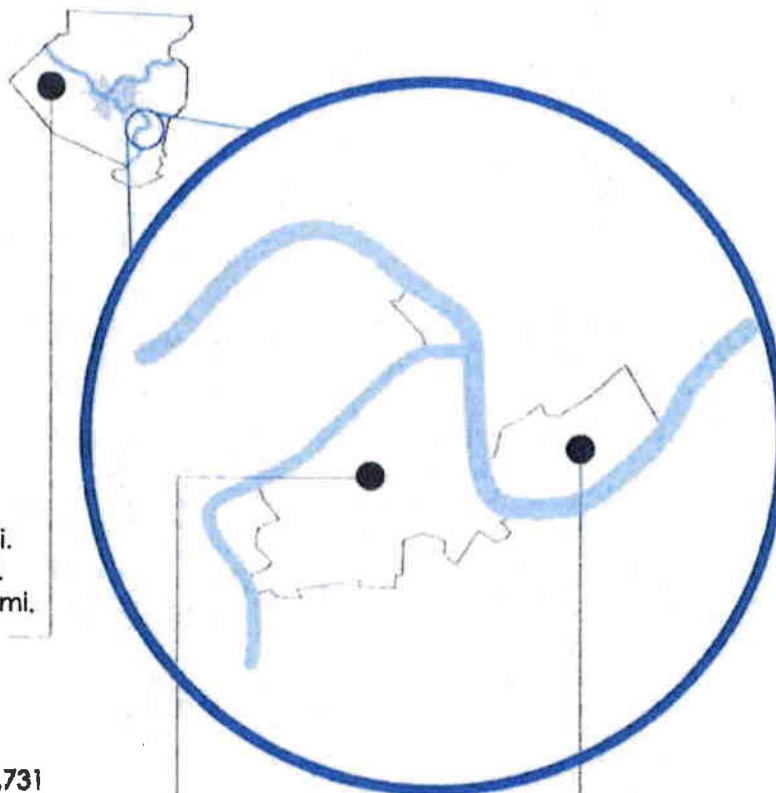
Total Population: 1,223,348  
Total Housing Units: 589,201  
Total Households: 533,960  
Total Area: 744.52 sq. mi.  
Total Land Area: 730.07 sq. mi.  
Total Water Area: 14.45 sq. mi.  
Population Density: 1,676/sq. mi.

#### City of McKeesport

Total Population: 19,731  
Total Housing Units: 10,088  
Total Households: 8,353  
Total Area: 5.41 sq. mi.  
Total Land Area: 5.04 sq. mi.  
Total Water Area: .37 sq. mi.  
Population Density: 3,912/sq. mi.

#### City of Duquesne

Total Population: 5,565  
Total Housing Units: 3,163  
Total Households: 2,493  
Total Area: 2.04 sq. mi.  
Total Land Area: 1.82 sq. mi.  
Total Water Area: .22 sq. mi.  
Population Density: 3,061/sq. mi.



## Key Drivers of the Plan

Starting in the late 1970s when a number of large manufacturing plants closed, the entire Mon Valley has experienced a cascade of job loss, population decline and disinvestment. This has created vacancy, blight and other problems that, in turn, created additional job loss, population decline and disinvestment.

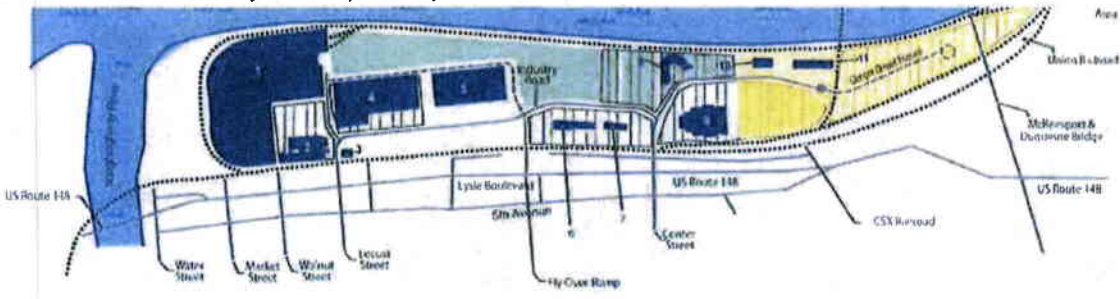


Today Duquesne and McKeesport are dealing with a number of issues that are a direct and indirect result of changes in industry and demographics over the past decades. However, both cities have a number of unique opportunities and a history of hard work and dedication that will become the underpinnings of continued revitalization and reinvention.

# RIDC

The Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) is a major industrial park owner/developer in the region. It is a privately funded non-profit serving the Pittsburgh metropolitan area to focus on a regional approach to economic development primarily through managing and rehabilitating industrial land for modern tenants. RIDC was formed in 1955 as a non-profit corporation as a central agency responsible for developing and coordinating efforts to create new employment and economic diversity. Much of that effort is focused on redeveloping sites associated with the region's former steel industry. Consequently, most of RIDC's property has existing infrastructure and environmental issues that characterize industrial redevelopment sites.

RIDC Industrial Center of McKeesport Map

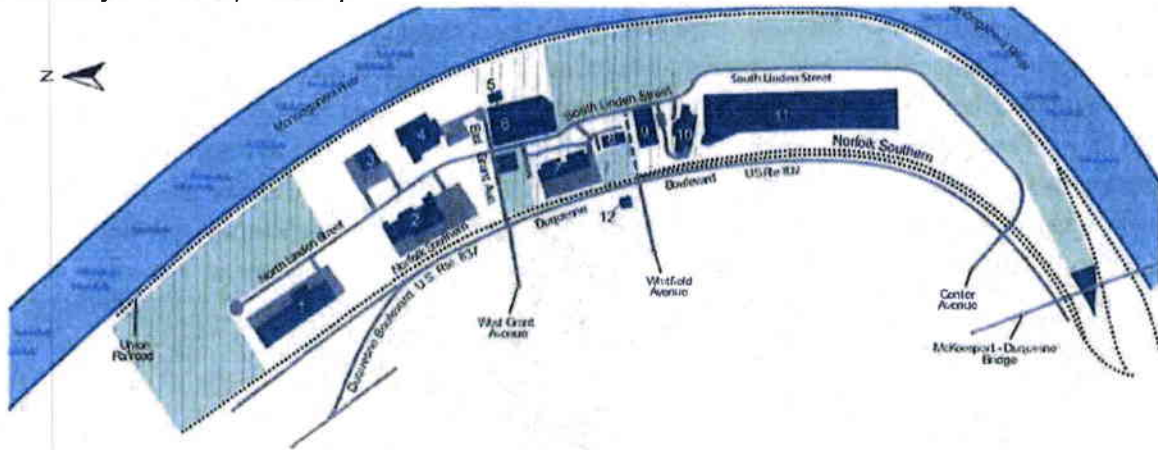


- |   |   |                |
|---|---|----------------|
| Building 1: Camp Hill Corporation       | Building 7: Brick Shed                            | Available Land |
| Building 2: McKeesport Manor II         | Building 8: Round House                           | FTZ Sites      |
| Building 3: Guard House                 | Building 9: McKeesport Manor I                    | KOZ Sites      |
| Building 4: McKeesport Commons Phase I  | Building 10: Consolidated Pipe and Safety Company |                |
| Building 5: McKeesport Commons Phase II | Building 11: Huckestein Mechanical Services       |                |
| Building 6: Roll Shop                   |   |                |

There are a number of other industrial park owners/developers in the region—many of which focus on the development of greenfield sites, where there are no costs associated with redevelopment, repurposing or remediation. Reusing or redeveloping industrial sites can be costly. From replacing/upgrading infrastructure to environmental cleanup, the expense is significant. Most RIDC sites have significant investment—often in the form of grants and loans—to prepare them for future development. Sometimes this money comes from public agencies but often the money comes in the form of loans. It is not surprising to find that the RIDC parks typically have higher sale and lease prices than parks that focus on the development of greenfield sites. However, the RIDC parks in Duquesne and McKeesport are the least expensive in the RIDC portfolio.

The RIDC Industrial Center of McKeesport is 133 acres (3.8% of the city's land area)

RIDC City Center Duquesne Map



- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Heat Treat Building                    | 7. Linden Square One               |
| 2. American Textile                       | 8. Roll Shop                       |
| 3. Department of Labor & Industry         | 9. Brick Shed                      |
| 4. Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank | 10. Stores Building                |
| 5. Open Hearth Building                   | 11. Allegheny Recovery Corporation |
| 6. Duquesne Industrial Manor              | 12. Business Innovation Center     |

- Available Land
- FIZ Sites
- KO2 Sites

When RIDC developed the parks in Duquesne and McKeesport, there was a significant investment to remove old infrastructure and build new infrastructure. Because of the high cost of site cleanup, RIDC had to find funding/financing to support this effort. The pay-back terms of the financing for that investment is a large part of what dictates land value/sale price and rent price for buildings in the parks.

The RIDC City Center  
Duquesne is 240 acres  
(18.2% of the city's land  
area)

The RIDC parks in Duquesne and McKeesport have always been marketed to industrial users but the sale price is closer to the price of land for commercial uses. Consequently, development at the two parks has been slow. RIDC is the largest owner of developable commercial/industrial land in both the cities of McKeesport and Duquesne and controls most riverfront property on the Monongahela River in each city. Because of the high visibility of the sites, lack of robust development activity and vast land area, there has been frustration from the communities because of a perception that activity on the sites is stagnant.

Based on market forces, other types of uses may be able to bear the higher purchase or lease price that is needed because of the cost associated with the past investments on the RIDC sites in Duquesne and McKeesport. For instance, if the park properties were marketed for commercial uses/activities such as office or retail, the market appeal most likely would be broadened.

## *Zoning*

Both cities have issues related to zoning that are common in built-out communities—a number of regulations do not coincide with the existing fabric of the built environment or common building products/industry practices. Fence height and opacity is an example in Duquesne. These types of building and code enforcement issues have the capacity to consume a large amount of municipal staff time.

McKeesport has an additional zoning issue related to requirements of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. A number of fair-housing issues were identified in a housing report that needs to be addressed as part of a battery of zoning ordinance updates.

The issue of zoning on RIDC property is of concern in both cities. There is a desire to expand uses and raise the bar in terms of the quality of the built environment. There is also a desire to level the playing field by ensuring that development opportunities and zoning regulations are consistent between the two cities.

## *Community Character*

Grant Street in Duquesne and 5th Avenue in McKeesport were once the “Main Streets” of the cities. These commercial corridors were where residents and businesses would obtain goods and services to satisfy daily needs. Today both communities suffer from vacancy, marginal land uses and disinvestment, in spite of the fact that much of the building stock remains intact. The upside of stagnant economies is often historic preservation. Both communities have an urban fabric that has retained some character through the years—old buildings, walkable streets and brick roads. Duquesne and McKeesport do not have to expend energy creating or manufacturing an artificial sense of place. They need to retain what is existing, and build on it through physical projects, programs and storytelling. The Heritage Center in McKeesport can play a role in these efforts along with other local and regional organizations.

## *Transportation*

Duquesne and McKeesport are located in close proximity to regional hubs like the Route 22 corridor in Monroeville and the Waterfront in West Homestead/Munhall. The drive to downtown Pittsburgh is reasonable for many commuters—particularly those with private vehicles.

Like many communities in the region, Duquesne and McKeesport have experienced severe service cuts from the Allegheny County Port Authority, which operates all main bus routes serving the area. Valley Heritage /Work link busses have completed some connections, especially in McKeesport, to get residents from the community to main bus routes and transportation corridors.

A significant number of rail lines along with industrial waterfront are servicing the industrial land uses in both communities. RIDC identified the large industrial waterfront parcels as an opportunity worth preserving for the right tenant or buyer.

## *Regional and Recreation Assets*

There are a number of regional assets that draw people into and around Duquesne and McKeesport: UPMC McKeesport Hospital, Penn State Greater Allegheny Campus, the RIDC sites, McKeesport Marina and Kennywood (which borders Duquesne). Building and maintaining relationships to reach common goals is important as limited municipal budgets restrict each city's ability to implement long term planning goals completely independently.

The Great Allegheny Passage trail passes through both Duquesne and McKeesport along the RIDC properties. The trail has been experiencing increased traffic as additional portions are completed and local interest grows. There are opportunities in both cities to focus some improvements and investments in an effort to bring trail users into the communities.

## *Economic Development Incentives*

Hundreds of acres are available for development in Duquesne and McKeesport:

- 20 acres within the KOZ at the RIDC Industrial Center of McKeesport
- 11 acres within the KOZ at the RIDC City Center of Duquesne
- 14 acres in the new Duquesne KOZ/Redevelopment Area

The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Duquesne (RACD), as administrator of the 3-City Enterprise Zone comprised of Duquesne, McKeesport and Clairton, has consolidated the four Enterprise Zone revolving loan funds into one revolving loan fund. RACD, over the past year, has been aggressively marketing the Enterprise Zone Program. Funds are geared toward economic development programs that encourage businesses to locate in the communities. In addition to the revolving loan fund, the following incentives are also available:

- Neighborhood Assistance Enterprise Zone Tax Credit Program
- Technical Assistance Matching Grants
- Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) Program (Only at selected locations)
- Job Training and Other Technical Assistance Programs
- Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) in McKeesport for local and school district taxes (Allegheny County does not participate)

### Perception

A resident at a public meeting in McKeesport shared her experiences with friends who had never been to McKeesport. Once they arrive, they are pleasantly surprised to find a nice community that, largely, stands in stark contrast to the 6:00 news reports and newspaper headlines. This theme was repeated regularly throughout the planning process. Duquesne and McKeesport have a lot to offer—the challenge is getting people past the “front door.”

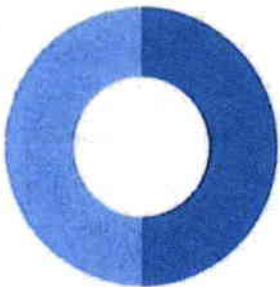
### Housing Stock

The housing stock in Duquesne and McKeesport is varied and provides a range of opportunities for the local population. Little new market rate for sale housing has been developed in recent years. Most new housing in the community has been initiated by nonprofit organizations or public bodies to fulfill service and/or revitalization missions. However, some projects have found it difficult to find qualified home purchasers and struggled to close out the project successfully.

In comparison with Allegheny County, Duquesne and McKeesport’s home ownership rate is significantly lower (54% versus 65% in 2010).

Aging communities often struggle with an oversupply of economically obsolete housing that is uncompetitive in today’s housing market. A result of this imbalance is abandonment by the owners or investors, leaving the city to assume the costs and responsibilities to demolish the structure.

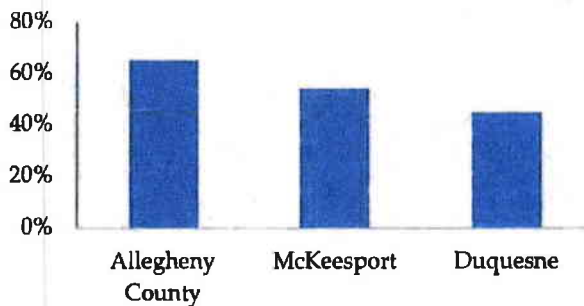
McKeesport is battling a backlog ranging from 650 to nearly 1100 units (source: US Census as published by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission) and a budget that permits ~20 demolitions per year. As a result, McKeesport is facing a 40-50 year backlog. Similarly, Duquesne’s backlog ranges from 200 to nearly 500 units (source: US Census as published by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission) and a budget that permits 25 demolitions per year, or a 10-20 year backlog.



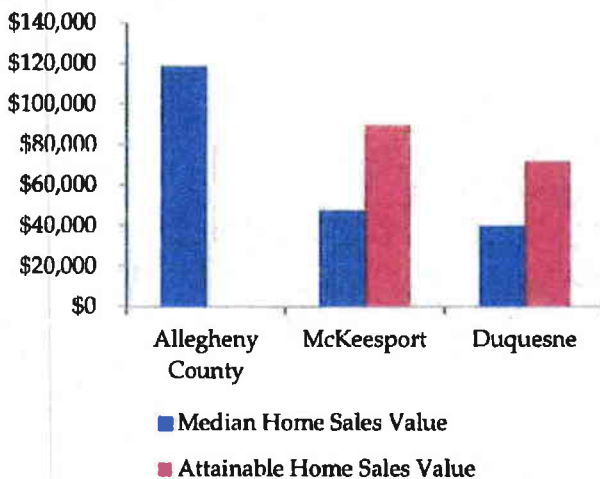
Approximately half of all housing units (55% in Duquesne and 46% in McKeesport) are not owner-occupied and half the population resides in these units.



### 2010 Home Ownership Rates



### Home Sales Value



In McKeesport, with a median household income of \$27,100, potential home sales values of \$90,000 would be considered attainable for existing residents (annual home ownership costs that are no more than 30% of annual household income). This represents 89% potential increase in McKeesport home values for existing residents and homeowners.

In Duquesne, with a median household income of \$21,700, potential home sales values of \$72,000 would be considered attainable for existing residents (annual home ownership costs that are no more than 30% of annual household income). This represents a 78% potential increase in Duquesne home values for existing residents and homeowners. (Baseline figures from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey as published by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.)

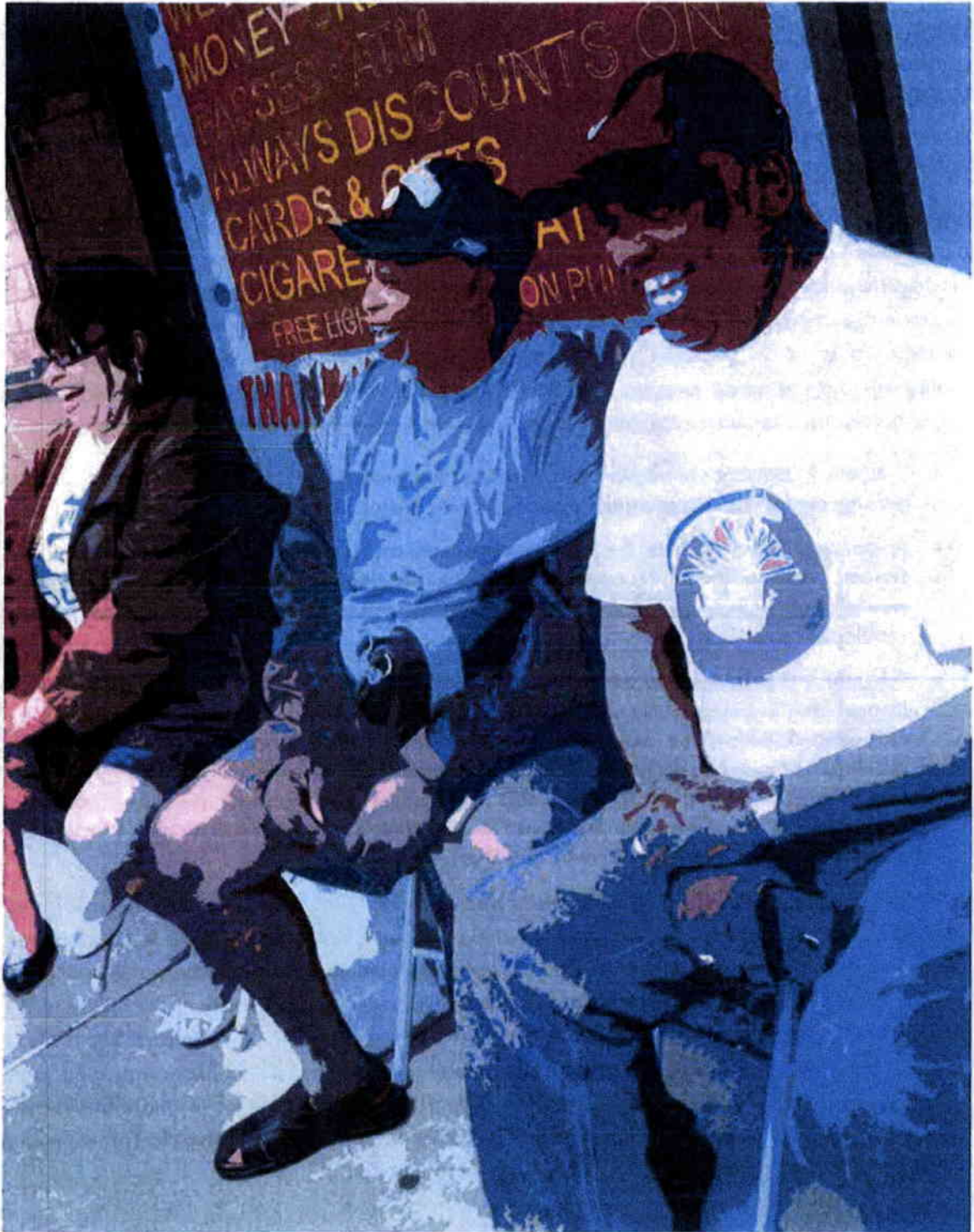
## *Population Projections and Build-Out*

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Cycle 9a Forecast is projecting continued decline in McKeesport's population through 2025 with modest growth beginning in the 2030-2035 time period; Duquesne's population is projected to continue to decline through 2040. Full projections can be found in the Appendix.

Build out scenarios are a common analysis undertaken as part of a comprehensive plan. Their intent is to understand implications related to future land use, development, infill, redevelopment, zoning and municipal services and infrastructure needs. Duquesne and McKeesport are unique in this context because of the decline that is projected to continue. Therefore, build-out in this context is not looking at the implications of an increased population—it is looking at the implications of potential infill development or continued vacancy. The three build out scenarios related to this plan include the following (the full data and description of assumptions can be found in the Appendix):

- Scenario 1: Existing vacant land and structures are redeveloped within the parameters of the existing zoning districts to continue existing development patterns.
- Scenario 2: Vacant land in the more dense central area of the communities remains vacant (turned over to neighbors for use as side yards) and the peripheral areas of the communities are redeveloped within the parameters of the existing zoning districts to continue existing development patterns.
- Scenario 3: Vacant land in the more dense central area of the communities remains vacant (turned over to neighbors for use as side yards) and the peripheral areas of the communities are redeveloped within the parameters of the existing zoning districts to continue existing development patterns. Additional new development occurs based on discussions found later in this comprehensive plan (housing and commercial development near the "point" in McKeesport where the Youghiogheny and Monongahela Rivers meet and housing development on the parking lot of the recreation field in Duquesne).

Based on population projections and the build out scenarios considered, there is little anticipated impact on municipal services or infrastructure within the next decade. Much of the infrastructure in Duquesne and McKeesport was built to support larger populations and more robust non-residential activity—from industrial activities to retail and commercial operations. Because of the nature of the scattered blight and vacancy, the cities do not have viable options to reduce infrastructure like roads or to seal off underground pipes. Consequently, the amount of infrastructure will likely remain the same (miles of roads, etc.) but the number of people supporting the maintenance of that infrastructure through tax revenues will likely continue to decline. Other services such as trash collection are scaled based on the current residential population and commercial needs.



## Vision

Community visioning is the process of developing consensus about what future the community wants, and then deciding what is necessary to achieve it. A vision statement captures what community members most value about their community, and the shared image of what they want their community to become. It inspires community members to work together to achieve the vision. A thoughtful vision statement is one of the elements needed to form a forward-looking strategic framework that gives governments the long-term-comprehensive perspective necessary to make rational and disciplined tactical/incremental decisions on community issues as they arise. As Yogi Berra would say, "if you don't know where you are going - you might end up someplace else."

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**Duquesne and McKeesport are  
dynamic cities of enduring  
value, committed to a future  
of new opportunities and  
discovery.**

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## Focus Areas and Goals

Community development goals and objectives for Duquesne and McKeesport are outlined through the following goals in the following chapters.

1

### *A Plan for Land Use, Redevelopment and Economic Development*

**Goal: Facilitate private-sector growth with strategic actions to create catalytic change in community focus areas.** This section includes a land use plan.

2

### *A Plan for Housing*

**Goal: Implement coordinated steps to stabilize and support neighborhoods, encourage reinvestment and promote a wide variety of equitable housing options.**

The plan for housing identifies housing problems and recommends measures for maintenance of housing quality in the future. This section includes a housing needs plan.

3

### *A Plan for Transportation, Assets and Amenities*

**Goal: Leverage and enhance existing systems with targeted investments.** This section includes a transportation and circulation plan as well as a plan for the protection of natural and historic resources and for recreation systems.

4

### *A Plan for Government, Outreach, Services, Infrastructure and Energy*

**Goal: Take a long-term and big-picture view on all city decisions.** This section includes a plan for community facilities and utilities and a plan for the reliable supply of water.

## *Interrelationships*

Interrelationships are key throughout the plan. Many actions and objectives support multiple goals.



## Key Initiatives

Key Initiatives are collaborative ideas that are essential for implementing the plan's top priorities; these initiatives range from short to long-term for implementation but are high priority actions and should be approached simultaneously for implementation with other key recommendations.

- Continue fostering relationships/creating partnerships with RIDC to enhance the marketing of available City Center of Duquesne and Industrial Center of McKeesport commercial/industrial sites.
- Broaden the range of allowable uses designated in both city ordinances related to RIDC properties
- Solidify and strengthen the market rate housing sector in stable neighborhoods to achieve increased potential home values and expand interest in owner-occupied housing
- Preserve existing homeownership in threshold neighborhoods
- Enhance general marketing efforts to show Duquesne and McKeesport in an improved light.
- Implement ordinance updates to address land use issues identified in the other plan elements
- Enhance external communication and storytelling
- Explore and evaluate options for code enforcement
- Leverage the Great Allegheny Passage to showcase the community and give people a reason to ride there from Pittsburgh or other destinations.
- Create a Joint Trail Committee

Throughout the plan, Key Initiatives are indicated with the symbol above or the phrase "Key Initiative."

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*Vision is not enough; it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps; we must step up the stairs*

*Vaclav Havel*

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## Framework for Action

This plan lays out a series of goals and action items to help the cities of Duquesne and McKeesport move into the future with success. The priorities identified for the plan's action items are based on analysis of data and an understanding of issues and opportunities. The action plan should be reviewed annually to consider new opportunities, completed actions and unexpected circumstances. In moving forward for long term success, always return to the vision statement as a guiding principal and frame discussions about action items with the following concepts in mind:

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*Don't just do  
something. Stand  
there.*

*Rochelle Myer*

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**Optimize, Don't Maximize:** Optimizing means selecting actions and efforts that work toward multiple goals. To figure out how to optimize efforts, determine first what the most important goal is and then tailor efforts to work towards that goal while supporting other goals.

**Think About ROI:** In business, the term return on investment, or ROI, refers to how much of a result will be gained from the time, and resources invested. The same idea works in communities. Low-ROI activities—such as enforcement of a code that no longer has relevance in the community—deplete energy and willpower as resources are spent on activities that don't create results. Energy, time and money are finite resources. Actions that provide more utility than cost will help to create momentum and a positive feedback loop.

**Test, Test, Test:** For actions that don't require significant resources, test strategies and methods to see which are the best fit for the community. Regularly log progress to obtain a set of data or observations for objective evaluation. For actions that require more significant input of resources, reach out to communities where the concepts have already been tested. Ask questions about pitfalls to avoid, special circumstances and lessons learned. Many of the key actions found in the plan feature examples of communities that have implemented the same or similar measures.

**Iterate:** To remain competitive, most products or brands have to change and evolve. Community development efforts can apply the same principal. This doesn't always mean changing an approach entirely; but it does mean making it better. Take the example of press releases: The community may already be producing press releases but there may be ways to improve the process, quality, quantity or impact. Could they reach out to journalists to better understand how to improve the content? Find local students who could take photographs to include? Begin sending materials to different outlets? The

overarching action remains the same but different iterations offer opportunities to change both the process and the outcomes.

**Don't be Afraid to Pivot:** At various times in the upcoming years of plan implementation, there may be times when it is obvious that the current model for approaching an issue or opportunity is dated, inefficient, or simply not working. When that happens, it's okay to pivot toward new ideas and new processes. Long term planning cannot anticipate every possible scenario but it does provide a framework that communities can utilize to pivot when necessary.

**Common Knowledge Isn't Always Accurate:** Entrepreneurs are used to hearing from experts every day that their idea or company won't work. If common knowledge was always the best, no one would ever take risks and launch innovative new companies. The same goes for community revitalization strategies — some concepts might hold true, but some trendy new ideas might be more fad than fact. Question what is known and why, search for data to back up understanding and reach out to partners and collaborators to enhance efforts.

**There is No Such Thing as a Get-Rich-Quick Scheme:** We've all seen ads for ways to "Get Rich Quick!" — and we all know that they won't work. It's the same for community revitalization and development. Quick and easy options rarely have lasting impacts. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. It might not be glamorous but slow, hard work that is compounded over weeks, months, years and decades is what leads to a healthy, strong community.

**Work Toward the Vision:** The takeaway? There is no one-size-fits-all community plan. Work toward the vision and expect bumps in the road. Successful small steps create positive reinforcement to keep moving forward in the long term.

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*When you find  
yourself in a hole,  
stop digging.*

*Will Rogers*

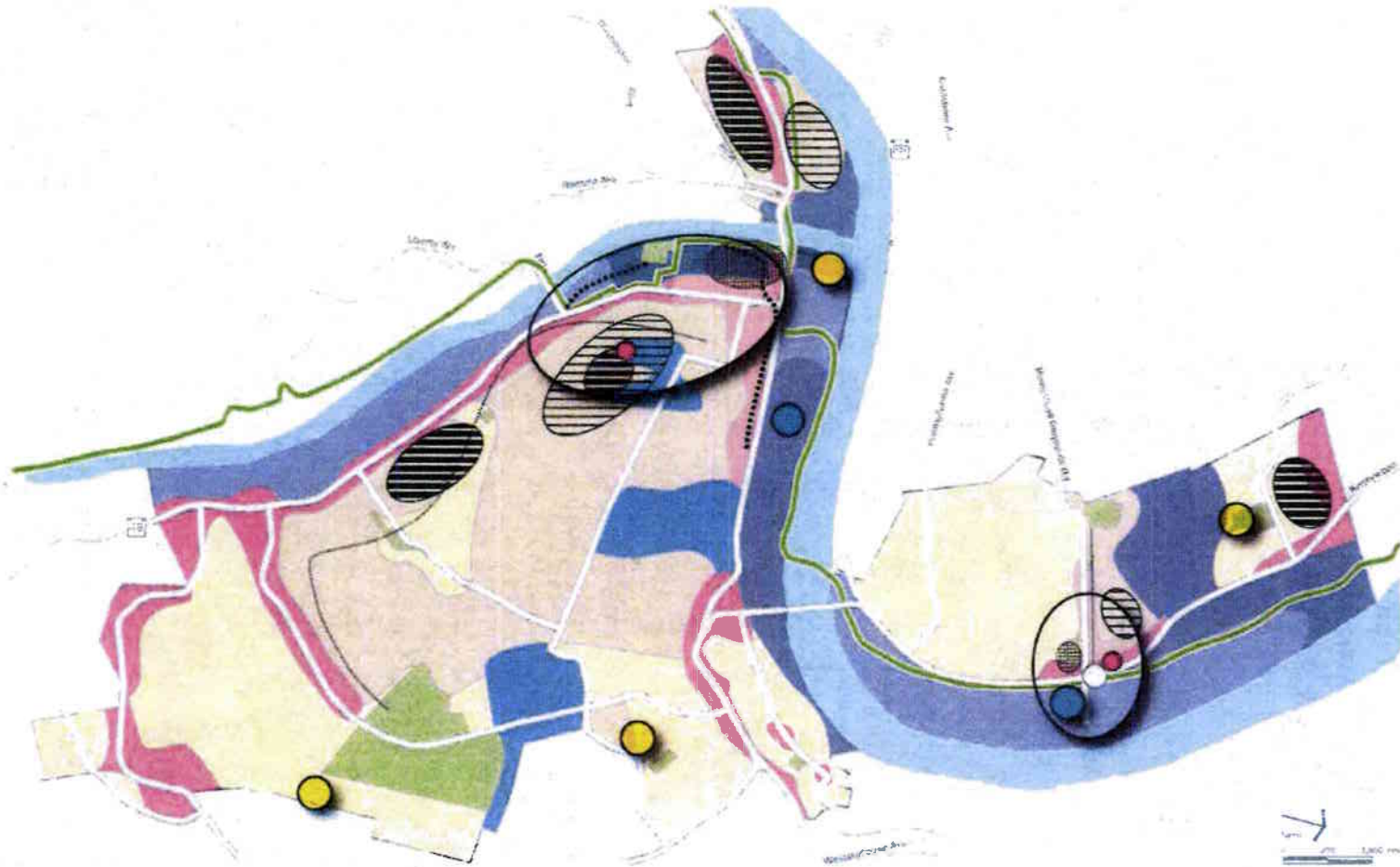
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# Joint Comprehensive Plan Map

This comprehensive plan map incorporates various plan elements that are associated with physical places in the community. Details can be found in the following chapters.





The **Reinvestment Focus Areas** are key area where each city can work to promote, support and facilitate non-residential private investment and redevelopment. In Duquesne, this focus is the first few blocks of Grant Avenue. In McKeesport, this focus is the area around the McKeesport Marina and the area down Walnut Street, past Kane Hospital and down 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Building on the Reinvestment Focus Area is the **Live-Work District** in Duquesne where there is an opportunity to build on the existing businesses to continue and promote the location of contractors and other related businesses. While this is part of the reinvestment strategy along Grant Avenue, there is additional opportunity along Second Avenue.

**Non-Residential Private Investment Opportunity Focus Area** is a key location where new investment in commercial land uses could occur. In Duquesne, this is the 3-acre parcel on RIDC property that is being marketed by Mark Harvey Smith, who is acting as a consulting property broker for Duquesne. In McKeesport, this is the area on RIDC near the flyover where there is potential for non-residential commercial space with the long-term possibility of housing in the form of row houses and condos.

**Housing Focus Areas** (Challenged and Threshold Neighborhoods) are key areas where investment and intervention could have significant impact. The areas identified on the map do not encompass all residential neighborhood types but identify the first-priority target areas. The Plan for Housing in each chapter further outlines the neighborhood types and the recommendations that can be utilized to support and uplift these areas.

Likewise, the **Residential Private Investment Opportunity Showcase Area** is a location where private investment in housing stock could occur in the long-term. The baseball field parking lot next to the stadium site in Duquesne is currently being used for recreation by the Duquesne School District but the city should be prepared to take control of the site if it ever becomes available and utilize it to facilitate private-sector new housing construction. Depending on the long-term outcome of the users in the RIDC park in McKeesport, there is an opportunity for waterfront housing development at the “point” of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Rivers.

**Trail-Focused Intersection/Corridor Improvement Areas** are short or medium term improvements that could enhance the likelihood that trail users will experience the city. In Duquesne, this includes creating an additional dedicated trail parking area within the Duquesne Plaza parking lot with signage and promotions. In McKeesport, this includes returning 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to a two-way street to facilitate small businesses, retail and office development that will support a walkable and interesting downtown to attract trail users into the community.

**Long-Term Pedestrian/Bike Improvements** are key areas where significant investment could enhance connections to the Great Allegheny Passage and the trail riders there. In Duquesne, this improvement is in the form of a flyover that would connect the trail to Grant Avenue and a bike lane that would lead to the park at the end of the street. In McKeesport, this could be in the form of a trail connecting Renzie Park to downtown along a swath of open space. In the short-term, property ownership and easement information could be collected to begin the process of long-term planning. This would allow Renzie Park to become a more significant amenity for trail users who could take a detour from the trail to experience the park without traveling extensively on the roadways. It would also connect more residents to the community’s feature park.

The **Key Focus Area** represents a concentration of plan focus elements: land use, economic development, transportation, housing, community assets and government outreach and services. By focusing revitalization efforts, the city can create a synergy where success builds on success and investments can work towards multiple goals.

The **Key Asset in Focus Area** is an existing community asset within the Catalytic Change-Key Focus Area. There are opportunities to build from this asset to create change and reinvestment within the Key Focus Area. In Duquesne, this asset is Duquesne Plaza, which is now under new ownership and is more community minded. In McKeesport, this asset is the new Twin River School.

Other each community (residential, commercial, etc.) are primarily focused on infill and continuing the existing character of the community.

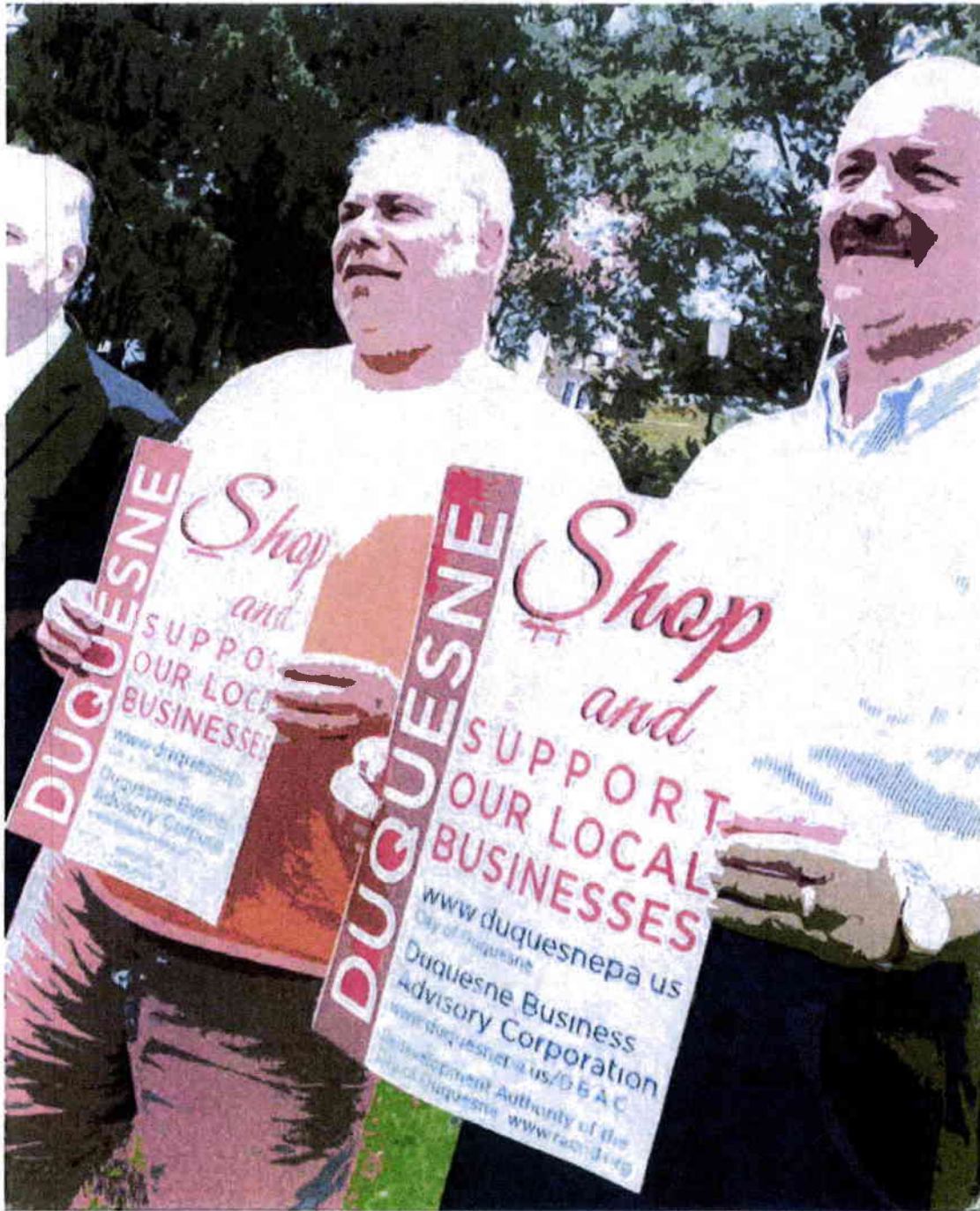
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*You’ve got to think about the big things while you’re doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction.*

*Alvin Toffler*

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## Duquesne's Plan Elements

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You've got to think about the big things while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction.

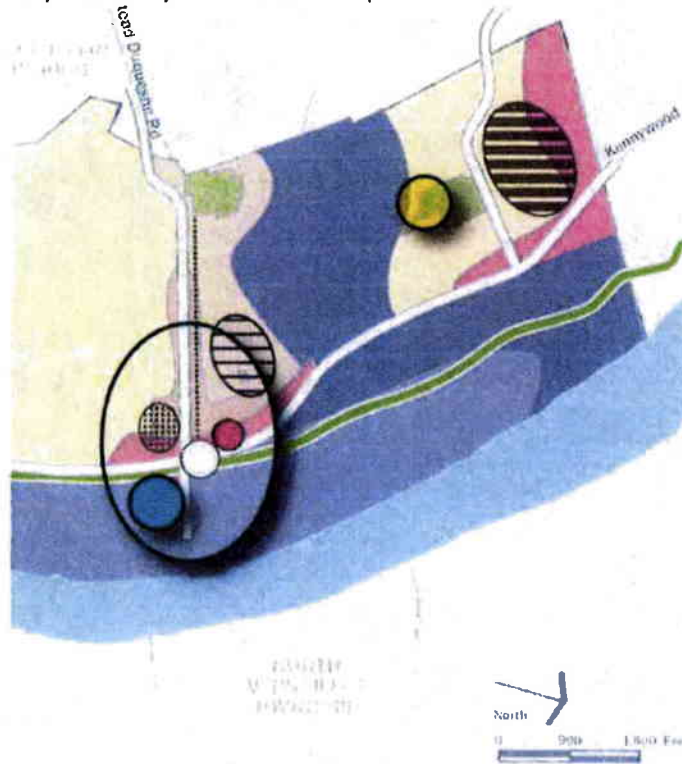
Alvin Toffler

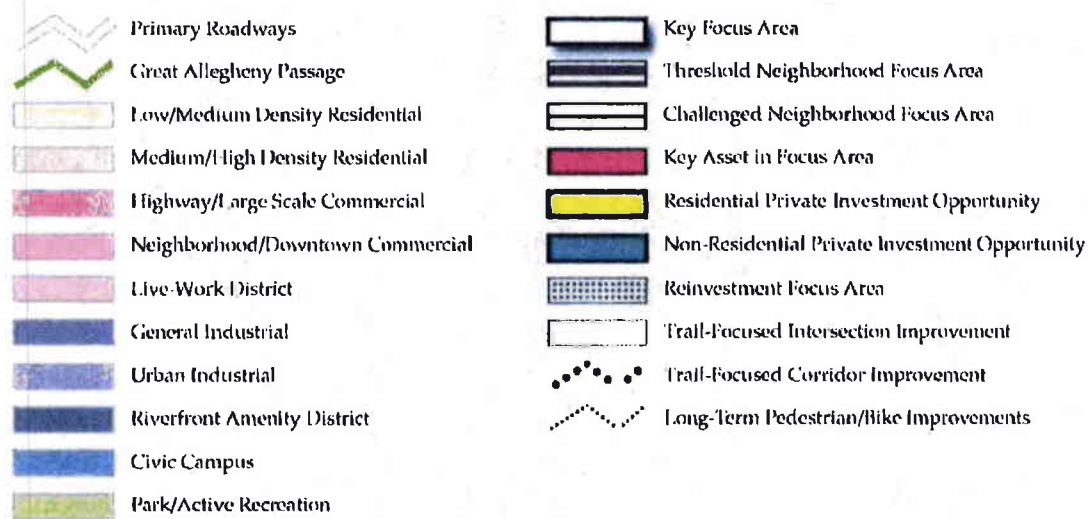
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This chapter contains more in-depth discussions of plan elements, goals and actions. Accompanying each goal is at least one key initiative. Each initiative supports multiple goals and strategies, that, when executed, will provide meaningful, measureable progress. Each initiative is, in turn, a collection of implementation steps that can be carried out at the local or regional level.

The initiatives are lofty but achievable—asking the communities to think about the big picture and stretch their horizons towards the future. This chapter also begins to outline potential champions and partners and key steps to bring the plan to fruition.

*Duquesne Comprehensive Plan Map*





This comprehensive plan map incorporates various plan elements that are associated with physical places in the community.

The **Reinvestment Focus Areas** are key area where the city can work to promote, support and facilitate private investment and redevelopment. In Duquesne, this focus is the first few blocks of Grant Avenue.

Building on the Reinvestment Focus Area is the **Live-Work District** in Duquesne where there is an opportunity to build on the existing businesses to continue and promote the location of contractors and other related businesses. While this is part of the reinvestment strategy along Grant Avenue, there is additional opportunity along Second Avenue.

**Non-Residential Private Investment Opportunity Focus Area** is a key location where new investment in commercial land uses could occur. In Duquesne, this is the 3-acre parcel on RIDC property that is zoned with a commercial overlay district and being marketed by Mark Harvey Smith, who is acting as a consulting property broker for Duquesne.

**Housing Focus Areas** (Challenged and Threshold Neighborhoods) are key areas where investment and intervention could have significant impact. The areas identified on the map do not encompass all residential neighborhood types but identify the first-priority target areas. The Plan for Housing in this chapter further outlines the neighborhood types and the recommendations that can be utilized to support and uplift these areas.

Likewise, the **Housing Private Investment Opportunity Showcase Area** is a location where private investment in housing stock could occur in the long-term. The parking lot adjacent to the











ballfield site in Duquesne is currently being used for recreation by the Duquesne School District but the city should be prepared to take control of the site if it ever becomes available and utilize it to facilitate private-sector new housing construction.

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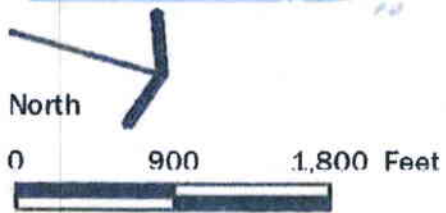
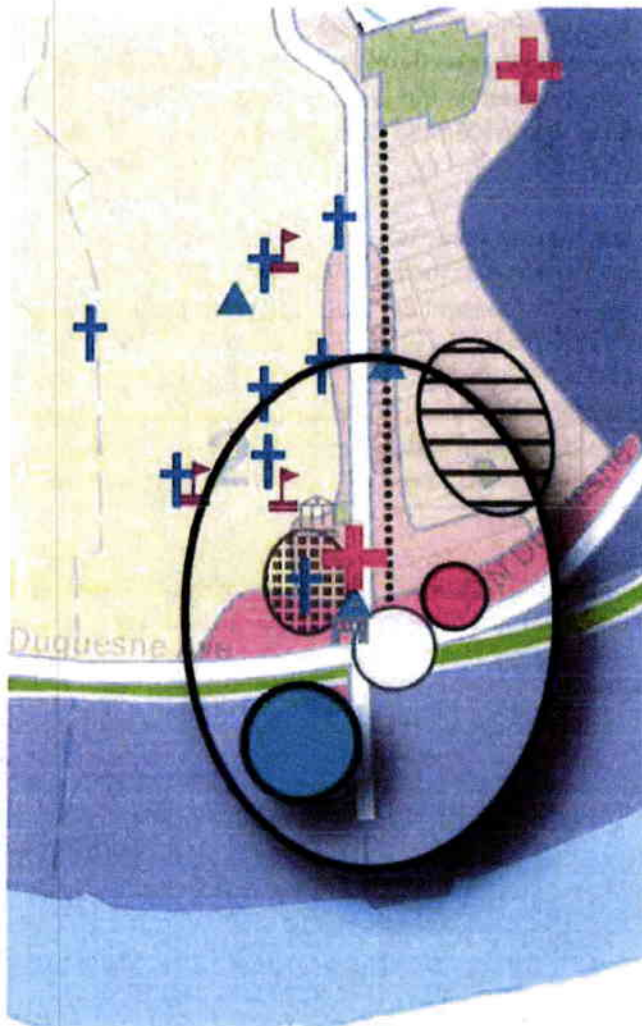
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The **Key Asset in Focus Area** is an existing community asset within the Catalytic Change-Key Focus Area. There are opportunities to build from this asset to create change and reinvestment within the Key Focus Area. In Duquesne, this asset is Duquesne Plaza, which is now under new ownership and is more community minded.

-  Municipal Building
-  Post Office
-  Church
-  Emergency Service
-  Hospital
-  School
-  River Access
-  Library
-  Historic Site (Listed on the National Register)
-  Historic Site (Eligible for the National Register)

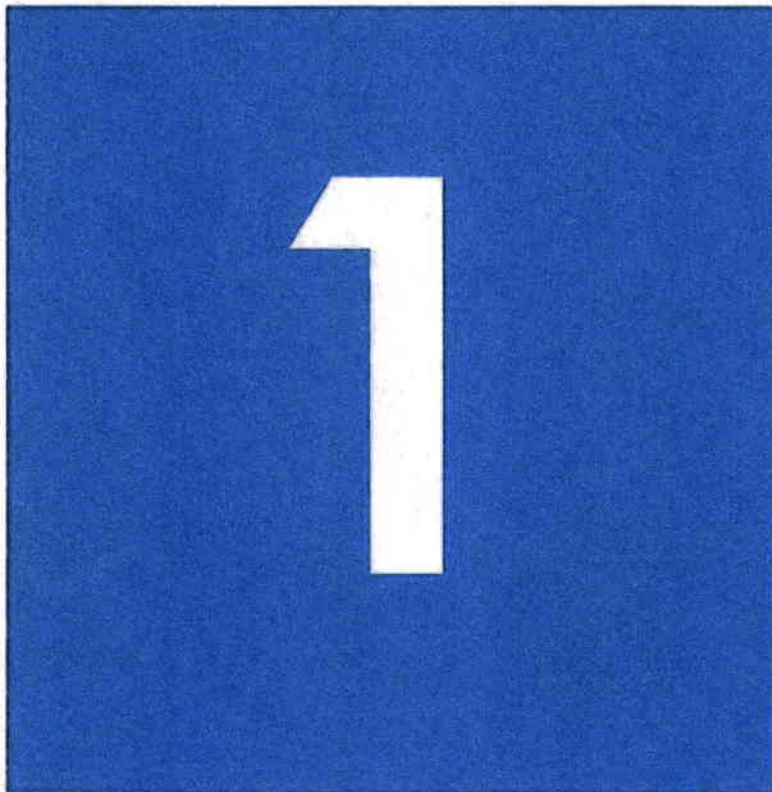


*Duquesne Key Focus Area Map*



## A Plan for Land Use and Economic Development

Business and economic development strategies range from enhancing the marketing of each city and its available commercial sites to incentivizing new business development, to improving the physical environment of business districts. Each city should use these strategies as a guide as it pursues opportunities for commercial growth over the coming years.



### **Land Use and Economic Development Goal**

*Facilitate private-sector growth with strategic actions to create catalytic change in community focus areas*



Continue fostering relationships/creating partnerships with RIDC to enhance the marketing of available City Center of Duquesne commercial/industrial sites.

The Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) is the largest owner of developable commercial/industrial land in the City of Duquesne. RIDC's ability to market the land to prospective tenants or purchasers is critical for attracting new businesses to each city. The communities must maintain a positive relationship with RIDC and ensure that the agency is employing its marketing and business-attraction resources effectively.

- Arrange regular meetings with RIDC staff to discuss and highlight available sites
- Request reports from RIDC on inquiries regarding the City Center of Duquesne to remain aware of any interest expressed for specific properties
- Attend RIDC workshops/conferences/events to represent the community and promote available sites

*Promote City Center Duquesne independently of RIDC's efforts to gain maximum exposure of available commercial/industrial site opportunities and financial incentives.*

While it's critical for RIDC to effectively advertise its commercial/industrial sites to attract tenants and employment, Duquesne should also take the initiative to market itself independently of RIDC to ensure that all possible resources are used to promote business opportunities.

- Enhance City of Duquesne and Redevelopment Authority websites and include a section on commercial/industrial properties available at RIDC properties

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*It does not take much strength to do things, but it requires a great deal of strength to decide what to do.*

*Elbert Hubbard*

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- Enhance websites to better promote the numerous financial incentives for businesses available through the Redevelopment Authority:
  - Enterprise Zone low-interest loan and tax credit programs,
  - Technical assistance matching grants,
  - KOZ opportunities, and
  - Available job training programs, and
  - Any utility incentives, such as relatively low costs for City water.
- Enhance websites to promote the numerous DCED (newpa.com) funding programs available to businesses
- Cross-reference efforts/listings/website of commercial broker on City's/Authority's websites
- Meet regularly with local and state representatives to promote the cities and its available commercial/industrial site opportunities
- Attend local/state/national workshops/conferences/events to represent each city and market opportunities, advantages, and incentives

*Facilitate and incentivize the expansion of existing businesses.*

Concurrent with the effort to attract new businesses, the cities must not ignore existing businesses and the importance of retaining them, many of which have been in the region for decades. Each city should ensure that the needs of existing businesses are acknowledged and addressed if possible so they can remain viable, whether it's financial, promotional, or procedural assistance. In a similar fashion, the cities should support businesses that express interest in expanding their operation.

- Create database of all existing businesses
- Contact owners by email, phone, mail, or in-person
- Provide owners with marketing material outlining all financial incentives available to them
- Remain in contact with owners to promote and encourage use of incentives
- Work with owners to facilitate any regulatory processes (code, etc.) necessary for business expansion

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

*Duquesne's Key Focus Area around Grant Avenue is the community's traditional downtown or Main Street. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development used to run a Main Street Program that has recently been consolidated into the Keystone Communities Program.*

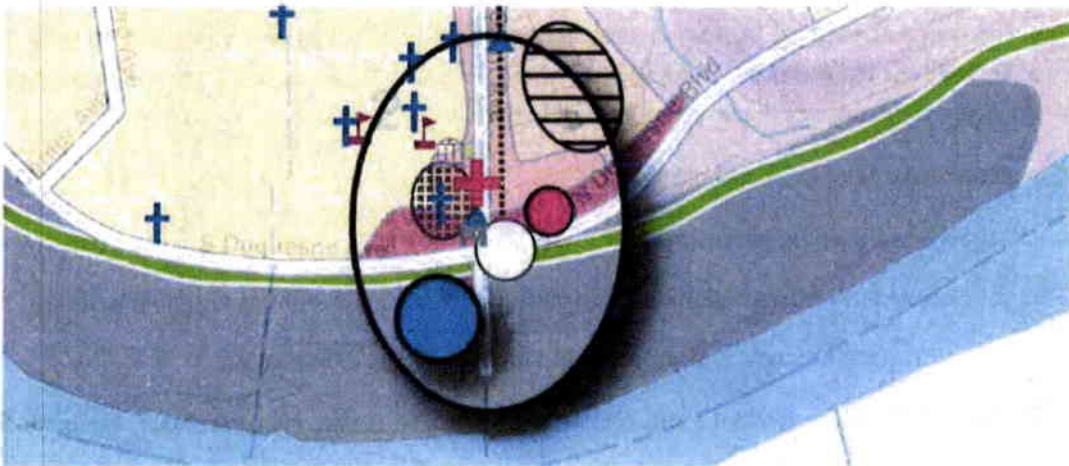
*The Keystone Communities Program provides grants to municipalities to help a community's downtown economic development effort through the establishment of a local organization dedicated to downtown revitalization and the management of downtown revitalization efforts by hiring a full-time professional downtown coordinator.*

*Funding uses include the following: Administrative Costs associated with Main Street Manager positions and offices; Physical improvements supported by downtown plan for Downtown Reinvestment Component; Acquisition costs and physical building improvements for Anchor Building component*

*Funding: Main Street: \$115,000 over a 5-year period; Downtown Reinvestment and Anchor Building components: up to \$250,000 or not to exceed 30% of project costs*

*Eligibility: Grants to municipalities to help a community's downtown economic development effort through the establishment of a local organization dedicated to downtown revitalization and the management of downtown revitalization efforts by hiring a full-time professional downtown coordinator*

*Allegheny County also has a Main Street program called Allegheny Together.*



*Investigate and reach out to prospective start-ups and growing businesses potentially seeking to locate in City Center Duquesne.*

Much of this strategy involves the City of Duquesne identifying business opportunities by being proactive through research and outreach to companies it desires to attract, and pursuing the opportunities through ongoing communication. This communication should involve face-to-face meetings. Through this communication, the City should promote any incentives it can offer to prospective businesses as well. To implement this strategy, the City should:

- Research and contact industrial companies appropriate for industrial/flex space in City Center Duquesne, including Marcellus Shale-related companies, craft brewing companies, data centers, call centers, additive manufacturing companies, and waste services and recycling companies
- Research and contact service businesses appropriate for office space in City Center Duquesne, including management, financial, health care services, and high tech businesses
- Establish relationships with and meet with company representatives to market Duquesne
- Inform businesses of all potential financial incentives available to them
- Seek out and consult with entrepreneurial/business development organizations (e.g. Duquesne University's Small Business Development Center in McKeesport) to help recruit businesses to Duquesne
- Use area universities as a resource for technical expertise, research, and promotion

*Step up efforts to strengthen Grant Avenue and Duquesne Plaza commercial space opportunities.*

One of Duquesne's best retail opportunities is Duquesne Plaza due to its location and visibility. Since investments have been made to the shopping center in recent years, retail space has become limited if not unavailable. However, developable land exists adjacent to the center, which would allow for expansion to include additional retailers. In addition, Grant Avenue, as the City's original commercial Main Street, contains many available commercial spaces in traditional storefronts. Understanding the retail and commercial market conditions, the City should strengthen its efforts to promote these commercial space opportunities to get them occupied. To implement this strategy, the City should:

- Enhance City of Duquesne and Redevelopment Authority of the City of Duquesne websites and include a section on available retail properties in the Plaza
- Cross-reference efforts/listings/website of commercial broker on City's/Authority's websites

- Research and contact retailers of desired categories to gauge interest in a potential location in Duquesne
- Research and contact area developers to gauge interest in developing commercial properties in Duquesne
- Establish relationships with and meet with company representatives to market Duquesne's commercial space opportunities
- Consider hiring a professional retail attraction consultant, particularly for Duquesne Plaza and its developable sites

*Create and promote a home improvement/contractor cluster along Second Avenue as a theme for downtown business district improvement.*

A small cluster of construction and remodeling companies has emerged on Second Avenue in Duquesne. The City should work to continue enhancing this niche by attracting new businesses of a similar trade (selling both construction-related services and products) and marketing the businesses to potential customers throughout the region. The niche would also lend itself well to creating a center for construction trades training. Such a facility could also house an incubator for emerging businesses as well as teach classes to the public and offer rentable space and equipment for construction/manufacturing use. A model facility, which is a nationwide chain called TechShop is located in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood. A tool lending library is another alternative or complimentary concept that could be paired with shared office space, a fax machine and other facilities that could help startups share costs. To implement this strategy, the City should:

- Research and contact area contractors to gauge interest in a potential location in Duquesne
- Coordinate with existing companies in Duquesne to identify their contacts in the trade
- Establish relationships with and meet with company representatives to market Duquesne's commercial space opportunities
- Promote the numerous financial incentives for businesses
- Consult with entrepreneurial/business development organizations (e.g. Duquesne University's Small Business Development Center in McKeesport) to help recruit businesses
- Pursue the development of a construction trade training center and/or incubator as a centerpiece of the business cluster with assistance from the above organizations

## *Urban Planning and Design Guidelines to Support the Key Focus Area*

The Main Street is a generator of city life, commercial and economic activity and a key public space. In addition to economic development planning and a mix of commercial and housing, the aesthetics and visual quality of the main street is crucial to any revitalization efforts. Grant Avenue provides the physical presence and cohesive architecture to develop such a revitalization effort.

Revitalization connected to historic themes and other city assets may help to jump start increased commercial investment along the main street corridor. The aesthetic decisions for the specific character of the main street are linked to historic and other themed city assets.

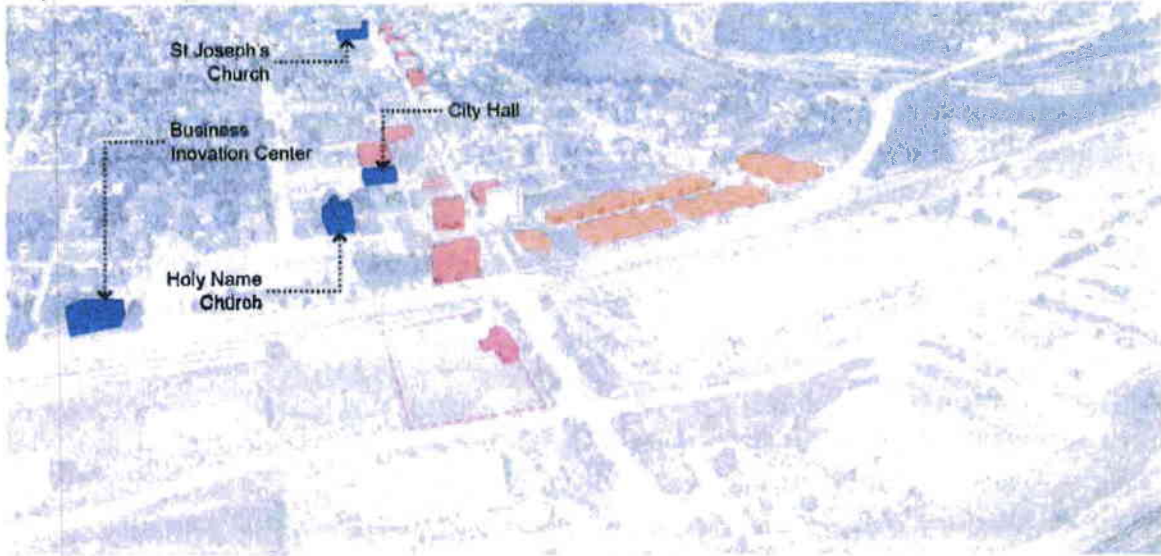
The Greater Allegheny Passage Bike Trail is an extensive trail system that has a pivotal point of intersection within the Duquesne Main Street Corridor. The intersection of Grant Avenue and Duquesne Boulevard (Highway 837) serves as a nexus between the downtown and the Duquesne RIDC site and the Allegheny Trail Crossing. Enhanced services along Grant Avenue may potentially capture this important pool of visitors traveling through the City along the 400-mile passage from Pittsburgh to the north and Cumberland, Maryland to the south.

*Duquesne RIDC/Key Focus Area Redevelopment Concept*





*Duquesne Building Form Guidelines*

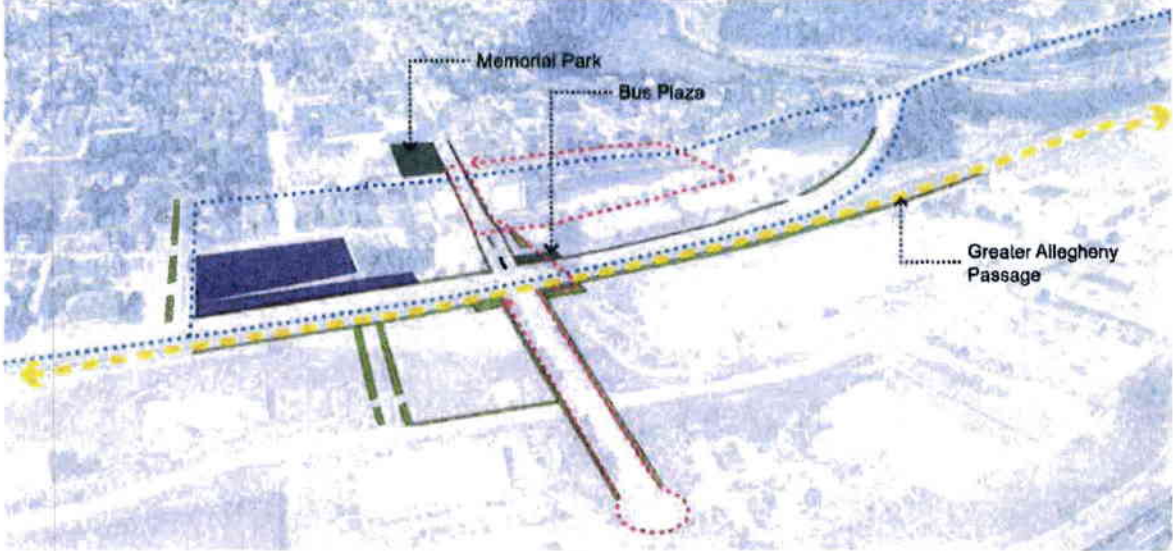


**Building Form Guidelines**

- Mixed-Use / Commercial Development
- Commercial Complex Development
- Potential Hospitality Development
- Landmark Building(s)



Duquesne Public Amenities Guidelines



**Public Amenities Guidelines**

- Existing Public Space
- Future Streetscape & Public Space
- Bike Trail
- Extended Bike Trail
- Existing Bus Routes
- Park & Ride



*Duquesne Urban Gateway Guidelines*

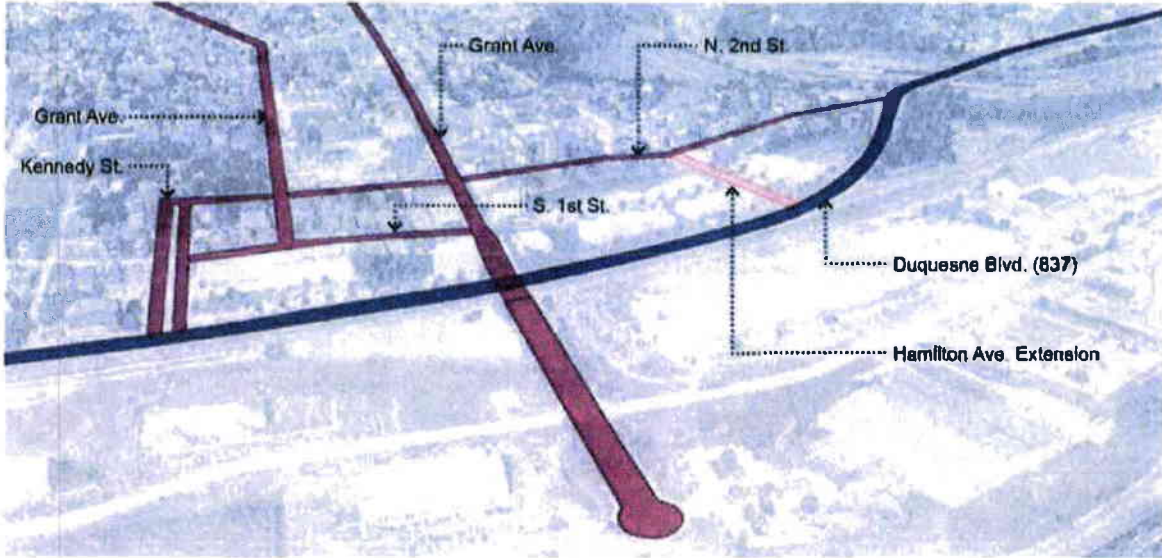


**Urban Gateway Guidelines**

- Duquesne Blvd. & N. 2nd St. Intersection Gateway
- Business District Gateway
- McKeesport - Duquesne Bridge Gateway



*Duquesne Street Corridor Guidelines*

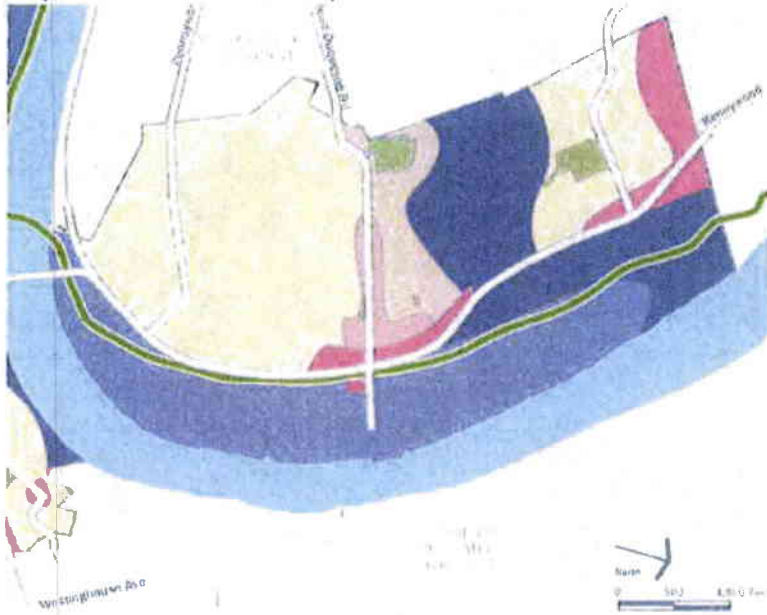


**Street Corridor Guidelines**

-  Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial Corridor
-  Vehicle-Oriented Commercial Corridor
-  Future Street Corridor



*Duquesne Future Land Use Map*



-  Primary Roadways
-  Great Allegheny Passage
-  Low/Medium Density Residential
-  Medium/High Density Residential
-  Highway/Large Scale Commercial
-  Neighborhood/Downtown Commercial
-  Live-Work District
-  General Industrial
-  Urban Industrial
-  Riverfront Amenity District
-  Civic Campus
-  Park/Active Recreation

## A Plan for Housing

Duquesne is a weak-market city with varied housing markets and conditions. The community exhibits multiple factors at play within it at the neighborhood level. As such, the individual neighborhoods reflect their particular set of assets and challenges. Collectively, however, they can be seen as forming a continuum of neighborhood dynamics from the strongest market-rate oriented neighborhoods with relatively high home values to weak neighborhoods with little housing demand and challengingly high vacancy rates and corresponding low home values.

In total, three types of neighborhoods (Stable, Threshold, Challenged) were identified in this undertaking with a set of recommendations for each typology. In this process, examples of real-world response strategies to address economic and community challenges that have been put in play both in the Pittsburgh market and from elsewhere across the country. While this plan's responsibility is not to



### **Housing Goal**

*Implement coordinated steps to stabilize and support neighborhoods, encourage reinvestment and promote a wide variety of equitable housing options.*

drill into each particular neighborhood and assess its status in terms of typological fit, examples are provided of each typology.

As noted by the Center for Community Progress and others, "there is often a close relationship between the strength of a neighborhood's housing market and many other factors, including tax delinquency, the vacancy rate, the homeownership rate, the level of homeowner investment in their properties and the volume of new construction." The typology profiles featured here seek to account for this interrelationship and the strategies that should be deployed in each situation to maximize economic and community potential, both short term and long term.

#### *Stable Neighborhoods*

Stable Neighborhoods are those where a healthy private sector housing market is operating. Home prices are appropriately average for the region and supply and demand are in relative balance. Homebuyers are predominantly middle income, vacancy is nominal, and rental properties are a small portion of the market. Most properties and yards are well maintained and few vacant lots exist. While higher priced neighborhoods exist, in the context of Duquesne, this type of neighborhood is the goal.

#### *Challenged Neighborhoods*

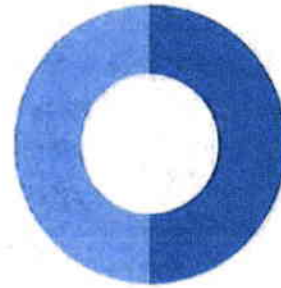
Challenged Neighborhoods are the most economically and socially challenged. Low housing values lead to high levels of abandonment, vacancy and absentee landlords. Homeownership rates are substantially below the regional market. The Center for Community Progress notes that in most cities the great majority of problem properties are privately owned investor properties, most often by owners who do not live in the property. Collectively, physical conditions of the homes in Challenged Neighborhoods are poor and most show evidence of disinvestment. Supply of homes substantially exceeds demand, and vacant lots abound in clusters. The area between Thompson's Run and Grant Avenue in Duquesne would be classified as a Challenged Neighborhood. The challenged neighborhood focus area is identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map on page 88.

Because the different neighborhood types exhibit different market forces and a different type physical supply (e.g.: the type or condition of housing units or the prevalence of vacant land), the strategic response to either maintain, revitalize, or mitigate the conditions within the targeted neighborhood differs. While code enforcement and promotional efforts may be sufficient in Stable Neighborhoods, demolition is a standard tool in Challenged Neighborhoods.

### *Threshold Neighborhoods*

Home prices in Threshold Neighborhoods are lower than in Stable Neighborhoods and the private housing market is considerably weaker. Supply of homes exceeds the demand for homes, and purely market rate new construction is rare in such areas. Tax credit developments or other financial subsidies deployed by specialized developers or nonprofits comprise the majority of any new housing developments or rehabilitation projects. While some homes are well maintained, a number show evidence of disinvestment, and rental properties abound. Absentee landlords acquire property willingly in these areas, as the return on investment (or often, the lack of investment) is attractive to such owners. Abandoned properties are sprinkled throughout the area and clusters of abandonment and vacant lots may begin to emerge. Vacant lots are rarely used for new development, and are often unkempt. In Duquesne, the far northern section of the city between Commonwealth Avenue and Hoffman Boulevard is the most robust housing market, but would still be categorized as a Threshold Neighborhood in this context. The threshold neighborhood focus area is identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map on page 88.

Data on vacant and blighted properties was sourced from the Financial Impact of Blight on the Tri-COG (Steel Valley Council of Governments, the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments, and the Twin Rivers Council of Governments) report. Data associated with this report can be found on the Vacant and Blighted Lands Map on page 179



*Approximately half of all housing units (55% in Duquesne and 46% in McKeesport) are not owner-occupied and half the population resides in these units.*

*In comparison with Allegheny County, Duquesne and McKeesport's home ownership rate is significantly lower (54% versus 65% in 2010).*



## Stable Neighborhoods

Currently, this key housing market component is missing in Duquesne, but with careful nurturing over time, there is potential to reestablish it, especially north of Commonwealth Avenue. As this housing market is reestablished in Duquesne, efforts should be made to support it.

- Solidify and strengthen the market rate housing sector in stable neighborhoods to achieve increased potential home values and expand interest in owner-occupied housing. Gain a greater depth of understanding of existing residents and their reasons for moving to and staying in the communities. This information will guide further efforts to encourage new residents to join the market. Consider undertaking surveys of new and former residents.
- The market rate housing neighborhoods are, not unexpectedly, those with the highest quality housing in good condition. Maintaining the condition of this housing requires continued code enforcement efforts to ensure private property owners preserve their property as well as their neighbors' home values.
- Creating a competitive environment can serve a housing market well by "upping the ante" of prospective developers to put their best proposal forward for consideration. Using the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for publicly held sites in a manner that evaluates best project fit, not just highest bid, has proven successful for many communities. A proactive approach to connect with successful local developers, such as that used by Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority, often yields positive results for neighborhood-scale projects.
  - Duquesne may consider this option for the parking lot of the Commonwealth Avenue site of the athletic fields of the former high school. This process would determine if there is a sufficient demand for market rate or mixed income housing development of the site.
- Consider uses beyond single family housing that will reinforce stability (corner stores or community centers, for example)



*Ensure that maintenance levels are maintained in rental units*

Healthy communities need a balance of housing types and choices, including apartments and other rentals. They key to rentals is proper maintenance (for example, through code enforcement).

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **NEW RESIDENT AND FORMER RESIDENT SURVEYS**

*Both the Lawrenceville Corporation and the Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation have conducted in-depth surveys of new residents in recent years to greater understand their market demand, housing types needed, and gaps in development that should be served.*

Further, the Lawrenceville Corporation also surveyed former residents to gain a greater understanding of why they chose to leave the community. The ability to understand and respond to former resident issues may highlight pending community concerns while they are still nascent and relatively manageable, rather than waiting until the issues become severe or costly to address.

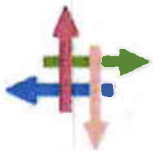


*Pittsburgh's Lawrenceville neighborhood. [Pittsburghskyline.com](http://Pittsburghskyline.com)*

## Threshold Neighborhoods

Threshold Neighborhoods come in many different stages and situations. Some are more comparable to Stable Neighborhoods, such as the northern end of Duquesne to those more akin to the Challenged Neighborhoods such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward in Duquesne. While there is a wide variety of Threshold Neighborhoods, the reality is that the strategies for addressing the issues are the same. The severity of the situation results in deploying a variety of the techniques featured below, rather than only a limited array of them.

In addition to the range of neighborhoods under the Threshold Neighborhood banner, the strategies for consideration also depend upon the intent of the effort.



*Preserve existing homeownership in threshold neighborhoods*

Working to maintain existing homeowners in a Threshold Neighborhood is one of the highest priorities. It is clearly substantially easier to affirm a prior investment into a homeownership choice than it is to persuade potential candidates to consider the neighborhood in question. Further, much research has shown that homeownership creates a more stable community than one primarily focused on the rental market. As a result, this market segment is highly desirable to maintain.

- To enhance the quality of the housing stock, existing rehabilitation and repair programs and financial assistance should be marketed to current residents. Programs such as these both strengthen the physical housing stock as well as strengthen the emotional connection that homeowners have with their own property, thereby increasing the likelihood of further investments as well as lessening the desire to relocate. While a great variety of such programs exist, the list below features some particularly relevant to these communities.
- Improving the physical and aesthetic environment is important for area homeowners. Curb appeal strategies matter to those who reside in the communities on a daily basis.
  - In one Detroit neighborhood, a local nonprofit organization organized a landscaping contest of area homeowners. Discounts on flowers at the nearby nursery were made available and a panel of local residents was established for the end of year review. The contest enhanced the sense of belonging by the residents as well as beautified the neighborhood.

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*Celebrate any  
progress. Don't  
wait to get  
perfect.*

*Ann McGee Cooper*

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## CASE IN POINT

### ASSISTING RESIDENTS WITH REPAIRS AND UPGRADES

*Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, in cooperation with the Wilkesburg Community Development Corporation, provides regular technical assistance sessions for how to maintain, rehabilitate, and invest in your home. The sessions are free, and are held monthly in the Housing Resource Center in Wilkesburg. The Design Center of Pittsburgh provides low cost consultations with licensed architects and landscape architects to area homeowners. More than 2,000 consultations have facilitated an estimated \$9.5 million in homeowner projects.*

*State Representative Erin Molchany and Pittsburgh City Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak (District 4) organized and conducted a Housing Renovation Fair in April 2014 featuring local assistance organizations and the programs they offer to area residents. The session featured opportunities to learn about best practices and available resources for home renovation projects.*

*The Duquesne Business Advisory Corporation has sponsored two programs for local homeowners to preserve and improve the local housing stock. Up to \$250 in paint and painting supplies are made available to homeowners eligible for the program, though income is not a criteria. Uniquely, the program has involved a partnership with Schink's Hardware on Grant Avenue that occasionally advances the cost of the paint and materials. Reimbursement for the paint and materials is then made directly to the hardware store and the homeowner, allowing for the work to proceed with no money out of pocket by the homeowner. A similar program provides up to \$500 in matching grants for homeowners in need of sidewalk repairs. These low cost programs provide a benefit to the entire community by maintaining and enhancing the public realm of the community.*

*Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh repairs and renovates the homes of low-income, elderly homeowners, military veterans, and individuals with permanent physical disabilities. With support from local communities and corporate sponsors, Rebuilding targets "Impact Neighborhoods" for multiple properties in a concentrated area to stabilize entire neighborhoods. Currently, the organization is working with the Hazelwood neighborhood in Pittsburgh, where sixty homes have been repaired in three years. Additionally, about ten percent of Rebuilding's work in Allegheny County occurs outside of the targeted neighborhoods.*

*Leveraging the Community Development Block Grant program, the state of Wisconsin has not only used the CDBG funds for income eligible residents for home loans, but has also created a revolving loan fund (RLF) from funds repaid to the state for the program. The RLF funds have fewer restrictions on income and are then available to both homeowners and landlords (in exchange for an agreement to rent to eligible income households). Loans are due in full when the property is sold or when the home ceases to be the homeowner's primary residence. Under the CDBG housing RLF, homeowners in owner-occupied dwellings and homebuyers receive 0% interest loans that are either deferred or feature low monthly payments. Rental rehabilitation loans are 0% to 3% monthly installment loans. CDBG housing funds can only be used for CDBG eligible activities. Allegheny County also has a CDBG program.*

- As was noted in the Stable Neighborhood strategies, learning more about how and why existing homeowners and renters made their choice to locate in the area is valuable to garnering a greater understanding of the market potential and how to maximize that potential. This may be even truer for the more fragile nature of a Threshold Neighborhood. Surveying these homeowners to understand why they originally selected this area and if they would do so again will help guide the appropriate strategy development and selection to retain them in the area. The University of Pittsburgh's University Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR) has developed an outreach strategy to gather this information from both long time and new homeowners in an area. Lawrenceville Corporation partnered with UCSUR in their homeownership research efforts.
- Focus on strategic code enforcement. As in any area, code enforcement is crucial to maintaining, stabilizing, and improving the neighborhood conditions. While significant in Stable Neighborhoods to prevent decline, and overwhelming in Challenged Neighborhoods, the fragile state and transitional nature of Threshold Neighborhoods makes them the most significant areas to focus limited resources in the ongoing code enforcement effort. According to HUD, "targeted code enforcement and vacant property registration requirements can motivate absentee owners to maintain properties and prevent decline" in a community (PD&R *Edge* online magazine, May, 2014).
- Keeping homeowners in homes is particularly challenging in Threshold Neighborhoods. By definition, these areas are those with more fragile neighborhood economies, and the financial challenges of residents may have negative spillover effects if left unchecked.

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **STRATEGIC CODE ENFORCEMENT**

*Mt. Washington's Housing strategy calls for the establishment of Community Zones monitored by local residents to alert municipal staff when enforcement efforts are needed in an area.*

*The Pennsylvania Neighborhood Blight Reclamation & Revitalization Act allows, in certain cases, a lien to be placed against the personal assets of an owner of a blighted real property, denial of permits for other properties under the same ownership entity, the extradition of out-of-state landlords and the establishment of blight courts. These strategies are significantly more impactful than placing a lien on an abandoned, vacant property.*

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **HELP RESIDENTS KEEP THEIR HOMES**

*In the Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh, abandonment and blight are being confronted by Operation Better Block and its partner organizations. The neighborhood group is canvassing door to door to meet with homeowners and assess their foreclosure risk. The program features a series of services that are crucial to maintaining homeownership in the community, and for which homeowners rarely understand where to turn for services. Included in the program are:*

*Foreclosure counseling and assistance. Financial guidance is provided through a partnership with NeighborWorks of Western Pennsylvania to prevent bank foreclosure when homeowners are in financial difficulty or get behind on mortgage payments.*

*A program to initiate tax payment plans for back taxes. Without direct outreach, many of these homes would accrue significant liens and further financial challenges. Operation Better Block has established a close working relationship with Jordan Tax Services as a result, to the mutual benefit of homeowners and the community at large.*

*Access to tangled title legal services of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation Wills Project. In Threshold Neighborhoods, the existence of foreclosure and tax liens against properties diminishes their market value and negatively impacts the housing market. Working with the Tangled Title program overcomes these issues to clear cloudy title situations.*

*Operation Better Block and the Wills Project also provide referrals to estate planning services for area residents. The intent of these referrals is to prevent the cloudy title situations from occurring that are often later addressed in the Tangled Title programs.*

*Allegheny County's Homeowner Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP) assists clients in applying to the PA Housing Finance Agency for emergency financial assistance to cease foreclosure actions.*

*The Allegheny County Home Improvement Loan Program can be utilized by residents to correct code violations and undertake lead-hazard remediation activities. Remaining loan proceeds can be used for energy improvements and general property improvements.*

- Especially true for homeowners in Threshold Neighborhoods, purchasing a home is typically the largest investment an individual makes. The financial stability of this purchase is impacted by the economic conditions of the Threshold Neighborhoods. One strategy that has proven successful in mitigating this risk is the creation of Home Equity Protection programs. Home Equity programs allow homeowners in designated target areas to buy insurance that ensures that they can get the value of their home back on resale, even if the market value of properties in their area declines during their ownership. There are a great many parameters to establishing such a program (including length of ownership, ratio of home value ensured upon sale, etc.), but they have proven successful in other markets to date. Typically homeowners pay a nominal fee (\$100-\$500) to enroll in the program to pay for an appraisal and for a contribution into the overall fund to pay out any losses in value.
- Ensuring that zoning ordinances continue to advance single family occupancy is important to the stability of the community in the long term.

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **PROTECT HOME VALUES**

*The Syracuse Home Equity Protection program was co-developed by faculty at Yale and Neighborhood Works, with guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Home Headquarters Inc., a local nonprofit administers the program. The program is reported to have had a near instant impact in stabilizing market prices, which had been falling for nearly a decade previously. Claims against the program for payouts have been rare in both Syracuse and in similar programs in Chicago.*

### *Expand homeownership opportunities in threshold neighborhoods*

While maintaining homeownership is important to the short term stability of the community, expanding and growing homeownership in is a key strategy for long term vitality.

- Developing a marketing and outreach strategy for prospective homeowners in is an important element in expanding the potential housing market for interested parties. Target markets would include the large employment base available at both the City Center of Duquesne. Typically, people who take a new job in such a site are unlikely to learn about nearby housing opportunities from their coworkers. Marketing and promotional activities that might be carried out by the city, a local nonprofit or neighborhood association are another way to increase the demand for the area's housing stock. Getting accurate local information to people who lack it or providing more accurate information to people who may be excluding the cities from their search because of stereotypes or erroneous information may put the areas "on the map" for prospective new purchasers.

- Outreach through local churches may also reach potential homeowners that would not otherwise be possible. Research shows that at many suburban churches, congregants are not local, but actually drive an average of twenty minutes to their destination.
- One well established method of both solidifying neighborhoods and increasing homeownership in an area is through Employer Assisted Housing programs. In such programs, participants are provided a range of technical assistance, financial training, and potentially down payment assistance in the purchase of a home in an eligible area. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has Employer Assisted Housing program guidelines and works with both communities and employers to establish such programs.
  - These programs have been successful in a variety of settings, including at Johns Hopkins University, Howard University, and with Marriott Corporation. Large employers such as those at RIDC parks, municipal entities, school districts, or possibly UPMC could serve as key actors in establishing a program.
- As noted previously, the purchase of a home is typically the largest financial expenditure that any family undertakes. Despite the sizable investment, and one that often comes with a thirty year mortgage attached, research shows that homebuyers do not have sufficient financial understanding and training to fully comprehend all the issues or to maximize their fiscal situation. Homebuyer assistance programs and financial/credit counseling are key elements to making long term homeownership prosper in a distressed community.
  - Assist individuals in becoming credit ready for home ownership.

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **OUTREACH THROUGH CHURCHES**

*At a recent service at St. Augustine/St. Monica Catholic Church in Detroit, parishioners were informed of nearby housing opportunities and open houses immediately after the service. When parishioners visited the homes after the service, they were greeted by the Mayor of the City of Detroit to encourage their interest.*

*The congregation of Macedonia Baptist Church in Duquesne, for example, could fit this profile and could prove a source of prospective homeowners for the area.*

*In the Pittsburgh region, a program at Carnegie Mellon University is launching the Wilksburg Vacant Home Tour in 2015. Designed to reframe the blight conversation, the self-guided tour will showcase abandoned or vacant properties, and lead tour participants on a journey back in time through the narratives of these homes and buildings. Most importantly, tour participants will be provided with a "tour kit" that will offer the tools to help visualize what the house once looked like in full vibrancy, and information on resources available to aid participants in more actively engaging these homes and buildings. The tour will be partnered with a resource workshop for those interested in learning more and will include a look at "next steps," the process, available tools, and the risks, challenges and rewards of such an endeavor.*



- Locally, both Dollar Bank and Neighbor Works Western Pennsylvania are well recognized for their home buyer counseling programs and may be able to provide assistance in this arena. Oftentimes, the counseling element is supplemented by financial down payment assistance for completing the program.
- It is particularly important that the program continue for at least one year beyond the original purchase of the home to maximize effectiveness.
- Many existing homes are in substandard condition, but remain as potential assets to the community. Developing or sponsoring a Rehab and Resale program for these properties is one method that potentially corrects both the weakness in the housing stock as well as expands homeownership in the community. These programs are typically targeted to where homeownership rates are low and foreclosure rates are high. Without such programs, undesirable investors are more apt to target these neighborhoods, thereby exacerbating a number of adverse conditions in the community. Advocating for the creation or expansion of such programs may require the expansion of technical capacity of local community development organizations.

- Both Mt. Washington Community Development Corporation and East Liberty Development Incorporated in Pittsburgh operate such programs. Mt. Washington CDC recently sold a property on Eureka Street for \$139,000, nearly double the previous high

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **ABSENTEE LANDLORDS**

*The Center for Community Progress notes that in most cities the great majority of problem properties are privately owned investor properties, most often by owners who do not live in the property. Strategies for dealing with these types of investor-owned properties or absentee landlords include the following:*

- *Strategic code enforcement: maximizing code enforcement capacity, targeting resources, working with property owners*
- *Working with rental landlords and investors: rental registration and licensing, tracking property owners, establishing and maintaining property standards, finding and targeting "bad apples"*
- *Dealing with vacant property owners: vacant property registration ordinances, motivating owners to reuse properties, vacant property receivership*

home value on the street. The organization had acquired the property for only \$21,500 and invested approximately \$100,000 before selling to a new homeowner.

- One source of subject properties for the Rehab for Resale program is to work with financial institutions to acquire problem properties before they hit the open market. Each of the major local and national financial institutions offers Real Estate Owned (REO) properties to nonprofits or partner agencies for consideration before considering a sale to the general public.
- While taking a direct role or sponsoring a nonprofit organization to undertake a Rehab for Resale program is effective, ideally the private sector market is an active partner. In some areas of Pittsburgh, local community organizations directly work with private investors to select and partner on rehabilitation projects that are directed and led by friendly private developers whom have a track record of success and community support. Encouraging successful local investors may preclude less desirable absentee landlords from becoming prevalent in the market.
- To expand housing opportunities and, new development by private and nonprofit developers presents an opportunity. Similar projects have taken place in the past or are taking place currently (Orchard Park redevelopment project in Duquesne)
  - Typically these projects are conducted by private or nonprofit developers that specialize in tax credit supported projects. Such developers include TREK Development Group, Ralph A. Falbo, Inc. and ACTION-Housing.
  - Conducting outreach to these groups and providing “FAM Tours” or familiarization tours with similar developers has the potential to expand the market interest in the communities.
  - Developers are more readily engaged when available sites are presented as part of a package of strategic investment. This may be an individual site or a series of residential lots packaged as part of a scattered site strategy.
  - Similarly, when a particular site is well suited to redevelopment, conducting a Request for Proposals (RFP) process may generate additional interest from high quality developers. Locations such as the parking lot of the former athletic fields in Duquesne along Commonwealth Avenue may be particularly well suited to this approach.

- Coordinated housing efforts. The scope and scale of the challenge is daunting. It is recommended that all organizations come together under the Redevelopment Authority to select a priority neighborhood upon which to focus all related housing efforts for designated period. The neighborhood selected should exhibit market potential, while still having a demonstrated need for action. Partner agencies may include:
  - ACTION Housing
  - Habitat for Humanity
- Similarly, when a particular site is well-suited to redevelopment, conducting a Request for Proposals (RFP) process may generate additional interest from high-quality developers. Locations such as the former athletic fields' parking lot in Duquesne along Commonwealth Avenue may be particularly well-suited to this approach. This process may be particularly successful if the Redevelopment Authority first engaged a market study to demonstrate the viability of the site and prospective project.

These efforts should be coordinated with the City of Duquesne's housing demolition program for full effectiveness.

### *Address the rental market in threshold neighborhoods*

Balancing housing types and choices is important in Duquesne. With 55% of the total population living in renter-occupied housing units, the rental market is an important consideration.

- An important key in the rental market is proper maintenance. In recent years, a number of new strategies for working with this segment of the housing market have been developed in Pennsylvania.
  - The Pennsylvania Neighborhood Blight Reclamation & Revitalization Act allows, in certain cases, a lien to be placed against the *personal* assets of an owner of a blighted real property, denial of permits for other properties under the same ownership entity, the extradition of out-of-state landlords and the establishment of blight courts. These strategies are significantly more impactful than placing a lien on an abandoned, vacant property.
  - The Pennsylvania Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act (2009) provides a mechanism to transform abandoned and blighted buildings into productive reuse by transferring control of the property to a third party. If the owner of a residential, commercial or industrial building fails to maintain the property the court may appoint a conservator to make the necessary improvements before the building deteriorates further to protect the well-being of the public interest of the community at large. Many different interested parties, including non-profits and adjacent homeowners

and businesses, can petition the Court to establish a Conservatorship of a problem property.

Rental registration systems are often cited as crucial elements in a housing strategy. However, Duquesne has an existing strategy for addressing the rental market that is working well. Duquesne requires an occupancy permit and inspection every time a new resident moves into a building. Because Duquesne has maintained its own water department (the City of Duquesne Water Department), the city requires an occupancy permit for new water service. This series of checks and balances has helped to ensure that all housing units are being inspected when a new resident moves in. The city has relationships with larger apartment owners to schedule inspections and the system is working well. Duquesne's situation is unique due to its small size and the fact that it has not transitioned to a multi-municipal water authority.

- While the above strategies are focused on enforcement, balanced programs also offer the “carrot” or an incentive for landlords to be productive community stakeholders. Good landlord programs or incentives have been developed in a number of markets to encourage pro-active support and coordination with public interests. The Center for Community Progress has noted the following incentive programs for rental housing situations.
  - One way some cities balance the rental registration program is by reducing or rebating fees to landlords who participate in good landlord or similar programs. The Utah Good Landlord Program offers a significant financial incentive in the form of a waiver of almost all of the Disproportionate Impact Fee. The criteria for participation in the program are set forth in the state law, which require landlords to follow anti-crime provisions and comply with applicable housing codes.
  - The city of Milwaukee offers a free training program to landlords that concentrate on how to be a “proactive property manager” including code compliance, applicant screening and how to recognize and deal with drug and other illegal activity. The program is five hours long, and at the end participants receive a free 100 page manual with useful information about the legal and business issues associated with managing rental property.
  - The Crime Free Rental Housing Program, was developed in Mesa, Arizona in 1992, and is now actively promoted by the International Crime Free Association to its members.
- Additional strategies can be used to support residents living in rentals.
  - The Allegheny County Accessibility Program is a program that makes accessibility modifications for both homeowners and renters to their homes to address the needs caused by permanent physical disabilities. Allegheny County residents who meet qualifying criteria can apply for improvements such as exterior ramps, interior and exterior lifts, doorway widening, bathroom modifications and more.

- The Weatherization Assistance program is a federally-funded program that provides income-eligible homeowners and renters free weatherization services. The improvements result in enhanced energy efficiency, reduced heating and electric bills, and make the home more comfortable.
- Duquesne has a strong rental market with only 45% of the housing units owner-occupied. About 40% of renters are paying less than 35% of their household income in rent. About 48% of renters are paying more than 35% of their household income in rent. Although rent in Duquesne is relatively inexpensive (only 3% of renter-occupied housing units have rent over \$1,000 per month), there may be unmet need for affordable housing.
  - Working to encourage new tax credit rental developments could help to address this need. Under this system, selected private tax credit developers coordinate their efforts with local philanthropic sources to leverage their work as catalytic change agents.
    - One current project in Brownsville, PA is projected to cost \$8 million, with significant financing achieved through low income housing tax credits. Local foundations have pledged an additional \$4 million in community support if the developer is successful with the tax credit application and proceeds with the project.

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS**

*Revitalizing the housing market in Challenged and Threshold neighborhoods is often accomplished by working to build the market value of housing opportunities to close the value gap with higher value Stable neighborhoods. Oftentimes, this is done through some form of private, though subsidized, housing development activity. The largest form of this development process is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).*

*In Challenged and Threshold neighborhoods, where properties may not be appreciating rapidly or may even be losing value, the investment into affordable tax credit housing is often the first new housing in the area in decades. The tax credits provide sufficient investment return to support a project that would otherwise not be financially feasible.*

*Specialized, private, for profit, housing developers often are experts in this particular housing finance mechanism. Locally, such firms include Trek Development Group, Ralph A. Falbo, Inc. (currently developing Orchard Park in Duquesne), a.m. Rodriguez Associates and others. (Many nonprofit housing developers such as ACTION-Housing also specialize in this market as well, as their work in McKeesport demonstrates.) Approximately 70% of all affordable tax credit housing is developed by for profit developers. The tax credits are competitive and overseen by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, thus forcing the developers to "up their game" to beat their competitors and secure the allocation of support. The competitive process thereby benefits Challenged and Threshold neighborhoods likely to be home to such developments.*

*Significant research over the years (see Lan Deng, 2011 and Smith and Williamson, 2008 among others) has demonstrated that neighborhoods with new affordable housing development are impacted more positively than otherwise comparable neighborhoods. Poor minority neighborhoods are among those that benefit most, especially when strategically located and complemented by related revitalization efforts.*

*Properly situated and balanced, affordable housing tools such as tax credits catalyze additional investment into the community and lead to increased home values. Closing the value gap with Stable neighborhoods results, allowing some communities to fully make the transition into Stable neighborhoods.*

### *Take a comprehensive approach to mitigating vacancy in buildings and land in threshold neighborhoods*

Vacant property and vacant lots are indicators of the economic challenges in Threshold Neighborhoods. While selective demolition may be appropriate for some of these structures, many others can be addressed using other strategies. (See the next section, Considerations in Demolition, for greater analysis and detail in this approach.)

- The Center for Community Progress offers a Vacant Property Registration Ordinance template for municipalities to refer to in the development of their own ordinance. It identifies three purposes to the ordinance:
  - To ensure that owners of vacant properties are known to the city and other interested parties and can be reached if necessary;
  - To ensure that owners of vacant properties are aware of the obligations of ownership under relevant codes and regulations; and
  - To ensure that owners meet minimum standards of maintenance of vacant properties.
  - In addition, the fee structure established in the ordinance may serve additional purposes, including covering costs incurred by the municipality to deal with vacant properties, and under some circumstances, motivating owners to restore and reuse vacant properties.
- As noted in the Considerations for Demolition section, one alternative to demolition is to board and secure (“mothball”) vacant properties for future redevelopment interest. As Threshold Neighborhoods are already indicative of weak market demand for housing in these areas, there is little likelihood of vacant land being productively reused for new housing opportunities in the near future. As such, municipalities should evaluate the future land use of the site as part of the analysis before choosing to proceed with demolition.
  - Some communities have found that artistic and aesthetically pleasing boarding strategies are more accepted by the community at large and have fewer negative perceptions than they might otherwise. The Hill District of Pittsburgh features buildings that have been boarded and secured, but feature vibrant flower patterns on the boards or window themes on the window boards, helping to reinforce a bit of the sense of place that would be activated if the home were occupied.
- While vacant structures are one aspect to the problem in Threshold Neighborhoods, lots where structures once stood are also a significant element of the challenge. Many, if not the majority, of vacant parcels that are negative factors in the community dynamic are a result of the demolition of the blighting property that preceded it on that site.

- Cleveland and Sandusky, Ohio both feature “mow to own” programs that provides credit to neighbors who mow and maintain vacant lots to be applied to the purchase price of the land. While the purchase price is nominal, the intent is to ensure that the lots will be maintained upon transfer. Initiating the transfer for \$1, as some municipalities do, may not ensure the continued maintenance of the lot into the future. Working through the sweat equity program is thought to enhance the likelihood of future maintenance.
- In the Mt. Washington neighborhood of Pittsburgh, individual vacant lots were included in the establishment and expansion of what has become Emerald View Park. Lots adjacent to the park were included in the overall park master planning process, conveying them from unloved community eyesores to part of the maintenance and trail development strategy of the park program.
- Student Conservation Association works with local community youth on greenspace and vacant land strategies while teaching conservation and building employable skills.
- The City of Pittsburgh features the Love Your Block program provides \$2,000 in funding to community residents and organizations tackling public place enhancements. Frequently, the program supports area residents in their efforts to beautify vacant lots with planters, community gardens, and public art.

## Challenged Neighborhoods

Demolition is the primary tool of stabilization in Challenged Neighborhoods. The aim is to get things under control in these neighborhoods, oftentimes while using the strategies of Threshold Neighborhoods in concert with these efforts. At the same time, demolition approaches, especially those conducted in either Stable or Threshold Neighborhoods can be too aggressive and may need to consider other factors at play.

*Establish a formal, written demolition strategy for use in challenged neighborhoods.*

With a limited ability to keep pace, establishment of a formal, written, demolition strategy is key. The strategy should evaluate when it is best to demolish a structure versus when an alternative strategy such as boarding and mothballing the structure may be a more cost effective solution that facilitates redevelopment activity in the future.



While the final strategy should be refined and customized, the factors highlighted below could serve as a baseline for consideration. Develop an appropriate "score sheet" of these and other factors to assess the need for demolition of any particular structure.

- Is the building historically, architecturally, or culturally significant?
  - St. Louis, Missouri has proposed a vacant building "mothball" fund to preserve solid stock as it awaits future redevelopment. Targeted to architecturally significant properties or those in historic districts, the program would split funding with the demolition budget under a new fee structure as proposed.
- Is the building a current safety hazard, a threat to public health, safety and welfare, or structurally dangerous, or is it just unoccupied?
  - Public safety is one of the primary functions of municipal government, and burned out shells should be demolished expeditiously, in whatever neighborhood they occupy.
  - Vacancy, even long term vacancy, does not necessitate demolition, however. A recent study of the Hill District of Pittsburgh noted 373 vacant buildings. Yet, the same study indicated that only 80 (21%) of these required demolition. The balance was recommended for mothballing, or further analysis of redevelopment potential. Recently, new funding was approved in the Tax Increment Financing district accompanying the redevelopment of the former Mellon Arena site that would mothball and preserve these vacant units as far away as the Upper Hill District so that the private market can "catch up" to these units, and ensure that they will not be lost to the neighborhood fabric in the interim.
- Is the building open to trespass? Can this situation be resolved through boarding of vacant structures rather than demolition?
  - Focus: HOPE in Detroit, Michigan uses community volunteers and funding from insurance company programs and foundations to board and secure vacant property.
- Type of construction (masonry versus frame):
  - Masonry structures are more durable to vacancy over time and should be boarded for preservation rather than demolished if possible.
- Is the building adjacent to other occupied property?
  - Generally speaking, other than immediate safety hazards being prevalent, demolition should proceed rarely when otherwise occupied property is prevalent. Creating a "missing tooth" impact in weak market communities does not solve the problem. Rather it encourages additional abandonment and vacancy as the neighborhood takes on the pall of blight.

- In this analysis, it is therefore preferable to demolish a unit on the end of the block, rather than in the middle of an otherwise occupied block of homes.
- Conversely to above, it is also true that demolition of particular problem properties could enhance the value of adjacent homes, particularly the removal of severely structurally compromised property or the demolition of obsolete alley houses.
- Is the area one of a high concentration of homeownership?
  - Some practitioners have found that excessive demolition negatively impacts the homeownership rates in a community. Vacant structures in areas of high homeownership should be evaluated carefully before proceeding with demolition.
  - One study in Detroit, Michigan, found that 8 of every 10 properties sold in tax sales reverted for back taxes again within five years, further exacerbating the situation prior to the establishment of the Detroit Land Bank.
  - The Center for Community Progress has established national best practices for land banking strategies for communities large and small.
- The Local Government Academy has developed a training series for local officials reflecting best practices and new tools recently enacted in Pennsylvania under the “New Tools in the Fight Against Blight” sessions.
  - Likewise, the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania has recently published the “Fight Blight Brightly” handbook of tools, techniques, and strategies.



*According to the Historic and Cultural Plan in AlleghenyPlaces, two key challenges to preserving community history and character are misperceptions about rehabilitation of historic structures, and lack of understanding about the economic value of historic properties. The AlleghenyPlaces Housing element recommends that municipalities inventory properties/structures that are vacant or abandoned and note their condition. Structures that are significant in some way and can still be saved should not be the top priorities for demolition.*

## A Plan for Government, Outreach, Services, Infrastructure and Energy

Providing residents and businesses with high quality services while maintaining fiscal responsibility is an important focus. Balancing investments of time and resources as part of delivering improvements and programs to the public are of utmost importance to the administration's everyday roles and responsibilities now and in the decade to come.

Leaders and staff are interested in and committed to advancing the effectiveness of services delivered.



### **Government, Outreach, Services, Infrastructure and Energy Goal**

*Take a long-term and big-picture view on all  
city decisions*

## Outreach

Outreach efforts are aimed at reach an audience outside the city as well as internal audiences.



*Enhance general marketing efforts to show Duquesne in an improved light.*

Often distressed communities are known by the outside world only for the negative aspects such as crime, poverty, and abandonment. This is usually the case because local media outlets only feature news of the community when it's bad. However, despite experiencing some of these unfortunate conditions, in reality Duquesne is making strides toward revitalization. Develop a marketing campaign and approach the city as a business/product: Create a brand and marketing plan to:

- Manage brand and marketing
- Approach current residents, businesses and organizations as current customers to be retained
- Approach potential residents, businesses and organizations as potential customers to be attracted

Efforts include attracting new businesses, improving infrastructure, and constructing new housing. To overcome any negative perceptions and highlight positive accomplishments and its vision for the future, the cities should increase efforts to promote themselves in a positive manner.

- Use City and Redevelopment Authorities websites to better showcase upcoming and recent projects, positive facts and figures, and profiles of local residents improving the community; update regularly
- Enhance/create new marketing and press materials to highlight opportunities and incentives available
- Establish relationships with and regularly meet with area and **regional** media/press representatives to encourage more positive coverage
- Send regular press releases of positive events to local press outlets

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*Often the only way to make a hard decision is to come back to the purpose*

*David Allen*

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- Engage former residents who can become cheerleaders and advocates of change and success (seeing former residents as an asset who can continue to be invested in the community)

*Find new and nontraditional marketing methods to showcase the cities and recruit niche businesses and new residents*

- Solid, affordable and attractive housing stock exists in the community. Yet the awareness of these homes is quite weak. A champion of promoting these options needs to be established. This could be the Redevelopment Authority, a local nonprofit, or some other entity. This effort would include:
  - Outreach to the real estate brokers and sales persons to familiarize them with the options in the community. Oftentimes, prospective homeowners are steered by these industry professionals to other markets for an expedited closing, and developing relationships with those that specialize in niche markets is important. This effort could include quarterly tours of homes on the market or some shared marketing strategy, such as co-operative ad purchases.

*Work with major employers and job training programs to guide residents to local jobs*

## **CASE IN POINT**

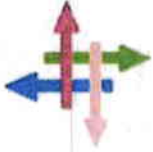
### **REACH OUT TO PROFESSIONALS**

*The South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association has conducted outreach to local real estate brokers to promote their listings at no charge in their annual StepTrek program book. These brokers likewise often feature Open Houses along the walk route to reach an audience they otherwise would have limited access to.*

*Many communities conduct outreach to real estate developers, brokers, and sales persons to build interest in the neighborhood market. Engaging with these industry professionals by hosting an occasional meeting to understand their perspective, issues, and concerns increases the vitality of the market potential.*

*This practice has taken place in Lawrenceville, Mt. Washington, and the South Side of Pittsburgh.*

## Government, Services, Infrastructure and Energy



*Implement ordinance updates to address land use issues identified in the other plan elements*

- **Built-out communities** oftentimes have zoning or other ordinances that are inconsistent with new housing design and construction techniques. An evaluation of current zoning and related building ordinances may alleviate the potential to discourage desired new development from taking place.
- **Ensuring that zoning ordinances continue to advance single family occupancy** is important to the stability of the community in the long term.
- **While zoning addresses health, safety and welfare issues, community design guidelines ensure that development and redevelopment is compatible with existing neighborhood fabric.** Design guidelines respond to issues of height, scale, setback, exterior detailing, garage placement, material selection, window proportions, etc.

### *Protect infrastructure that contributes to the community's character*

Evaluate ways to protect brick streets and other key elements in the community's physical character. For example, the brick street found on Kennedy Street is an element worth preserving. As discussed in the Background Studies and Trends Chapter, Duquesne is a highly urbanized area with full access to service, infrastructure and energy resources.

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*Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.*

*Henry Ford*

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*Prepare to make strategic investments in infrastructure and energy systems to support the city's long term vision.*

- Align long term improvements with planned growth and development. Utilize infrastructure investments to facilitate growth areas.
- Continue to make long term capital improvements to utilities and water systems and address problems as they arise

## *Water Service*

Barring significant unforeseen industrial or other water needs, the current water and sewer facilities will be able to accommodate anticipated growth and development in Duquesne. It is not anticipated that expansion or extension to the existing sewer system is needed. This plan for the reliable supply of water is generally consistent with the State Water Plan. Lawful activities such as extraction of minerals impact water supply sources and such activities are governed by statues regulating mineral extraction that specify replacement and restoration of water supplies affected by such activities.

## *Sewer Service*

The Municipal Authority of the City of McKeesport (MACM) owns and operates a wastewater treatment plant and conveyance system serving the greater McKeesport area. The communities served by the Authority include in whole or part of the City of McKeesport, City of Duquesne, East McKeesport Borough, Elizabeth Township, Liberty Borough, Port Vue Borough, North Versailles Township, Versailles Borough, White Oak Borough, Glassport Borough, and Lincoln Borough.

The Municipal Authority of the City of McKeesport purchased the Duquesne Water Treatment Plant in 2010. Since then, operational changes have been made to better handle and treat the incoming flows. The Authority submitted a long term control plan to the PA Department of Environmental Protection in 2014 to address the wet weather issues that exist. The plan is currently under review. The plan will address the design loadings of the plant as well as address the combined sewer overflow regulatory requirements.

## *Stormwater*

Watersheds in this region are covered by the Pennsylvania Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan. Allegheny County is currently preparing a county-wide Act 167 Plan that will update the existing plan. PA Act 167 requires municipalities to adopt a local Act 167 plan that is consistent with the County's plan within six months after the PA Department of Environmental Protection has approved the County's plan. The proposed Allegheny County Act 167 plan will include a mode ordinance that can be used for this purpose, so achieving compliance could be inexpensive and relatively simple.

## A Plan for Transportation, Assets and Amenities

Providing residents and businesses with high quality services while maintaining fiscal responsibility is an important focus. Balancing investments of time and resources as part of delivering improvements and programs to the public are of utmost importance to the administration's everyday roles and responsibilities now and in the decade to come.

Leaders and staff are interested in and committed to advancing the effectiveness of services delivered.



### **Transportation, Assets and Amenities Goal**

*Leverage and enhance existing systems with targeted investments*



## *Parks, Recreation, Natural and Historic Resources*

Inventories of park, recreation, natural and historic resources can be found in the Background Studies and Trends Chapter. Based on municipal budgets and projected continued population declines, the overall plan for parks and recreation is to support and enhance existing spaces and amenities.

Primary natural resources consist of riverfront areas and steep slopes, where development should be restricted. A number of historic resources were identified, which can be used to help build community character.

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*The best place to  
succeed is where  
you are with what  
you have.*

*Charles Schwab*

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## *Exploit the City's position on the Great Allegheny Passage to enhance retail development opportunities.*

The Great Allegheny Passage is a unique potential economic development resource. It brings with it many opportunities for new businesses that want to be near the trail as a quality of life amenity, as well as retailers and other businesses that can take advantage of trail users as customers. The City should enhance efforts to attract these types of businesses, and ensure that the trail's attributes are maximized as part of these efforts. There is always opportunity, particularly as trail traffic expands. It may be difficult to operate trail businesses like lodging properties or bike shops given proximity to Pittsburgh, but there are some opportunities to connect to the trail and offer basic services (café, ice cream, snacks, inner tubes, maybe even a bike rental). The trail should not be sold as an opportunity that will fully support a business, but rather one that can supplement income.

- Consider temporary retailers at first to test the market, including pop-up retailers/restaurants and food trucks
- Research and contact local food truck operators, restaurateurs, and eventually other retailers (recreation-related outfitters/retailers) to gauge interest in a potential location along the Great Allegheny Passage
- Establish relationships with and meet with company representatives to market the cities and the trail
- Promote the numerous financial incentives for businesses
- Seek out and consult with entrepreneurial/business development organizations (e.g. Duquesne University's Small Business Development Center) to help recruit businesses

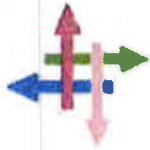
*The Great Allegheny Passage: One Trail with Many Opportunities*

**Recreation Users:** The Great Allegheny Passage is regional economic generator connecting the community to a growing market of consumers who spend money on leisure and recreational activities. This connection supports many types of non-residential activity. The growth opportunities for businesses related to the trail is significant. The *2012 Trail Town Business Survey Report* (The Progress Fund) looked at businesses related to the trail and found that, of those responding, they weighted average income per establishment was \$650,000 with over 50% of that income being generated in the summer months. Even though these establishments are open year round, the bulk of their income is generated in a three month window. 9.1% of the businesses were located in Allegheny County (the county with the most businesses was reported in the survey was Somerset at 37.5%).

The *2012 Trail Town User Survey Report* (The Progress Fund) surveyed the users of the trail and had 1,195 respondents. 6.4% of the respondents started their rides in McKeesport while 9.2% ended their rides in McKeesport (the highest ending point for all riders was in Boston, PA with 19.5%). The survey also showed a drop in multi-day users over the previous survey and a growth in daily trail users. This does not mean that the overall multi-day user rate has fallen, but rather the overall usage of the trail has increased, with daily users being the largest growing sector. These daily users can spend a significant amount of money. The survey looked at group average spending rates for groups of three people. The highest amount of money spent on the trail per person was \$228.85 in Cumberland, Maryland. The lowest average amount of money spent is in McKeesport with \$15.07 (specific data does not exist for Duquesne at this time). In Homestead the average user is spending \$179.37. There are untapped business opportunities related to trail use in the City as well as opportunities to introduce and welcome trail users to the communities.

**Commuters:** Bicycle commuting is on the rise in the US. Based on the 2013 American Community Survey results from the Census Bureau, bicycle commuting has increased 408% in Pittsburgh since 2000, the largest increase of any city in the US. The rates have doubled since 2007 to 2%, which places Pittsburgh in 11<sup>th</sup> place for rate of bicycle commuters, just behind Philadelphia.

The City has the ability to make themselves bicycle friendly communities attracting investment and residents for a lifestyle that is not fully auto dependent. The reason a community would want to make the leap towards being a bicycle friendly one is simple. It is cost effective and attracts a younger group looking for a lower impact, less expensive lifestyle. With the average vehicle yearly costs around \$6,000 - \$7,000 people have found that using a bicycle as a daily means of transportation gives them more money in their pocket. The highest rate of bicycle commuters are the most educated workers (representing roughly half of bicycle commuters). The City is poised to attract residents interested in bicycle commuting by utilizing and enhancing connections to the Great Allegheny Passage. By having a strong bicycle connection, residents have options. With a close proximity to downtown Pittsburgh and a direct connection on the Great Allegheny Passage, the City can become bicycle bedroom communities for urbanites attracted to a low cost of living and convenient location.



Leverage the Great Allegheny Passage to showcase the community and give people a reason to ride there from Pittsburgh or other destinations.

Often distressed communities are known by the outside world only for the negative aspects such as crime, poverty, and abandonment. However, despite experiencing some of these unfortunate conditions, in reality the city is making strides toward revitalization. To help overcome negative perceptions, highlight positive accomplishments and attract businesses and residents, the cities should increase efforts to promote themselves in a positive manner.

- Riding to Duquesne is a nice 20+ mile ride from Pittsburgh. A stop for lunch or snacks before heading back is probable.
- Duquesne is nice starting point from the east if people want to park their cars and ride into Pittsburgh.
- Find opportunities to get involved with Rivers of Steel, a nonprofit committed to preserving, interpreting and managing the historic, cultural and natural resources related to big steel. Rivers of Steel hosts popular tours.
  - There are opportunities to get involved with trail-related steel heritage tours showcasing industry—past and present—that the communities are built around as well as churches, historic buildings and other community institutions.
- Work with nearby trail towns to organize bike tours and create itineraries. Itineraries are an inexpensive way of telling a community's story and a lot of cyclists are looking for such information. Itineraries could be themed and also direct people to local businesses.

## CASE IN POINT

### A TRAIL RIDER'S EXPERIENCE

*We asked a regular GAP trail rider to take a detour from her normal route and ride through Duquesne. Here are her observations:*

"Kennedy Ave. (although a hill) was really nice and there's so much there – nicely maintained houses, churches, school library. The green space next to the municipal building looks nice. Basically, this area of Duquesne as well as the industrial park area (with the green space, new buildings, sculptures, etc.) present well. That said, people are not permitted to walk near the sculptures and old train car, which is disappointing."

- Cycling church or historic tours could travel along the trail with “excursions” into communities. These could be organized group rides or itineraries available for riders to use in planning trips.
- Ghost signs are a niche tourist interest. There are a number of ghost signs along the trail. Itineraries and events could be created around the ghost signs to bring people into the communities. There are also artists who can enhance and restore signs that are extremely faded or damaged without altering the work—like a fresh coat of paint.
- Promote this section of trail for families:
  - Less busy than Pittsburgh
  - Ride 4-5 miles between Duquesne and Riverton Bridge in McKeesport for a great view of the Monongahela River.
  - Ride 4-5 miles from Duquesne to Homestead for a view of the roller coasters at Kennywood.
- Engage with local organizations and churches. For example, at Appalachian Trail Days in Damascus, VA, the churches really connect to trail users: cookouts, showers, etc.
- Build a relationship with the Progress Fund and keep up to date on information like trail counts.

*A ghost sign is an old hand painted advertising sign that has been preserved (intentionally or inadvertently). They attract a niche group of preservationists and history buffs.*



*Ghost sign in Tarentum, PA.*

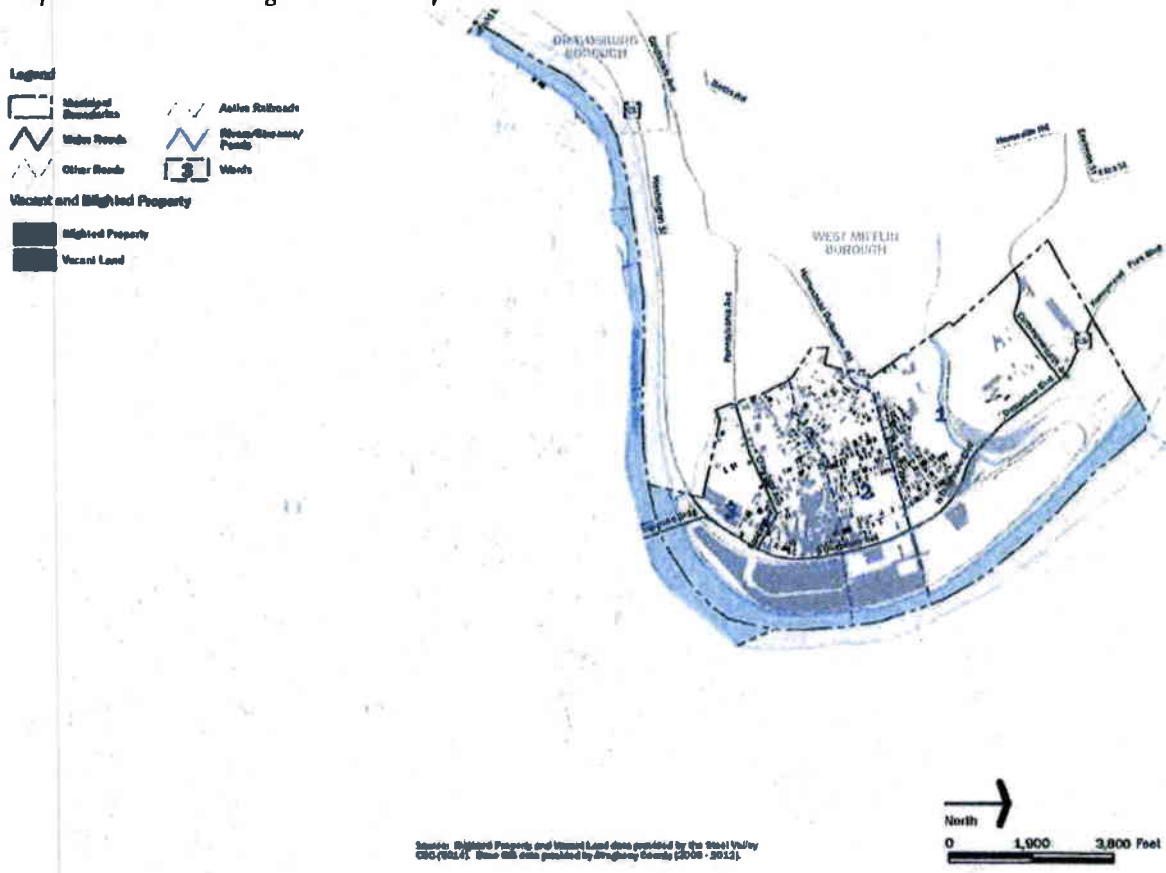
## *Vehicular Transportation Network*

A number of important regional roads run through Duquesne. Land use considerations related to those roads can be found in the Land Use and Economic Development Section of the Plan Elements Chapter. A comprehensive inventory of roadways can be found in the Background Studies and Trends Chapter. Parking and roadway capacity was designed to handle significantly higher population, more robust industrial activity and regional commerce.

Because vacancy and blight has been scattered throughout the community, there are no opportunities to reduce roadways and infrastructure in a linear manner (literally closing a section of roadway). This model has been used in cities like Detroit and Youngstown where there may be only one or two occupied structures on a block and it is worth the cost of relocating the occupants in order to reduce infrastructure and maintenance costs. Duquesne and McKeesport are not in this type of situation. However, there is excess road capacity that could be used to create bike lanes, stormwater management areas or spaces to store snow when it is plowed.

Based on population growth projections and the build-out analysis (found in the Appendix), the current road systems in Duquesne can support anticipated growth. Further, additional industrial development will not strain the existing roadways beyond their existing capacity. The focus of the plan for the vehicular network focuses on supporting planned development in key focus areas and targeting roadway improvements to improve the city's regional image.

*Duquesne Vacant and Blighted Lands Map*



*Prepare a preliminary plan for a flyover to connect the Great Allegheny Passage and Grant Avenue. Regularly seek opportunities and partners for construction of the flyover.*



- Work with the owner of Duquesne Plaza to have post and ring style bike racks installed (similar to those at the Waterfront).
- Work with the owner of Duquesne Plaza to provide space and signage for additional trail-related parking
- Reinforce the Grant Street-Great-Allegheny Passage connection by taking advantage of opportunities for public art and murals at the intersection of Grant Avenue and First Street

Coordinate with Allegheny County and the SPC to get the project on the regional Transportation Improvement Plan

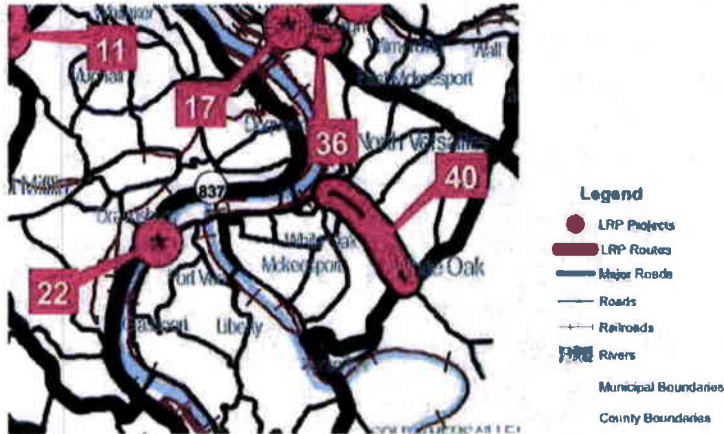
*Invest in gateways and primary corridors.*

The most important investments should be coordinated within the Key Focus Areas and follow design guidelines outlined in the Land Use and Economic Development Section of the Plan Elements Chapter.

*Reprioritize transportation system improvements based on development and land use changes to accommodate changing needs for capacity.*

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission has identified a number of projects in their 2040 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern PA Fiscally-Constrained Component that could impact Duquesne.

*Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission 2040 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern PA – Relevant Projects*



Project 40, identified on the map above, represents the widening of Lincoln Way in White Oak. Project 22, identified on the map above, represents improvements the rehabilitation of Mansfield Bridge, which was completed in October of 2014.

*Make stronger connections to the GAP on the existing community road network. Crosswalks are key; as are signage and attractive, safe places to park bikes. Pursue physical business district streetscape improvements on Grant and Second Avenues.*

The physical environment along Grant and Second Avenues in Duquesne is in need of updating and improvement. While in some specific locations limited streetscape improvements have been installed over time, generally sidewalks are in disrepair, lighting is inadequate, trees and greenery are lacking, amenities such as benches and bike racks are missing, and wayfinding signage does not exist. This substandard streetscape environment negatively impacts the businesses within each commercial district, making it more difficult to attract customers to existing businesses while hindering the attraction of new businesses to vacant retail space. An attractive streetscape will help initiate investment in businesses while encouraging pedestrians to stroll and shop. A streetscape enhancement project is recommended to improve the appearance and function of these two streets, which will contribute significantly toward a revitalized commercial district. To implement this strategy, the City should:

- Research funding opportunities for streetscape design

- Conduct conceptual planning and preliminary design of potential improvements. A consultant's help may be needed with the conceptual planning/preliminary design phase but it is less expensive than the actual engineering and design of the improvements. That step is also needed to determine both the cost and the scope of work for final engineering and design. The conceptual design phase can also involve the community through activities such as charrettes or events such as those promoted through the Better Blocks Program
- Secure funding for design
- Prepare an RFP for design/engineering services; hire consultant to prepare documents
- Explore funding for physical public realm improvements through programs such as PennDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program (administered by SPC) and the PA Multimodal Transportation Fund.
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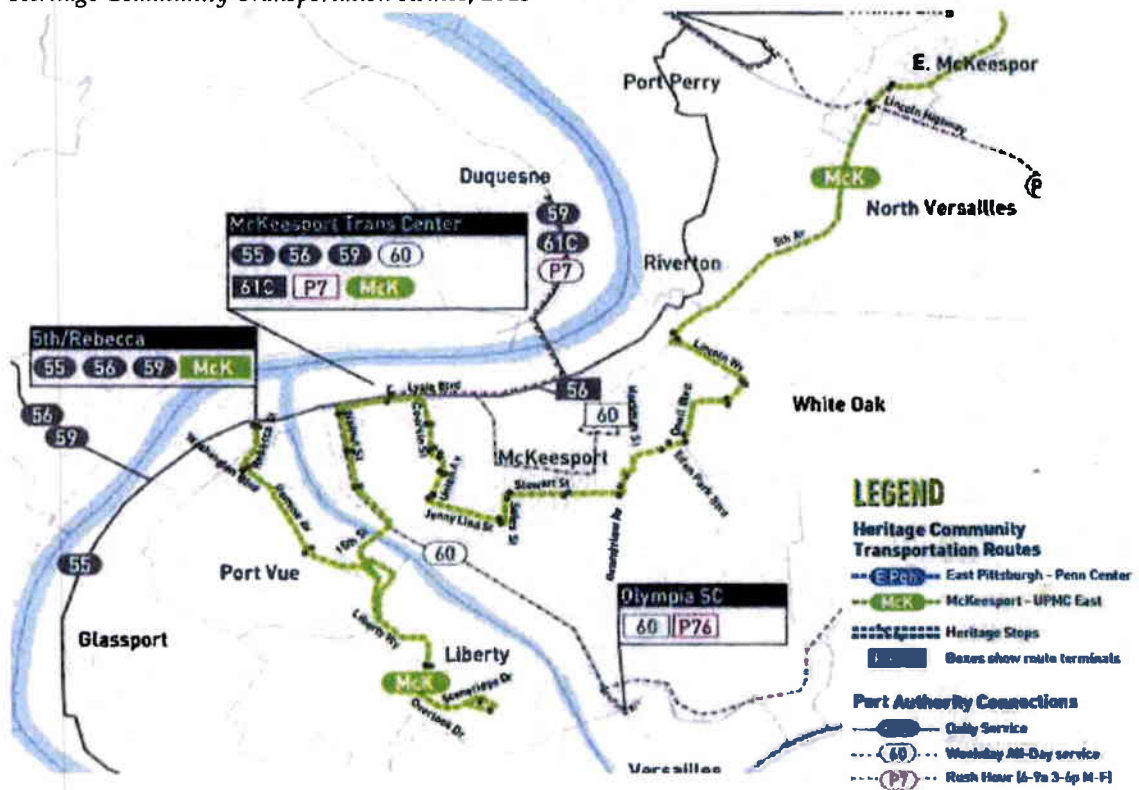
### *Mass Transit*

Duquesne has experienced significant cuts in service from the Allegheny County Port Authority in recent years. Discussions with the Port Authority reveal that service levels are continuously being analyzed and reconsidered. Representatives emphasized the importance of sharing data and planning efforts to ensure that the Port Authority has up-to-date information.

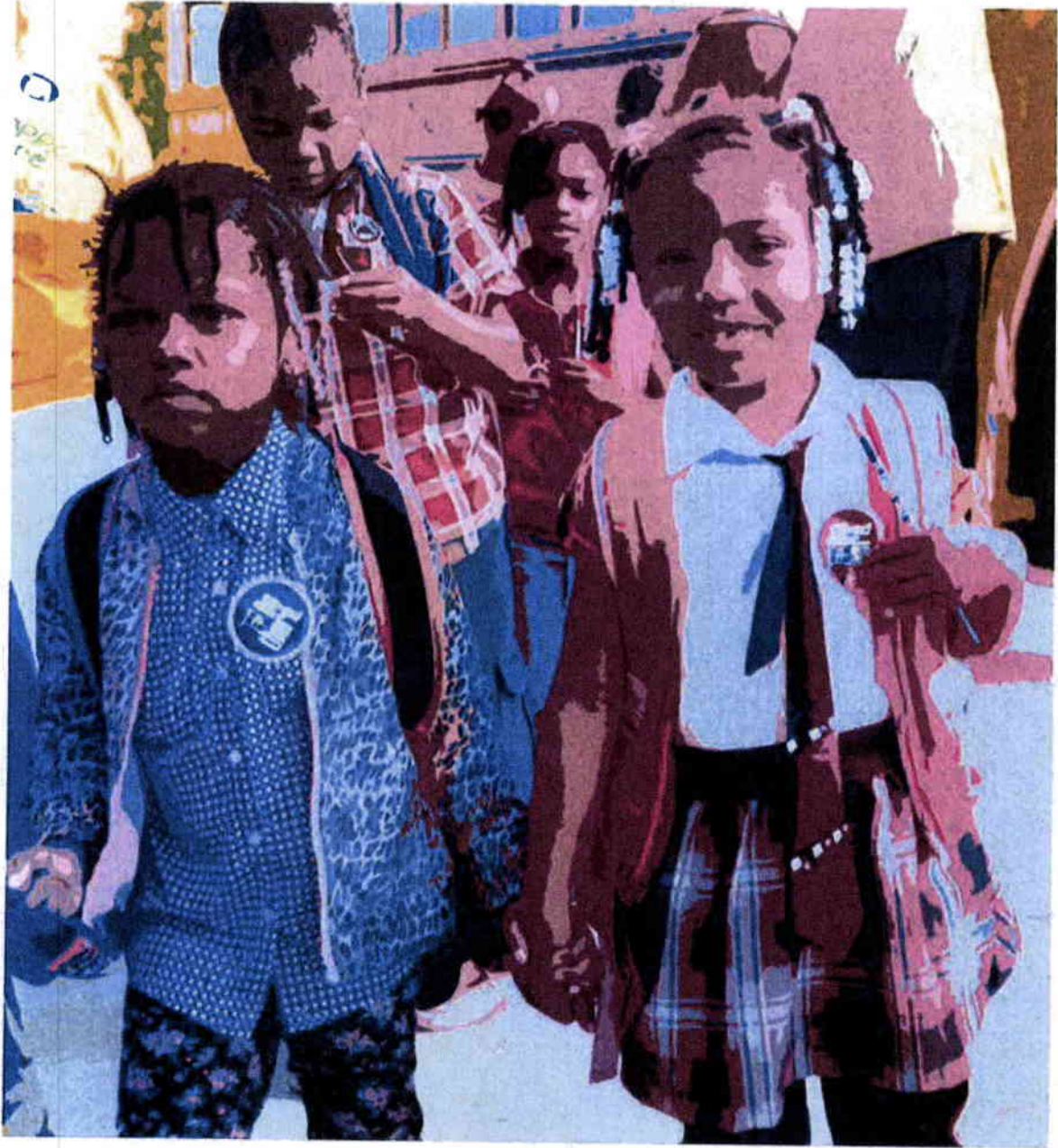
Heritage Community Initiatives serves areas of the Mon Valley with WorkLink—a fixed-route van service filling critical transportation gaps that is designed to get residents to employment, retail centers and the greater transportation network. WorkLink does not currently have a route through or stops in Duquesne but Duquesne residents can connect to WorkLink lines via existing Port Authority routes.

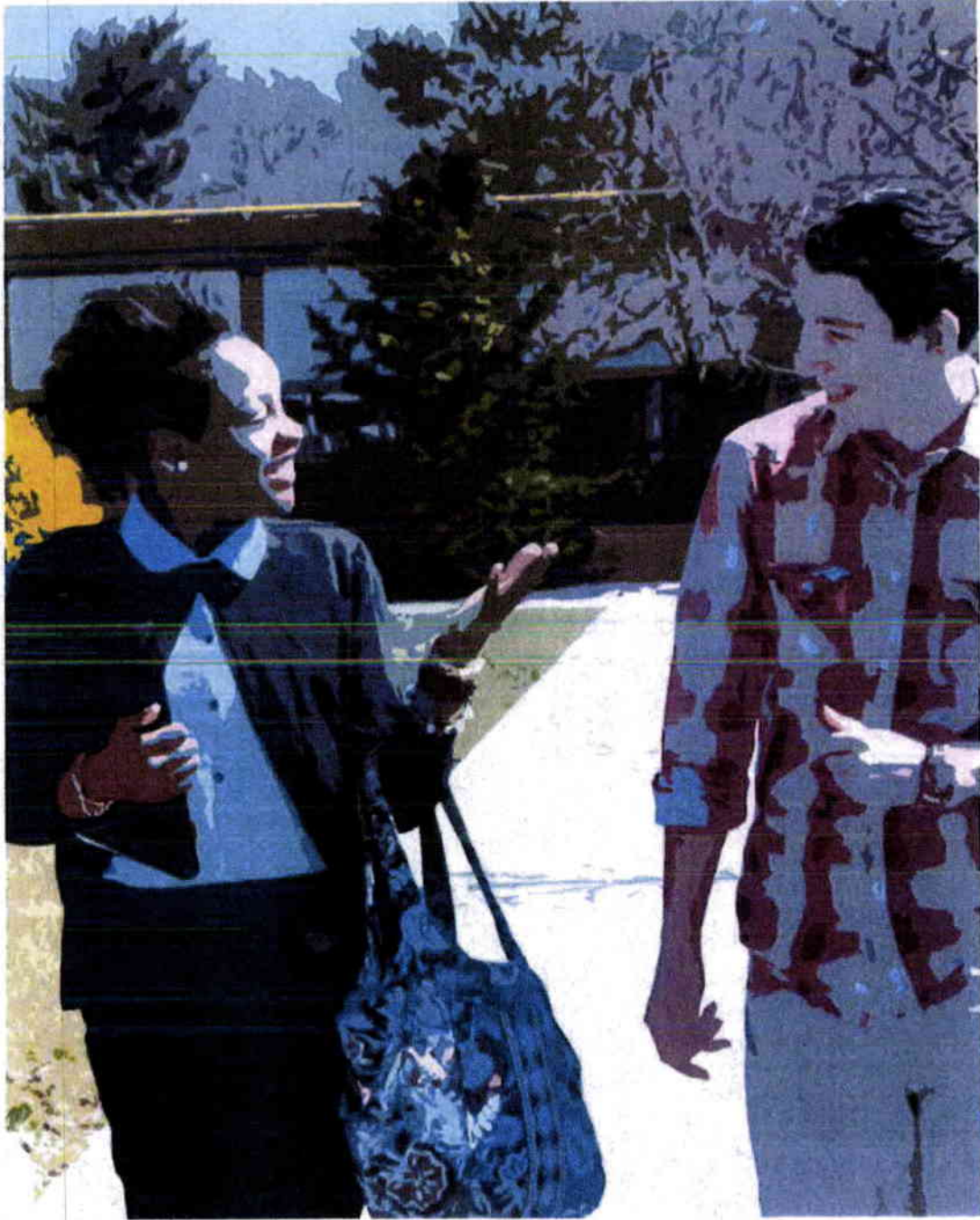


Heritage Community Transportation Routes, 2015



Continue to advocate for public transportation and keep in contact with Allegheny County Port Authority and Heritage Community Initiatives.





## McKeesport's Plan Elements

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*You've got to  
think about the  
big things while  
you're doing small  
things, so that all  
the small things go  
in the right  
direction.*

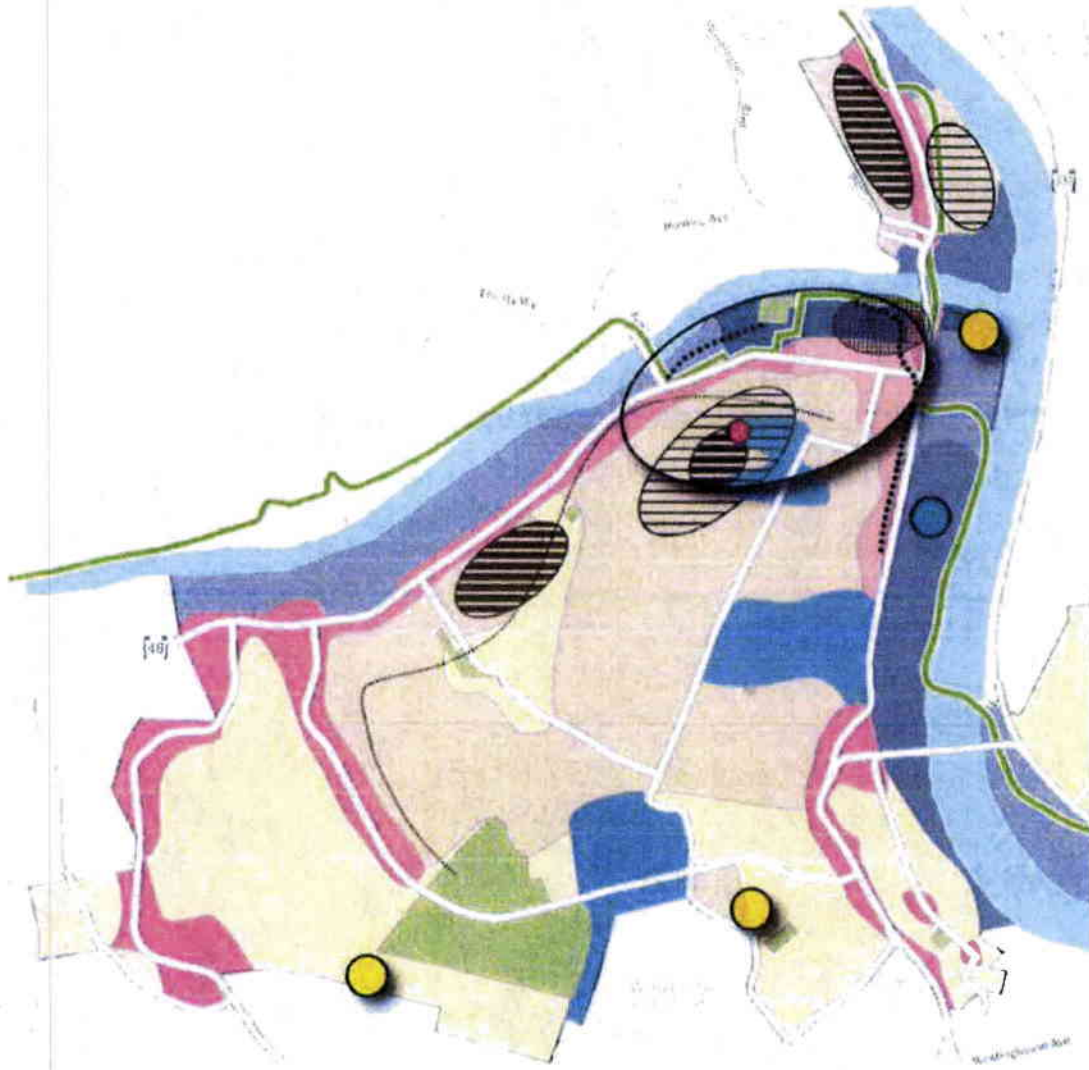
*Alvin Toffler*

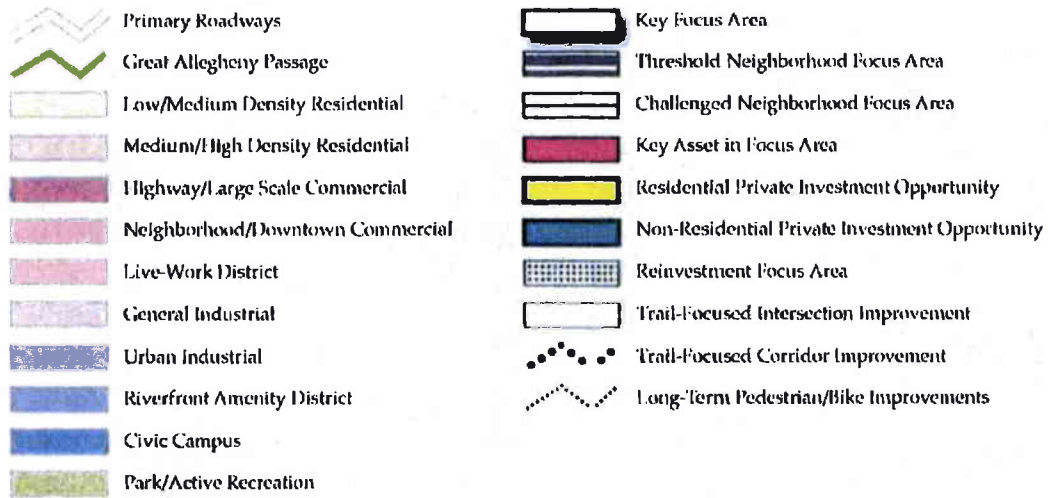
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**This chapter contains more in-depth discussions of plan elements, goals and actions. Accompanying each goal is at least one key initiative. Each initiative supports multiple goals and strategies, that, when executed, will provide meaningful, measureable progress. Each initiative is, in turn, a collection of implementation steps that can be carried out at the local or regional level.**

**The initiatives are lofty but achievable—asking the communities to think about the big picture and stretch their horizons towards the future. This chapter also begins to outline potential champions and partners and key steps to bring the plan to fruition.**

*McKeesport Comprehensive Plan Map*





This comprehensive plan map incorporates various plan elements that are associated with physical places in the community.

The **Reinvestment Focus Areas** are key area where the city can work to promote, support and facilitate private investment and redevelopment. In McKeesport, this focus is the area around the McKeesport Marina and the area down Walnut Street, past Kane Hospital and down 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Non-Residential Private Investment Opportunity Focus Area** is a key location where new investment in commercial land uses could occur. In McKeesport, this is the area on RIDC near the flyover where there is potential for non-residential commercial space with the long-term possibility of housing in the form of row houses and condos.

**Housing Focus Areas** (Challenged and Threshold Neighborhoods) are key areas where investment and intervention could have significant impact. The areas identified on the map do not encompass all residential neighborhood types but identify the first-priority target areas. The Plan for Housing in this chapter further outlines the neighborhood types and the recommendations that can be utilized to support and uplift these areas.

Likewise, the **Residential Private Investment Opportunity Showcase Area** is a location where private investment in housing stock could occur in the long-term. Depending on the long-term outcome of the users in the RIDC park, there is an opportunity for waterfront housing development at the “point” of the Monongahela and Youghioghene Rivers. Additional areas are located near Renzie Park and feature existing Stable Neighborhoods and, in some cases, excellent views.











**Trail-Focused Corridor Improvements** are short or medium term improvements that could enhance the likelihood that trail users will experience the city. In McKeesport, this includes returning 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

to a two-way street to facilitate small businesses, retail and office development that will support a walkable and interesting downtown to attract trail users into the community.

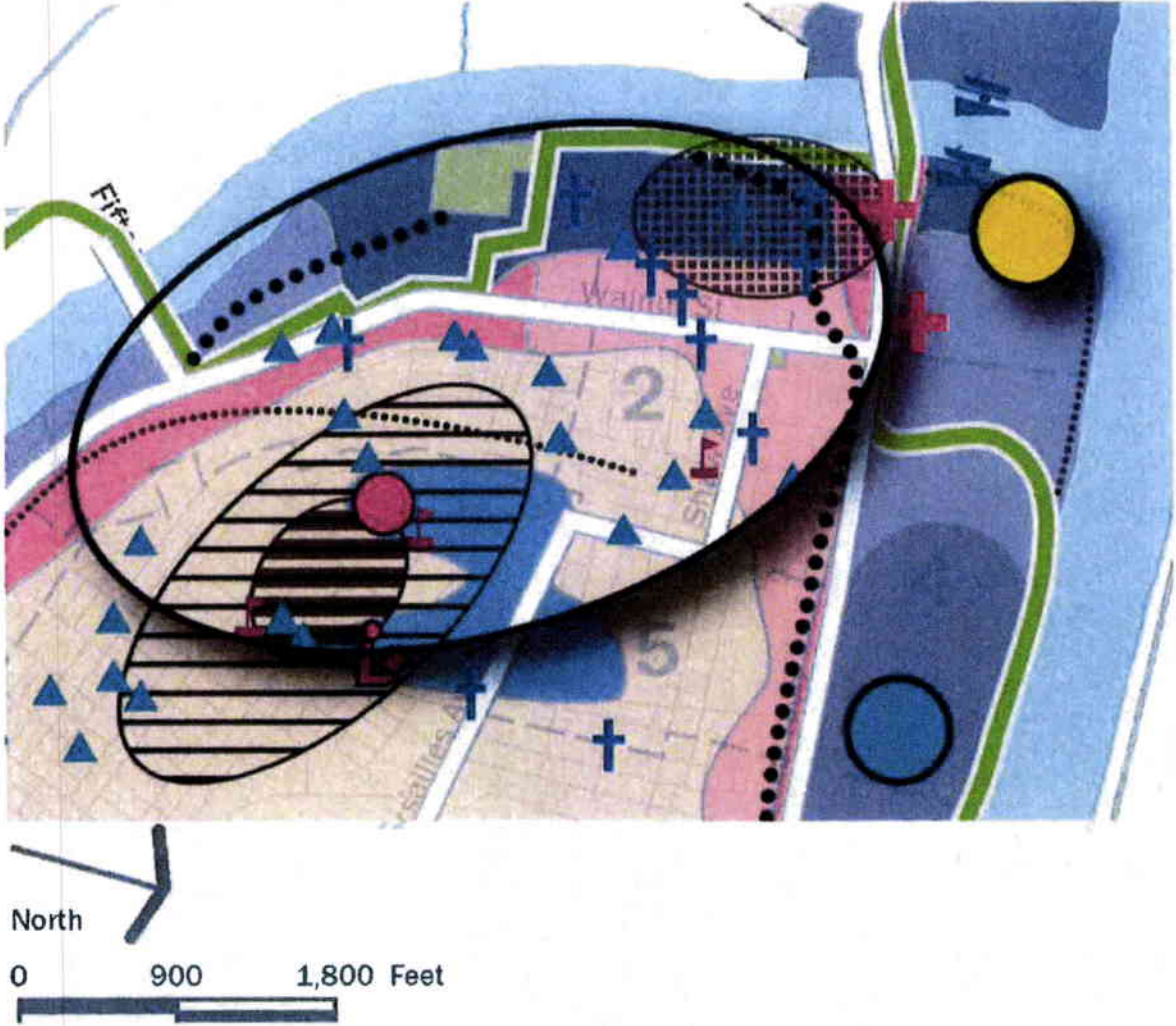
**Long-Term Pedestrian/Bike Improvements** are key areas where significant investment could enhance connections to the Great Allegheny Passage and the trail riders there. In McKeesport, this could be in the form of a trail connecting Renzie Park to downtown along a swath of open space. In the short-term, property ownership and easement information could be collected to begin the process of long-term planning. This would allow Renzie Park to become a more significant amenity for trail users who could take a detour from the trail to experience the park without traveling extensively on the roadways. It would also connect more residents to the community's feature park.

The **Key Focus Area** represents a concentration of plan focus elements: land use, economic development, transportation, housing, community assets and government outreach and services. By focusing revitalization efforts, the city can create a synergy where success builds on success and investments can work towards multiple goals.

The **Key Asset in Focus Area** is an existing community asset within the Catalytic Change-Key Focus Area. There are opportunities to build from this asset to create change and reinvestment within the Key Focus Area. In McKeesport, this asset is the new school.

-  Municipal Building
-  Post Office
-  Church
-  Emergency Service
-  Hospital
-  School
-  River Access
-  Library
-  Historic Site (Listed on the National Register)
-  Historic Site (Eligible for the National Register)

McKeesport Key Focus Area Map





## **CASE IN POINT**

### **ACTION HOUSING'S CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN**

*ACTION Housing has a long-standing relationship with the City of McKeesport and has recently been working on a Cultural District Plan that centers around the new Twin Rivers School in McKeesport. Phase One includes two vacant lots across the street from the school with plans for new single family housing. The money from the sale of those homes will be put into a fund to do more focused work in that district—targeting rehabilitation and repair of residential structures, particularly ones on well-maintained blocks where additional investment can support existing homeowners. The 2015 goal is to break ground on the two new residential structures and build interest in the area. In the long term, there is an interest in reusing the old Centennial School in the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward for multifamily housing (market rate or low/middle income).*

*In order to support the short-term investment and long-term vision, ACTION Housing has been in discussions with the McKeesport Area School District to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle network around the school. Although the Safe Routes to School program at the state level is currently on hold, ACTION Housing, the school district and the city are working together to connect Twin Rivers school to the high school and the nearby baseball diamond. The goal is to create a bike and pedestrian friendly corridor so kids would only have to walk 2-3 blocks on city sidewalks and could complete their trips on the corridor.*

*Coordinating efforts with ACTION Housing and other local organizations will help McKeesport lay the groundwork for change and revitalization in its key focus area.*

## A Plan for Land Use and Economic Development

Business and economic development strategies range from enhancing the marketing of each city and its available commercial sites to incentivizing new business development, to improving the physical environment of business districts. Each city should use these strategies as a guide as it pursues opportunities for commercial growth over the coming years.



### **Land Use and Economic Development Goal**

*Facilitate private-sector growth with strategic actions to create catalytic change in community focus areas*



*Continue fostering relationships/creating partnerships with RIDC to enhance the marketing of available Industrial Center of McKeesport commercial/industrial sites.*

The Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) is the largest owner of developable commercial/industrial land in the City of McKeesport. RIDC's ability to market the land to prospective tenants or purchasers is critical for attracting new businesses to each city. The communities must maintain a positive relationship with RIDC and ensure that the agency is employing its marketing and business-attraction resources effectively.

- Arrange regular meetings with RIDC staff to discuss and highlight available sites
- Request reports from RIDC on inquiries regarding the Industrial Center of McKeesport to remain aware of any interest expressed for specific properties
- Attend RIDC workshops/conferences/events to represent the community and promote available sites

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*It does not take much strength to do things, but it requires a great deal of strength to decide what to do.*

*Elbert Hubbard*

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*Promote Industrial Center of McKeesport independently of RIDC's efforts to gain maximum exposure of available commercial/industrial site opportunities and financial incentives.*

While it's critical for RIDC to effectively advertise its commercial/industrial sites to attract tenants and employment, McKeesport should also take the initiative to market itself independently of RIDC to ensure that all possible resources are used to promote business opportunities.

- Enhance City of McKeesport and Redevelopment Authority websites and include a section on commercial/industrial properties available at RIDC properties
- Enhance websites to better promote the numerous financial incentives for businesses available through the Redevelopment Authority:

- Enterprise Zone low-interest loan and tax credit programs,
- Technical assistance matching grants,
- KOZ opportunities, and
- Available job training programs, and
- Any utility incentives, such as relatively low costs for City water.
- Enhance websites to promote the numerous DCED ([newpa.com](http://newpa.com)) funding programs available to businesses
- Cross-reference efforts/listings/website of commercial broker on City's/Authority's websites
- Meet regularly with local and state representatives to promote the cities and its available commercial/industrial site opportunities
- Attend local/state/national workshops/conferences/events to represent each city and market opportunities, advantages, and incentives

*Facilitate and incentivize the expansion of existing businesses.*

Concurrent with the effort to attract new businesses, the cities must not ignore existing businesses and the importance of retaining them, many of which have been in the region for decades. Each city should ensure that the needs of existing businesses are acknowledged and addressed if possible so they can remain viable, whether it's financial, promotional, or procedural assistance. In a similar fashion, the cities should support businesses that express interest in expanding their operation.

- Create database of all existing businesses
- Contact owners by email, phone, mail, or in-person
- Provide owners with marketing material outlining all financial incentives available to them
- Remain in contact with owners to promote and encourage use of incentives
- Work with owners to facilitate any regulatory processes (code, etc.) necessary for business expansion

## **CASE IN POINT**

### **MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

*McKeesport's Key Focus Area around 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is the community's traditional downtown or Main Street. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development used to run a Main Street Program that has recently been consolidated into the Keystone Communities Program.*

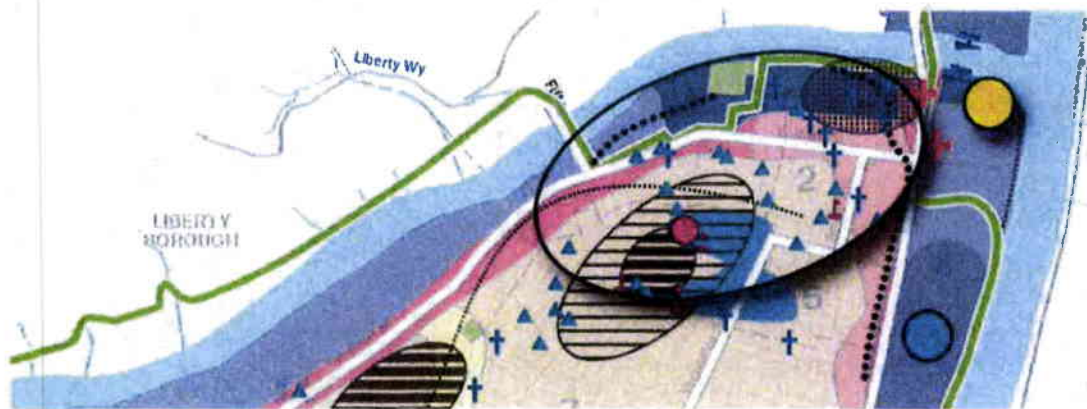
*The Keystone Communities Program provides grants to municipalities to help a community's downtown economic development effort through the establishment of a local organization dedicated to downtown revitalization and the management of downtown revitalization efforts by hiring a full-time professional downtown coordinator.*

*Funding uses include the following: Administrative Costs associated with Main Street Manager positions and offices; Physical improvements supported by downtown plan for Downtown Reinvestment Component; Acquisition costs and physical building improvements for Anchor Building component*

*Funding: Main Street: \$115,000 over a 5-year period; Downtown Reinvestment and Anchor Building components: up to \$250,000 or not to exceed 30% of project costs*

*Eligibility: Grants to municipalities to help a community's downtown economic development effort through the establishment of a local organization dedicated to downtown revitalization and the management of downtown revitalization efforts by hiring a full-time professional downtown coordinator*

*Allegheny County also has a Main Street program called Allegheny Together.*



*Investigate and reach out to prospective start-ups and growing businesses potentially seeking to locate in the Industrial Center of McKeesport.*

Much of this strategy involves the City of McKeesport identifying business opportunities by being proactive through research and outreach to companies it desires to attract, and pursuing the opportunities through ongoing communication. This communication should involve face-to-face meetings. Through this communication, the City should promote any incentives it can offer to prospective businesses as well. To implement this strategy, the City should:

- Research and contact industrial companies appropriate for industrial/flex space in the Industrial Center of McKeesport, including Marcellus Shale-related companies, data centers, call centers, additive manufacturing companies, and waste services and recycling companies
- Research and contact service businesses appropriate for office space in the Industrial Center of McKeesport, including management, financial, health care services, and high tech businesses
- Establish relationships with and meet with company representatives to market McKeesport
- Inform businesses of all potential financial incentives available to them
- Seek out and consult with entrepreneurial/business development organizations (e.g. Duquesne University's Small Business Development Center) to help recruit businesses
- Use area universities as a resource for technical expertise, research, and promotion

*Continue revitalization focus on the McKeesport Marina area and target area for commercial rehabilitation and trail-related retail growth.*

The marina area of McKeesport, located along Water Street near the intersection with 5th Avenue, is an area of the City potentially most ripe for revitalization. With the marina, trail, and interesting industrial buildings, this part of McKeesport has many economic advantages that other commercial areas of the City do not. As a result, the City should focus on this location for targeted rehabilitation of commercial buildings and infill development. Over time, successful economic development in this area could potentially spread down 5th Avenue into the core of Downtown McKeesport. To implement this strategy, the City should:

- Enhance City of McKeesport and Redevelopment Authority websites and include a section on available commercial and retail properties in this area
- Research and contact service businesses appropriate for office/commercial space in the marina area of McKeesport, including management, financial, health care services, and high tech businesses to gauge interest in this location

- Research and contact retailers of desired categories to gauge interest in a potential location in McKeesport near the marina and trail
- Research and contact area developers to gauge interest in developing commercial properties in McKeesport
- Establish relationships with and meet with company representatives to market McKeesport's commercial space opportunities
- Consider hiring a professional retail attraction consultant

*Take advantage of the community's heritage of hands-on skilled trades and potential synergies with Penn State's engineering professors and students to encourage entrepreneurial and learning opportunities.*

Consider ways to facilitate the development or location of a shared “maker” space in McKeesport. Such a facility could also house an incubator for emerging businesses as well as teach classes to the public and offer rentable space and equipment for construction/manufacturing use. A model facility exists in Philadelphia called NextFab. A similar nationwide chain called TechShop is located in Pittsburgh’s East Liberty neighborhood. To implement this strategy, the City should:

- Work with Penn State to research shared spaces and their needs
- Contact potential organizations who could spearhead and run the facility—whether as a new location with an existing model (as in TechShop) or as a new facility
- Consider potential incentives or assistance that the city could provide
- Consult with entrepreneurial/business development organizations (e.g. Duquesne University's Small Business Development Center in McKeesport) to help recruit a facility or an organization/startup to create a new facility

## CASE IN POINT

### NEXTFAB AND TECHSHOP

*The NextFab Studio is a facility in Philadelphia that allows members to use a tremendous amount of industrial level technology for a small monthly membership fee. This is a 21,000 square foot facility with full time employees that are skilled in their trades so that they can teach you both the concepts, and the best practices for using equipment. Beyond basic education and the ability to prototype items you are also able to complete your first manufacturing runs of products that you are trying to get to market.*

*The company is organized as a limited liability corporation. It is funded by some startup grants and a variety of memberships. Aside from student and individual memberships, corporate and institutional accounts are available that provide access for multiple employee, with training included. The web site lists about 25 different classes ranging from basic safety and machine usage, to various software packages (Illustrator, Photoshop, Solidworks) and skills like Product Photography. The "Orientation and Workshop Safety Training" is required for each and every member, including each associate under a corporate or institutional account.*

*TechShop is a similar facility with nationwide locations including one in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood.*



Student project at NextFab. [Blog.nextfab.com](http://Blog.nextfab.com)



## *Urban Planning and Design Guidelines to Support the Key Focus Area*

The Main Street is a generator of city life, commercial and economic activity and a key public space. In addition to economic development planning and a mix of commercial and housing, the aesthetics and visual quality of the main street is crucial to any revitalization efforts. McKeesport is fortunate to have many strategic corridors that will assist in facilitating a positive revitalization effort.

The Greater Allegheny Passage Bike Trail is an extensive trail system that has pivotal points of intersection through McKeesport. Enhanced services and development within the RIDC McKeesport site may potentially help capture this important pool of visitors traveling through the City along the 400-mile passage from Pittsburgh to the north and Cumberland, Maryland to the south.

Expanded urban design guidelines can be found in the Appendix.

*McKeesport RIDC/Key Focus Area Redevelopment Concept*

