



SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE REVITALIZATION BLUEPRINT: BUILDING AN ENVIRONMENT TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY AND VISIT

The Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor Revitalization Plan provides a detailed blueprint that enables the Township to create an inviting and vibrant corridor that encourages people to live, work, play and visit. The specific infrastructure improvements, land use recommendations and market uses are provided within the pages of this Plan. Action steps and funding strategies will allow the Township to take incremental steps to strategically change the dynamics of the corridor, which will ultimately strengthen and improve its retail environment and appearance.

Revitalization of the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor will require long-term, dedicated leadership from Muhlenberg Township and strategic partnerships (i.e., public-public, public-private, and institution-public-private) to achieve this Revitalization Plan's vision of transforming the corridor from its current tired and disjointed mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses to a vibrant, coherent, and well-designed urban environment defined by three unique districts each having their own brands/identities that build upon and strengthen the existing current assets and opportunities for development and redevelopment. These districts are the Gateway Village District – A Place to Play (Focus Area 1), Commerce Center District – A Place to Live and Work (Focus Area 2), and the Town Centre District – A Place to Visit (Focus Area 3) and are further defined below.

Achieving the vision must first begin with creating the appropriate zoning regulatory environment that codifies the vision embodied by each district. Thereafter, the Township's leadership and strategic partnerships should be used to identify and execute targeted development on key sites within each district that will serve as the catalyst to energize, change and strengthen the entire corridor, while creating unique commercial neighborhoods. Uses identified within the market assessment will provide the necessary anchors, while zoning changes will allow the development to actually occur.

As the Township begins to make its investment within the corridor through streetscape and pedestrian amenities, the private sector should be encouraged to follow suit through the creation of revolving façade improvement loans, tax increment financing and other financial programs designed to entice private investment in the corridor.

Partnerships with the Greater Reading Economic Partnership, Berks County Commercial and Industrial Development Authority, as well as the creation of a Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Business Association, will allow the Township to develop the financial tools needed to assist business and industry, build infrastructure required to support new development, and develop a communication and marketing effort for the corridor.

THE MARKET POTENTIAL

The basis of the market analysis was built upon regional data and local information. There are two factors currently in play on the corridor. The first is the high ratio of commercial space to employment space; the other is the fact that property owners and commercial brokers are having a difficult time recruiting new retail. The Township will need to change the business and residential mix within and surrounding the Corridor; these changes can then positively create changes with respect to population and employment, two key markets that will support future economic initiatives.

In order to successfully create a new "destination" the Township will need to differentiate itself from nearby competitors such as Wyomissing and Exeter. Unique elements will be required to appeal to a local population who currently goes elsewhere for products and services. New development should include mixed-use nodes that are compact and walkable, and it should incorporate recreation-oriented businesses, cafes, shops, restaurants, boutique retail, housing, and new recreation and leisure amenities.

The market analysis provides suggestions to redirect the market for the Corridor and develop potential anchors for the revitalization effort. These recommendations were defined based on the demographic trends, stakeholder interviews, and industry experience; the recommendations were provided in two phases.

The first phase encourages the Township to attract new employment centers that would create new job opportunities within the corridor, and would therefore create a new consumer base. The analysis encourages the conversion of the NGK Metals site into a new employment center, and strategically infilling the vacant storefront space with medical uses. A sports complex and a hotel/conference center are also recommended to change the dynamics of the corridor. This phase of redevelopment should also focus on creating new residential units within the corridor.

Once the Township has strengthened the corridor with employment centers, recreational activities and new residents, they should begin to recruit new retail and restaurants to the corridor. Much of this activity will occur on its own due to the redevelopment activities that have transpired during the first phase.

CREATING THE NEW FIFTH STREET HIGHWAY / ALLENTOWN PIKE

The market analysis provides the direction for the Revitalization Plan based on current consumer demands and the dynamics at play on the corridor. Creating three distinct districts on the corridor will allow the Township to create new commercial neighborhoods that provide the sense of place and appeal recommended within the analysis.

GATEWAY VILLAGE DISTRICT (FOCUS AREA 1) – A PLACE TO PLAY

The Gateway Village District is situated at the northernmost point of the corridor and it will become a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike to Muhlenberg Township. The district will strengthen the design and appearance of existing and future development along the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor. It will become a "Place To Play" by promoting hospitality and recreational uses and provide for a logical transition from these more concentrated business uses to neighboring residential developments (e.g., Cherokee Ranch and Temple neighborhoods). A unique hotel, regional sports complex, pocket parks, trails and other recreational activities will serve as the targeted, catalytic development projects necessary to initiate this district's transformation. Appropriate design standards will be used to achieve high quality site layout and design and a multi-modal, complete streets (i.e., pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and transit bus) urban transportation network to ensure connectivity among and between existing and new uses throughout the district.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- **Adopt new Zoning and Subdivision / Land Development Ordinances** to coincide with the land use recommendations within this Plan.
- **Adjust land uses permitted within current zoning districts** to match the recommended land use plan for the corridor and this specific focus area. The intent will be to better define land uses permitted in separate zoning categories rather than having many uses overlapping between categories. The zoning and land use regulations for the corridor need to be more specific than the current standardized zoning code conveys.
- **Establish additional land use categories** identified in the General Land Use Plan, especially the new mixed-use categories.
- **Coordinate with Ontelaunee Township** to modify Zoning or SALDO as necessary to encourage the desired land uses on the portion of this Focus Area that lies within Ontelaunee Township.



- **Develop the site currently situated behind the Wal-Mart** currently used for farming/First Energy Transmission lines. The Township and County should partner to purchase the site and create the infrastructure needed to then subdivide and market to commercial, private recreation and clean industry/R&D flex company uses and/or a gateway business hotel.
- **Key Market Anchors:** Sports Complex, Hotel/Conference Center, Recreational Trails
- In addition to servicing the key market anchors, **initial improvements should focus on pedestrian and streetscape improvements.** Capacity-adding improvements (turn lanes, etc.) should be pursued in the long-term.
- Leverage public funding for the following projects:
 - **Streetscape improvements in the Cherokee Ranch neighborhood** - Among other benefits, these improvements will provide access management, enhance the neighborhood setting and provide a sense of identity.
 - **Establish a new Northern Gateway to the corridor, north of Wal-Mart** - This new roadway will provide access to proposed recreational center. Potential tenants can provide a local contribution or reimbursement.
 - **Realign the Wal-Mart entrance and create “Kutztown Road Extended” through the commercial area** - This new roadway shall be designed to provide a “town setting” and to allow infill development. This initiative can be supplemented with funding from redevelopment and infill opportunities.
- Leverage public funding or development/redevelopment contributions for capacity improvements at the intersection of Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike and Leesport Avenue - These long-term improvements are recommended to accommodate future traffic volumes from development and infill development along the corridor.
- Capacity improvements at the intersection of Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike and Tuckerton Street should coincide with the redevelopment of the NGK property - These improvements are recommended to accommodate future traffic volumes, particularly from NGK redevelopment.
- Use redevelopment initiatives as an opportunity to **upgrade ADA compliant sidewalk along the corridor**, including connections within the commercial areas.
- Leverage Multi-Modal public funding for the following initiatives:
 - **Establish a “Green-Belt” shared-use trail within the community**, adjacent to and generally parallel to the corridor. As identified in the Transportation Section, this would provide safer passage for bicyclists of all ages and would accommodate recreational bike-riding, in addition to increasing mobility between local destinations. Within this District, the trail should connect to the

existing Muhlenberg Rail Trail, the Kids Peace School, Temple and the proposed athletic facilities.

- **Provide thermoplastic brick imprint pedestrian crosswalks at all signalized intersections** within this District. This treatment will emphasize to motorists that they are entering a commercial neighborhood, while improving the aesthetic appeal.
- **Create bus stops along Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike that are ADA compliant and provide safe locations for the buses to pull-off outside of the traffic stream.** BARTA has indicated that this corridor has their highest ridership; providing safe, accessible access should further increase transit usage and pedestrian activity.
- The new roadways within the Wal-Mart plaza / recreational area should also provide bus pull-off areas.
- **Tax Increment District Plan** – This can alleviate burdensome costs of relocating transmission lines located adjacent to the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor. The TIF Plan should be developed in coordination with the Muhlenberg School District and Berks County.
- Other Land Use and Corridor Design Actions:
 - **Redevelopment** - Focused acquisition, marketing, subdivision and redevelopment of the vacant auto dealership at Leesport Avenue and Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike for commercial uses including professional offices, restaurants, hotel/inn, retail, etc.
 - **Rebrand North Reading Plaza as a Gateway** - Muhlenberg Township should approach and work with the owner of the North Reading Plaza to rebrand (name the center) as an identifiable “Muhlenberg” destination.
 - **Potential Business Relocation** - Conduct an in-house feasibility study considering the relocation of the Muhlenberg Township Maintenance Facility on Leesport Avenue to be coordinated with the pending relocation of the Muhlenberg Municipal Building.
 - **Park Expansion** - Consider expansion of the existing park on Leesport Avenue in coordination with the Muhlenberg Maintenance Facility relocation.

COMMERCE CENTER DISTRICT (FOCUS AREA 2) – A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

The Commerce Center District encourages the reuse, continuation and/or expansion of industrial and quality commercial uses (e.g., NGK Metals Brownfield Site, TrimMasters, Unique Pretzel, Manderbach Ford, Giant Foods, Target, Unclaimed Freight, etc.) that are dependent upon frontage and access to the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor. New economic development opportunities within this district should focus on a new mixed use, LEED-certified development adjacent to Quarry Lake, new casual dining restaurants placed in proximity to the Town Square Shopping Center, and the strategic and environmentally sensitive adaptive reuse of the NGK Metals Brownfield site. Preserving the integrity of neighboring residential uses, recognizing the strong institutional presence of the Muhlenberg School District campus, and promoting a complete streets atmosphere to increase pedestrian safety, accessibility and walkability is of utmost importance. Sensitivity should be given to protecting Laurel Run and the Quarry Reservoir through Low Impact Design and other stormwater best management practices.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- **Adopt new Zoning and Subdivision / Land Development Ordinances** to coincide with the land use recommendations within this Plan.
- **Adjust land uses permitted within current zoning districts** to match the recommended land use plan for the corridor and this specific focus area.
- **Key Market Anchors:** Employment Centers, Residential Development
- **NGK Metals Brownfield Site** – Concentrate on redevelopment of this site. It is acknowledged that redevelopment of this site will be difficult under the current conditions. As with many Brownfield sites, addressing environmental liability and demolition and remediation costs at the NGK Metals site present the greatest barriers to redevelopment. The property owner has indicated a reluctance to redevelop the property unless the developer is a recognizable, large-scale developer or a governmental entity. Redevelopment at the site could likely occur provided a suitable buyer is identified. Successful redevelopment of this site will require hard work, study and negotiations by all interested parties. Muhlenberg Township and agency officials have suggested recommendations on potential buyers in the past and should continue to do so in the future. Township officials should work with the EPA and DEP to identify a developer accustomed to remediating brownfield sites for redevelopment. To accommodate industrial development, the site could potentially be subdivided to minimize impacts to the regulated landfills. This would require coordination with both EPA and DEP using the Pennsylvania Land Recycling Program as the redevelopment tool.



COMMERCE CENTER DISTRICT (FOCUS AREA 2) – A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (CONT'D)

- **Re-establish rail service at the NGK Metals Brownfield Site.** To facilitate industrial development and meet regional rail demand, re-establishing rail access would make the site a highly marketable industrial location. The railroad adjacent to the site is the Pennsylvania line of the Reading and Northern Railroad also a Norfolk Southern line. Conversations with Greater Reading Berks Economic Partnership, Norfolk Southern, and Reading and Northern Railroad confirm that rail access is a frequent request from businesses seeking to locate in Berks County. Reading and Northern Railroad reports that commodities transported to/from the area include (but are not limited to) paper, plastics, and sand. Reading and Northern Railroad recently completed a rail siding on the Main Line to support Packing Corporation of America. This rail infrastructure project will facilitate the transfer of commodities and finished product ship that will enable the company to create 200 new jobs.
- **New Uses for NGK Metals could include:**
 - **CNG/LNG Fueling Station:** With the increased production of shale gas plays in Pennsylvania, using natural gas as a vehicular fuel, particularly fleet vehicles, is becoming a priority particularly with Pennsylvania state government. Conversations have been held with the Pennsylvania Governor's Office, Chesapeake Energy, Clean Energy Fuels, Wawa, UGI, and BARTA about the potential location of a CNG or LNG fueling station in Muhlenberg Township. The Governor's Office provided contacts and insight into upcoming fleet conversion programs through DEP. While Chesapeake Energy is not in the business of constructing natural gas infrastructure, they suggested follow-up conversations with convenience store operators such as Wawa and Sheetz. Wawa was contacted as the company operates in Berks County. Currently, the company is not looking for new locations to construct CNG facilities but rather is retrofitting existing convenience store locations. UGI indicated that natural gas lines would need to be analyzed for proper sizing should a CNG station be located in Muhlenberg Township. Clean Energy Fuels constructs natural gas fueling stations across the country. A site like NGK Metals could potentially be a location for either a regional CNG or LNG fueling station depending on market demand. This could also serve as fuel for new industry located at the NGK Metals. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations require approximately 1 acre of land while Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) stations require approximately 2 acres of land. Therefore,

should a CNG or LNG station be constructed at the site, ample land would remain for other industrial uses.

- **Office/Mixed Use.** First tier frontage along Tuckerton Road provides for prime office building location and a new gateway into the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor. The site is located in an existing industrial zone (I-1) with business and professional offices by right uses. As discussed under Industrial above, the site could potentially be subdivided to minimize impacts to the regulated landfills. Coordination with both EPA and DEP would be required using the Pennsylvania Land Recycling Program as the redevelopment tool.
- **Utility – Solar Photovoltaic Field.** Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels could potentially be placed on EPA and DEP regulated landfills to generate electricity for a future site end user with excess sold back to the electric grid. Additional engineering would be required to determine the feasibility of anchoring panels to landfills. Utility uses are permitted within the current zoning district. As the cost to install solar PV is high, this redevelopment opportunity would not be financially viable without some type of public funding.
- **Streetscape Enhancements.** Until a viable redevelopment option is identified for the NGK Metals site, the Township may want to consider streetscape enhancements that could provide screening from the industrial buildings currently at the site. This would require negotiations with the property owner.
- The NGK Metals property could also be subdivided from the more contaminated brownfield sections to permit earlier redevelopment along the Tuckerton Road frontage under new Township ownership, while the remaining portions of the site remain under NGK Metals control due to liability.
- **Develop site adjacent to Quarry Lake into LEED-Certified mixed use development.** Implementation discussion with the Muhlenberg Water Authority has revealed their plans for a treatment plant at this location in order to draw water from the lake as part of the treatment process. At this point, the cost exceeds the benefit, and there is not sufficient demand to warrant moving forward with this plant. The Township should begin discussions with the Water Authority to develop a plan for the mixed use project, while determining a more appropriate site for the treatment plant.
 - Note the treatment plant may be better located along the railway tracks behind the Unique Pretzel Factory expansion and could possibly be combined with the suggested environmental education facility on the west side of the quarry. This would add to the public benefit of the facility while still permitting mixed-

use development on the north rim that could help offset the cost of the public facility.

- Work with the owners/developers of the Town Square Shopping Center and the Water Authority to create a public/private partnership for mixed-use quarry development that could create a revenue stream and/or bonding source for leveraging a new Quarry Lake Park and other public improvements along the corridor. Tax Increment Financing could be used for this purpose whereby the new tax increment could pay for the park and other improvements. The TIF could also be used to provide funds for debt service for the Water Authority's treatment plant.
- Leverage public funding for the following projects:
 - **Improvements along the Town Square Shopping Center frontage.** These improvements include the creation of a cul-de-sac for North Temple Boulevard near its intersection with Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike, the addition of a bus pull-off area and pedestrian connectivity improvements. These improvements increase pedestrian mobility and can promote redevelopment of the east side of the road, or infill development within the Town Square Shopping Center.
 - **Streetscape improvements within the quarry / school area.** This long-range improvement can improve the overall quality and uniqueness of the corridor.
 - **Capacity improvements at the intersection of Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike and Water Street.** These improvements are recommended to accommodate increased traffic volumes from development and redevelopment along the corridor. The funding can be subsidized by development / redevelopment contributions.
 - **Access management** in this District is critical. Accesses should be evaluated during each redevelopment project. The Township should adopt an Access Management Program as a guiding principle including updates to the SALDO.
- Use redevelopment initiatives as an opportunity to **upgrade ADA compliant sidewalk along the corridor**, including connections within the commercial areas.
- Leverage Multi-Modal public funding for the following initiatives:
 - **Establish a "Green-Belt" shared-use trail within the community**, adjacent to and generally parallel to the corridor. As identified in the Transportation Section, this would provide safer passage for bicyclists of all ages and would accommodate recreational bike-riding, in addition to increasing mobility between local destinations. Within this District, the trail should connect to the NGK Metals site, the schools, the library and the Muhlenberg Swimming Association.



- The suggested Laurel Run Greenway trail could also be included with the “Green-belt” trail suggested above to link with additional public and private uses along Water Street.
- **Provide uniform high-visibility thermoplastic pedestrian crosswalks at all signalized intersections** within this District. This treatment will provide safer, defined crossing points for pedestrians.
- **Create bus stops along Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike that are ADA compliant and provide safe locations for the buses to pull-off outside of the traffic stream.** BARTA has indicated that this corridor has their highest ridership; providing safe, accessible access should further increase transit usage and pedestrian activity.
- **Tax Increment Financing Plan** – NGK Metals Site and the Quarry Lake Mixed Use Project. The NGK site will require funding for remediation; TIF funds can be used to supplement remediation grant funding. The TIF funds can also be used to assist the Water Authority in developing a treatment plant closer to the railroad line behind Unique Pretzel. The TIF Plan should be developed with the cooperation of the Muhlenberg School District and Berks County.
- Other Key Land Use and Corridor Design Actions:
 - **Vehicle-oriented retailers** - Focus vehicle-oriented sales, service and repair uses within identified areas along the corridor through adjustments in permitted uses in corresponding commercial and industrial zoning districts.
 - **Retail and restaurants** - Focus retail and restaurant uses in or adjacent to existing shopping centers only in Zone 2. Actively market and pursue a restaurant use for the vacant, South Temple Boulevard site across from the Town Square Shopping Center.
 - **Business Relocation** - Pursue future voluntary relocation of Mattress Discount Shop tenant to North Reading Plaza and reuse the site and building for an industrial or employment use.
- **Mobile Home Relocation** - Pursue voluntary relocation and acquisition of mobile home residences along the Laurel Run and Darby Avenue area to a safer living location for residents. Assembled land parcels should then be consolidated and subdivided to market to new or relocated ‘clustered’ vehicle service/repair businesses.
- **Redevelopment** - Pursue focused acquisition, marketing and future redevelopment of the Kline’s Motel Site for an industrial/employment use and/or possible shared parking resource to serve surrounding and expanding employment uses.

TOWN CENTER DISTRICT (FOCUS AREA 3) – A PLACE TO VISIT

The purpose of the Town Center District is to encourage the development of a lively, mixed use area, centered on the adaptive reuse of existing, underutilized retail spaces to capitalize on new use opportunities. As indicated in the Market Assessment, such opportunities could include professional medical services and skilled employment uses, hospitality and restaurant uses, municipal and recreational uses, and new residential uses. More specifically, this district will serve to achieve the following objectives:

- Promote the development of a commercial service district in which a variety of medical, commercial, office, civic, entertainment, quality retail, and residential uses are permitted in a pedestrian accessible environment;
- Preserve the integrity and value of existing nearby single- and multi-family residences;
- Provide specific, targeted regulations regarding streetscape design, landscape design, parking, architectural and façade design, residential dwelling units, and setback standards; and
- Encourage the development of new or the adaptive reuse of existing commercial buildings that are harmonious with each other and with the Township’s Revitalization Plan recommendations for the Town Center District

Concentrating on attracting a non-retail use to this district is the key to stabilizing the existing retail. As this area begins to stabilize and retailers can once again be recruited, the Township should work with property owners to create a new town center that mimics the appearance of a traditional downtown. This will enable the Township to hold special events to showcase the available retail.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- **Adopt new Zoning and Subdivision / Land Development Ordinances** to coincide with the land use recommendations within this Plan.
- **Adjust land uses permitted within current zoning districts** to match the recommended land use plan for the corridor and this specific focus area.
- **Key Market Uses:** Medical Services and Retail (Reading Health System, St. Joe’s Regional Health Network, Penn State Hershey Medical Group). The Reading Hospital has been expanding since 2009; in 2012 the Reading Hospital changed their name to the Reading Health System. The “System” now includes the 673-bed acute care hospital in West Reading, along with a number of facilities that provide skilled care. St. Joe’s Regional Health Network has also been expanding to meet the health needs of the community. In 2010, St. Joe’s opened an urgent care walk in facility in Maiden creek Township on Route 222. Along with providing urgent care services, this facility also provides CT scan, X-Ray, Lab, Mammography, Physical Therapy and EKG. Our nation’s health systems will continue to expand to meet the needs of our aging population.

These health systems do not currently have a presence on the Corridor, partnerships should be created with one of these health systems to develop a medical mall type use within the southern portion of the Corridor.

- **Infill vacant storefronts with medical use;** these should be concentrated into one area to create critical mass
- The following projects should be pursued in conjunction with the redevelopment of the Town Center District:
 - **Removal of the traffic signal for Plaza 222 and convert this access to right-in / right-out. Provide alternate signalized access via a new traffic signal at Elizabeth Avenue.** A signal at this location can serve motorists along Elizabeth Avenue, while still providing signalized access to Plaza 222 from Elizabeth Avenue. This also provides for the future extension of Elizabeth Avenue west of Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike.
 - **Extend Emerson Avenue and Florin Avenue** to improve connectivity between the residential areas and the commercial district. This can help blend land uses and facilitate mixed land uses to avoid distinctions between residential and commercial areas.
- The following projects should be pursued in conjunction with redevelopment and infill opportunities within Muhlenberg Plaza and the Fairgrounds Square Mall:
 - **Potential modifications to the Fairgrounds Square Mall / Muhlenberg Plaza access from Bellevue Avenue.** Relocating the mall access to the east (across from the Unique Pretzel Driveway) provides separation from the railroad bridge, allowing for the development of proper turn lanes and a western gateway. This also allows for signalized access to Muhlenberg Plaza area and for Unique Pretzel.
 - **Extension of Elizabeth Avenue into Muhlenberg Plaza,** which will provide direct connection into the Fairgrounds Farmers Market and additional signalized access to the Fairgrounds Square Mall.



TOWNE CENTER DISTRICT (FOCUS AREA 3) – A PLACE TO VISIT

KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (CONT'D)

- **Modification of the Fairgrounds Square Mall access at George Street** to an Entrance Only. This modification will enhance the overall traffic flow in this area by simplifying the intersection operation and facilitating two-way traffic along George Street. This will improve the overall connectivity of the roadways in this area. This modification will not diminish access into the mall. Alternate egress should be provided along George Street to the south and via the existing signal to the north. The modification will have to be properly staged and sequenced to ensure both egress movements and internal circulation is efficient.
- Utilize redevelopment initiatives to provide a southbound right turn lane along Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike at the intersection with Bellevue Avenue. This intersection is currently near capacity and this improvement will help the intersection accommodate the future traffic demand along the corridor.
- **Close Fairview Street** with the relocation of the Township Municipal facilities. This will eliminate a skewed intersection and provide extra developable land.
- Work with PennDOT to establish a break in the Limited Access Right-of-Way to **create a fourth leg to the intersection with of Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike and the Route 12 Eastbound Ramps**. This direct access across from the interchange can promote redevelopment activities within this quadrant of the interchange.
- Work with PennDOT to create streetscape, signage, landscape and lighting improvements for the Route 12 and Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike gateway.
- Use redevelopment initiatives as an opportunity to **upgrade ADA compliant sidewalk along the corridor**, including connections within the commercial areas.
- Leverage Multi-Modal public funding for the following initiatives:
 - **Establish a “Green-Belt” shared-use trail within the community**, adjacent to and generally parallel to the corridor. As identified in the Transportation Section, this would provide safer passage for bicyclists of all ages and would accommodate recreational bike-riding, in addition to increasing mobility between local destinations. Within this District, the trail should connect from Hyde Park to the proposed Town Center, the Fairgrounds Square Mall and the Fairgrounds Farmers Market.

- **Provide uniform high-visibility pedestrian crosswalks at all signalized intersections** within this District. This treatment will emphasize to motorists that they are entering a commercial neighborhood, while improving the aesthetic appeal.
- **Create bus stops along Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike that are ADA compliant and provide safe locations for the buses to pull-off outside of the traffic stream.** BARTA has indicated that this corridor has their highest ridership; providing safe, accessible access should further increase transit usage and pedestrian activity. Any redevelopment within the Fairgrounds Square Mall or Fairgrounds Market should include locations for on-site bus stops
- Other Key Land Use and Corridor Design Actions:
 - **Improve Development Standards** – Encourage redevelopment and renovations to conform to the goals of the Revitalization Plan. For example, continue to work with the property owners/developers of the Elizabeth Avenue McDonald’s Restaurant to acquire the Hess Service Station site and join the sites to create a better, expanded restaurant site adhering to higher quality site development standards.
 - **Targeted Redevelopment** - Approach and actively work with the owner of Plaza 222 to demolish, market and redevelop the old Plaza 222 Cinema site for a new anchor use for the shopping center.
 - **Targeted Redevelopment** - Approach and actively work with the owner(s) of the currently vacant buildings/sites and hotels/motels within the Route 12 Highway/Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike quadrant to demolish, consolidate, market and eventually redevelop the area for new uses.
 - **Targeted Redevelopment** - Approach and actively work with the owner(s) of the Boscov’s outparcel at the Fairview Avenue Mall entrance and the frontage properties along George Street to the west, to consolidate, market and eventually redevelop the area for a new mix of uses and Muhlenberg Avenue entry that would strengthen the South End of the Fairgrounds Square Mall and Boscov’s department Store anchor.
 - **Targeted Redevelopment** - With the establishment of the new Township Municipal Building/Offices in Hyde Park, the Township should incrementally acquire and assemble the identified remnant commercial properties along the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor to better facilitate marketing and redevelopment of new Main Street Mixed-Use Development around the Municipal Campus.

- **Redevelopment Opportunity** - Work to gradually purchase/option and assemble the free-standing commercial properties surrounding the Fairgrounds Farmers Market toward Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike to demolish, consolidate, market and eventually redevelop the area for the Elizabeth Avenue extension and associated Farmer’s Market Retail Village.
- **Improve the Streetscape** - Approach and actively work with the owner of the old Unclaimed Freight Furniture Building and Advanced Auto Parts site to do façade, parking lot and perimeter landscape enhancements at this key gateway property. This would be a similar initiative to the Plaza 222 shopping center and parking enhancements that were completed in 2011.
- **Improve the Streetscape** - Approach and actively work with the owner of the Fairgrounds Farmer’s Market to do façade, parking lot, walkways and perimeter landscape enhancements to improve the visitor experience and linkages to surrounding businesses and attractions, like nearby Unique Pretzel.
- **Increase Employment Uses** - Pursue additional industrial/employment and service commercial uses on current vacant sites along the Bellevue Avenue and Route 61 corridors and gateway, ie. The old O’Grady’s Restaurant site.
- **Encourage Infill** - Approach and actively work with the owner(s) of the Lowe’s and Bj’s Warehouse sites to subdivide and establish permitted outparcels sites along Madison Avenue for new restaurants or supporting retail uses. This would be a similar initiative to the Township’s work with Sam’s Club in 2011 to create an out parcel or shared site use for the service station and carwash that were developed in the Sam’s Club parking lot at the north end of the corridor.



GENERAL CORRIDOR-WIDE IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- The Township should work with corridor merchants/businesses to commission and **establish a corridor branding/marketing program and campaign** similar to, but unique, to that prepared for the West Street corridor leading into Reading. Consider renaming the roadway “Muhlenberg Parkway”, or some other community-identifying name that emphasizes the roadway is not merely a thruway.
- The Township should **establish a Façade and Site Enhancement revolving grant program** to incentivize enhancement/improvement of existing older structures along the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike corridor.
- The Township should commission the preparation and **establishment of corridor specific site development standards and guidelines** that would be required for expansions and new developments on properties within the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Corridor study area. These guidelines should deal specifically with, but not limited to, the following items identified as issues along the corridor:
 - Creation of Muhlenberg Township gateway identity
 - Quality design of walkways & streetscape amenities in the public right-of-way and private development sites;
 - Provision of internal private property walkway linkages with the Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike corridor.
 - ADA accessibility for bus stops;
 - Gradual relocation of overhead utilities underground;
 - Amortization & removal of off-site billboards along the corridor;
 - Amortization of older private development pedestal signage;
 - Limitations and removal of temporary signage;
 - Treatment of outdoor storage, display areas, and tractor-trailer storage areas;
 - Location of refuge, recycling, loading and service bay uses;
 - Better off-street parking delineation and screening requirements;
 - Consistent implementation of on-site landscape requirements;
 - Architecture that reinforces the street environs – Minimum architectural guidelines;
 - Typical franchise architecture vs. Corridor “themed” architecture – Reinforce desired character with incentive-based guidelines;
- Fifth Street Highway / Allentown Pike Enhancements – walkways, signage, lighting, furnishings, vegetation, etc.
- Review on-site stormwater management practices and encourage low-impact solutions.