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COATESVILLE, PA

Coatesville Charrette Report and Urban Design Plan

Knight Program in Community Building – University of Miami School of Architecture

REDISCOVERING ~ REVALUING ~ REBUILDING

COATESVILLE, PA

COATESVILLE CHARRETTE REPORT AND URBAN DESIGN PLAN

A Study Prepared for the City of Coatesville, Pennsylvania
July 2004
By The Knight Program in Community Building, University of Miami School of Architecture

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHARRETTE SUMMARY

For six days, from October 22 through 27, 2003, a team of 30 multi-disciplinary professionals, graduate students, faculty members, and consultants affiliated with the University of Miami School of Architecture's Knight Program in Community Building conducted the Coatesville charrette. The team worked with dozens of local staff and volunteers and several hundred citizens of the City of Coatesville to plan for the area's future growth and development. The charrette team developed master plan concepts and strategic imperatives in the areas of policy, design, and management. These concepts and imperatives were based on: advanced data collection; two pre-charrette visits by team members to meet with local community officials, staff, and citizens; and input during the intensive stakeholder sessions, pinups, and reviews convened during the charrette itself.

Despite its recent economic struggles, Coatesville is a city with an enviable setting, a historic downtown and neighborhoods, good proximity to major markets, and diverse and committed citizens. The City has a cache of walkable streets, affordable housing, and historic architecture and character that no suburb can challenge. It is the type of small, distinctive, urban community with a main street and transit service that has not been built in America for a very long time, but which is in great demand today due to dramatic changes in the demographics and lifestyle preferences of Americans.

These attributes need to be developed to make the City more attractive, more livable, and more convenient for residents, businesses, and visitors. The future lies in maintaining what is unique about Coatesville and enhancing its assets.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

After years of decline, Coatesville is once again experiencing growth pressures, offering the City an opportunity to imagine a new future for itself. The charrette analysis and design work resulted in six strategic imperatives necessary to secure the desired future.

1. CONCENTRATE ACTIVITY

Revitalize and leverage the tremendous value of Coatesville's historic main street and historic properties by concentrating new development, events, and other activities in and near the downtown.

2. MARKET THE COATESVILLE BRAND

Develop a brand identity for Coatesville that will attract tourists to visit; young singles, couples, and families to live and work; and businesses to locate in the City. Build on the area's natural and historic assets to enhance the community's identity.

3. PROTECT AND LEVERAGE NATURAL ASSETS

Protect views of hillsides and hilltops that overlook the City. Protect and improve views and access to the creek.

4. BUILD TO REVALUE HISTORIC ASSETS

Preserve and re-use historic buildings. Require new construction to be compatible with existing urban character.

5. PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Guide future development to reinforce the neighborhood structure.

6. MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE TRANSIT

Promote Coateville's internal transit connections and transit accessibility to the region.

Together, these actions will leverage Coatesville's considerable assets and give shape to future development. Ideally, Coatesville will direct most of its new development effort into its historic, walkable center. Coatesville's center is the key to its future success, and is what sets Coatesville apart from competing suburbs.

MOVING FORWARD: THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE IN COATESVILLE

The *Coatesville Charrette Report and Urban Design Plan* cannot provide solutions for all of the complex social and economic issues that Coatesville's residents face, but the charrette and this plan continue the community dialogue while providing specific proposals, guidelines, and strategies for action.

Growth in Chester County has now reached the edges of Coatesville. The time to plan and choose a future course for development is now. Opportunities abound: the natural amenities of the City's geography and waterfront; a historic main street and rail station; prominently located mill properties available for redevelopment; historic architecture and character; and committed and passionate residents.

To bring about the changes envisioned in this plan does not require one grand sweeping effort completed in a single stroke. The enhancement of Coatesville will unfold through an incremental approach in which individual steps will accumulate over time to create the place that citizens dream of: street by street, building by building, each move following a unified vision for a more livable community. This plan and the citizens and public officials who work to implement its recommendations will ensure that the combination of these actions add up to more than the sum of its parts, delivering a more livable Coatesville for the benefit of all current and future residents.

"Success," as car racing legend Bobby Unser said, "is where preparation and opportunity meet." We believe that the people of Coatesville who came together for the charrette have the talent, creativity, and commitment to continue to move this initiative forward and prepare to take advantage of each opportunity that arises to build a more livable, prosperous community of the 21st century.

1. CONCENTRATE ACTIVITY

Revitalize and leverage the tremendous value of Coatesville's historic main street and historic properties by concentrating new development, events, and other activities in and near the downtown:

- Establish incentives to attract desired uses downtown (grocery store, movie theater, offices, housing).
- Develop the Steel Mill and waterfront properties into a regional mixed-use destination.
- Redevelop the train station and acquire commuter service.
- Develop Third Avenue to tie the train station, the City Hall complex, and the school to Lincoln Highway.

2. MARKET THE COATESVILLE BRAND

Develop a brand identity for Coatesville that will attract tourists to visit; young singles, couples, and families to live and work; and businesses to locate (or re-locate). Build on the area's natural and historic assets to enhance identity.

MASTER PLAN

3. PROTECT AND LEVERAGE NATURAL ASSETS

Protect the view of hillsides and hilltops that overlook the City. Protect and improve views and access to the creek.

4. BUILD TO REVALUE HISTORIC ASSETS

Preserve and re-use historic buildings. Require new construction to be compatible with existing urban and architectural character.

5. PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Guide future development to reinforce the neighborhood structure.

6. MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE TRANSIT

Promote Coatesville's internal transit connections and transit accessibility to the region.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

The *Coatesville Charrette Report and Urban Design Plan* is organized into six sections as follows:

I: Executive Summary

Provides a brief overview of the key points of the report.

II: Introduction

Provides background on the study area and an overview of the charrette process.

III: Existing Conditions

Provides a description and analysis of the existing conditions in the study area.

IV: Urban Design Plan

Contains the heart of the *Report*, including a summary of ideas explored in the charrette and a breakdown of the design strategies embodied in the master plan concepts, with design guidelines to be incorporated into regulations that will guide the plan's implementation.

V: Strategic Actions

Identifies the strategic imperatives and recommended actions in areas of design, policy, and management in order to implement the goals and visions that emerged during the charrette.

VI: Appendix

Includes a summary of the stakeholder meetings and a list of documents and reports used in preparation for the charrette.

Downtown Coatesville

Coatesville Charrette

Brandywine Creek

Coatesville Cultural Society

Coatesville Train Station

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The 2003 Knight Program in Community Building Design Charrette was held in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. This location was selected through a competitive process that included the submission of a proposal, a phone interview, and ultimately, selection by the 2003 Knight Fellows. Coatesville was selected because of the unique opportunities presented, including:

- Possibility to have a major impact on the entire City and address a number of different conditions including urban infill, brownfields, and greenfields
- Potential for the process to serve as a model for other similar Pennsylvania communities and
- Ability of the community to implement the design ideas

In the months leading up to the charrette, the Knight Fellows made two pre-charrette visits to the City of Coatesville. During each visit we met with community leaders, stakeholders, government agencies, and business leaders. The objective of our visits was to get acquainted with the place, the people, the assets and challenges of the community, and to identify the goals of community leaders and administrators.

The Coatesville charrette opening presentation was held at Gordon Elementary School and featured a discussion on urban design by Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, dean of the University of Miami School of Architecture, followed by roundtable discussions with citizens to discuss Parks, Historic Areas, Safety, Churches, Schools, Nonprofits, Housing, and Transportation. City Hall served as the charrette headquarters, with Council Chambers as the design studio. Residents were encouraged to visit the charrette headquarters and participate in the community meetings and the pin-up review sessions held throughout the process. The City of Coatesville devoted the October issue of "City Scapes," the quarterly City of Coatesville newsletter, to the charrette, including an invitation from the City Council President to all the residents of Coatesville to attend and participate in the charrette. During the course of the charrette, over 500 citizens participated in the opening, community meetings, mid-review, and closing presentation.

The community meetings were held over a three-day period, with active participation by residents and stakeholders. The topics of the meeting included:

- Transportation, Street Design, and Transit
- Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism
- Shatterzone (steel mill site redevelopment)
- Downtown business
- Riverwalk, Parks, Trails, and Community Facilities
- Developers, Landowners, and Financial Institutions
- Land Use Policies, Codes, and Public Works
- Schools and Safety
- Churches, Cultural Groups, and Nonprofits
- Housing and Rent

During each meeting, input and ideas from the participants were recorded to help the design team put ideas into a visual context.

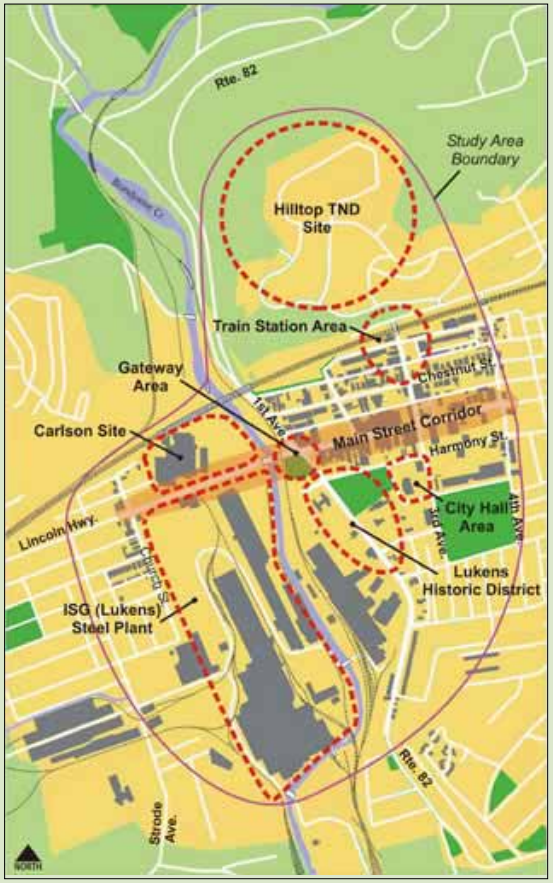
Drawing on all of the public input, the charrette team developed possible options for land use and urban design decisions and presented these ideas at a community pin-up session, where residents commented on the preliminary

A charrette is a collaborative planning process where citizens, designers, planners, and community officials gather to formulate a vision for future development in an area. A charrette facilitates input from all participants and provides the design team with immediate feedback on the community's vision and ideas.

drawings to ensure that the final product reflected the input received. Ultimately, master plan concepts were completed and presented at a final reception and closing presentation. In the months that followed, all of the drawings produced at the charrette were scanned into a digital format; specialized sections of the report were completed, assembled, and edited by members of the charrette team; and the report was designed graphically. The *Coatesville Charrette Report and Urban Design Plan* is intended to serve as the basis for the vision that will guide the inevitable growth and redevelopment in the study area and help the City of Coatesville continue to thrive.

Knight Fellows and Coatesville community members visited and discussed development issues within the study area (left). This report explains the many master plan concepts for new development and redevelopment.

The study boundary is identified in red (right), and includes several areas: Main Street Corridor, Gateway Area, Carlson Site, ISG (Lukens) Steel Plant, Lukens Historic District, City Hall Area, Train Station Area, and Hilltop TND Site.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Coatesville is located along the west branch of the Brandywine Creek in the heart of Chester County and the Brandywine Valley. The first settlement in the area was an Indian village that grew as a trading center and market for the fur trapping industry. In 1787, Moses Coates, a prosperous farmer and the area's first postmaster, purchased land that is now the center of Coatesville.

In 1794, rural life in the valley changed with the completion of the Philadelphia to Lancaster Turnpike, now U.S. Route 30, historic Lincoln Highway, and America's first turnpike. Moses Coates's son-in-law, Jesse Kersey, a potter by trade and a Quaker missionary by vocation, conceived the idea to develop the area by selling frontage properties on the turnpike. Kersey formed a partnership with ironmaster Isaac Pennock and, in 1810, purchased over one hundred acres of Coates's farm that lay along both sides of the Brandywine Creek. The farm's sawmill was converted to an ironworks and named Brandywine Iron Works and Nail Factory, the forerunner of Lukens, Inc.

An event of major importance to the region was the construction of the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad and the establishment of a station on the west side of the Brandywine in 1834. Because of its location at the halfway point between the two terminals, the station was designated as "Midway," and the village that quickly formed around the terminal took the same name. The railroad depot became the liveliest spot in town. In 1867, the Village of Coatesville and the Village of Midway joined to form the Borough of Coatesville. It continued to operate as a borough until 1915, when by vote of its citizens, it became the first and only city in Chester County.

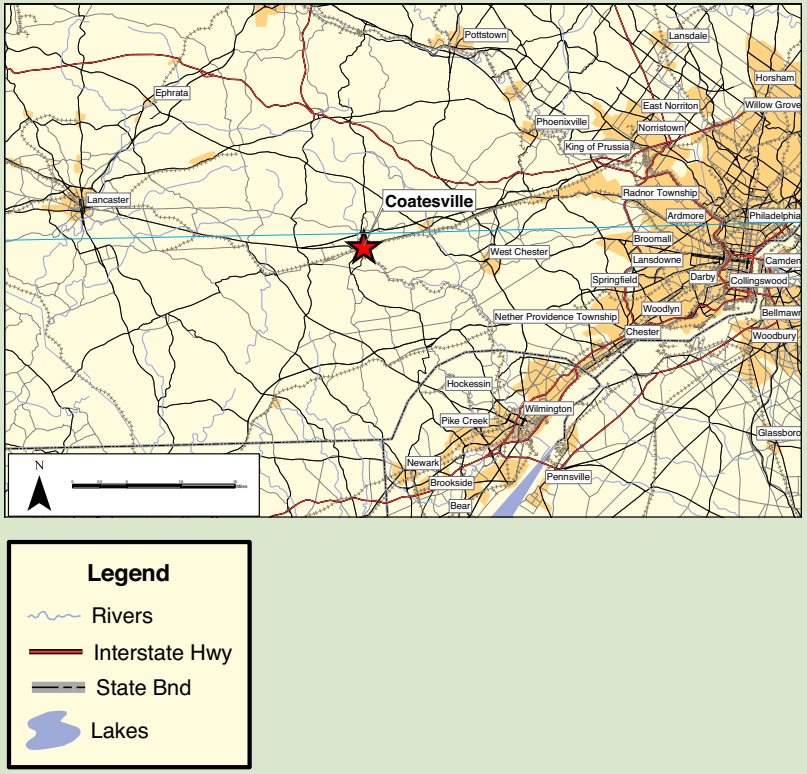
By the 1950s, the City of Coatesville had become the economic center of western Chester County with nearly 6,000 jobs associated with the steel industry. However, as the end of the 1960s approached, five events propelled the City into three decades of decline:

- Construction of the U.S. 30 Bypass;
- Construction of a regional mall in a nearby town;
- Construction of Oak Street, a public housing project;
- Development of the electric furnace and resulting dislocation of steel industry jobs, including Lukens Steel's evolution from an employer of 6,000 to just over 1,000; and
- Relocation of Lukens' headquarters from downtown Coatesville to a neighboring community.

In 1998, Bethlehem purchased the Lukens Steel Mill. Five years later, in 2003, the International Steel Group, Inc. (ISG) acquired the mill from Bethlehem, and it is now called Coatesville: ISG Plate Inc.

The City of Coatesville now faces a number of challenges and opportunities. Economic activity has been weak, and City residents are disproportionately less affluent than the surrounding region. The perception of crime remains a problem. The infrastructure is aging and needs repair to support new development and redevelopment. In these respects, Coatesville is not unlike many small cities in America. Successful turnarounds in a number of similar communities show that these challenges are also opportunities for change, rejuvenation, and empowerment.

COATESVILLE AND SURROUNDING REGION



COATESVILLE ASSETS

The City of Coatesville is fortunate to have a number of important assets that it can build on as it revitalizes the downtown, including multi-modal transportation, a central business district, an industrial redevelopment site, historic buildings and urban design, and a destination venue.

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

Coatesville is served by rail via the Amtrak Keystone Corridor; automobile via the Lincoln Highway (Business Route 30), U.S. Route 30 Bypass, and PA 82; air via Chester County Airport; local bus; bikes lanes the length of Lincoln Highway; and a network of pedestrian sidewalks throughout the City. Although the City is multi-modal, the modes fail to connect with each other.

A CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District is the symbolic center of Coatesville and encompasses approximately 30 acres bordered by the railroad to the north, industrial uses to the west, additional commercial uses to the east, and the historic area to the south. The Central Business District (CBD) currently supports a number of successful businesses, but also contains vacant parcels and abandoned, blighted properties. Lincoln Highway can be preserved and enhanced to become the vibrant core of the City. Lack of parking in the CBD is a primary concern in the community, but parking requirements need to be balanced with the creation of a pedestrian-friendly commercial corridor and public space.

AN INDUSTRIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITE

The steel mill has long dominated the area surrounding the Brandywine Creek. Current operations on the land owned by ISG and G. O. Carlson represent only a fraction of former capacity. Today, the opportunity to redevelop approximately 50 acres of the land into new uses opens up significant redevelopment possibilities.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND URBAN DESIGN

The mansion district of Coatesville is directly across the Brandywine Creek from the steel plant. Home to the former mill executives, this area represents approximately nine acres that can be enhanced to draw visitors to the City of Coatesville. In addition, the vistas of the City are dominated by the historic railway viaduct. One of the oldest viaducts in the nation, this railway viaduct spans PA 82 and acts as a symbolic gate into the City.

A DESTINATION VENUE

The Brandywine Creek serves as the anchor for proposed destination entertainment within the City of Coatesville. Nestled between the ISG mill and the Historic District, the creek presents an opportunity for new recreation, commercial, and residential development. A walking and biking trail is planned from Coatesville to Hibernia (six miles north); the creek can be cleaned, restored, and used for gentle water recreation, such as kayaking and canoeing; and a new riverwalk can knit the natural resources of the creek into the downtown, providing a unique and highly attractive combination of a historic main street linked to a riverwalk promenade.

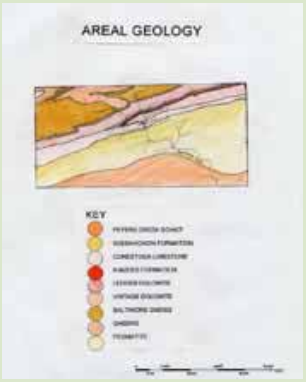
B. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Coatesville is located in a unique environmental setting of two crossing valleys, where the Brandywine Creek collects water from smaller watersheds. This intersection constricts water flow and has caused flooding in the past. A topographical analysis shows Coatesville resting in a "bowl," where the hills provide a natural background.

The Brandywine Creek is a destination point within the greater region. Running along the mill entry into the City and south through the Coatesville: ISG Plate mill and the Historic District, the creek is an opportunity yet to be realized. Today, views to the creek from the bridges are often blocked by overgrown vegetation, and much of the creek is inaccessible. However, the waterfront can be cleaned, restored, and made accessible for water recreation such as kayaking and canoeing. In the downtown, the creek can be transformed into a more urban riverwalk with shops, offices, and residences overlooking an active waterfront with cafes, public gathering spaces, and settings for outdoor performances and festivals that blend active and passive recreational uses.

The crests of the hilltops surround the City both physically and figuratively, embracing the built space in the valley and creating an intimate setting and enclosure of space that is quite unique. The preservation of and access to the Creek and the surrounding hilltops should be among the City's immediate strategic priorities. These views from downtown up the hills to the crest are an important part of Coatesville's identity.

The Brandywine Creek with Coatesville: ISG Plate, Inc. visible on the horizon.

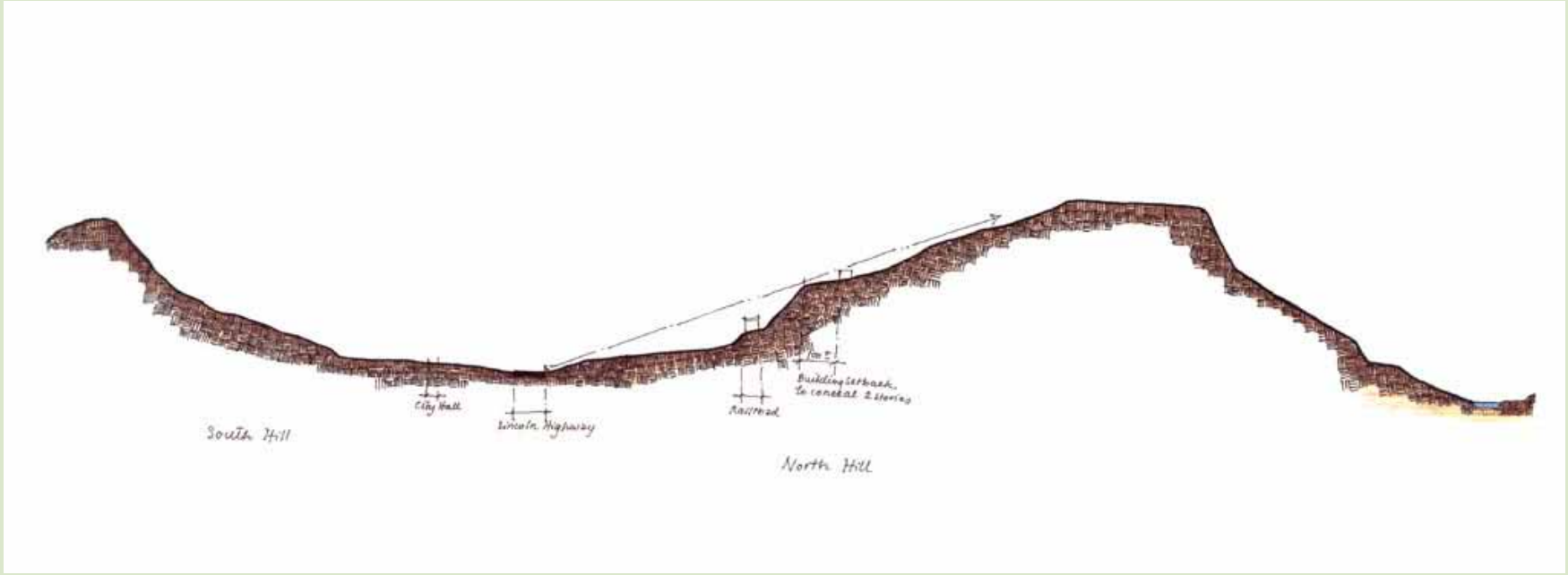


The watersheds containing Coatesville are underlain by a complex carbonate geology affected by metamorphic events.

An aerial photograph of Coatesville, illustrating its linear development at the nexus of two valleys.

This drawing of Coatesville's topography illustrates the intersecting valleys and surrounding hills.

The sloping streets illustrate Coatesville's position in the valley "bowl."



Coatesville's hills provide enclosure and vistas of nature from the downtown. To maintain this asset, careful siting of hilltop development is necessary. Buildings behind the crest of the hill will be effectively concealed, preserving the City's visual greenbelt. Exceptions should be made only for the most distinctive civic structures, such as clocktowers, steeples, obelisks, or other elements that act as beacons for the town below, rather than rows of conventional apartment buildings, offices, and houses that crowd the downtown and block views.

C. TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM

Coatesville is served by rail via the Amtrak Keystone Corridor; automobile via the Lincoln Highway (Business Route 30), US Route 30 Bypass, and PA 82; air via Chester County Airport; local bus; bike lanes the length of Lincoln Highway; and a network of pedestrian sidewalks throughout the City. Until there were substantial declines in ridership, the City also was served by SEPTA commuter rail service.

Although the City is multi-modal, the transportation modes fail to connect with each other.

PEDESTRIANS

Many people depend on walking, biking, and transit as primary forms of transportation in and around Coateville, raising the importance of creating and maintaining a pedestrian-friendly urban form. Downtown Coatesville and nearby historic neighborhoods are generally built in a pedestrian-friendly manner, with a good fabric of interconnected streets and sidewalks, and a pleasant urban form with buildings lining the streets and on-street parking to buffer pedestrians from traffic. However, the excessive length of street blocks hinders pedestrian access. Often, people jaywalk to reach destination points along the business corridor.

LIGHTING

Citizens rate the public lighting along the main streets as "good," but lighting along residential side streets, particularly in the eastern portion, needs improvement. Lighting for downtown commercial and residential neighborhoods requires very different types of light fixtures and wattages than suburban or rural conditions. Too little light becomes a safety issue, but too much light in the form of tall poles with "cobra head" fixtures and glaring white light intended for shopping mall parking lots can be equally destructive of the types of ambience that attract people to live, work, and visit in the downtown. Inappropriate suburban-style lighting is frequently a problem when large infill development is carried out in a historic downtown. Urban lighting standards for main street and residential areas should be adopted that establish suitable fixtures and luminescence for each condition.

BIKE FACILITIES

Bike lanes line Lincoln Highway, but they do not extend into neighboring towns or into the neighborhoods, thus limiting their usefulness. Connections with side streets and other bicycle trail systems should be explored, and the existing bike lane striping should be evaluated to see whether or not it should be converted to additional on-street parking.

TRAIN SERVICE

The Coatesville Train Station is vacant. The platform and platform structures are crumbling, but still in use, connecting the City to places like Philadelphia and Lancaster.

Amtrak provides passenger rail service to Coatesville, but stops are infrequent, just a few times a day. Currently, there are mid-day gaps, as there is no train service eastbound from 8:18 AM to 4:02 PM and westbound from 6:58 AM to 5:22 PM. Norfolk Southern, out of Philadelphia, controls freight train service on the Amtrak main line.

BUS SERVICE

Krapf's Coaches, Inc. provides the local and regional bus service in and around Coatesville. In 1992, Krapf's took over the former Route 120 line, which connects Coatesville with Downingtown, Exton, and West Chester. Now called Route A, the service picks up more than 1,200 passengers a day, seven days a week, between the hours of 5:30 AM and 11:00 PM. Other fixed public transit routes within the City include the Coatesville Link Evening Services (CLE); the Rambler, serving Upper Merion Township and Conshohocken; southern Chester County's SCCOOT services; and Bala Cynwyd's CART service. In 1994, Krapf's Coaches became the first private contractor to provide fixed route services for SEPTA. They operate routes 204, 208, and 207, and the West Whiteland Whirl, in addition to running the DART routes 59, 62, 63, 64, and 65.

Downtown Coatesville street

SEPTA Bus

STREETS AND AUTO TRAFFIC

Coatesville's streets, alleys, and roadways that make up the main thoroughfares and residential side streets are generally in good condition. Beyond lighting fixtures, streetscape enhancements are lacking along the main streets throughout the City.

Within the downtown, cars tend to travel 25 M.P.H., which is an appropriate speed for downtown traffic. The signals along Lincoln Highway should be coordinated to ensure the smooth flow of vehicles at or below this speed.

Traffic is often congested at the hospital exit, which is on a narrow, steep hill. The resulting stacking problem extends onto the highway at the next exchange. The Oak Hills area is becoming a possible alternative to accessing Coatesville from the south.

TRUCK TRAFFIC

Currently, there is a high volume of north-south truck traffic through the Historic District. Many of these trucks are transporting large loads of scrap steel to the steel mill. However, truck traffic on Lincoln Highway is limited to local deliveries along the street. Due to weight and direction limits, trucks carrying scrap tend to use Route 82. These trucks are typically very large, causing damage to the mast arms holding overhead traffic signals. While not all providers of scrap have access to rail, necessitating the use of trucks, City residents have expressed a desire to see more scrap transported via rail instead of truck.

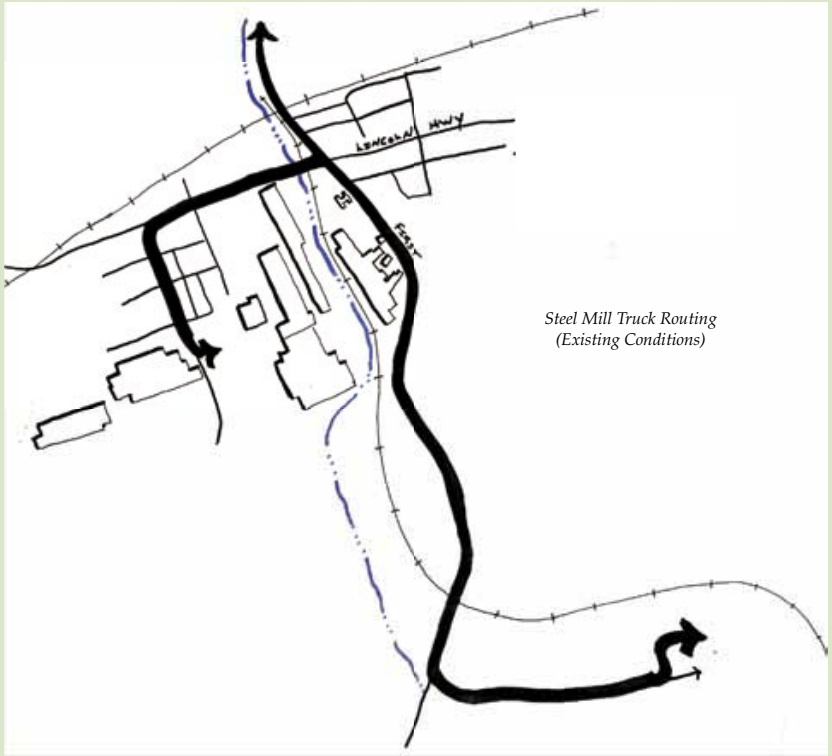
The mill operators also have expressed the desire to transport a higher proportion of scrap by rail. Scrap transportation options should be studied further to see:

- whether more scrap can be delivered to the existing rail yard(s) presently loading scrap;
- whether additional locations exist along the rail and outside of the downtown where bulk scrap may be broken down and loaded on railcars; and
- what other options, if any, exist to transport more scrap by rail.

AIRPORT SERVICE

The City is served by the Chester County Airport (CCA), which is equipped to handle most corporate business aircraft 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Due to Coatesville's topography, the flight path is so high that planes arrive and depart unheard. Rental cars and professional flight instruction courses are also offered through the CCA.

Chester County Airport (CCA)



Steel Mill Truck Routing (Existing Conditions)

Scrap hauling and other industrial truck traffic travels through the historic areas of Coatesville.

D. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

One of Coatesville's outstanding characteristics, conveyed by residents throughout the charrette, was the strong sense of community, deeply connected to Coatesville's industrial heritage and its history as a working steel town. Coatesville has been a racially mixed community since at least the time of the Civil War, when there were stops on the underground railroad immediately adjacent to the steel mill. In addition to the strong sense of identity based on its industrial history, Coatesville is fortunate to have a large population of young people who will provide a resource for new traditions and industries. Coatesville will have to tap the energy and vitality of the younger generation in order to realize the full potential of the City, which will need to have one foot firmly in the future even while celebrating its past.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2000 Census revealed that Coatesville's demographics had shifted to create a "majority minority" community. Latinos, originating from Central America and Mexico, are Coatesville's fastest growing ethnic group. Conversely, the overall population experienced a decline of ten percent (10%) between the 1990 and 2000 census. Seventy percent (70%) of the population is 44 years old or younger.

There is a perceived ethnic divide between the east end and west end residents and the amenities available in each community. This divide is apparent in discussions about recreation. Residents state that the recreation facility available on the east end is only used by residents of the east end, while the west end residents do not have their own formal recreation center.

Numerically, the two age cohorts with the largest increase in population were 5- to 24-year-olds, and 45- to 64-year-olds. The population growth of Coatesville is projected to be approximately 300 additional people between now and 2010.

INCOME

In the City, the median household income is $29,900, or forty-six percent (46%) of the county median. Forty-four percent (44%) of Coatesville households earn less than $25,000 per year, and forty percent (40%) of the population receives some form of public assistance.

POLICE & SAFETY

Coatesville citizens describe the relationship between the police and the community as improving. The City has an active Weed and Seed Program and other community policing services. Despite these improvements, some residents reported racial profiling incidents and aggressive policing. Reported crime incidents have risen due to these measures of increased policing, but there seems to be an overall decline in violent activity. Drug-related crime continues to pose the single largest safety challenge in the City of Coatesville. In general, safety within the City has improved. However, Coatesville continues to be plagued by the perception of high crime from people outside the City.

EMPLOYMENT

The City's unemployment rate currently hovers between six percent (6%) and seven percent (7%), more than double the county rate. Currently, there are no job training programs or satellite college campuses within the corporate limits of Coatesville. Pennsylvania Career Link, the statewide job training and employment program, provides services in Chester County (visit http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us for more information). Residents are also concerned about the lack of population trained to be poised for a potential influx of white-collar positions.

RECREATION

There is strong interest from Coatesville residents in having a wider variety and increased number of recreation facilities. Of existing recreation facilities, the Scott School site and Ash Park are used the most.

EDUCATION

The primary and secondary education system has a good reputation within Coatesville. However, residents in the surrounding county do not have as favorable an opinion of the schools in Coatesville.

Coatesville residents at the Charrette

E. HOUSING

Coatesville's existing housing stock, with its great variety of single-family houses, twins, rowhouses, and apartments, provides affordable housing throughout the City and should be preserved as new housing is added to accommodate a variety of household types and incomes. Coatesville's residential neighborhoods have a fairly uniform character, created by narrow walks, short fronts and backs, and primarily single and twin houses. The prevalence of alleys allows the fronts to be dominated by porches, rather than garages. The historic house types and neighborhood form provide excellent precedents for the planning and design of infill development that can gradually blend more intensive, urban-style housing into the existing pattern of blocks and streets.

Coatesville's housing stock is mature, as seventy percent (70%) of the homes were built prior to 1959. While most of the City's housing stock is single-family attached or mixed-use, it is characterized by significant architectural diversity. Numbers indicate that the housing stock in Coatesville is valued at less than fifty percent (50%) of the county median values. However, anecdotal reports suggest housing values are rising within city limits. Many residents express a desire for assistance in improving and maintaining the existing building stock.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

Currently, forty-six percent (46%) of Coatesville's homes are owner-occupied, well below the national average of sixty-eight percent (68%). School taxes are perceived as burdensome and a barrier to homeownership. While there is a local homebuyers education program, its effectiveness in increasing the homeownership rate is unclear.

RENTAL HOUSING

Fifty-four percent (54%) of the housing stock in Coatesville is rental. Residents give rental-unit code enforcement efforts mixed reviews. The average rent in Coatesville is between $500 and $850. There are some reports of rental "gouging" for recent Latino immigrants.

FINANCING

Many citizens raised concerns over home financing; predatory lending, especially towards seniors; a lack of mortgage financing options; and high interest rates.

MIXED-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS

Residents expressed an interest in creating a balance between affordable and market-rate housing through the development of mixed-income neighborhoods.

Residential neighborhood within Coatesville

Coatesville single-family attached homes

Coatesville rowhomes

Coatesville single-family detached home

Coatesville multi-family housing

Coatesville mixed-use block

A study of lots and house siting east of Third Avenue identifies deep front yards, rear yards, narrow lots, rowhouses and twins, and sometimes the presence of alleys.

A study of lots and house siting west of Church Street finds front yards shallower than those found east of Third Avenue; rear yards sometimes with garages and alleys; narrow, deep lots; and rows and twins dominating the housing stock.

F. ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE CONTEXT

The largest employment sectors in Coatesville are educational, health, and human services (23%), manufacturing (18%), and retail trade (14%). Forty-four percent (44%) of the households earn less than $25,000 per year.

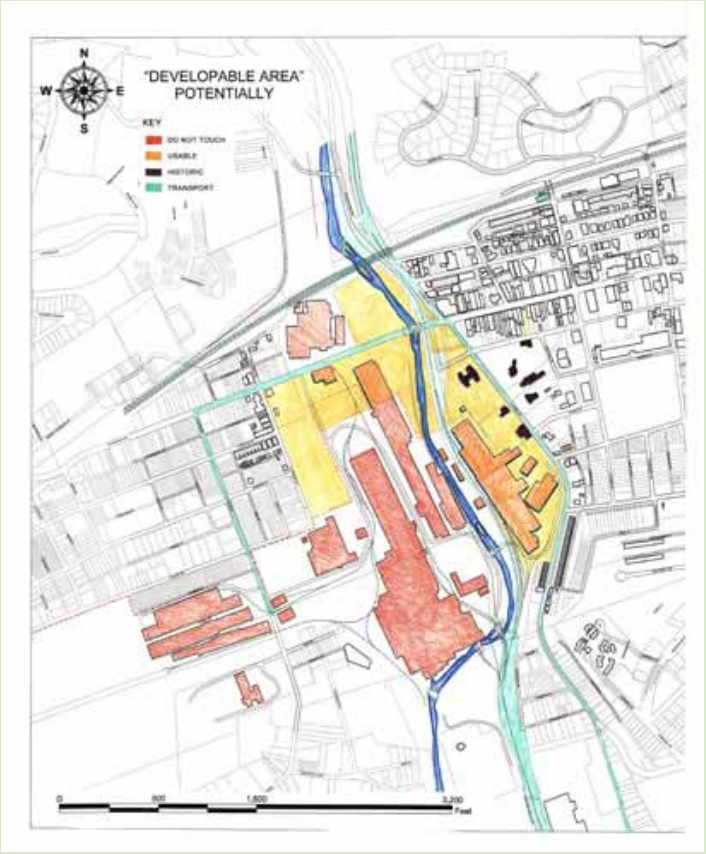
STEEL MILL

The ISG Mill facility has long dominated the area surrounding the Brandywine and remains active, but is inefficient in its use of land and burdened with environmental concerns. The owner has an incentive to divest real estate, presenting the opportunity to redevelop approximately 50 acres of formerly industrial land, including the unused portions of both the ISG plant and the G. O. Carlson site. The acquisition of these sites will create the opportunity to join the east and west ends of the City. Lincoln Highway passes through the center of this redevelopment area.

LENDING ENVIRONMENT

Currently, there is no community development bank or non-bank lender present within the city limits, and only one local bank is noted for mortgage lending. Despite this, the City uses a variety of other financial tools to spur economic development. Hope VI funds and assistance from the Redevelopment Authority contribute development dollars,

This interior view of the Steel Mill illustrates the vast amount of space available for development.



Relatively minor changes in the operations of the mill could open up a large amount of land for redevelopment.

along with tax increment financing (TIF), historic tax credits, and HOME funding. The City also offers a "soft second" down payment program and a small micro-loan fund. Chester County operates a small-business training program that works in conjunction with Coatesville's micro-loan fund program.

Commercial real estate lending for mixed-use development in the area is difficult. Furthermore, brownfield sites in Coatesville are common, and the Pennsylvania Act 2 land designation for partially cleaned brownfields complicates financing and site availability.

Downtown Development

Coatesville is fortunate to have a strong urban character to its downtown. It will be important to weave new infill development into the the existing fabric of walkable streets and blocks, and to extend the urban character of blocks and neighborhoods through new development in the large redevelopment sites, such as the ISG mill and G. O. Carlson sites. Throughout the charrette, there was strong agreement that new development should begin in the downtown, where development can support existing businesses and contribute to the vitality of downtown. In contrast, development along Route 82 on the outskirts of town may draw energy and business away from the downtown.

The quality of the retail frontages in downtown Coatesville is spotty, with very few areas of consistently good frontages. This quality is related to the architecture and condition of the buildings, but also depends on the uses and activities within the buildings. To create a

Building conditions in the downtown vary.

Downtown Coatesville

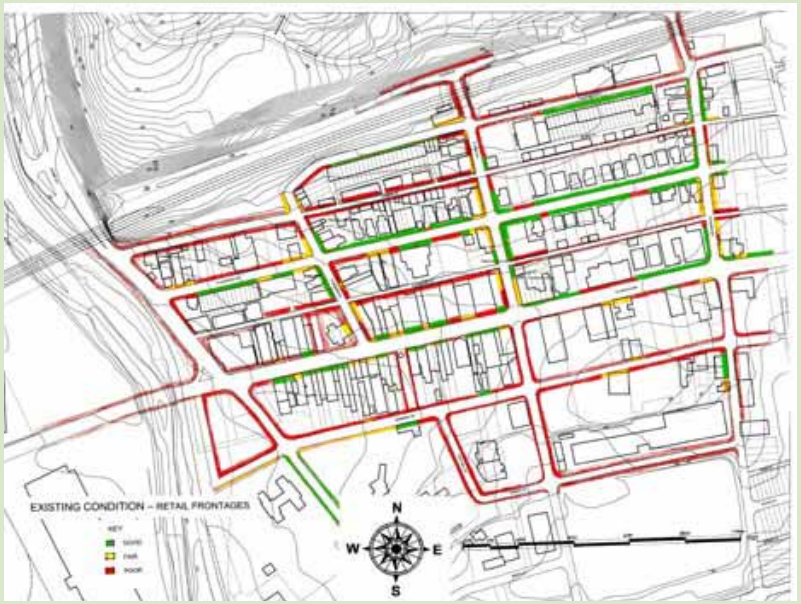
Amish Farmers Market on Lincoln Highway

consistently good retail frontage, the uses in the spaces need to add activity to the street. Too many of the frontage spaces in downtown Coatesville are either vacant, or occupied by uses that generate little activity, such as offices and part-time stores. Good quality frontages typically have buildings pulled up to the sidewalk, doors and windows facing the street, and awnings and other amenities to create a positive pedestrian experience. Poor quality frontages typically include buildings with deep setbacks, blank walls, garage openings, or surface parking lots facing the street.

There is significant vacancy in first-floor spaces in downtown Coatesville. However, non-profit organizations have begun to stabilize these vacancy rates. The highest commercial rents in downtown are $7.00 per square foot (triple net). These rents are too low to cover construction costs plus profits over 10 to 30 years, resulting in a lack of new construction activity.

While two large regional banks have branches in Coatesville, a lack of major employers and retailers in the City is still a concern. There is evidence that this situation is slowly improving. Two major developers recently announced plans within Coatesville. One calls for building ten 10,000-square-foot office buildings over the next decade along Route 82 and two additional buildings between the High Bridge and Lincoln Highway. The other calls for redevelopment of the "Shatterzone" into retail, housing, and offices.

Despite the reality of increasing safety, the perception of downtown Coatesville as being unsafe hinders development.



Dark red indicates areas with poor retail frontages. The lack of consistently good retail frontages discourages walking and pedestrian activity in the downtown.

The gas station across from the historic ISG Mill buildings. The grocery store site is south of Lincoln Highway on Route 82.

The existing gateway to the Central Business District as seen from Lincoln Highway, looking east from the front of the ISG Mill. The cars are stopped on the bridge over the Brandywine Creek.

G. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

From the stately mansions in the Lukens National Landmark District to the finely detailed commercial buildings in downtown, the City of Coatesville has a rich and varied architectural legacy worthy of preservation. One example is the historic mansion district located directly across the Brandywine Creek from the ISG Mill. Home to former mill executives, this area comprises approximately nine acres that can be enhanced to draw visitors to the City of Coatesville.

The vistas of the City are dominated by the historic railway viaduct. One of the oldest viaducts in the nation, and the first of its type in the United States, it spans Route 82 and acts as a literal and symbolic gateway into the City.

Residents expressed a strong desire for protection of the community's varied historic resources. The Historic Architecture Review Board (HARB), which is charged with reviewing projects in historic areas of the City, is currently inactive, although one meeting during the charrette focused on the possibility of restarting it.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The City of Coatesville has a long and colorful history that invites exploration. From Rebecca Lukens, who built a steel empire, to the role of Coatesville in the Underground Railroad, the story of Coatesville illustrates important themes in American history. There is strong community support for establishing a museum to tell the story of Coatesville. In addition to educating residents about Coatesville's history, the museum could serve as a destination for the many tourists who explore Pennsylvania each year. The City's several historic resources, including mill buildings and historic houses, such as Terracina and the Graystone Mansion, have the potential to be a rich cultural resource that would bring Coatesville's history to life.

Formerly City Hall, the Graystone Mansion is currently undergoing a restoration spearheaded by the Graystone Society. Once fully restored, the Graystone Mansion and grounds could become a focal point for community activity; a place to celebrate family events, such as weddings and reunions, as well as a gathering spot for holidays and festivals. The construction of a bandstand and outdoor concert area in the rear of the building would create a public civic space adjacent to the new City Hall that would be an ideal setting for performances of the Lukens Band on summer evenings.

Lukens Historic District Marker

Graystone Mansion

Terracina

Railroad Viaduct

H. URBAN FORM

Coatesville is a traditionally planned city, with a logical and interconnected network of streets. The City developed in a dense manner due to the surrounding topography and has a street plan that is more linear and compact than is found in less walkable communities. In addition, the threads of Coatesville's industrial history and architectural heritage are woven tightly together in numerous historic buildings. Many of these structures were designed by Cope and Stewardson and were modeled after buildings on the University of Pennsylvania campus. Others followed A.J. Downing's style book for the country gothic movement. The train station, originally built in 1865, served multiple functions for the railroad and residents, creating a true gateway to the community.

The large, black mill buildings are a striking icon that identifies Coatesville and creates a strong impression as one enters the City. Coatesville residents express a strong attachment to the form of the mill buildings, although some residents also see them as dividing the City's neighborhoods.

The steel mill has long dominated the area surrounding the Brandywine, but today the facility is partially vacant, creating the opportunity to redevelop approximately 50 acres. The acquisition of the ISG and G. O. Carlson sites will create the opportunity to join the east and west sides of the City.

Five-minute-walk circles illustrate the neighborhood structure of Coatesville. Neighborhood centers are within an easy walk of many residents. Future development should reinforce the neighborhood structure.

Physically, Coatesville is located in a "beautiful bowl" of hills, which provides a distinctive landscape and natural vistas.

One of Coatesville's most important assets is its very intact building stock of relatively high density that lines most streets with few gaps. Although many of the buildings need investment, they create the character of the place. The architecture is diverse and reflects the City's industrial past.

Because it developed largely before automobiles, Coatesville has a strong neighborhood structure. The west neighborhood, east neighborhood, and downtown are easily walkable in five minutes from center to edge. This five-minute walk brings one from the east neighborhood to the school, the downtown center to the train station, and the west neighborhood to the commercial areas.

The most significant streets in the urban form of downtown Coatesville are Lincoln Highway and Third Avenue. Lincoln Highway is the primary access into downtown, and indeed, into the City of Coatesville. Lincoln Highway is physically well suited to traditional main street land uses and mixes, with retail on the ground floor and offices and residences in upper stories. Third Avenue provides the primary access between the downtown core and the train station. With the return of commuter rail service, the train station would become an even more important part of downtown. The school, park, back of City Hall, and the police station are also on Third Avenue.

Coatesville's historic fabric is remarkably intact, with few holes. The urban form is composed of many small buildings arranged on a rectilinear grid. This drawing also illustrates the massive scale of the mill buildings.

Although there is a significant amount of parking, both on-street and in surface parking lots, there is a perception of insufficient parking. Because of vacant storefronts, deteriorated buildings, and the lack of street activity, walking just a few blocks from available parking to a destination is unpleasant. In addition, much of the available parking is in private lots that limit access. Better systems of wayfinding for pedestrian circulation and for motorists seeking parking are needed in the downtown.

Coatesville Alley

Train Station Platform

Dense Residential Development

Downtown Coatesville

URBAN DESIGN PLAN

A. OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the charrette, the team explored a variety of ideas for revitalizing Coatesville's neighborhoods and downtown. Redevelopment can occur at any scale, and Coatesville's government, non-profit, and private sectors have roles to play at each level. This page provides a short overview of the various opportunities the charrette explored.

LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS

Large-scale projects usually require public-private partnership or single-property ownership of many acres. The ISG Mill redevelopment could occur at this scale, and the charrette examined several possibilities for this site.

Alternative Site Plan for Hilltop Area

MIDDLE-SCALE PROJECTS

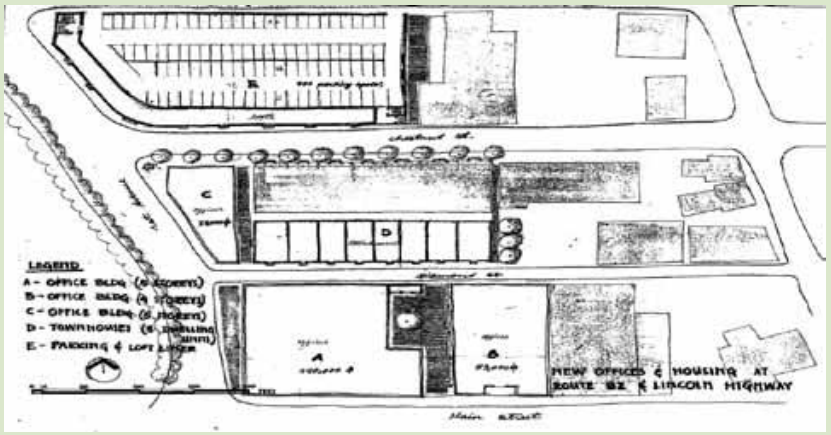
Middle-scale projects involve acquiring and assembling more than one parcel of land. Often, these projects require government assistance for property acquisition, but the development can occur through private initiative. The charrette explored a number of middle-scale projects, including:

- Alternatives for the Hilltop Area,
- City Hall and Daycare Center,
- Train Station Area, and a
- Class A Office Building on the grocery store site at the corner of Third and Lincoln.

SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS

Small-scale projects take place at the level of a single property and an individual owner, and thus are the easiest to accomplish. In fact, this kind of reinvestment is already occurring in Coatesville. By improving Coateville's zoning codes to include good urban design features and guidelines supporting its historical character, Coatesville can ensure that activity at the individual level will contribute to the overall sense of place, rather than detract from it.

Train Station Area



An example of a large-scale project with new office and housing development at the intersection of Route 82 and Lincoln Highway.

Steel Mill Redevelopment

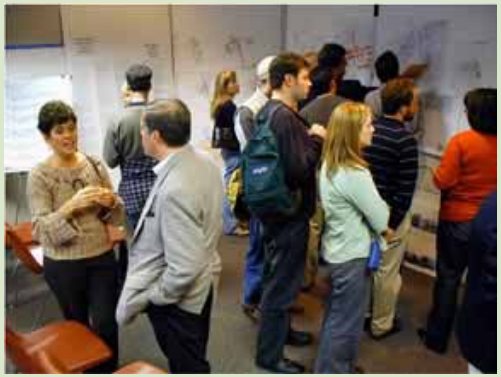
City Hall Area

B. MASTER PLAN

The design elements of the master plan reinforce two strategic objectives: (1) build upon the existing strengths of Coatesville, and (2) increase connections in all parts of the downtown. Coatesville has the unique opportunity to present itself as a walkable, urban alternative in the Brandywine Valley. The existing historic fabric of the City is of rare quality, both architecturally and in its urban design. As it once was the hub of a large area, the downtown was built to be walkable and compact, a characteristic that should be leveraged as an asset.

The design team sought multiple ways to reinforce the walkability of the downtown. Whether through retrofit of some of the existing developed areas or redevelopment of former industrial sites, the designs emphasize making connections for pedestrians, bikes, and cars, and creating lively, interesting places for all of Coatesville. If the City can follow this formula for its redevelopment, it will secure its continued uniqueness in Chester County.

The charrette team and residents discussing Coatesville.



Coatesville has a series of unique opportunities and some large and important players already interested in new development. This view shows the proposed master plan with all potential redevelopment sites.

This drawing is a "bird's-eye" perspective from the hilltop northeast of the Brandywine, providing a view of a large portion of the redevelopment areas considered in the study. A key goal to the City's redevelopment is to build in a way that preserves and enhances its charm and character. If new construction and renovation are compatible with Coatesville's historic buildings, the new development will revalue the existing urban fabric. New buildings that are out of place will devalue the historic fabric and reduce the physical identity and predictability sought by investors.

C. LIVABLE STREET DESIGN & TRANSIT STRATEGIES

The existing condition of Coatesville's street design and transit service is quite good compared with many similar communities. However, citizens raised several issues related to street design and transit that were explored during the charrette.

TRUCK TRAFFIC

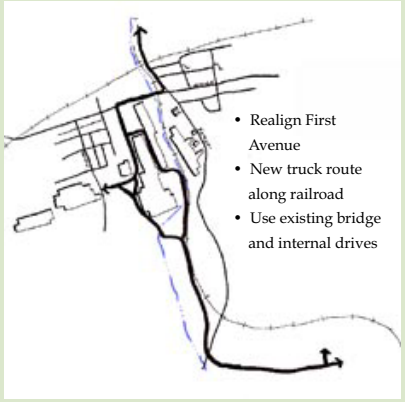
A series of concept studies identified several potential improvements to address truck traffic carrying scrap.

The illustration on the left illustrates how trucks presently access the ISG Steel Mill, then exit via Lincoln Highway, and pass directly through the historic area of Coatesville.

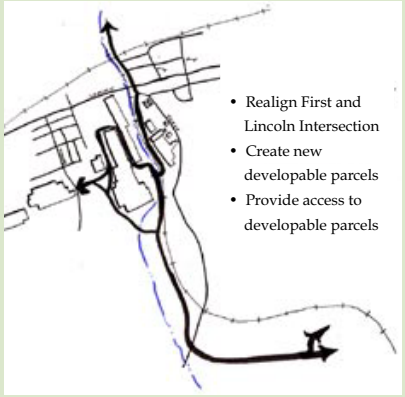
An immediate solution, shown as Alternative A, illustrates how trucks could access the mill property east of Strode using an existing driveway into the site and internal routes. This truck route could be implemented as a simple matter of policy or mill management immediately.

The long-term solution, shown as Alternative B, involves re-aligning the intersection at Lincoln Highway and First Avenue to create a new circulation pattern that keeps the trucks away from the rest of the traffic, Lincoln Highway, and the historic district. As an additional benefit, the re-alignment would create a new area of developable land. This illustration shows the proposed realignment of First Avenue into a more right-angled intersection along

Steel Mill Truck Routing: Existing Conditions



Steel Mill Truck Routing: Alternative A – Immediate Solution



Steel Mill Truck Routing: Alternative B – Long-Term Solution

with a new street along the railroad tracks. This new street could provide access to new parcels and buildings created through the redevelopment of some of the mill property on the east side of the creek. The proposed truck route would use one new drive, existing roads, one existing bridge, and routes internal to the mill.

Lincoln Highway or Main Street?

The central core of Coatesville stretches along historic Lincoln Highway, the first transcontinental highway in the United States. When it was first built in 1913, Lincoln Highway provided a crucial transportation link to the outside world, spanning from Times Square in New York City to the Pacific Ocean in Lincoln Park, San Francisco, 3,389 miles west.

Today, "highways" have more negative connotations than they did when Lincoln Highway was built. People now associate highways with high-speed traffic, traffic congestion, urban decay, and environmental degradation.

The stretch of Lincoln Highway through downtown Coatesville functions as a traditional main street—as a walkable, pedestrian-oriented retail core. This kind of traditional main street requires a different design treatment than a highway. **For the future health of Coatesville, it is essential to maintain and enhance the existing pedestrian-oriented character of the downtown core.** On-street parallel parking, frequent crosswalks with sufficient crossing times, and street trees are all characteristics of pedestrian-oriented streets.

Given its former and planned function in the downtown retail core, we suggest that the City consider renaming the stretch of Lincoln Highway that goes through Coatesville's downtown as "Main Street." Another possibility is to add an additional designation.

Changing the designation from a "highway" to a "main street" may help protect the downtown by reminding everyone of its function. If "Main Street" sounds too much like a Norman Rockefeller version of small town America, perhaps Coatesville could borrow the designation other communities in the area use and call it "Lancaster Avenue."

Whatever the name or designation, the most important issue is to protect the character of the street.

Parking

Parking solutions for Coatesville need to be considered from the standpoint of design, policy, and management. Currently, there is a perception that the level of parking in the downtown core is insufficient. While a full inventory of available spaces and correlation with existing commercial and residential uses has not been completed, the charrette team agreed that there is no deficiency in parking quantity today, as illustrated in the drawing on the following page. However, the utilization of existing parking, especially off-street parking, could be greatly improved.

Surface parking lots will likely remain a part of Coatesville's near future, simply due to the land costs in comparison with the costs of parking structures. While this may be expected to change as real estate values climb, the siting of parking lots will be an important part of the downtown's revival.

Pedestrians in a downtown environment are more comfortable walking along buildings with windows (and preferably, visible activities occurring inside the building) than they are walking past parking lots. The resulting urban design rules are simple: no off-street parking should front a street, and corner parking lots should be banned by ordinance. Existing surface parking lots should be screened with low walls.

Newly constructed public parking should be concealed in lots or garages located behind new and existing buildings. This siting counters the deadening effect that garages have on walking, but still provides the needed supply. All parking in the core should also function in a "shared" sense, being available to all residents, workers, patrons, and visitors to downtown. This sharing should be ensured both through public/private agreements for existing parking facilities and new land use regulations for newly constructed facilities.

Resources for Good Street Design & Parking Policy

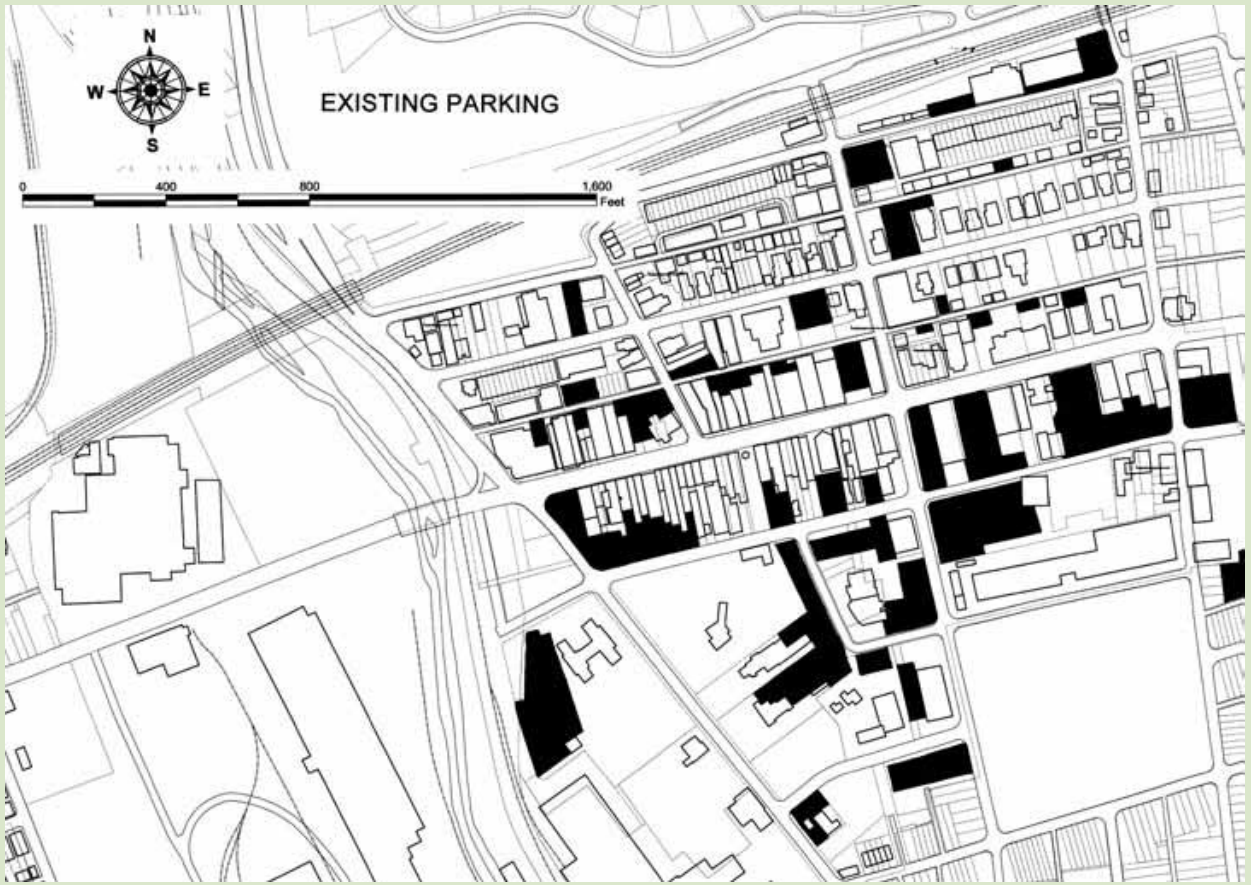
The following resources provide more detailed guidance on street and parking design, policy, and management:

Bohl, Charles, *Place Making*, 2002.

Urban Land Institute, *Dimensions of Parking*, 4th ed., 2000.

Currently, patrons utilize on-street parking along commercial corridors. The downtown provides extensive amounts of on-street parking that should be maintained and expanded wherever new streets are created, such as in the steel mill sites.

As more intensive infill development is attracted to the downtown and structured parking becomes viable, parking should be concealed behind liner buildings to maintain a high-quality, walkable environment.



Black areas represent existing parking locations throughout downtown Coatesville.

In all aspects of parking, the City should strive to employ policies and management techniques that reduce the demand for parking, and make sure that the supply is strategically located.

D. Network of Trails, Parks, and Open Space

The Brandywine Creek is one of the key environmental features of downtown Coatesville, yet a visitor might not even know it exists. Although the High Bridge is a striking part of the skyline, the views to the creek itself are almost entirely obstructed by overgrown brush.

The portion of the creek that runs through the downtown and the ISG Mill site presents a unique opportunity for developing a riverwalk. The west edges of the creek are largely undeveloped north of Lincoln Highway and the east edges are undeveloped south of Lincoln Highway. The development of a riverwalk could open up some small parcels for development, potentially as live-work units. At the same time, the current undeveloped nature of the creek banks presents an unusual opportunity in an existing downtown to develop according to good environmental practices.

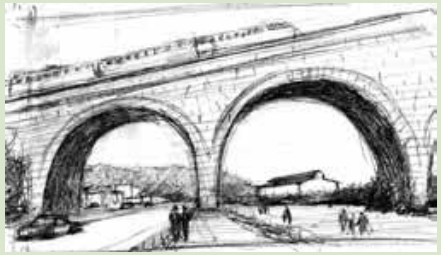
Although the downtown portion of the riverwalk should take on an urban character, a more naturalistic water trail system could connect the downtown up to the proposed golf course and recreation development. In this way, the golf course and the associated recreation opportunities could be part of a larger plan for attracting people to the City.

Brandywine Creek presents a unique opportunity to develop a riverwalk that can be tied directly into the main street through downtown Coatesville.

Overgrown vegetation surrounding the Brandywine Creek

The High Bridge in Coatesville

A successful riverwalk along the Canal in the urban Manayunk neighborhood of Philadelphia



A sketch of the view of the ISG Steel Mill through the High Bridge

E. Specific Urban Design Strategies

1. Gateway Intersection

The intersection of First Avenue and Lincoln Highway is badly aligned. Many studies were undertaken to examine how this intersection might be better aligned, as well as what potential urban design benefits could be realized with various alignments.

From an urban design perspective, the area was studied from all approaches—north, south, east, and west. Ultimately, the team determined that a more regular alignment would yield new building sites that can help to establish a gateway to the easterly portion of Lincoln Highway.

The four intersection designs depicted on the next page all include a new, more regular alignment of First Avenue and Lincoln Highway. These intersection options are not mutually exclusive. For example, the infill buildings depicted in one rendering could be built with the alignment shown on another. Similarly, the one-way street shown on the left sketch could be removed and either the park can be made larger, or more buildings can be placed in that location.

Existing Gateway

A rendering of new gateway buildings with the presence to hold and contain the Central Business District. Windows instead of blank facades work in conjunction with development of the riverwalk and the "Shatterzone." The proposed realignment of First Avenue and Lincoln Highway creates an opportunity for a bell tower and mixed use buildings to be built.

Analysis of the existing First Avenue and Lincoln Highway intersection

A one-way southbound single lane street approximately where First Avenue currently exists as a two-way street is retained. Different layouts of parks and infill buildings at the northeast and southeast corners provide a variety of options.

The sketch depicts a new park where the other sketch shows the bell tower site. This sketch also directs primary traffic along a new route adjacent with the railroad tracks, while First Avenue would become a more local-serving street, ending at a "T" intersection at its northerly terminus.

This rendering shows the new infill buildings and bell tower on the northeast and southeast corners, respectively. Located at the first intersection south of Lincoln Avenue along the proposed realigned First Avenue is a new truck route headed into the steel mill.

2. THE G. O. CARLSON SITE

The availability of the G. O. Carlson site following the charrette opened up additional redevelopment opportunities on a key site within the downtown that can accommodate mixed-use development, line the north side of Lincoln Highway with complementary buildings and uses to face the redevelopment proposed for the ISG property, and link the riverfront to the west side of the downtown. Although the team did not conduct on site reconnaissance for the G. O. Carlson property, the plan was redrawn to encompass the site based on its availability for redevelopment. Specific site conditions, including any needed environmental clean-up, will need to be researched and confirmed prior to finalizing the redevelopment options presented here.

The revised plan and rendering show the critical first step of extending the city's historic pattern of walkable blocks and streets throughout the site, weaving it back into the fabric of the downtown. This action more than anything else will ensure that the site does not become a superblock island that might be walled off or out of context with the historic city and with the high quality pedestrian setting the citizens and city leadership clearly support. Unlike the ISG property, there do not appear to be any historic mill structures or buildings worthy of adaptive reuse on this site, but local historic preservationists should be consulted to confirm the charrette team's impressions. With the buildings removed and street grid extended into the site, more than four blocks will become available for urban development.

A variety of moderately intensive mixed-use development is envisioned for the site, including a significant office component in the central and northern portions of the property. The mixed-use office buildings would incorporate a traditional mix of masonry and glazing consistent with the downtown character and the mixed-use urban design guidelines detailed in a later section of this report. The intent is to avoid a rash of incompatible glass boxes and buildings with blank walls that would destroy the character of downtown Coatesville. The height at the core of the office concentration could be a maximum of five (5) stories on the streetfront plus an additional two (2) stories above so long as they are set back a minimum of twenty (20) feet from the front of the lower stories.

On-street parking should be extended throughout the new streets. Additional parking for office employees will require structured parking within the buildings, within garages located in the center of blocks (similar to Post Properties projects like Addison Circle), or in a dedicated parking garage along the northern edge of the property. If the parking structure is located towards the northern portion of the site, adjacent to the high bridge, it could provide parking for both office employees and visitors to the riverwalk and downtown while minimizing the visual impact on the pedestrian environment. Any side of the garage that faces onto a street should incorporate liner space on the first floor that can be leased to small businesses for a variety of office, service, and retail uses.

Providing transitions from this core of office development to the edges of the site will be crucial to provide development that is compatible with the context of the main street (Lincoln Highway) to the south, and the existing residential neighborhood to the west. The plan proposes two- to three-story urban live-work units to face the office blocks and provide a transition from the office area to the residential neighborhood to the west. Along Lincoln Highway, retail will be required on the ground floor of buildings with office or residential uses above. The height along Lincoln Highway should be three to five stories.

Now that the G. O. Carlson site is available, streetscape improvements—street trees, sidewalk improvements, street furniture, and lamp posts—should be extended from the existing main street area of Lincoln Highway, across the creek, to both sides of Lincoln Highway. Developers could be expected to participate in making these improvements as they will greatly enhance the attractiveness of their properties on the west side of the creek.

Extending the historic street grid through the ISG Mill and G. O. Carlson sites creates a graceful extension of Coatesville that draws from and enhances its existing character.

3. ISG (LUKENS) STEEL MILL SITE

The mill buildings are the strongest architectural element immediately visible to anyone entering Coatesville. In addition, they serve as a powerful symbol in telling the story of Coatesville's industrial heritage. However, keeping every part of every building intact is not necessary to maintain their role in Coatesville's skyline and history. There are many ways to keep smaller pieces of the buildings that will still tell the story. One of the Shatterzone Site Plans illustrates an option for keeping the majority of the Open Hearth Building, while the other illustrates an option for keeping only a portion of that building.

The scale of some of the steel mill buildings is unusual due to their vast interior size and uninterrupted space. There is a trade-off between the wonderful possibility of having such a unique indoor space and the cost of maintaining it.

Many of the ideas in the two Site Plan alternatives are interchangeable. For example, the ideas for the west side in Option A could be combined with the ideas for the east side in Option B.

Quite a bit of land is available for development in the "Shatterzone" area, and the building type and land use options are extensive. For the purposes of the charrette, we located a number of key program items in this area, including a grocery store, an ice skating rink, and a museum. In addition, it is entirely possible to maintain the functional portion of the rolling mill in the short and long term.

The ISG Plant is a strong architectural element and a powerful symbol for telling the story of Coatesville.

Vast interior space of the ISG Steel Mill

The Brandywine Creek as it flows by the ISG Steel Mill

New multi-story buildings near the steel mill will add a pedestrian scale to the area.

Regardless of the eventual use for the "Shatterzone," a few key principles should be followed to ensure a successful redevelopment for all of Coatesville:

Extend the City's street grid into areas of new development.

Doing so provides multiple pedestrian, bike, and car connections; links the historically separated sides of the City; and relieves some of the pressure on Lincoln Highway to carry all the region's traffic. In addition, it provides for development that is compatible with the existing City fabric.

Preserve some elements of the rolling mill and accent their presence.

The mill building has a dominating presence in the City's skyline and has some potential for adaptive reuse. In addition, smaller elements, such as the Gantry Crane and chimneys from the 110/104 mill, would add a unique flavor to the redevelopment.

Provide for public outdoor space in the redevelopment.

Whether it is a skating rink, farmer's market, plaza, or some other space, public outdoor space is a critical component of any successful urban area.

Connect to the Brandywine Creek.

It is an opportunity to bring more people into the downtown.

Design the scale of buildings appropriately.

On the west side of the "Shatterzone," it is more appropriate to place buildings of moderate height, as they will be more compatible with the existing neighborhoods. Towards the center of the site, the opportunity exists to build higher.

Reinforce the frontages along Lincoln Highway.

Lincoln Highway is not just the historic center of Coatesville, it is also the most lucrative retail frontage. New construction along Lincoln Highway should reinforce its walkability and enhance its liveliness.

These two images show the close proximity between the mill and the City of Coatesville.

The "Shatterzone" site and the mill site on the eastern side of the creek each present many different opportunities for redevelopment. The key issue at this stage is to define community goals and establish guiding urban design principles for this area.

Shatterzone Redevelopment – Option A

West Site: The available land is maximized for development, showing a simple system of streets and blocks. A supermarket is accommodated, along with a hotel and conference center. Adjacent to the mill, a skating rink terminates one street. Additionally, a remnant of the former gantry crane is preserved and integrated into the riverwalk system.

East Site: A new theater is located in the former mill building, and a farmers' market is located in a renovated structure as well. A skating rink is incorporated into a portion of one of the former mill buildings, with the chimneys retained in adjacent public parking. The rest of the former mill is removed, and space is cleared for a bowling alley, entertainment, residential, and mixed-use buildings. An at-grade crossing of the railroad is anticipated to link the two sides of the river. Route 82 is relocated along the creek, allowing the historic district to be united in a more walkable environment.

Shatterzone Redevelopment – Option B

West Site: A large public space is created adjacent to and underneath the former Open Hearth building. A road can be connected directly under the structure, and the north portion opened up for ice skating. A public square in front enhances the public nature of the space. The rest of the area is devoted to residential and commercial uses, in a slightly more regular block fashion than in Option A. North of Lincoln Highway, the creek is modified to bring a small lagoon into the site. This allows for a unique site feature and the ability to bring sun onto several sides of buildings around the water. Development around the lagoon would include a series of mixed-use and residential structures.

East Site: Compared to Option A, this design preserves more of the former mill. A museum occupies a significant portion of the structure, as well as theater/arts space and skating opportunities. To the north, a new bowling alley easily fits on the first floor of a mixed use structure, and other residential buildings line the creek. An amphitheater is located on the historic properties, sloping towards the creek. This option proposes building a bridge over the railroad tracks and creek, connecting Kersey Street across to bring people into the City government area. Route 82 basically retains its current alignment in this option.

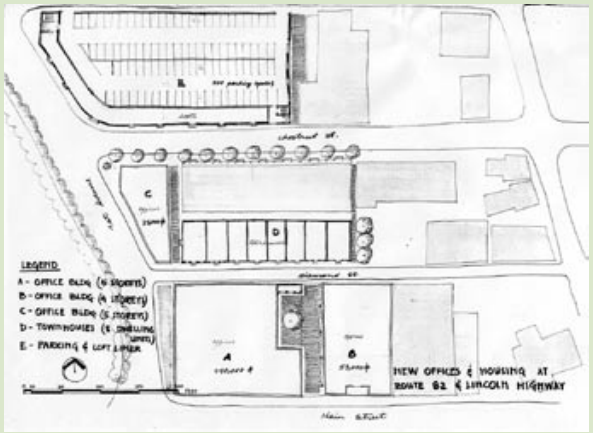
4. MAIN STREET/LINCOLN HIGHWAY

The existing quality of the retail frontages is spotty, with very few areas of consistently good frontages. This deficiency is related to the architecture and condition of the buildings, but also depends on the uses and activities within the buildings. To create consistently good retail frontages, the uses need to add activity to the street. Too many of the frontage spaces in downtown Coatesville are either vacant or occupied by uses that generate little activity, such as offices.

The design of window display space and lighting is also important. Bringing in a retail consultant to work with existing shop owners could bring new ideas and life to the downtown.

The existing "main street" is composed of buildings up to five stories in height with low one-story infill. Good urban design codes can help reshape the retail frontage. One-story buildings could be redeveloped as two- to six-story buildings with retail space on the ground floor, parking behind, and offices and apartments above.

Three- to six-story buildings along Lincoln Highway will create a sense of enclosure and add vibrancy and activity to the downtown.



This site plan demonstrates that sufficient parking for substantial new downtown development can be hidden behind narrow liner buildings.

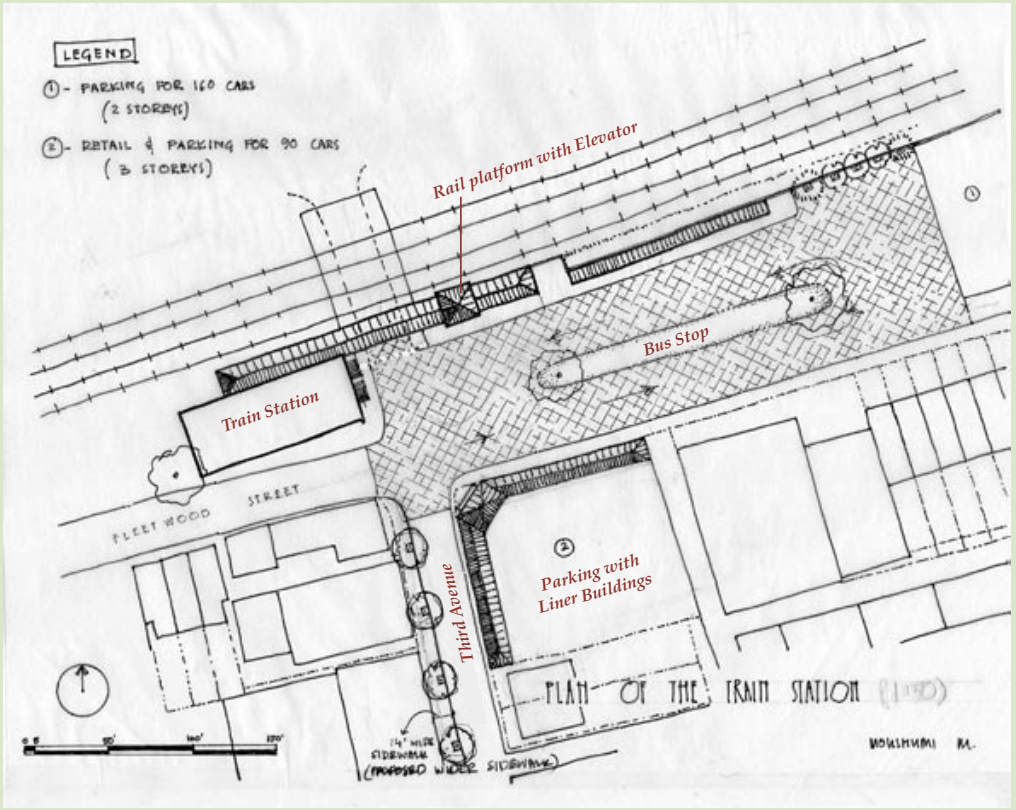
Rendering of the intersection of Second Avenue and Lincoln Highway.

5. TRAIN STATION AREA

The train station presents an important opportunity because rail connects Coatesville to the region and the rest of the world. A renovation of the train station, which includes restoring the station, introducing an elevator, re-facing the bridge, and adding a transfer area for buses, could create an important transportation center. The arching of the High Bridge creates an impact when arriving by car, and an expanded transit center could create the same sense of arrival by train.

Locating parking for the train station involves delicate trade-offs. Parking a few blocks away from the train station provides the opportunity for small businesses to take advantage of the foot traffic, adding activity and vibrancy to the area. However, SEPTA has not embraced this model in the past. A parking garage immediately adjacent to the train station, but concealed by liner buildings, may be the best solution. The two most important actions are to restore SEPTA service and to protect and improve the urban quality of the streets and building fabric.

The train was once a key link between Coatesville and the rest of the world.



A new transportation center with an expanded platform, an elevator, a new bus stop and turn-around, and liner buildings with structured parking. Although not illustrated here, parking could be developed north of the station.

Existing Coatesville Train Station

A renovated train station, improved bus connections, and renewed train service would improve Coatesville's livability and economic development opportunities.

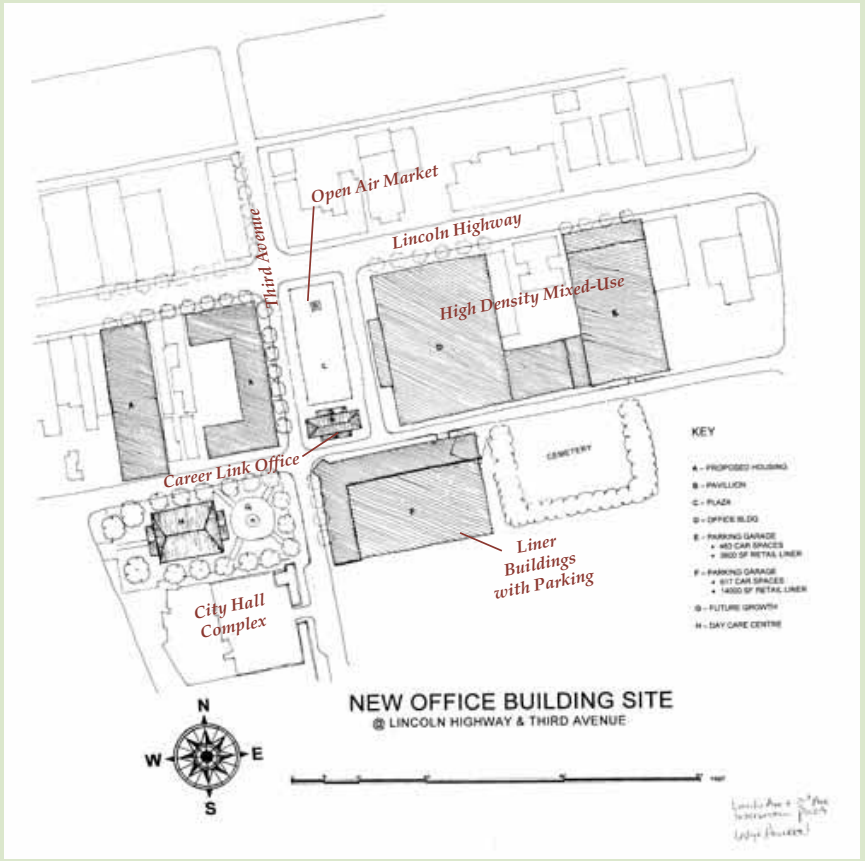
6. THIRD AVENUE CORRIDOR

Because Third Avenue links the train station, Lincoln Highway, City Hall, and the school and park, it is one of Coatesville's most important streets. Redevelopment activities along this corridor should reinforce the street's importance and transform it into an "A" level street.

Scott School is a key institutional anchor along Third Avenue.

The train station is another important anchor, but open parking lots and deteriorated buildings decrease the quality of urban design in the area.

This existing building on Third Avenue demonstrates good urban design: eyes on the street, with the building pulled up to the sidewalk.

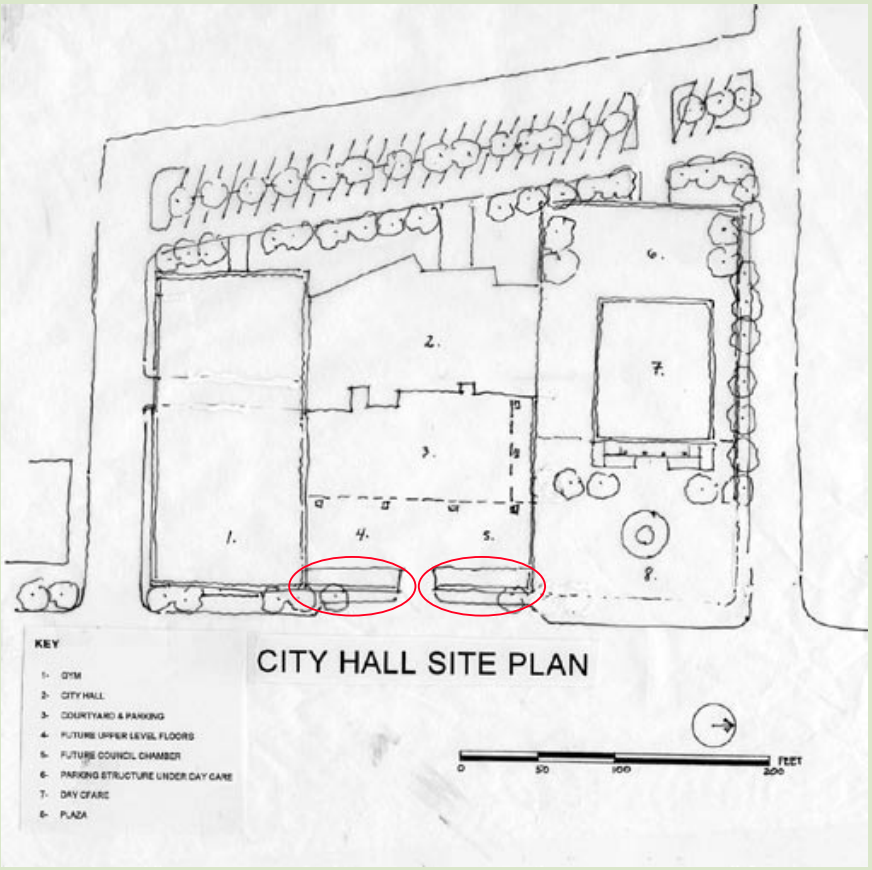


Development activities, including redeveloping the train station area, developing an open air market and plaza, and reorienting City Hall, can transform Third Avenue into the "A" level street its place in the urban form demands.

7. City Hall Area

Our suggestion for future development around City Hall re-orients some of the activity to emphasize the importance of Third Avenue. The City envisions a future recreation center and daycare in the vicinity of City Hall. The entry to the gymnasium, pool, and basketball court could be on Third Avenue, with a drive-through entry to a courtyard for the police station. At some future time, the addition of a grand council chamber would face a small square. The daycare center is part of a new program just beyond the square.

The proposed City Hall Complex is designed to bring City Hall to the street so it engages with Third Avenue. This site plan incorporates elements discussed for this area, including a gym and daycare center. Low walls, circled in red, conceal parking for the police station and create the sense of enclosure an urban street needs.



Existing Coatesville City Hall

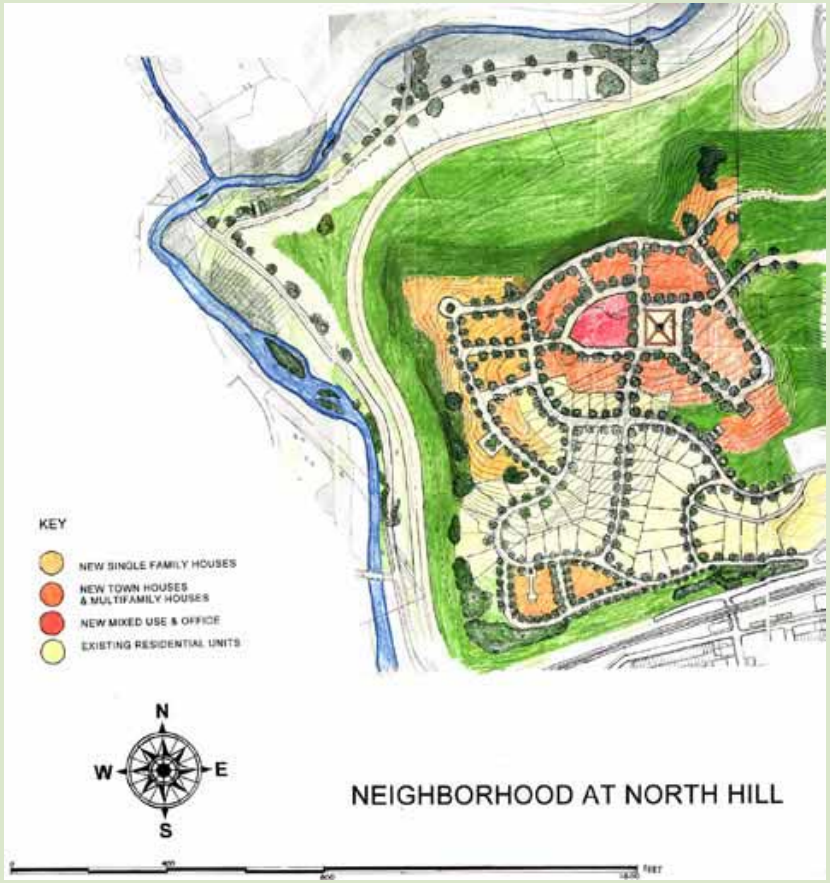
Additions to City Hall would create a sense of place and prominence on Third Avenue, reflecting the street's importance as the connection between downtown and the train station.

8. North Hill Neighborhood

A development proposal for the Hilltop neighborhood in the north section of Coatesville was recently introduced. The proposal includes an office component with several multi-story buildings. An analysis was conducted of the hilltop evaluating site visibility, slope, and places where vegetation might be maintained to enhance the view to the north. A section of the valley was drawn using topographic maps from the United States Geological Survey in order to identify ridgelines and topographic breaks that would maximize the aesthetic beauty of the hillside while encouraging development. The section drawing indicates that if development were pulled back from the ridgeline a distance of 100 feet and the tree line maintained, development could be enhanced and value would be increased.

The team explored crafting a new neighborhood on North Hill following the analysis of the valley section. Utilizing the footprints of the buildings proposed in the recently submitted conceptual plan, a campus pattern was developed to maximize the development opportunities on the site. By reconfiguring the building footprints, the idea of integrating more housing in a variety of formats became an opportunity worth further study. Ultimately, the configuration of the new neighborhood on North Hill can become a place with a variety of uses, including neighborhood retail, office, and live-work spaces that benefit from transit improvements at the train station, and new housing opportunities for a growing population.

Our proposal demonstrates that the North Hill site can accommodate an entire new mixed-use neighborhood, including a range of housing types, offices, and neighborhood retail.



F. URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Based on the charrette conversations and the site plans developed, we devised a general outline of urban design guidelines to direct residental and mixed-use development in downtown Coatesville. We recommend that the City hire a planning and design firm with expertise in drafting zoning and urban design guidelines for historic downtowns. This section can be used as a springboard for more in-depth revision of the current city codes.

Floor Heights

The first floor is to have a 12-foot minimum to accommodate retail and create a pedestrian-scale streetfront. Other floors will have a 9-foot height minimum.

Building Heights

The Coatesville Code currently lists building height limits in terms of the maximum number of stories, a technique New Urbanists often use to encourage variations in the overall height of buildings based on how high developers want to make each floor. This variety is effective for encouraging loft-style office and residential development, but too much flexibility could lead to undesirable buildings. Overall height for buildings should be limited to 72 feet for a six-story building, which will allow a developer to build six 12-foot-tall stories (or some variation) as long as the ground floor is 12 feet high. The Code should also include a two-story minimum for new construction.

Appurtenances

Appurtenances, architectural features not used for human occupancy, such as chimneys, spires, belfries, cupolas, silos, dormers, parapet walls, ventilators, skylights, antennas, and cornices without windows, may extend beyond the building height limit.

Setbacks

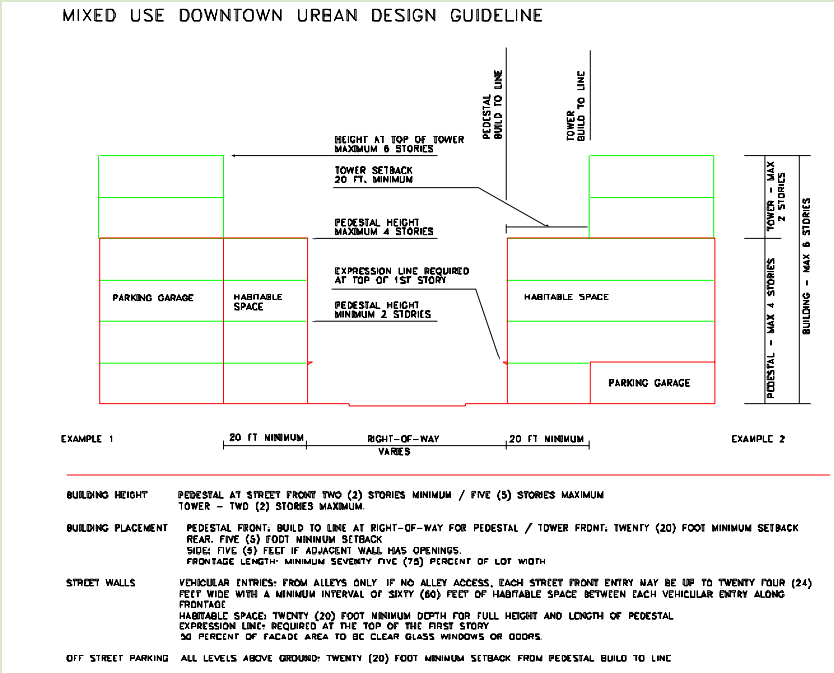
The "pedestal" is the base of the building up to the point at which a setback is required. For instance, in the Mixed-Use Urban Design Guideline chart, the setback is 20 feet for any floors above four stories.

Build-To Lines

Zoning code changes are necessary to establish build-to lines.

Habitable Space

Habitable space is occupied by people who are working or living in that space. It does not include storage areas, parking, or other "dead" space that does not provide "eyes on the street" for at least a portion of the day. Habitable space prevents "empty sockets" of parking garages overlooking every street from the second floor up. If the bottom floor is retail and service, and the empty sockets are above, there would be no eyes on the street from closing hours until morning, creating a safety concern.



Sample height and build-to regulations for mixed-use areas

Street Walls (Transparency and Facades)

Each floor of any building facade facing a park, square, or street shall contain transparent windows covering from a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) to a maximum of seventy percent (70%) of the wall area. With facades along primary retail streets, such as storefronts facing Lincoln Highway, parks, plazas, squares, and other retail streets, the quality and character of storefronts is crucial to create an attractive, safe, walkable environment, and to maximize visual merchandising for successful retail, dining, and other ground floor businesses. Ground floor commercial space shall have transparent storefront windows covering no less than fifty percent (50%) of the facade area. Storefronts shall remain unshuttered at night, use transparent window material, and provide a view of interior spaces lit from within. Doors that are unlocked during normal business hours or entrances with public access shall be provided at intervals no greater than fifty feet, unless otherwise approved.

Interior Partitions

For facades along primary retail streets, partitions shall be installed no closer than fifteen feet behind the building frontage line, for all uses, in order to preserve full room-sized areas of habitable space visible from the street. For buildings facing all other squares, parks, and streets, ground floor partitions shall occur no closer than ten feet behind the building frontage for retail and eating/drinking establishments, and five feet behind the building frontage line for all other uses.

Building Fronts

Along all primary retail streets (regardless of whether a particular use is strictly retail, or some other ground floor use including but not limited to dining, service, or office), building fronts are required to provide shelter over sidewalks for pedestrians by means of at least one of the following:

Awnings and Marquees

Depth: 5 foot minimum
Height: 10 foot clearance minimum
Length: 25% to 100% of building front

Balconies

Depth: 6 foot minimum for second floor balconies
Height: 10 foot clearance minimum
Length: 25% to 100% of building front

Colonnades and Arcades

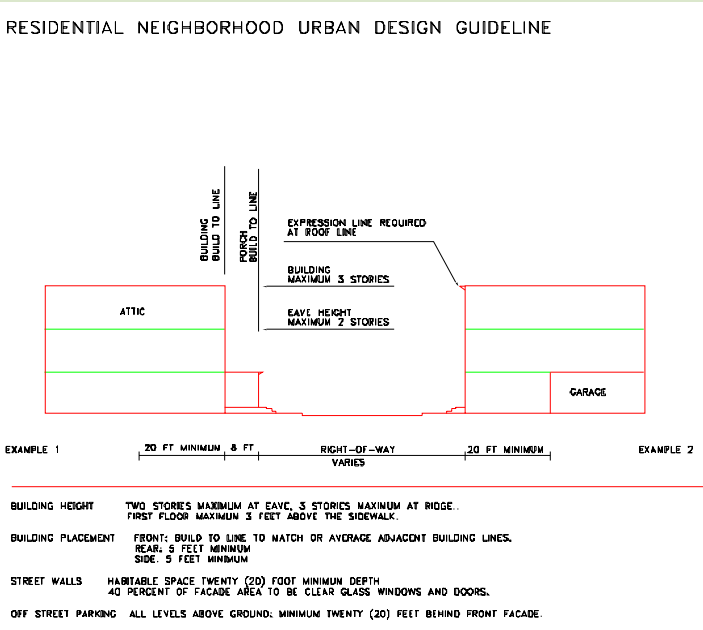
Depth: 10 foot minimum from the build-to line to the inside column face
Height: 10 foot clearance minimum
Length: 75% to 100% of building front

Front Porches

Depth: 8 foot minimum
Length: 25% to 90% of building front

Stoops

Depth: 6 foot minimum
Length: 5 foot minimum



Sample height and build-to regulations for residential areas

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

The following Strategic Imperatives highlight six key areas in which the City needs to take action to realize the vision presented in this plan. Each Strategic Imperative is supported by a series of recommended actions in the areas of management, policy, and design. The next step in Coatesville's planning process is to develop an action plan, using these Strategic Imperatives and actions as a starting point. The action plan should prioritize actions, based on their feasibility and expected impact; assign responsibility; and develop a timeline with measurable outcomes. The most powerful action plans are developed collaboratively.

1. CONCENTRATE ACTIVITY

Revitalize Coatesville's downtown by concentrating new development, events, and other activities in and near the downtown:

- ***Establish incentives to attract desired uses downtown (grocery store, movie theater, offices, housing).***
- ***Develop the Steel Mill and riverfront properties into a regional mixed-use destination.***
- ***Redevelop the train station and acquire commuter rail service.***
- ***Develop Third Avenue to tie the train station, the City Hall complex, and the school to Lincoln Highway.***
  - **Downtown Development:** Support the Main Street Program.
  - **Economic Development:** Develop tools to educate people about opening a business in downtown. Support the small business development program that combines a 6-week small-business training program with a micro loan program. Hire a retail consultant to work with downtown shop owners on store layouts, lighting, and displays.
  - **Economic Development:** Evaluate the potential risks and benefits of convention center development by analyzing the experience and market in competitive cities.
  - **Events:** Sponsor events in the downtown to generate activity. Partner with community groups.
  - **Funding:** Investigate funding sources for streetscape improvements.
  - **Safety:** Continue the Weed & Seed/Community Policing approach.
  - **Safety:** Support town watch and block watch groups.
  - **Signage:** Establish signage systems for wayfinding for pedestrian circulation and for motorists seeking parking.
  - **Transportation:** Develop the local transit network to provide service for workers and school children.
  - **Transportation:** Promote better transit connections between Coatesville and Philadelphia, Lancaster, and Wilmington.
  - **Incentives:** Develop incentives to attract desired uses downtown (grocery store, movie theater, offices, housing).
  - **Incentives:** Investigate using a land value tax to create an incentive to develop.
  - **Regulating Code:** Clarify the PA Act II restrictions regarding building on brownfield sites.
  - **Regulating Code:** Clarify the necessary requirements to pass a housing inspection.
  - **Transportation:** Study renaming Lincoln Highway through the downtown to protect its walkable character.
  - **Transportation:** Study immediately rerouting truck traffic per Alternative A to improve the quality of life in and around the downtown.
  - **Zoning Code:** Add a Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinance to guide development at the Shatterzone site and Hilltop site. Establish urban design guidelines to develop the Shatterzone Site in such a way that the east and west ends of Coatesville are knitted together.
  - **Zoning Code:** Adjust the zoning code to encourage and facilitate mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly building in the downtown. Establish a minimum height of two stories and a maximum height of six stories for downtown buildings. Require pedestrian-friendly street frontages for all downtown buildings, including habitable liners for all parking lots and garages. Modify the code to allow and encourage shared parking.
  - **Downtown Development:** Maintain and enhance the pedestrian character of Lincoln Highway, including on-street parallel parking, frequent crosswalks, mid-block crossings where appropriate, pedestrian level lighting, and street trees.
  - **Downtown Office Development:** Investigate the possibility of developing a Class A Office Building on the Rite Aid site.
  - **Hilltop Development:** Investigate mixed-use alternatives to the Hilltop Project.
  - **Mill Redevelopment:** Redevelop the Mill Site using principles of traditional neighborhood design (TND).
  - **Recreation Linkage:** Develop the riverwalk as a regional green link for walking and bicycling into downtown.
  - **Redevelopment:** Develop Third Avenue to tie the train station, the City Hall complex, and the school to Lincoln Highway, and reorient City Hall to face Third Avenue with a new Council Chamber, daycare center, and plaza.
  - **Train Station Redevelopment:** Renovate and expand the train station area to include an elevator, refacing the bridge, and adding a transfer area for busses. Aquire commuter rail service.

BLUE = MANAGEMENT IMPERATIVES
GREEN = POLICY IMPERATIVES
PURPLE = DESIGN IMPERATIVES

2. PROTECT & LEVERAGE NATURAL ASSETS

Protect the view of the hillsides and hilltops as a natural greenbelt. Protect and improve views and pedestrian access to the creek.

- **Recreation:** Create new and renovate existing parks to provide sitting and eating areas.
- **Recreation:** Develop a riverwalk through downtown and the mill area as a regional green link for walking and bicycling. Pursue opportunities to link the partial bike trails with new trail sections through landscape design. Selectively clear and expose the creek to views from downtown.
- **Environmental Preservation:** Identify wetlands that need to be preserved.
- **Environmental Preservation:** Minimize the environmental impact of developing along the creek through use of "Best Management Practices."
- **Zoning Code:** Establish a tree protection ordinance to preserve large specimen trees.
- **Zoning Code:** Develop a transfer of development rights ordinance to preserve open space on the hills and along the creek. Protect hillsides and hilltops from inappropriate development with

zoning and subdivision code changes requiring setbacks determined by view angles.

3. BUILD TO RE-VALUE HISTORIC ASSETS

Preserve and re-use historic buildings. Require new construction to be compatible with existing urban and architectural character.

- **Building Codes:** Maintain quick and predictable development approvals to facilitate development. Place a design professional on City staff to manage and coordinate preservation and new development issues.
- **Preservation:** Work with the Greystone Society to develop an active community outreach program regarding historic preservation and local historic buildings: home and cemetery tours, lecture programs, school programs, markers and signage, and events.
- **Building Codes:** Require buildings to be maintained and enforce building and empty lot maintenance requirements.
- **Preservation:** Coordinate all City agency work to ensure preservation of the historic character of Lincoln Highway through the downtown.
- **Preservation:** Create a façade preservation/ improvement program. Provide educational tools to teach people how to protect, renovate, and maintain historic buildings throughout the City. Develop preservation incentive programs. Create a design manual to ensure compatible building and redevelopment in downtown and neighborhoods. Include examples of "unacceptable" design in order to better educate citizens and developers. Activate HARB and historic preservation regulations, focusing on exterior portions of buildings.
- **Preservation:** Expand the National Landmark Historic District to other specific buildings along Lincoln Highway and elsewhere in downtown. Protect historic properties through appropriate regulations and design review process. Provide City support for completing national register applications for historic properties. Consider naming the entire City or residential neighborhoods a historic district.
- **Zoning Code:** Modify the zoning code to require build-to lines at street frontages to match the average of existing adjacent historic buildings.
- **Preservation:** Preserve elements of the rolling mill buildings and accent their presence.

4. MARKET THE COATESVILLE BRAND

Develop a brand identity for Coatesville that will attract tourists to visit, young professionals and families to live and work, and businesses to locate (or relocate). Build on the area's natural and historic assets to enhance identity.

- **Marketing:** Develop a positive marketing campaign: "Positively Coatesville."
- **Marketing:** Use tours and events to promote the new image of Coatesville: safe, walkable, historic, and friendly.
- **Signage:** Improve wayfinding, especially in the downtown. Develop a hierarchy of signs from vehicular access at the highway exit to pedestrian directories downtown.
- **Housing and Marketing:** Identify and advertise housing opportunities that appeal to different market segments: young singles and couples, empty nesters, workers in nearby office centers, former Coatesville residents.
- **Housing and Marketing:** Promote Heritage Tourism as a major attraction, including neighborhoods and mill buildings. Integrate heritage tourism with working steel mills. Work with regional schools to include field trips to mills.
- **Housing and Marketing:** Support schools with additional funding and activities to improve their reputation with homebuyers.

5. PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Guide future development to reinforce the neighborhood structure.

- **Community Facilities:** Encourage community use of school facilities, such as gyms and libraries.
- **Economic Development:** Market and conduct community outreach for job-training programs. Partner with local community colleges to make adult extension courses accessible to Coatesville residents.
- **Housing:** Develop a homeowner education program to educate renters about the benefits of ownership. Provide incentives for first time homebuyers. Partner with churches to facilitate access to housing services.
- **Housing:** Organize home maintenance courses for existing homeowners.
- **Outreach:** Maintain transparency and communication with the public throughout the redevelopment process.
- **Outreach:** Use creative outreach methods to engage residents in public processes, visioning, hearings, public meetings, etc.
- **Recreation & Youth:** Encourage churches and other institutions to create more after-school programs for youth.
- **Recreation & Youth:** Invite colleges outside of town (Westchester, Lincoln) to reach out to young people with arts programs.
- **Recreation:** Develop a network of bike lanes within the neighborhoods, throughout the city, and connecting to the creek and to regional greenways.
- **Services:** Perform an assessment of existing services to determine gaps.
- **Affordable Housing:** Balance affordable and market-rate housing construction to create mixed-income neighborhoods.
- **Affordable Housing:** Encourage local, faith-based, and non-profit CDC investment in housing. Assist these developers in pursuing funding.
- **Affordable Housing:** Establish a local community land trust to protect existing affordable single-family housing from rising land prices.
- **Housing and Financing:** Investigate predatory lending and redlining related to auto and housing insurance and lending.
- **Housing:** Work with local and regional builders and the State Historic Preservation Office to develop a one-stop homeowners renovation shop to give advice on regulatory design, construction, and maintenance issues.
- **Outreach:** Empower the east and west sides of Coatesville to work independently and together in preservation and redevelopment efforts.
- **Zoning Code:** Develop a prescriptive code to encourage and facilitate preservation of historic houses and compatible infill building of new housing.

6. MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE TRANSIT

Promote Coatesville's internal transit connections and transit accessibility to the region.

BLUE = MANAGEMENT IMPERATIVES
GREEN = POLICY IMPERATIVES
PURPLE = DESIGN IMPERATIVES

APPENDICES

A. SUMMARY OF INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

- Demographics as of 2000 census have shifted for the first time to a community which is now "majority minority."
- Fastest growing ethnicity is Latino, primarily Central American and Mexican, which have more than doubled in population. However overall the city population declined by 10% between the 1990 and 2000 census.
- As of the 2000 census, 70% of the population was aged 44 years or less. The two age cohorts with the largest numeric increases were 5 to 24 and 45 to 64.
- 40% of the population receives some form of public assistance. Median household income is $29,912, which is 46% of the county median.
- City unemployment is currently estimated to hover between 6 to 7%, more than double the county rate.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Streets, alleys, and roadways on main thoroughfares and residential side streets are generally in good condition. Little if any streetscape improvement is present on main streets.
- Water and sewer lines are reported to be in relatively good repair.
- Public lighting is cited as "good" along the CBD main streets but mixed along residential side streets, particularly within the eastern portion of the city proper.
- 72% of housing stock was built prior to 1959. The housing stock includes significant architectural diversity. Most is single-family attached or mixed-use. Anecdotal reports suggest an increase in housing values within city limits.
- 54% of housing stock is rental. The housing stock in Coatesville is valued at less than 50% of county median values. The efficacy of code enforcement on rental units receives mixed reports. Average rents are between $500 and $850. There are some reports of rental "gouging" for recent Latino immigrants.
- Significant 1st floor vacancy exists within the CBD. Vacancy rates, however, have been somewhat stabilized by non-profit occupancy. A large amount of historic structures remains somewhat intact.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- Primary and secondary education has a better reputation within Coatesville than outside.
- School taxes are perceived to be burdensome and a barrier to homeownership.
- There is no existing presence of a job retraining or satellite college campus, although community members discussed the need extensively.
- There is an absence of major employers or retailers. The population is not currently trained to be poised for a potential influx of white-collar positions.

CAPITAL ACCESS AND THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY

- Two large regional banks have a branch presence.
- No community development bank or non-bank lender is present within the city limits.
- The County operates a small micro loan fund in conjunction with the City. The County also operates a small business-training program that works in conjunction with the micro loan fund.
- Commercial real estate lending was described as "traditional" with difficulty in obtaining financing for mixed-used development.
- City has and will use tax increment financing (TIF) and redevelopment authority dollars. Hope VI has also been used along with historic tax credits and HOME funding. Act 2 land designation for partially cleaned Brownfield sites complicates financing and site availability.
- One local bank is noted for mortgage lending. However, it is unclear if mortgage products are being offered with higher than traditional debt/income ratios. The County operates a "soft second" down payment program.
- The results of local home buying education in relation to homeownership are unclear.
- Predatory lending was reported, especially in relation to seniors pulling equity from their homes.

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Citizens described police-community relations as improving. Weed and Seed and community policing programs are in place. Some residents reported feeling that there were racial profiling incidents and aggressive policing.
- Crime statistics show an increase in reported incidents due to more officers and increased policing, but an overall decline in violent activity. Drug related crime is the single largest challenge.
- Participants said that safety within Coatesville is improved, but externally, the image of Coatesville being unsafe persists.
- Coatesville has very limited recreation opportunities. However, the Scott School site and Ash Park are utilized. Citizens stated that only residents in the east end use the recreation at the east end of Coatesville. The west end has no formal recreation center.
- Participants reported that the Cultural Society, a café and performance space on the main street, has limited usage and accessibility.
- Community members strongly supported development of the steel heritage museum to preserve the historic identity of town.
- Community members discussed an East vs. West divide in Coatesville. This divide is both a physical and ethnic division.
- Emergency management is now staffed with a mix of volunteer and hired personnel. In the face of increasing development, there is some concern about capacity.

COATESVILLE COMMUNITY ASSETS

- Ethnic diversity
- River proximity
- Rail infrastructure
- Historic building stock
- Sense of community identity
- Increasingly pro-active government
- Density

RECOMMENDATIONS—DESIGN

- Design of mixed income communities to prevent re-concentration of lower income housing and allow for more even property appreciation. This would be in conjunction with the establishment of a community development corporation including local faith based and secular non-profits along with private sector developers.
- Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic residences by both for- and non-profit developers.
- Placement of educational satellite from an area college or university in an existing historic building to augment job training skills and adult education. Possibility of securing developer concessions to support educational infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATIONS—MANAGEMENT

- Investigate collaboration between the city and a for-profit business for recreational centers. Models for profit-generating athletic centers include:
  - Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center in Boston (http://www.rltac.com/Facilities/facilities.html)
  - Run 'n Shoot Centers in Atlanta and Washington, DC (http://www.runnshoot.com/index.html)
  - Joe Dumars Fieldhouse in suburban Detroit (http://www.joedumarsfieldhouse.com/index/)
- Promote the expansion of the traditional capital lending base to augment area banks. Community development thrifts could provide additional financing for CBD and neighborhood revitalization as well as expansion of small business services to both the English and non-English speaking population.
- Explore combining public offices with non-profit agencies to increase the use of historic buildings near the main street and allow for increased opportunities for main street retail.
- Create an arts collaborative combined with extension classes, live/work space, and programmatic ties to the local public and parochial schools.

HOUSING

MAJOR ISSUES

- There was overwhelming support for creating a balance between affordable and market rate housing development. The community also desires to develop and attract a mix of income levels and housing choices.
- Participants supported increasing home ownership opportunities to achieve neighborhood stability. The current homeownership rate in Coatesville is 45.7% compared to 68% nationwide. Financial and programmatic tools are needed to increase access to home ownership and reduce the affordability gap.
- Assistance to improve and maintain the existing building stock is needed. Charrette participants expressed concerns about predatory lending, mortgage financing options, and insurance rates.
- New housing should respect the existing context of the community, including housing affordability, convenience, architectural character, and density.
- Lifestyle housing niches that could be target markets for future housing development include:
  - Seniors
  - Young couples
  - Empty nesters
  - 1- 2-person households
  - Artists
  - Young tech workers in King of Prussia and Conshohocken

RECOMMENDATIONS—DESIGN

- Maintain density and traditional architecture design in new housing development. Take advantage of existing infrastructure as an asset.
- Assist property owners in maintaining historic properties.
- Integrate for-sale market-rate housing design into affordable housing development.

RECOMMENDATIONS—POLICY

- Provide incentives to developers for inclusionary housing, such as free land and secondary financing.
- Encourage Habitat for Humanity and other non-profit developers to partner with for-profit developers to promote mixed income development and neighborhoods.
- Build on existing homeowner and rental rehabilitation programs through partnership with local lenders, making aggressive use of public and private financing tools, i.e., EQ2, PA Housing Finance, NR, Fannie Mae, etc.
- Study lending and home mortgage insurance patterns and practices to investigate access or lack of access to capital for home ownership and maintenance in Coatesville.
- Explore development of a Community Land Trust program to ensure long-term affordability of housing stock and access to affordable homeownership.

RECOMMENDATIONS—MANAGEMENT

- Create or identify an existing CDC to become a NeighborWorks organization to take the leadership in increasing affordable home ownership opportunities, especially in the core study area. This would include development of a secondary mortgage market, home ownership counseling and neighborhood revitalization strategies. See http://www.nw.org for information on NHS and NeighborWorks.
- Code Enforcement: Maintain and strengthen rental housing licensing to maintain the existing stock and ensure affordable homeownership.
- Collaboration and partnership: Develop a directory and web site of housing available in Coatesville.
- Collaboration and partnership: Establish an on-going citywide affordable housing coalition to promote partnerships, eliminate duplication and leverage new resources.
- Maintain an efficient zoning and permitting process as part of Coatesville's competitive advantage to attract developers.
- Explore community-based construction training opportunities to take advantage of planned new development and retirements within the construction industry.
- Work to exceed HUD Section MBE/WBE goals.
- Develop a parade of homes in Coatesville to showcase housing and lifestyle options throughout the community.
- Encourage local faith-based organizations to develop support services for grandparents raising their grandchildren.

ECONOMIC AND REAL ESTATE CONTEXT

- The population growth of Coatesville is projected to be approximately 300 people by 2010.
- 44% of Coatesville households earn less than $25,000 per year.
- The largest percentage of the workforce is employed in educational, health and human services (23%). The second largest concentration is in manufacturing (18.4%) and the third is retail trade (14%).
- Two major developers announced plans this week. One calls for building ten 10,000-square-foot office buildings over the next decade along Route 82 and two additional buildings between the High Bridge and Lincoln Highway. The second calls for redevelopment of the Shatter Zone into retail, housing and offices.
- Downtown still suffers from old perceptions of being unsafe. However, the reality is changing and perceptions are as well, albeit slowly.
- The highest rents downtown are $7.00 square foot, triple net.

RECOMMENDATIONS—DESIGN

- Key Point: Many places have revalued themselves based on aesthetic considerations.
- Coatesville's location in a beautiful "bowl" of hills is distinctive, and those views should be preserved.
- Coatesville has a distinctive, historic Main Street on which to build.
- Feelings are mixed on the impact of the icon building of the mill. Should it stay? Or should it go?
- We want to explore opportunities to tie activity in the proposed office buildings to the life of the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS—POLICY

- Revive HARB for review of historic properties throughout the community.
- Develop protection for viewsheds.
- Favor development in existing historic downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Confirm the feasibility of the development proposal(s):

1. Comprehensive market study which evaluates:
   a. Current and projected supply and demand
      i. Determine most underserved retail categories
      ii. Determine office tenant mix that should be targeted to correlate with Coatesville's competitive advantage
      iii. Establish jobs-housing balance
   b. Unmet demand (gap) for various land uses proposed
      i. Retail (especially grocery store)
      ii. Office
      iii. Housing of various types
         1. Condominium
         2. Rental
         3. Townhouse
   c. Absorption Rates
      i. How much office can be absorbed by demand in near term
      ii. How many housing units can be rented or sold
      iii. How much retail (especially grocery) is supportable
   d. Achievable average rental rates for various land uses
      i. Class A office space
      ii. Class B/C office space
      iii. Retail anchor tenants
      iv. Inline retailers
   e. Average construction and development costs for various land uses
2. Development phasing strategy based on:
   a. Amount of office space that can reasonably be absorbed in the regional market
   b. Amount and type of retail that is most underserved in Coatesville
   c. Mix of market rate and affordable housing that will catalyze more private sector investment
3. Put together marketing package to attract retailers:
   a. Highlight available properties
   b. Describe/present underserved retail categories
   c. Show planned developments in the area (additional households, office space, etc.)

RECOMMENDATIONS—MANAGEMENT

- Maintain Coatesville's competitive advantage in quick approvals of proposed projects.
- Set criteria against which revitalization strategies are measured. Criteria may include:
  - Build on distinctiveness of Coatesville.
  - Provide job and higher educational opportunities for residents of Coatesville.
  - Develop job skills for today's jobs for residents of Coatesville and link City investment in new development with employment of local residents.
  - Develop entrepreneurial skills for residents of Coatesville.
  - Encourage local participation by residents of Coatesville.
  - Attract people and spending into Coatesville from the surrounding area.

LAND USE, CODES, AND PUBLIC WORKS

ISSUES

- The City has not adopted a long range "vision."
- There is a need for a mediation/dispute resolution system to resolve disputes; Pennsylvania law (see PA State Ann. Title 53, Section 10908.1) allows use of mediation.
- The crests of the hilltops surrounding the City are subject to being developed, thus negatively affecting the aesthetics and setting of the City.
- The historic properties are at risk of being demolished and/or their character changed because protections are not in place.
- For efficient and cost-effective land development, developers need predictability and certainty regarding the development approval process.

RECOMMENDATIONS—POLICY

- Consider adopting a land development code that promotes mixed uses, offers a range of housing price points within neighborhoods, and promotes connectivity and walkability.
- Consider establishing pre- and/or post-application mediation procedures pursuant to Section 908.1 of the PA Municipalities Planning Code to aid the process of reaching consensus on potentially contentious development proposals.
- Maintain the aesthetic values of surrounding hilltops and woodlands by adopting a policy that restricts development heights that would intrude on crests.
- Engage the citizens in establishing a "long range vision" for the City through a series of facilitated town meetings that provides clarity, certainty, and predictability for future development. This vision would build upon and expand the revitalization plans referred to as Tier One and Tier Two. The vision should likely address such issues as:
  - The desired type of land development patterns and their appropriate locations.
  - The need to rewrite the land development regulations that address urban and suburban design and their appropriate locations, with consideration of establishing design guidelines that include limitations in terms of the number of floors (allowing for variations in height).
  - The adoption of "traditional neighborhood design" guidelines that address setbacks, encroachments, building disposition on parcels, location of parking, facades, street design, and transit.
  - The transfer of development rights from the hillsides (sending areas) to the downtown (receiving areas).
- Create a legal and certified advisory Historic Architectural Review Board whose mission is to promote preservation and adaptive reuse of historic properties, giving consideration to efficient review and coordination with City departments.
- Allow for, regulate, and market "bed and breakfast" lodging.
- Invite higher education institutions to explore distance-learning opportunities in the City.
- Consider the creation of a non-profit center that combines the current storefronts on Main Street into a shared office facility.
- Encourage the funding and placement of the "steel beam sculpture."
- Consider implementing a voluntary, or mandatory, contribution of one percent of total development costs for public arts and amenities.

B. PREVIOUS COATESVILLE PLANS AND STUDIES

Rediscovering Coatesville Through Downtown Revitalization (Tier I), adopted September 2002

Prepared by Thomas Committa Associates, Inc, Town Planners & Landscape Architects

- The focus of this Revitalization Plan (Tier I) is to envision Coatesville as the new downtown for the greater Brandywine Valley Region. The 2002 plan is an update of the 1999 plan and functions to set the stage for the Tier II plan.

Urban Center Revitalization Plan (Tier II), adopted December 2002

Prepared by Thomas Committa Associates, Inc, Town Planners & Landscape Architects

- The Tier II plan serves as a strategic plan for the City of Coatesville in the development of a new vision for the City. The plan focuses on infrastructure and transportation components as integral to the City's proposed future rehabilitation and growth.

The 2002 Countryside Exchange, a program of the Glynwood Center

Prepared by the Glynwood Center

- The City of Coatesville was selected through a competitive process to participate in the Countryside Exchange. Applications are evaluated based upon such criteria as the depth of interest within the community, existing leadership and leadership skills, and the diversity of community members supporting the application. Through meetings, tours, and presentations, the team gains a cross-section of community concerns that are then articulated into a final report.

City of Coatesville Train Station Parking and Improvements Study, April 2003

Prepared by the Buchart Horn Team

- The focus this study was to identify rehabilitation needs and potential locations for structured parking at the train station and the immediate area.

Weed & Seed Neighborhood Revitalization Plan and Community Partnership Program

Renée C. Fairconeture, M.H.S., Community Development Coordinator, AID Team and Seed Coordinator, City of Coatesville

- This plan forms the foundation for the City of Coatesville's city-wide revitalization plan through a process engineered by the AID Team and AID Team Subcommittees. It maps out assets which will need to be continued throughout the City's Weed and Seed implementation process with increasing levels of specificity.