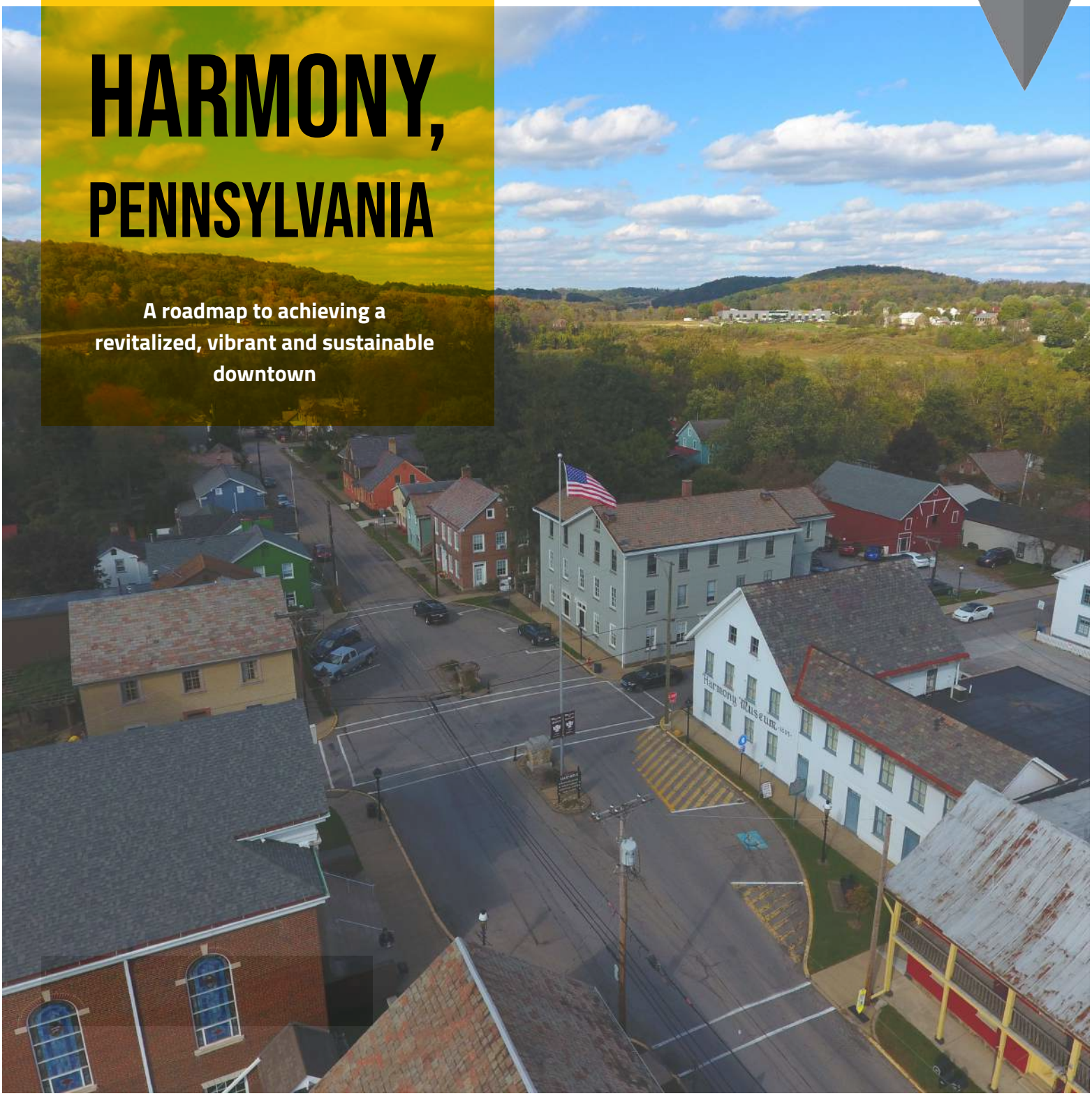
Revitalization Roadmap
Setting the Course to a strong community

October 2019

HARMONY, PENNSYLVANIA

A roadmap to achieving a revitalized, vibrant and sustainable downtown



PREPARED BY:

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Adopted: November 2019

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HISTORY OF HARMONY

Founded by German migrants and rooted in a deep desire to retain the characteristics that made it unique, Harmony is today a diverse community.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Harmony, Pennsylvania is a community with a long and storied history, from its origins as a safe haven for families fleeing religious persecution through today when it acts as a bedroom community for other regional employment hubs. The area that currently makes up Harmony was originally settled in 1804 by Johann Georg Rapp, a German immigrant and founder of the Harmony Society. The remote and beautiful location served as an ideal place for the teaching of his communal religious beliefs. During the early years of habitation, he created a prosperous village, reminiscent of German town-planning practices, and grew a thriving municipality based on these principles.

Additional elements of note for the Borough of Harmony and immediately surrounding area are:

- In December of 1753 George Washington was reportedly "shot at" here during the run up to the French and Indian war.
- The local residents that founded the community were called Harmonites.
- The community is uniquely situated adjacent to Connoquenessing Creek, offering spectacular natural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.
- The downtown square was designated as a "historic downtown" in 1974.

Southwest Pennsylvania

A location attractive to many individuals and inviting to all for an improved quality of life.

Harmony's long and interesting history is focused on the downtown square and Mercer Street corridors. The community has been able to maintain the downtown's unique architectural character and preserve its built environment through stringent preservation of valuable community buildings. The desire for preservation, coupled with newer roadways at the periphery of the community, has created a downtown corridor and square that has been preserved over many generations, even while most other regional downtowns have been demolished or changed.

However, in recent years, services and amenities have dwindled within the borough of Harmony. This has created a sense of loss for local residents, who particularly miss:

- a grocery store within convenient access of downtown
- a butcher or natural foods store
- a variety of dining options

As the community continues to grow and diversify, it is critical that Harmony preserve its unique heritage while making full use of the assets it provides.

1974 THE YEAR HARMONYS DOWNTOWN DISTRICT WAS ADDED TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER

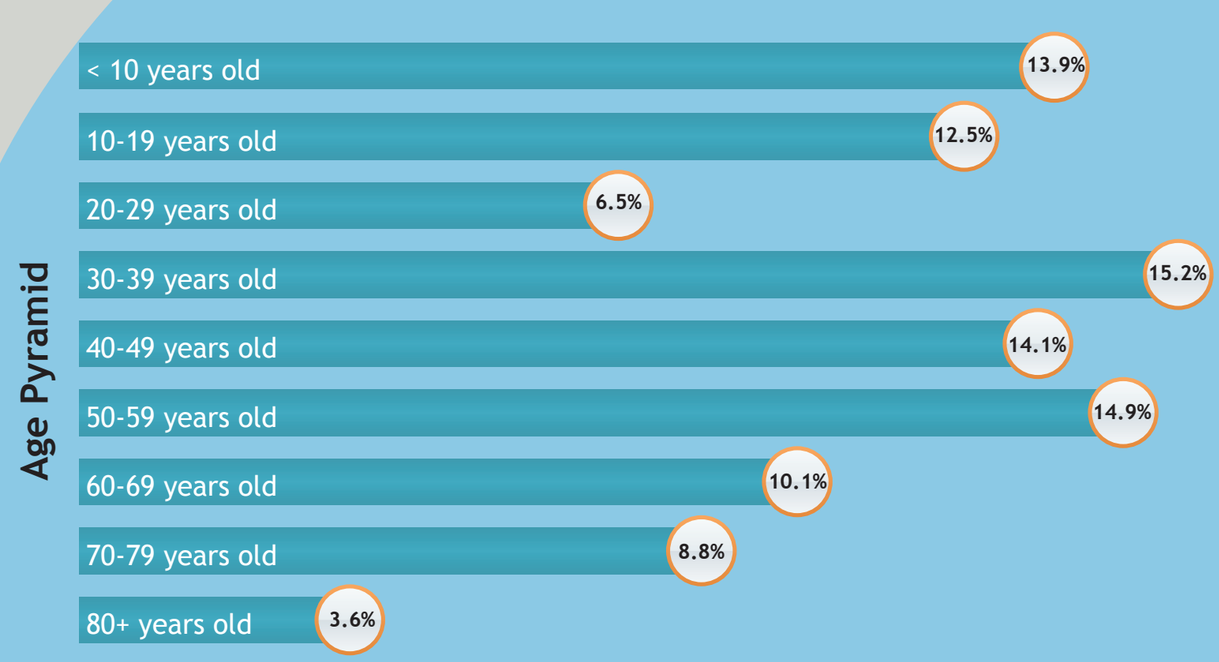
ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

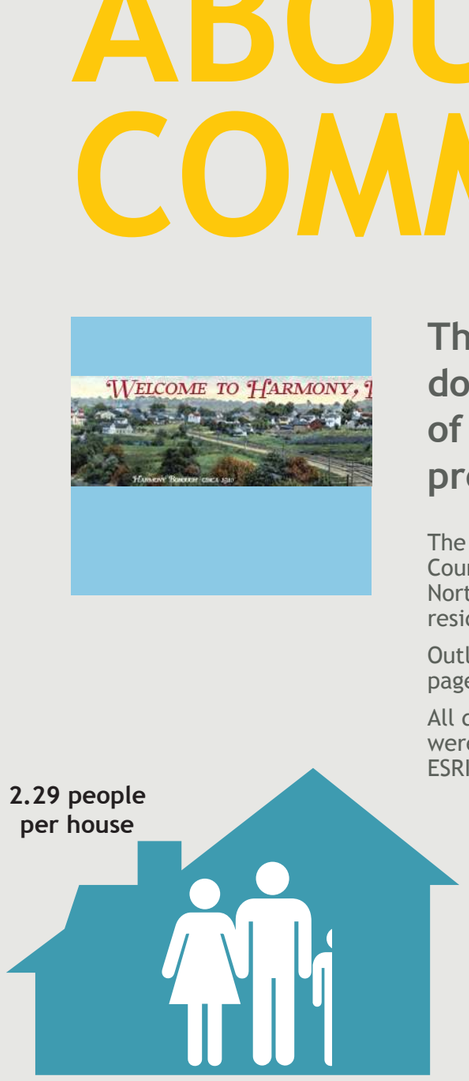
The most complete historic downtown in Butler County: home of driven individuals desiring to preserve their history

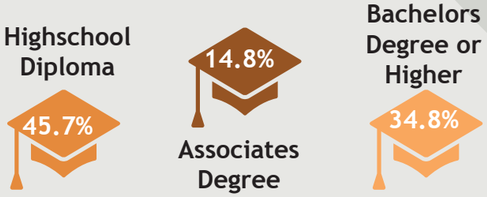
The Borough of Harmony is a small community in Butler County, Pennsylvania. It lies approximately 30 miles North of Pittsburgh and has a projected population of 857 residents (US Census Bureau).

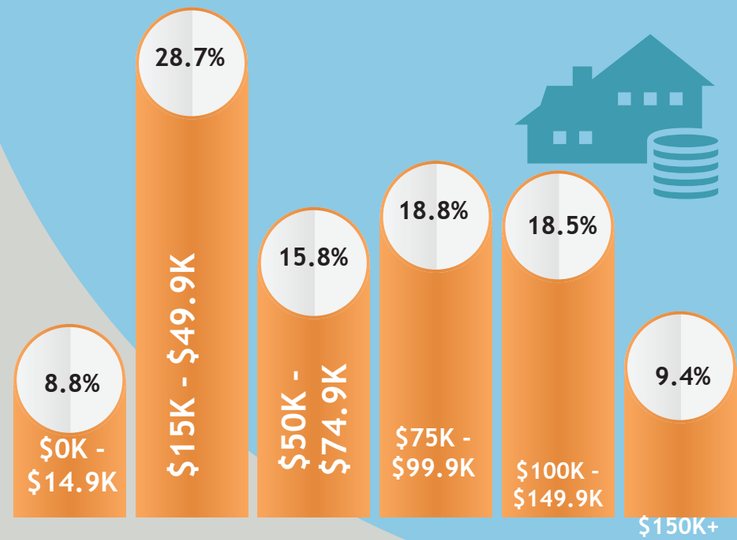
Outlined below, and in the supporting graphics on this page, are key facts about the Borough of Harmony.

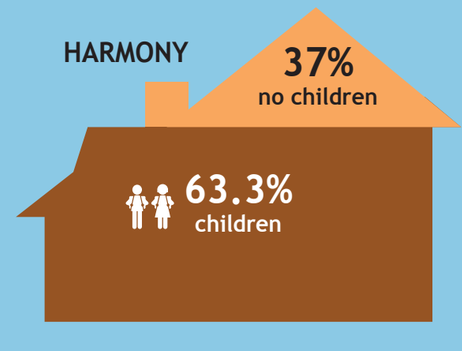
All documentation and graphics provided in this section were compiled with data from the US Census Bureau and ESRI Business Analyst database.

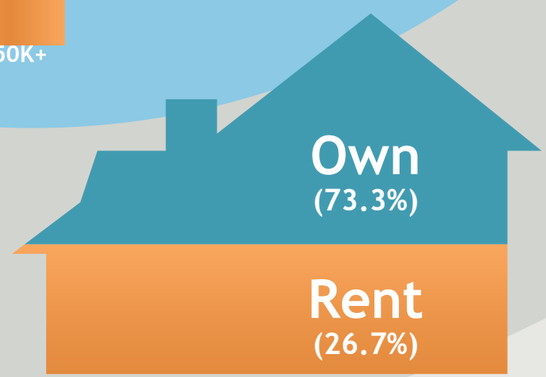












The Roadmap Process

The Revitalization Roadmap process is a streamlined alternative to the traditional downtown plan, hybridized with an action-oriented strategic plan. The process undertaken for the Harmony Revitalization Roadmap is grounded in comprehensive community input, undertaken to create a clear and concise roadmap for the community to follow to achieve revitalization. The detailed process used to create the revitalization roadmap is outlined on the next page.

A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT DOWNTOWN HARMONY, OFFERING IMPLEMENTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Action oriented - Specific - Measurable - Community driven

A COMMUNITY BACKED PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN

Locally driven process with national experience results

A Detailed Review of the Roadmap Process Utilized for Harmony, Pennsylvania

- *Review of the available community documents, including:*
  - Existing plans
  - Strategic community revitalization documents
  - Comprehensive plans
- *Detailed community assessment*
  - Visual inspection of the downtown
  - Analysis of the community character
  - Review of current community capacity
- *Comprehensive community input*
  - Community input survey
  - Open-house charrette (hands-on input) meeting
  - Local event participation
  - Stakeholder meetings
- *Main Street assessment*
  - Detailed discussions to understand capacity
  - Strategic recommendations and board analysis
- *Recommendations presentation*
  - Drafting of strategic recommendations
  - Creation of an implementation matrix
- *Creation of the map*
  - Finalization of recommendations
  - Creation of roles and responsibilities matrix
  - Implementation timeframe creation

The above outlined items are a brief summary of the overall process undertaken for a Revitalization Roadmap planning process. It is through the completion of these steps that the Borough of Harmony will be enabled to:

PROVIDE HIGHLY IMPLEMENTABLE GOALS

Create strategic recommendations for the periods below:

- 1 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years

OUTLINE CATALYST PROJECTS

Provide a list of catalyst recommendations for:

- Built environment
- Streetscape
- Facades
- Real estate/underutilized properties
- Community character

IDENTIFY LOCAL RESOURCES AND ASSETS

Identify available resources to answer the 5 W's of strategic implementation:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why

Note: The Revitalization Roadmap is not a comprehensive downtown plan or a specific strategic plan. All work provided as part of the process is prepared to document a clear and concise roadmap for community revitalization of each unique community.

DESTINATION DISCOVERY

A common vision
for the community

MEETING WITH GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE COMMUNITY-WIDE PERCEPTIONS AND REALITIES

In the spaces provided below are highlights about the participants who took part in the stakeholder meeting process. On the following pages in this section there are more detailed results from the stakeholder meeting process.

LOCAL RESIDENTS

Residents are the vital users that will create a sustainable downtown. In Harmony several concerned and outstanding residents took part in the stakeholder meetings. The discussions held with these individuals was focused on the importance of the downtown, its historical significance, and the missing services or amenities.

BUSINESS OWNERS

Business owners are the lifeblood of a downtown. Their support and continued operation can improve or detract from the overall atmosphere. Hence, information gathered from these individuals and groups was focused on gathering input about the economic conditions within downtown Harmony.

REGIONAL AGENCIES

Participants from these groups provided a valuable regional perspective grounded in local thought and inspiration. Discussions, which focused on how to make Harmony a better place and a regional draw, were highly enlightening.

Destination discovery is the first step in the roadmap process. During this step individuals and groups of people are interviewed in a closed-door meeting. This style of meeting allows participants to be blunt, factual, and fear no future alienation from the views they express. During this phase we met with several individuals or groups from within Harmony — specifically, Property Owners, Business Owners, Regional Agency Officials, and Concerned Residents. During this discussion, each participant was asked six questions. They are outlined on the right.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS HELD

Held on 10/7/19 in the Borough Hall at 213 Mercer St, Harmony, PA 16037

- What are the biggest issues currently present within Downtown Harmony?
- What are the most unique assets in Harmony?
- How does your community show civic pride?
- What are the potential roadblocks to better utilizing the downtown?
- What does your downtown most need?
- What is your community missing?

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

DOWNTOWN

The residents and business owners within the community have a sentimental attachment to the downtown corridor of Harmony. Every stakeholder who participated noted the significance of the downtown to their past, and their aspirations for future enhancements. The common theme in this topic was that all participants wanted to see a more vibrant, attractive, and inviting downtown.

COMMUNITY

People in Harmony are community-centric, putting the community first and creating a pseudo-family among all residents. This style of community interaction illustrates outstanding civic pride within the community. A group of individuals who gather to discuss the economic viability of their downtown and set it as a priority over other more glitzy or glamorous options is a group of vested individuals.

UNIQUENESS

Harmony was described as a fantastic place to raise children, participate in the community, and have a better quality of life. That being said, when questioned about what specific unique characteristics were synonymous with Harmony, many stakeholders struggled to identify truly UNIQUE assets that were present in Harmony.

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Residents, business owners, and meeting participants were extremely vocal about their aspirations for the downtown of Harmony. Their united voice represented the common theme to bring all parties together for the betterment of the community as a whole. Their desire was for more walkable and safer pedestrian corridors with abundant retail and restaurant options to serve local residents and visitors alike.

PARTICIPANTS WERE A BROAD AND DIVERSE SAMPLE OF THE COMMUNITY

Comments from the stakeholder meetings are highlighted below. Information represented on these pages does not provide the names of individuals or groups responsible for the comments. This is to protect the respondents' confidentiality. These comments display outstanding examples of community character:

1. **Harmony is a community that is close-knit and well connected to one another.**
2. **Residents and visitors are similar in their support for revitalizing the downtown core of Harmony.**
3. **Harmony has outstanding architecture that is remarkably intact and well preserved**
4. **Downtown Harmony serves, and should always serve, the LOCAL residents first and visitors second.**
5. **The town square of Harmony supports many events throughout the year, each of which are well attended.**
6. **Residents are concerned about the increasing frequency of flooding along the creek.**

DOWNTOWN ASSESSMENT

Every journey starts from a single point or location. Understanding what this point is will allow for creation of a detailed "map" to reach the destination.

Prior to starting any journey, a starting location must be determined. This is true with downtown revitalization efforts as well. To create a snapshot of the current conditions within Harmony, a downtown assessment was completed.

This assessment focused on providing a detailed review of the current conditions of the downtown in September of 2019. The results of this assessment were broken down into five categories, each representing a common pillar of downtown health and sustainability. The results for each of the five categories, listed on the next page, are provided in the remaining pages of this section.

The downtown assessment was structured to be similar to a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) analysis, yet focusing solely on the downtown of Harmony.

DOWNTOWN ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

1. BUILT ENVIRONMENT
2. COMMUNITY CHARACTER
3. REAL ESTATE/ DEVELOPMENT
4. COMMUNITY CAPACITY
5. STREETSCAPE

THE DOWNTOWN ASSESSMENT WAS CONDUCTED UTILIZING:

- VISUAL INSPECTIONS OF THE DOWNTOWN
- GUIDED TOURS
- SELF-GUIDED EXPLORATION OF EXISTING ESTABLISHMENTS
- DETAILED ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND DATABASE INFORMATION
- DAY AND NIGHT-TIME SITE INVESTIGATION

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Harmony has a remarkable downtown with diverse and well-preserved architectural elements. Buildings within the downtown are uniform in appearance, yet each has unique identifier elements. Each of the buildings contributes to the overall community or architectural context, creating corridors that are punctuated with purposeful intersections and unique civic spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Downtown buildings are of a similar forming and massing, providing a continuous look and feel within the downtown and town Square area.

Historic and Similar Building Stock

The building stock in Harmony is primarily of the Georgian or federal style and primarily constructed around the 1800's. This short construction timeframe coupled with limited alterations and continual maintenance, has created an outstanding and unique building stock. The level of preservation in the Borough of Harmony far exceeds that of other regional destinations.

Maintained Building Stock

Buildings with the Borough of Harmony are well maintained and have the historical elements primarily intact. The local residents have taken great pride in caring for their buildings to the extent financially capable. While each building may have minor blemishes or work needed for restoration, as a whole, the community is in exceptional shape.

Unique Architectural Elements

The buildings in Harmony are unique in architectural form and massing. In the late 1880's it was rare to see three and four story buildings outside of major metropolitan areas. The buildings in Harmony were constructed to a grand scale for their construction era, each having unique architectural elements that set each building apart from one another.

Diverse Building Construction

Buildings within the downtown square and Mercer St commercial district of Harmony are of a similar construction method. Many of the buildings are created with a wood frame and masonry or stone walls. These buildings range in overall footprint size and height, yet are mostly focused around the small downtown massing scale.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The Borough of Harmony is a small historically Germanic community that personifies the unique characteristics and feel of a small-town atmosphere. It is through this preserved and harmonious atmosphere that Harmony creates a pleasing lifestyle for current residents and attracts new residents and visitors. Harmony has a unique community character that is supported through, and personified by, the local residents. The community's specific goal is to preserve the unique character of Harmony and create an attractive hub of activity.

The character of a community drives the sense of place and the quality of life. Based on these elements, Harmony is an outstanding place both to live and raise a family, and to experience small-town living.

Civic Pride

Communities that witness a long-term disinvestment within a downtown can often track the root cause back to a lack of civic pride. This is currently one of the issues the borough of Harmony is experiencing — specifically, a detrimental environment that is focused on status quo instead of quality of life.

Identifiable Character

Residents of Harmony were easily able to identify the characteristics that "Make Harmony, Harmony". Repeatedly, the following character traits were given as an explanation of Harmony:

- Small-town charm
- A great historic community
- People looking out for people
- A community that serves the residents

Historic Old-World Atmosphere

While meeting with the residents and surveying their input, residents repeatedly noted the old-world feel and atmosphere of Harmony as the primary contributing characteristic to the overall small-town charm. This perception or realized atmosphere, coupled with the ease of access, is a driving factor for the residents of Harmony.

"Communityness"

"Communityness" is a sense of place or being in which the role of each member contributes to the mutual benefit of all. Based on the results of the survey and discussions with the public, Harmony personifies "communityness" and this is the second driving factor in how the people categorize the character of their town.

REAL ESTATE/ DEVELOPMENT

From the development perspective, the Borough of Harmony is mostly built out, having minimal unused parcels remaining. Based on our research and detailed discussions with stakeholders, the borough is witnessing a shortage in retail/commercial spaces and an overall lack of real estate to develop additional spaces. As a result, new business start-ups and residential expansion has plateaued in the Borough. In order for Harmony to prosper, existing spaces must be put to better use or density must increase.

Investment in real estate or property development within the downtown of Harmony is limited and has the potential to effect the economic vitality of the community.

Lack of Property Turn Over

Properties in the square and commercial corridors of Harmony are put up for sale infrequently. When properties do sell they are often sold for over-asking price or never make it to the open market. With a municipality approaching build out, new businesses and/or development opportunities are difficult to come by.

Low Rental Rate

While there is a lack of turnover in rentals or purchase options, the current square-foot rate for leases is $12.50. Compared to other regional or national locations that are similar in size and character, Harmony's square-foot rental rates are almost $2.00 below average. Alongside low rental rates is the high cost of renovating the historic properties within the municipality.

Available Spaces Not Marketed

Within the borough of Harmony there is currently a limited amount of first-floor retail or commercial rental spaces available. While many of the first floor spaces are full, there is still potential for expansion into upper floor spaces that are unused. After talking with the public during the input process, there were concerns about the need to provide ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access to upper floors.

Inadequate Spaces for Users

Spaces available on the upper floors of buildings are currently not set up to meet local business or professional needs. Many potential renters were questioned during the process and their justifications for not renting a space were:

- spaces too small or too large
- inadequate access for business style/ type
- inadequate fixture and fittings for the price

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

The Borough of Harmony is a community of like-minded and community-proud individuals, each willing to donate or volunteer their time to the betterment of the community as a whole. This desire for the greater good illustrates a community that is full of diversified and individual agencies or boards. While there are many community revitalization and redevelopment groups within the community (Historic Review Board, Planning Commission, Borough Council. Historical Society, etc.), they are all running their own organization and agencies. By running each of these agencies independently and not having adequate communication between them, the community is torn on which group to support.

There is ample capacity among the talented and supporting residents, yet there are too many individual groups vying for the same support or volunteer hours.

Ease of access

During the meetings and survey process participants routinely noted the ease of access to regional business hubs as a strong factor contributing to community character. Harmony is currently functioning as a bedroom community to other regional employment hubs, offering an enhanced quality of life coupled with the higher income from larger metropolitan areas.

Many Groups, Few Residents

While the community has many vested individuals or groups working toward making Harmony a more amazing place to live, they are each vying with one another for support from a diminished number of residents and even smaller amount of volunteer hours. While many people would like to help with more than one group, time is often at a premium.

Infrequently Utilized Spaces

The downtown core of Harmony is a beautiful and historically significant town square, boasting a unique civic space. This vital community space has infrequent and irregular programmed use. Highlights of the civic space are focused on set concerts and community programs; hence, the space witnesses high use during these few events and little use otherwise.

Strong Volunteer Base

Harmony is a community created of vested individuals who wish to see the downtown revitalization process succeed. These individuals are of a varied makeup encompassing design professionals, attorneys, financial professionals, and long-term residents. Each of these groups or individuals has a specialized skill set that will help ensure the sustainability and success of the downtown revitalization efforts.

STREETSCAPE

The borough of Harmony is currently witnessing a lack of space within the streetscape realm. Currently the right-of-way spaces along the commercial corridors and within the town square are limited, creating an often crowded space with limited potential in the current configuration. By having an unattractive and unkempt streetscape the borough of Harmony is less inviting to local residents and visitors. It is important that this vital space be attractive and inviting, encouraging residents to wander and interact with local businesses in a safe environment.

A streetscape is the realm where pedestrians interact with downtown businesses and neighbors. The current streetscape conditions in Harmony are providing potential downtown users with a negative experience.

Small Sidewalks

Sidewalks within the downtown core and commercial corridors of Harmony are smaller than necessary to provide adequate pedestrian walking spaces. In several community spaces, specifically along Mercer Street, the sidewalks are at maximum width due to the limited right-of-way. Within the downtown square there is more room to expand the sidewalks.

Poor sidewalks & ADA Ramps

Sidewalks throughout the project area have signs of uneven wear, frost heaving, and improper maintenance. This has caused the surfaces to be irregular and potentially become a trip hazard. Many ADA ramps within the project area are in poor condition. This is due to numerous attempts to patch the ramps and meet ever-changing standards.

Missing Landscape Elements

Much of the downtown corridors within Harmony are devoid of vegetation. This lack of necessary vegetation is diminishing the pedestrian experience within the community. The streetscape realm is currently dotted with few trees and even fewer shrubs, causing additional noise and a lack of adequate separation between pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns.

Lack of Adequate Lighting

Lighting within the project area is made up of several different styles or manufacturers. Many of the light fixtures are older bulb-based fixtures that are “throwing” a yellow light. Additionally, lighting within the downtown is not overlapping, causing dark spots in the sidewalks and roadways. The borough has begun renovating the luminaires including upgrading bulbs to energy-efficient LED fixtures.

PUBLIC INPUT

1-ON-1 MEETINGS

One-on-one meetings allowed for residents to meet with the consultants in a safe and inviting environment. This meeting format was offered to any resident who desired to have a more personal and candid conversation about downtown Harmony.

MULTI-FORMAT SURVEYS

In the digital era it is more important than ever to provide surveys and questions in multiple formats. Accordingly, digital and print-form surveys were utilized as part of the Harmony Revitalization Roadmap process.

OPEN-HOUSE PUBLIC MEETING

An open-house meeting allowed residents and visitors to provide feedback about downtown Harmony on various topics, including Transportation, Streetscape, Visual Preference Voting, Forming and Massing, and Alternative Transportation.

LOCAL EVENT PUBLIC MEETING

As a follow-up to the open-house meeting, a secondary public input meeting helped garner additional feedback in reference to proposed enhancements and desired outcomes for the downtown.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Understanding how residents interact with the downtown is critical to understanding where revitalization efforts will have the most impact. In order to better understand the public’s needs or desires, a comprehensive public input process was undertaken to gather valuable feedback. The public input campaign was driven by best management practices and focused on open-ended questions to spur meaningful conversations with participants.

UNDERSTANDING THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS AND DESIRES WILL DETERMINE THE BEST PATH FOR REVITALIZATION

PUBLIC INPUT RESULTS

Outlined on this page are figures, charts and information about the results of the public input process. Back-up data about this information is available in the ancillary or appendix section.

Harmony Open House Meeting

Held at:
September 19, 2019
Borough Hall
217 Mercer St
Harmony, PA 16037
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

WHAT DID THE PEOPLE SAY?

Residents were vocal throughout the entire public input process and were often united in supporting a particular desire or direction.

Elements of the public participation process for the Harmony Revitalization Roadmap are highlighted on the right. These key factors illustrate a community that desires revitalization, but not at the expense of community character and history. Additional feedback and detailed survey responses are available in the appendix (separate document).

71.7%

51.7% of residents support expenditures for family-friendly dining

55

unique survey response sets from the community (combined print/digital)

50.1%

50.1% of participants patronize downtown on a daily basis

65%

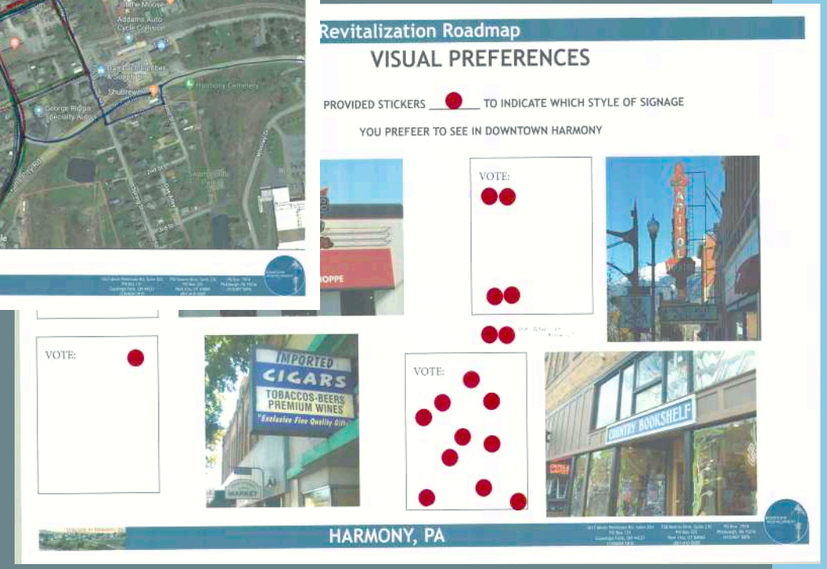
65% of residents felt there were not enough retail amenities within downtown

53.8%

53.8% of respondents desired a convenience or small grocery store

QUALITY OF LIFE

The majority of responses noted living in Harmony for an increased quality of life



Comments from the public input meetings are highlighted below. Information represented on these pages was gathered solely by meeting participants and residents. All information and scans are available in the appendix section of the roadmap document (separate document). These statements represent an amalgamation of the prioritized feedback from the events.

1. **Harmony is a town with unique architectural buildings that are important to the heritage of the community.**
2. **All forms of transportation should be encouraged and welcomed within the square of Harmony.**
3. **There is a strong desire for safer pedestrian circulation, especially sidewalks and crosswalks.**
4. **Residents desired more Germanic-style elements within the downtown, including a butcher and/or general mercantile.**
5. **People desire to have additional amenities within the downtown — specifically, family-friendly dining, convenience stores, and a natural foods store.**

ROADMAP
RECOMMENDATIONS

Charting a course does not always require a map, yet having a clearly defined, time-bound, and specific process to achieving the desired goal greatly improves the chance of success.

Preparing a carefully charted course will help the Borough of Harmony achieve its desired destination of a revitalized downtown. While a roadmap does not guarantee that there will not be a few detours along the way, making a document that will guide the community and Main Street group towards a successful implementation improves the chances of reaching the desired destination.

The recommendations in this Revitalization Roadmap section are based upon a detailed analysis of existing documentation, a downtown assessment, extensive community input and best management practices from a consultant with national experience in small to medium-sized communities.

The recommendations in this section are meant to serve as a living document, providing a set of priorities to be implemented one at a time. The document should be updated annually to review attainment of the recommendations and be re-prioritized as necessary to meet community goals.

The recommendations in this section are broken down into five categories, each representing a critical pillar of successful downtown revitalization implementation. Recommendations are provided on the following pages and will be outlined in the next chapter for the roles and responsibilities matrix in a similar format.

HARMONY'S UNIQUE DESTINATION:

An intact and historically significant Germanic-style small community focused on balancing an improved quality of life for residents with an attractive holiday destination for regional visitors.

ROADMAP
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. BUILT ENVIRONMENT
2. COMMUNITY CHARACTER
3. REAL ESTATE/ DEVELOPMENT
4. COMMUNITY CAPACITY
5. STREETSCAPE

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

PURPOSE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment of a downtown embodies the physical space where users interact with stores or services, gather in civic spaces, and assimilate into the small-town culture of their community. It is this space that serves as the vital “third space” in a personal-interaction scenario (live, work, play). Without this space, residents and visitors lack a common area to congregate and share a story and cannot bond to a common thread.

Each community has a unique and specific atmosphere that the built environment helps create. It is through this uniqueness and mutual service agreement that the downtown grows to serve a community and the community their downtown.

BENEFITS OF A STRONG BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The benefits of a strong and uniform built environment are numerous, but there are a few that are more important than the others. The important benefits are:

- People form an intrinsic bond with buildings that are significant to their childhood or have played a role in important life milestones.
- Residents prefer different architectural styles, so providing a mixture of styles will appease more individuals, creating a larger draw to the downtown.
- When traveling, people have a desire to visit places that are different from their own hometown yet have a familiar sense of forming and massing which will provide them with a sense of security.

18.5K

AVERAGE AMOUNT OF VISITORS TO A SMALL TOWN ANNUALLY

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Built Environment section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet comprehensive plan recommendations

1 Creation of Community Guidelines

To preserve the unique character and atmosphere of Harmony, it is recommended that a strong set of design and development guidelines for the community as a whole be created. Chapters of this document should be devoted to different areas of the borough, such as commercial corridors, downtown square, neighborhood areas, highway corridors, etc. These guidelines should be created as an effort to preserve the community’s built environment. All guideline creation should take place with ample public input. This will allow the community to have their voices heard and the borough to create a set of guidelines that the majority of the community can support. Final adopted guidelines should clearly outline the process for non-compliant parcels/buildings and be adopted by the borough council as an amendment or attachment to the comprehensive plan, ensuring legislative authority to uphold the document.

2 Yearly Façade Program

Creating a yearly façade program will bring the largest return on investment of all downtown revitalization work. It is recommended this program offer a 50/50 or dollar-for-dollar match for local business owners. This program should be offered to existing businesses as well as potential businesses as an attraction opportunity. Façade projects should be capped at $10,000 per addressed property to help increase the number of projects annually. We understand this process is underway and it is recommended that it be repeated annually. Additionally, the borough of Harmony can request funding assistance for this from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

3 Create a Downtown Development Authority

Creating a long-term sustainable downtown improvement funding mechanism will help the downtown of Harmony be able to facilitate necessary improvements or enhancements to the downtown and commercial corridors. A newer mechanism within the Commonwealth is a Downtown Development Authority (DDA). DDAs are often structured based on sales tax increases for a geographic TIF (tax increment financing) boundary, based on real estate taxes. These differ from revitalization zones in how the funding is spent. Specifically, all funds captured in a DDA must be spent in the same area; local business owners are only minimally affected if the projected district is a sales tax capture; and while property owners will experience limited impact, business owners reap the benefits of a sustainable funding source for enhancements.

4 Construct a Downtown Gateway

When someone enters the Borough of Harmony and the historic square area, there should be a place marker or sign identifying arrival into this unique destination. Simple signage is often sufficient, provided it is congruent to the uniqueness of the community character. While the borough has several of these items, they are currently not noticeable or special enough to draw attention. Potential remedies include:

- **Creation of a gateway arch or entrance**
- **Tailoring of the existing signage**
- **Creation of a historically accurate and unique downtown gateway sign.**

5 Create a SPOC

Creation of a single point of contact (SPOC) in Harmony will allow for easier development, renovation, and business attraction to fulfill underserved needs. This position is typically held within the municipality or a local non-profit. The SPOC should be the controller of information, serving as the most knowledgeable individual and coordinating necessary services from other amenities. SPOC contact information should be advertised on webpages and with local realtors, illustrating the ease of working with the borough to attract a business or renovate a building.

6 Continue to Preserve and Personify

The Borough of Harmony has an intact and architecturally significant set of buildings within the downtown square and commercial corridors. These buildings are one of the Borough’s true assets, creating a historical tourism base for the community. It is recommended that considerable effort be made to ensure preservation of the buildings and personalize the unique characteristics that make each building independent. It is through the preservation of these buildings that Harmony will continue to expand and personalize its existing efforts to turn Harmony into a desirable destination. Efforts should be made by the Borough of Harmony to partner with property owners to identify the historic features, categorize remaining elements, and prepare a plan to restore the buildings.

COMMUNITY @HARACTER

PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character is the atmosphere that makes a downtown feel like a desirable place to be. Without this character, a downtown begins to feel like a lifeless shopping mall or lifestyle center. Community character helps residents and visitors alike feel a connection to the community, forming a symbiotic relationship. By identifying and personalizing the unique community character within downtown Harmony, the residents have a more tangible connection with their community and can begin to interact more frequently within the downtown.

BENEFITS OF A UNIQUE COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Unique community character is what ties a group of local residents to their hometown. It is through this connection that people feel a sense of shared ownership for their downtown and take pride in preserving the amenities or services it provides. Through creation of this strong tie, the following is offered:

- A strong sense of “HOME”
- Improved integration between local residents and businesses
- Improved sense of ownership for the well-being of downtown
- Increased participation and volunteerism

75%

OF TOURISTS PREFER EXPERENTIAL TOURISM

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Community Character section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet comprehensive plan recommendations

1 Create a Single Community Revitalization Agency

A successful downtown is predicated upon a single, strong, and efficient group to help promote and program the community. Currently, Harmony has many community agencies that are working towards the common goal of a vibrant community, yet none of them encompass everything needed for a successful downtown revitalization. To remedy this, it is recommended that a single downtown or community revitalization agency be created. This single agency can serve the community for all its historical, museum, downtown revitalization, and community enhancement needs. By merging these multiple needs into one central agency, the community

2 Collaboratively Promote Downtown

A downtown is only as strong as the programs it offers to attract visitors and provide a quality of life for residents. In an effort to help create a more active and vibrant downtown, it is recommended that events be promoted collaboratively with the entire community. By working together with the local restaurants, destination centers, and municipality, a series of inclusive events can be provided, ensuring access for everyone along the entirety of the Mercer Street, Main Street, and Market Square areas. By partnering events and gathering purposes, the downtown can become more productive and inviting for regional visitors looking for a daytime trip or “staycation.” Promoting the downtown should focus on experiential visits that will create a lasting memory. Case studies show that when a particularly strong memory of an event or place is created, many people revisit that location over and over to re-create a similar experience.

3 Downtown Mission Statement

A single vision or mission for the downtown is critical to revitalization. It allows for the community to rally behind a single goal, aiding implementation. It is recommended that Harmony create a unique tag line or vision/mission statement for just the downtown corridors. This should be separate from the line used for the community as a whole. Flags and banners should be created stating the tag line, logos should be prepared, and all of them should be used solely in the downtown in an effort to create the feeling of a unified location.

4 Unify Signage

Community character is most identifiable within the downtown signage — specifically, the styles, colors, and style of signage. A downtown with unified signage creates a sense of place. It is recommended that Harmony create a unified signage style and implement sign guidelines within the downtown Market Square and Mercer Street corridor. Signage guidelines should be open enough to allow for personal expression and yet be restrictive enough to allow for a unified theme or character to be evident throughout all signage.

5 Increase Visibility

A downtown survives through frequent and increased usage. To increase visibility for the borough of Harmony it is important to increase the visibility of the downtown and available amenities. It is recommended that Harmony work with regional and county-wide agencies such as the Butler Tourism Bureau to help promote the outstanding historical destination that Harmony is. Working with the regional and county tourism bureau, or similar agencies, the borough should work toward creating a unified marketing message to attract “staycation” and weekend trip generation.

REAL ESTATE/ DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of real estate development in a small downtown is to create spaces for business creation and expansion. Without local real estate development, buildings within a downtown often slip into disrepair and will never meet their full economic potential. Local developers will provide the community with necessary spaces for business location and job creation. As regional, state, and federal grants continue to become harder to attain and more complicated to administer, local developers have been turned to more and more to pick up the slack for downtown revitalization efforts. It is through the creation of these valuable relationships that the municipality will empower its own residents and property owners to create a more walkable, livable, and sustainable community.

BENEFITS OF A UNIQUE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

Incentivizing LOCAL developers will drive the small downtown economy, preserving jobs and generating a new tax-base. It is through successful incentivization that the Borough of Harmony could realize the benefits below:

- Improved rental spaces (residential and commercial)
- Increased rental rates (per square foot)
- Increased business retention
- Larger clientele for downtown rentals
- More jobs created and retained within downtown
- Local tax dollars being spent at local stores

$14.50

AVERAGE SQ FT COST FOR RETAIL OR COMMERCIAL SPACE IN A DOWNTOWN

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Real Estate Development section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet comprehensive plan recommendations

1

Diversify Services and Amenities

A common theme among all survey and public input comments was a need for more retail and commercial services within the downtown Market Square and Mercer Street corridor. While the downtown buildings are remarkably full, the public was vocal about not having their needs or desires met within the available businesses or services. The recommended services to create a sustainable and exciting downtown are:

- Natural Foods Store — 15-20 mile draw, offering quality necessities at a fair price
- Book store — a used bookstore to create a destination location
- Convenience store — offering necessities or desired goods at no more of a mark-up than 20%-25% regular grocery store pricing
- Family Friendly Dining — A variety of food options, ranging from $10.00 to $14.50 per person
- Craft/card/yarn store — typically a regional draw due to the specialized nature of the business or service provided.

2

Detailed Building Assessments

The first step to increasing the retail amenities or services within a downtown is to form a detailed understanding of the underutilized spaces. This will allow the community and local property owners to maximize rental spaces in any building. To achieve this, a detailed building assessment (interior and exterior) should be completed for all downtown buildings. The building assessment will focus on providing the property owners and borough officials with a better idea of the spaces that are available, what each may be suitable for, and the willingness of the owner to attract a tenant. Building assessments should be completed to identify:

- Available spaces
- Applicable uses
- Necessary upgrades
- Occupancy issues
- Owner information.

3

Create Due Diligence Reports

Creating due diligence reports (DDR) will help prepare Harmony for redevelopment and attract action-oriented development companies to renovate buildings. A DDR is a double-sided sheet of cardstock outlining all the typical information a developer undertakes within the first 60-90 days of the acquisition process. It typically includes:

- Building information
- Zoning information
- Traffic counts
- Demographic data
- Available owners concessions
- Code deficiencies/tax liens.

By preparing these reports the community will be better able to identify spaces that are ideally situated for the specific needs of the residents. The reports should be created to identify the Duration, Intensity, Rate, and Timing (DIRT) of the desired development. Multiple properties should have these ready and the SPOC should be listed as the information gatekeeper.

4

Proactive Marketing for Business Attraction

By completing the previously listed recommendations, the borough of Harmony will begin to become proactive with private development. At that time the community must move forward and directly court the type of developers necessary to create a sustainable downtown. Proactively marketing regional and local developers should take preference over national developers.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY

A community is made up of talented individuals, all of whom have a unique skill set and the common goal of downtown revitalization. Each individual has a certain capacity and part to play in the overall process of downtown revitalization. By understanding the roles and responsibilities of the many different groups, a municipality will be better able to create a comprehensive volunteer base for community-based projects. It is by including the necessary local participants that a community will successfully implement a grassroots-based downtown revitalization.

BENEFITS OF A UNIQUE COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Through identifying the unique capabilities of each individual or group, the downtown will be able to:

- better leverage volunteer efforts
- capitalize on available resources and expertise within the community
- allow locals to build a deeper connection and sense of ownership with the community
- increase civic pride
- provide a more cost-effective option to consultant-led projects.

LOCALS ARE THE TRUE EXPERTS ON THEIR DOWNTOWN. ALLOW THEM TO HELP AND PROVIDE THEIR MEANINGFUL INPUT

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Community Capacity section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet comprehensive plan recommendations

1 Creation of Main Street Organization

Creating a successful downtown revitalization project requires a group of devoted and driven individuals. This group is often called the Main Street committee or group. In order to be most effective this group of individuals should be created as a stand-alone agency, separate from the municipality. Separating these programs allows the newly formed Main Street group to request non-profit status and begin to attain grant or foundation funding for downtown revitalization work. The organization should create a set of bylaws and train a board made up of driven individuals. The goals of this group should be to promote, preserve, and enhance the downtown in all aspects of the four-step Main Street approach.

2 Unified Downtown Programming

Programming the downtown corridors will ensure that all spaces are maintained and each business garners the same amount of exposure. It is recommended that the borough of Harmony create a unified programming calendar or schedule for the downtown, encouraging use of all spaces. This will require planning uses and spaces at all ends of the downtown and Market Square to encourage walking between both points. Through this programmed space, visitors and residents are more likely to patronize additional retail or commercial establishments.

3 Local Fundraising Campaigns

In addition to creating a DDA (mentioned previously), it is important that the local Main Street group create a comprehensive fundraising campaign. In this way, the community will be provided with enough funding to hire a full-time Main Street manager to oversee the downtown revitalization process. It is recommended that fundraising be completed by a three-pronged approach to ensure sustainability:

- Municipal Support — This process would allow for businesses to support the Main Street through memberships or contributions.
- Business & Resident Support — Offering fundraising events such as art walks, fairs, etc. is always a great way to engage the community and raise funds.
- Foundations or Fundraising Support — There are several national foundations that support Main Street programs, although they typically only contribute up to 33% of the yearly operating costs.

4 Creation of a unified volunteer List

- In a small community the majority of volunteer hours are often completed by a small group of devoted individuals. In an effort to discourage volunteer burnout and increase the volunteer pool, it is recommended that a comprehensive community volunteer list be created. This list should encompass more than Main Street volunteers. It should focus on providing a comprehensive list of individuals and what they may be willing to volunteer/ donate their time to. By creating this list, the community will have a better understanding of how to determine roles and responsibilities for each prioritized task or recommendation to make the community more vibrant.

STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS

PURPOSE OF STREETSCAPE

The purpose of a streetscape is to provide a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians and to encourage alternative transportation methods to make full use of the downtown. A successful downtown revitalization requires a successful streetscape. Each streetscape must be uniquely situated to cater for the needs of the residents and the climate of the region. There is no one right way to design streetscapes, but some universal requirements are:

- a safe and attractive atmosphere
- a mixture of hard and soft surfaces
- clear delineation between transportation methods
- increased visibility
- wayfinding signage

BENEFITS OF A UNIQUE STREETSCAPE

A downtown streetscape project is one of the most visible downtown enhancement projects that a community can undertake. Through the completion of a streetscape project, a community will witness:

- improved accessibility
- increased foot traffic
- improved attitudes and perceptions toward the downtown
- improved private development around the periphery of the streetscape project
- improved lighting and night-time safety for vehicle and pedestrians

$4.25

AVERAGE RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EVERY $1 INVESTED AFTER 5 YEARS.

Outlined below are the recommendations for the Streetscape section. All recommendations provided are formulated to create catalysts for change within the community or to meet comprehensive plan recommendations

1 Complete Comprehensive Streetscape Enhancements

Currently, the streetscape infrastructure within the Market Square and Mercer Street corridor is in a state of disrepair. Understanding that limited resources are available to make these costly repairs or enhancements, a phased streetscape program is recommended for the square area. The phased approach to streetscapes will allow the community to create a strong streetscape and comprehensive enhancements, one section at a time. The phases are as follows:

Phase 1 — Borough square area:

- **Install brick sidewalks and cobble street surfaces in the square**
- **Install new sidewalks elsewhere**
- **Install new vegetation**
- **Create new civic spaces and provide more site amenities**
- **Install new signage**
- **Refresh square area store façades**
- **Install zero-grade elevation transitions in the square.**

The rationale behind this streetscape phase is to create a multi-purpose space for increased civic function. The space will remain open to traffic on both Main Street and Mercer Street. The cobble surface will provide an old-world feel and increase pedestrian safety.

Phase 2 — Main Street enhancements:

- **Install additional vegetation in raised planters**
- **Install water features**
- **Install or create outdoor market stalls on the west side of the square**
- **Close traffic along the Main Street corridors, while the Mercer Street roadway remains open**
- **Install new outdoor seating spaces**
- **Install new landscape and shade trees**

The purpose of this second and final streetscape phase for the borough square is to finalize the transformation into a historic Germanic square, highlighting the unique architecture and creating an outstanding civic space. Execution of this phase will be completed several years after the first phase, and only after further examination of potential traffic interruptions or impacts. This phase will include closing the Main Street sections of roadway and retaining the Mercer Street roadways for traffic. Ample shade trees and seating will be provided in an effort to create a new community-gathering spot.

Sample Plan view renderings for both phase 1 and phase 2 concepts are outlined on the next page.

2 Install Wider Sidewalks

Where possible along the Mercer Street and Main Street corridors it is recommended that wider sidewalks to improve pedestrian circulation be installed. As the community continues to grow in popularity, the sidewalk space will become more challenging to navigate. Increasing the sidewalk spaces would also allow the community to become more compliant with current ADA regulations.

3 Increase parking options

Currently, the square and Mercer Street corridors do not offer sufficient on-street parking. During the public input process, formalizing currently unimproved parking facilities and providing more parking off the roadway corridors were noted as priorities. When financially feasible, it is recommended that the borough purchase underutilized parcels that are not significant to the historical architecture and install new municipal parking lots.

4 Improve or Replace Street Lights

The borough has replaced streetlights throughout the downtown with first generation LED's, and some have been upgraded to newer generation LED fixtures as funding allows. It is recommended this process continue but that it focus on upgrading the lighting in the borough square first. This is the primary location where people walk, bike, and run through, so lighting in this area is of the utmost importance. Replacing the luminaires with LED fixtures and painting the existing poles with an appropriate marine-grade paint will ensure the fixtures have a long life. Where dark or dim spots are found, it is recommended new light fixtures be installed to ensure a 25% overlap in light casting. This will eliminate all dark spots, promoting a safer walking environment.

5 Install Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage helps direct people to and around the downtown. Currently, the borough of Harmony has insufficient signage directing visitors and residents around the community and to available parking locations. Necessary signage to be installed includes:

- at interstate corridors
- for parking locations
- for trailhead locations and connectors
- at critical intersections throughout the town, directing people towards the downtown
- for amenity locations and applicable parking

Sample images of phase 1

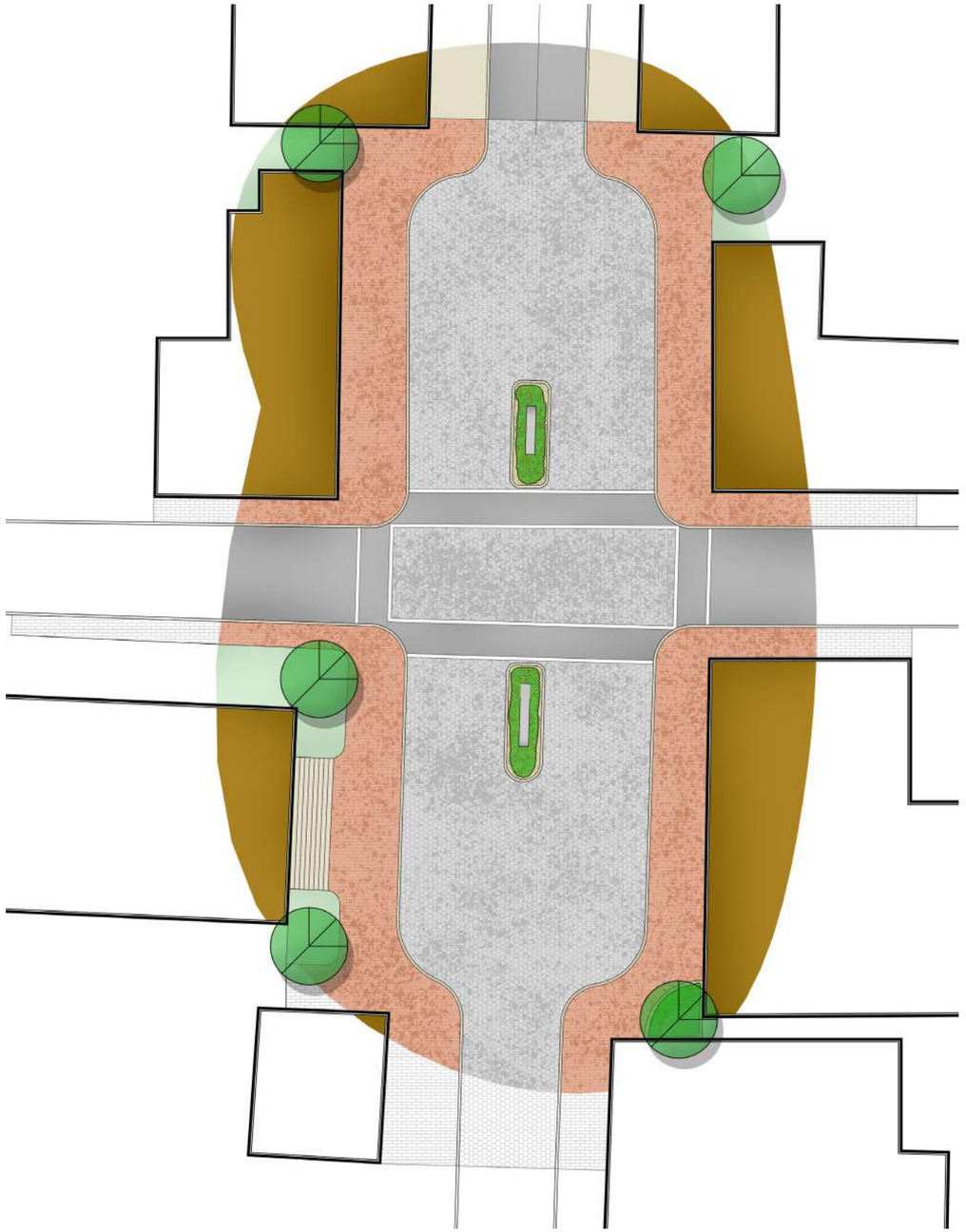
Sample images provided below are for contextual purposes only. Actual fixtures, surfaces, and signage may vary.

Sample images of phase 2

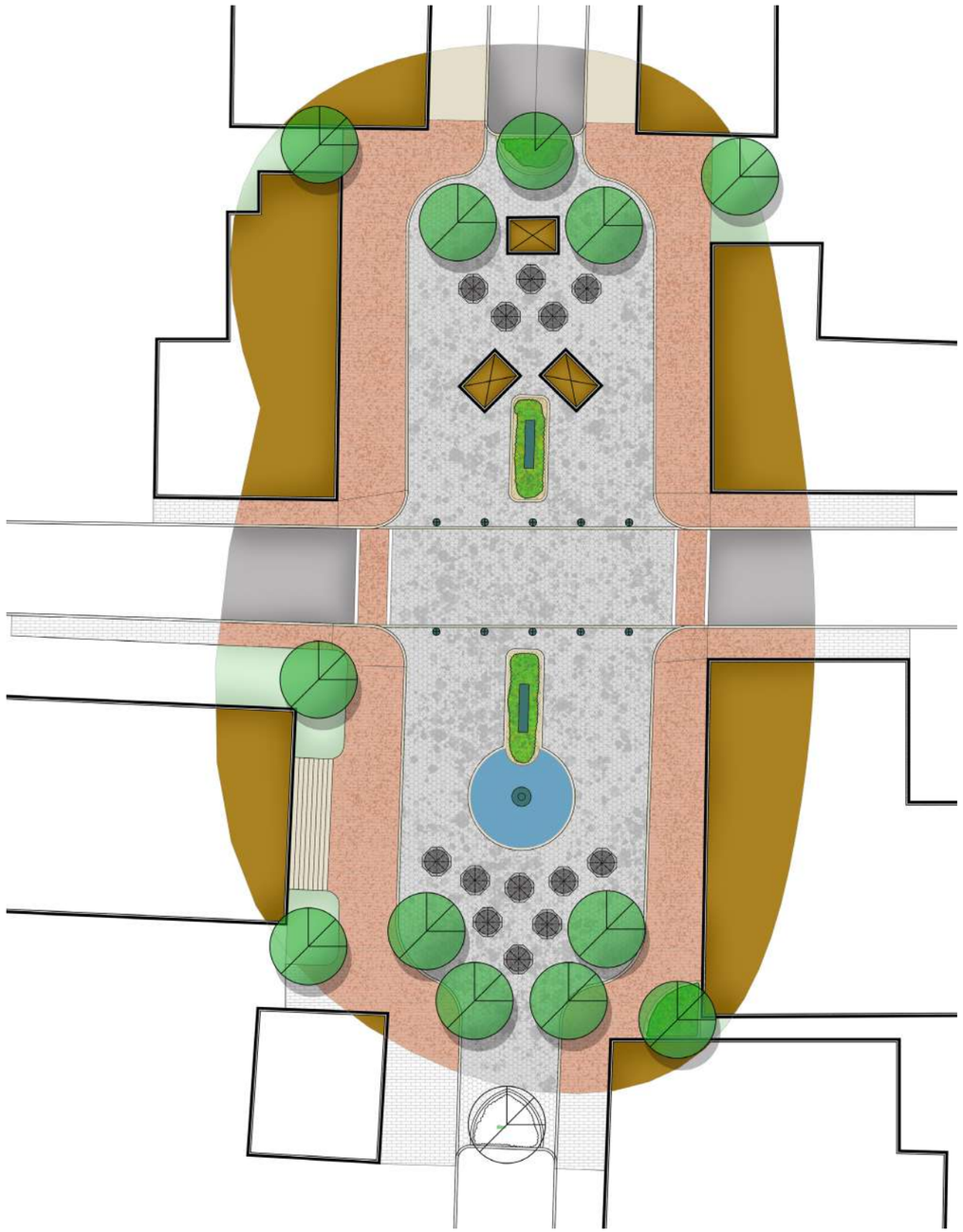
Sample images provided below are for contextual purposes only. Actual fixtures, surfaces, and signage may vary.

STREETSCAPE RENDERINGS

PHASE 1



PHASE 2



PHASE 2
AERIAL VIEW

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES MATRIX

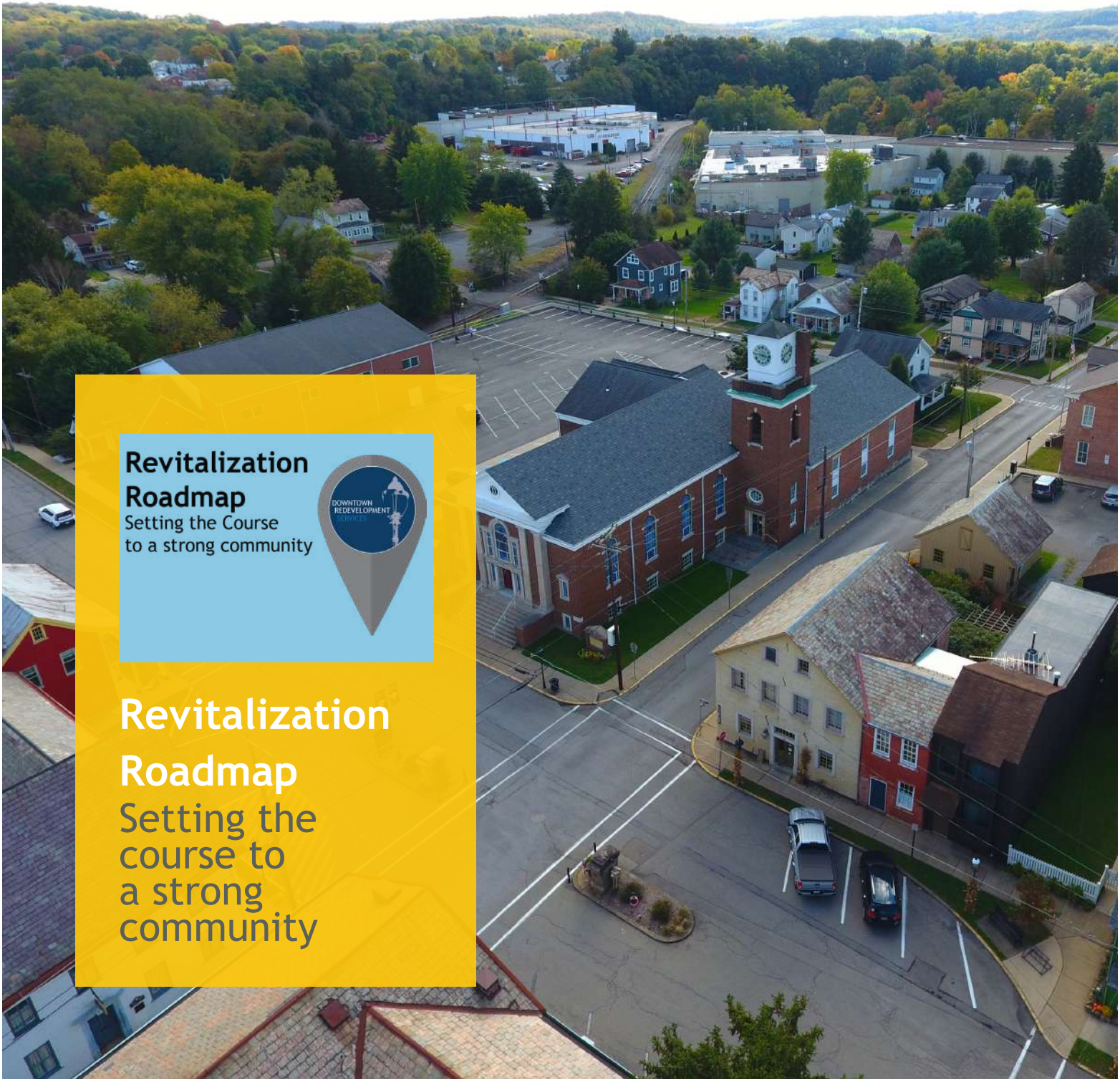
24

STRATEGIC GOALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN THE NEXT 1-TO-3 YEARS

ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH TIME BOUND AND SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities matrix is prepared to answer the Who, What, When, Where, and How of the strategic recommendations. All information provided on this chart is subject to funding availability and community buy-in.

	Project	Category	Borough of Harmony	Butler County	Downtown Committee	Butler CDC	Chamber & Businesses	Milestone/ Completion Date
1	Creation of Community Guidelines	Built Environment	●	●	●			8/1/2020
2	Yearly Façade Program	Built Environment	●	●	●		●	11/1/2020
3	Create a Downtown Development Authority	Built Environment	●			●		1/1/2021
4	Construct a Downtown Gateway	Built Environment	●	●	●	●	●	8/1/2010
5	Create a SPOC	Built Environment	●				●	3/1/2020
6	Preserve & Personify	Built Environment	●	●		●		8/1/2020
7	Create a Single Community Revit. Agency	Community Character	●					3/1/2020
8	Collaboratively Promote Downtown	Community Character	●	●	●	●	●	6/1/2020
9	Downtown Mission Statement	Community Character			●		●	1/1/2021
10	Unify Signage	Community Character	●				●	7/15/2021
11	Increase Visibility	Community Character	●	●			●	7/15/2020
12	Diversify Services and Amenities	Real Estate/Development	●	●		●		2/1/2022
13	Detailed Building Assessment	Real Estate/Development			●		●	9/1/2020
14	Create Due Diligence Reports	Real Estate/Development	●		●			11/1/2020
15	Proactively Market for Business Attraction	Real Estate/Development	●	●			●	8/1/2021
16	Creation of a Main Street Organization	Community Capacity	●		●			8/1/2020
17	Unified Downtown Programming	Community Capacity	●					3/1/2020
18	Local Fundraising Campaigns	Community Capacity	●		●		●	10/1/2020
19	Creation of a Unified Volunteer List	Community Capacity	●		●		●	6/1/2020
20	Complete Comprehensive Streetscape Enhanc	Streetscape	●		●			11/1/2021
21	Install Wider Sidewalks	Streetscaoe	●	●				12/1/2022
22	Improve Parking Options	Streetscape	●	●				7/1/2022
23	Improve or Replace Street Lights	Streetscape	●					11/1/2022
24	Install Wayfinding Signage	Streetscape	●					7/2/2022



Revitalization Roadmap

Setting the course to a strong community

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