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Borough of Pottstown
Heritage Action Plan

July 2011

Prepared by

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the Schuylkill River Greenway Association
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At its heart this plan is a vision for a revitalized economy based on the breadth of Pottstown's historical, recreational, environmental and arts and cultural resources and its historic connection to the river. It will take the diversity and strength of the entire community, coming together around this vision, for Pottstown to secure its rightful place as the economic hub of the region.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Heritage tourism gives a community the opportunity to tell the story of its unique role in Pennsylvania's rich history and in the development of our nation, while generating sustainable economic activity. The Borough of Pottstown has the opportunity to utilize its historic, cultural, and recreational assets to promote economic development and revitalization, to enhance residents' quality of life, and to improve the sense of place for residents and visitors alike.

Situated along the scenic Schuylkill River in southeastern Pennsylvania, the Borough of Pottstown was founded in 1752 by John Potts. He came from a family of ironmasters who established a forge there, beginning the town's long history of manufacturing, which came to include Mrs. Smith's Pies, Kiwi shoe polish, Firestone tires and steel for the Golden Gate Bridge. Pottstown was also a critical stop along the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroads, linking the upstate coal industry to Philadelphia. Pottstown's historic architecture, tree-lined streets and neighborhoods, and walkable downtown have made it a regional commercial hub and an ideal place for families, visitors, businesses and educational institutions such as The Hill School and Montgomery County Community College's West Campus.

The Pottstown Heritage Action Plan (HAP) is the result of a community-based planning process that was done in a relatively short period of time due to the timeline associated with the funding source. Pottstown's Heritage Action Plan Group has prepared the HAP as a blueprint of strategies and actions to increase the community's attraction as a destination for visitors interested in heritage resources. By their very nature, these strategies reinforce community pride, economic development and natural resource conservation.

Pottstown's HAP includes an inventory of the numerous existing heritage resources and recommendations for marketing, managing and improving them. The logical lead entities in the implementation of any Heritage Program would be PAID and PDIDA, both of which are currently in transition.

A prioritized list of Strategic Actions is also included in the HAP. Due to the immediate availability of \$25,000 in implementation funding from the Schuylkill River Greenway Association/William Penn Foundation, four projects that meet the funders' criteria have been chosen for implementation. They are:

- Creating Schuylkill River Trail connections between Riverfront Park and High Street and between High Street and Pollock Park
- Creating and installing three 3-sided informational kiosks to be installed in Riverfront Park, Pollock Park and in a downtown location
- Creating a comprehensive Pottstown brochure to be distributed via the kiosks, Chamber of Commerce and area businesses
- Creating a Trail-friendly decal for use by participating local businesses/organizations

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Pottstown's HAP can and should be used to seek further grant funds to implement projects from its prioritized list of Strategic Actions.

Finally, the HAP should be considered a “living” document that is periodically reviewed and updated when projects are completed, additional resources are created or improved and ready to be showcased, or new ways to tell Pottstown’s “story” are developed.

INTRODUCTION

Background

A Heritage Action Plan, or HAP, is a plan to promote and protect a town's historical, recreational, environmental and arts and cultural resources; to make it a destination location; and to spur economic development.

In November 2010 the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, with funding from the William Penn Foundation, put out a request for Letters of Interest for a Trail Towns & Tours Grant Program. The Borough of Pottstown applied, and in January 2011 it was named one of five grantees. The Borough received \$2,000 to create a Heritage Action Plan and the opportunity to apply for implementation funds of up to \$25,000 at the completion of the plan. The implementation funds, if received, can be used to improve Trail connections into downtowns and raise awareness among visitors of existing heritage resources. These funds must be spent by May 2012.



The Borough contracted with Susan Repko, PP, AICP of Skillman, New Jersey and Thomas E. Carroll of Pottstown to guide the heritage action planning process, publicize it, bring together stakeholders, solicit input and create the final plan within a relatively short time frame due to funding requirements. They were guided by the Heritage Trail Towns and Tours Toolkit, created by Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC of Easton, Maryland for the Schuylkill River Greenway Association. The Toolkit provides the detailed steps, rationale, sample forms and examples for creating a Heritage Action Plan with input from the community.

There were two major intents behind creating a HAP for Pottstown: (1) to identify and leverage existing arts, cultural, historical and recreational resources to attract visitors and spur sustained economic activity, and (2) to improve the connections between the Schuylkill River Trail and downtown Pottstown.

The Schuylkill River Trail (SRT) will eventually extend about 120 miles between Philadelphia and Pottsville. It is well-documented that trails of this length become travel destinations for bikers and hikers interested in multi-day trips. Within the next couple of years, the Trail will be completed between Philadelphia and Reading.

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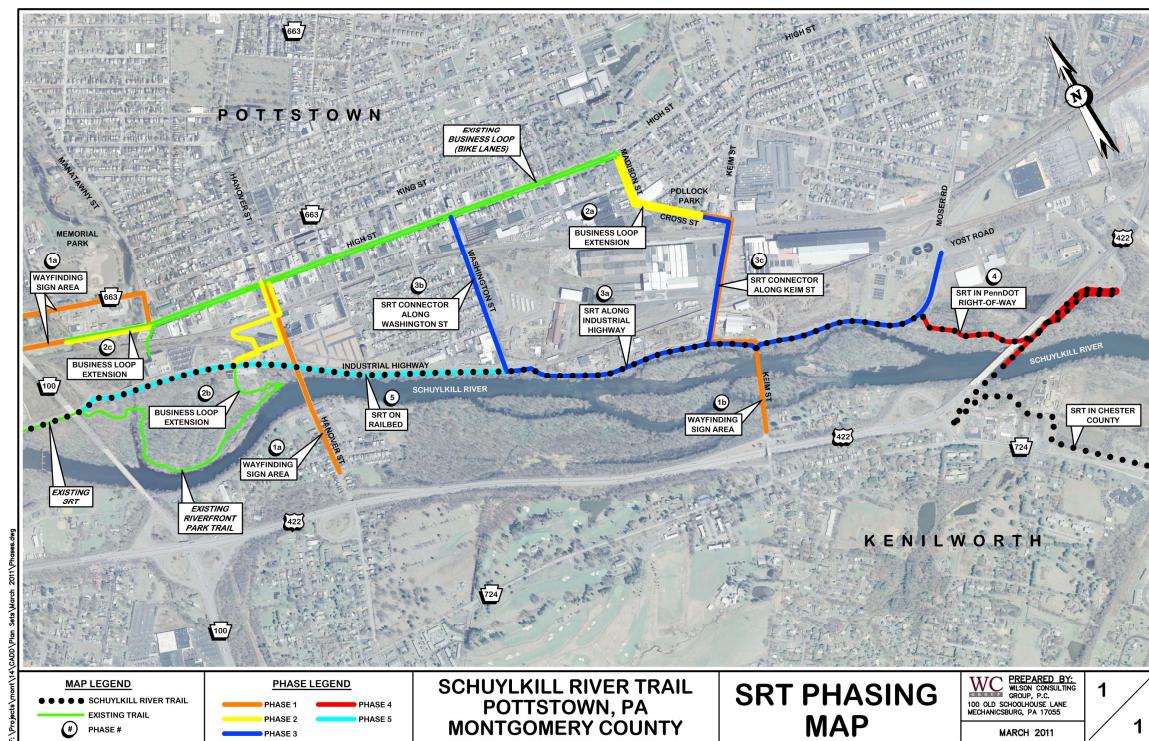


Due to Norfolk Southern Railroad's active use of the tracks on Pottstown's southern border, the SRT may never run directly adjacent to the river.

High Street's existing bike lanes and several proposed connections between the existing trail and High Street, therefore, have been designated as the "Pottstown Business Loop" portion of the Trail. **See Montgomery County's SRT Phasing Map below.**

This "detour" will increase the number of outdoor enthusiasts traveling directly through Pottstown. The Borough must let these tourists know how to get into the downtown and what resources and amenities are available to them. The Borough must also make them feel welcome and safe, so that they not only have an enjoyable experience but want to tell their friends and come back again.

The marketing of Pottstown as a heritage destination is meant to reach a wider audience of visitors, not just Trail users. Through well-placed and well-designed signs, kiosks and marketing brochures, anyone coming to the downtown should be able to easily locate and enjoy local history, architecture, parks, restaurants, shops and the arts.



Heritage Tourism is Economic Development

Where does heritage tourism fit into Pottstown's existing economic development plans and management structure?

Currently there are two economic development entities in the Borough: the Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA) and the Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID).

PDIDA is a special assessment district created to promote downtown businesses, organizations and activities; attract and retain businesses; and maintain an attractive streetscape. In the past, it has administered a façade improvement program. Its activities are governed by a volunteer board. The district encompasses High Street between York and Evans Streets, and Hanover and Charlotte Streets between King and Queen Streets. In 2006 PDIDA received a Main Street Program designation and funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Although the Main Street Manager position no longer exists as of June 30, 2011, it is expected that PDIDA will be re-structured and enhanced as an all-volunteer, self-sustaining organization.



PAID is an affiliate of the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce and a partnership of Pottstown Borough, Pottstown School District and the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority. Its mission is to work cooperatively with all of Pottstown's public, private and non-profit entities and citizens' groups to develop an economic development strategy for the entire Borough, not only the downtown, and to serve as the single authoritative entity to implement economic development initiatives.

The newly-appointed board of PAID recently announced its commitment to pursuing the strategies delineated in the Pottstown Economic Development Strategic Plan (Gannett Fleming, 2008) and Pottstown, Pennsylvania: Transformation Strategies (Urban Land Institute, 2009) to guide its economic development efforts. **A heritage tourism approach to downtown revitalization is consistent with the recommendations in the Strategic Plan and the ULI report.**

One of the three goals in the Strategic Plan is to "enhance Pottstown's identity as the urban hub of the region." Strategies under that goal include:

- Strengthening and publicizing amenities and resources that draw people to the Borough.

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- Continuing efforts to revitalize the Main Street commercial district along High Street as well as adjacent areas.
- Making improvements to the transportation network to promote the safe and efficient movement of people, vehicles and goods within and through the Borough; developing a way-finding system to provide clearer directions into and within the Borough; and improving pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular connections between High Street and Riverfront Park.

The Urban Land Institute explicitly recognized the potential for the Schuylkill River and related recreational, arts and cultural activities to spur revitalization when they recommended:

- Opening up the riverfront; removing the rail tracks; and creating a “place of magic.”
- Completing the long-distance trail; connecting to other trail communities; making Pottstown a stopping point; and participating in regional efforts to market the trail.
- Selling the Borough more effectively with brochures, a separate website, and a marketing communications package.
- Encouraging and accommodating a vibrant downtown; building a threshold of arts, culture and entertainment; and attracting retailers, including outdoor-oriented stores, such as canoe/kayak outfitters.
- Coordinating and promoting private and public activities downtown, using a “diverse arsenal of media components.”



The Heritage Action Plan picks up recommendations from the Strategic Plan and the ULI report and runs with them.

The HAP, if adopted and embraced by the Borough, PAID and PDIDA, can give those entities guidance on coordinated promotion and implementation of a heritage tourism-based

vision for downtown revitalization, one that likely comes with a quick infusion of \$25,000 from the Schuylkill River Greenway Association (SRGA) for implementation. The HAP can be then used to apply for funding from other sources for projects that will not be able to be completed in this initial round.

Because the HAP’s purpose is to recognize and promote Pottstown’s history and resources as they relate to the river and the River Trail, the plan’s projects and strategic actions are necessarily centered on Riverfront Park and the adjacent downtown. **It’s important to keep in mind that these projects constitute just one aspect of the multi-faceted economic development efforts that must occur simultaneously in the downtown and other areas of the Borough under the leadership of PAID and PDIDA.**

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Outline of Pottstown's HAP

At the beginning of the planning process the Pottstown Heritage Plan Group (see Section IV: Stakeholders and Partners) discussed their perceptions of what needed to be accomplished to increase the attractiveness of the downtown for visitors and residents. This self-analysis identified the challenges that citizens, business owners and public officials face in any effort to spur reinvestment and is summarized as a listing of issues and opportunities in **Section I**.

Moving from challenges, the group envisioned a future Pottstown that capitalizes on existing assets and opportunities. **Section II** outlines goals and objectives that provide direction for actions and key investments in improvements and will move the Borough toward its vision.

Focusing on assets, the Group prepared an inventory of resources, which are summarized in **Section III**. This process was not only a listing of resources but also an evaluation of the relative importance and condition of the resources.

Achieving the Pottstown Group's vision requires coordinated efforts involving citizens, businesses, public officials and organizations with parallel objectives. Partnerships, along with unified strategies, are critical to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resource and human capital. **Section IV** provides a summary of the Partners whose energy and commitment will be necessary to the success of the Heritage Program.

Section V: Marketing and Outreach details the primary marketing objective and marketing strategies for Pottstown to undertake to establish itself as a Trail Town with heritage resources worth experiencing. This Section includes a description of specific projects and activities that PAID, PDIDA and the Partners can undertake to support the marketing strategies.

Section VI: Manage and Improve summarizes programs and measures to protect existing historic, cultural, historic and natural resources, e.g., Historic District Guidelines and Open Space Plan.

Section VII: The Strategic Action Plan summarizes actions to advance the goals and objectives of the HAP. This section includes a listing of prioritized projects as well as details on four projects that have been selected for immediate implementation due to available funding from the Schuylkill River Greenway Association/William Penn Foundation.

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SECTION I: ISSUES and OPPORTUNITIES

Two Heritage Plan Group meetings were held at the Chamber of Commerce. Minutes from the first meeting can be found in Appendix A. Information about the HAP process was disseminated via the blog *Positively!Pottstown*, Facebook, Twitter and e-mail to seek input from stakeholders, partners and the general public. *The Mercury*, *The Sanatoga Post* and the local blog *Roy's Rants* all picked up the story at various times and publicized the HAP process. These discussions resulted in a distillation of various problems that are, in large part, already understood by the community.

Issues

Pottstown's downtown is perceived as not being very clean and as being unsafe, particularly after dark. A key challenge is changing the reality and the perception for both visitors and residents. These are major barriers to attracting new businesses. The downtown has many vacant residential and commercial buildings and there is a need to improve this streetscape.

Pottstown residents appear to lack pride and a full understanding of their own local, natural resources, such as the Schuylkill River, as well as their own history. Members of the Heritage Plan Group cited a need for more arts and cultural venues and activities that promote ethnic origins, place appreciation and a sense of community and the need for more dining facilities that feature local food.

Finally, there appears to be a lack of a physical and economic connection between the staff and students of the Hill School and Montgomery County Community College and the downtown. There are not enough attractions downtown for young people; there is a need for more bars and entertainment establishments and activities.

Opportunities

Pottstown's numerous assets – infrastructure, location, student populations and cultural and historic sites – present prime opportunities for revitalization strategies.

Pottstown has historic streetscapes, good sidewalks and bike lanes, all of which can be exploited to link the Schuylkill River Trail to the downtown, the Hill School, Montgomery County Community College, and cultural and historic sites. There is also the potential to use these linkages to better connect the faculty and student populations to the businesses in the heart of the downtown.

Pottstown's real estate is affordable and has good access to major highways (Route 100, Route 422, Route 724). In addition to its own bus system and free bike share program, Pottstown has its own airport, an asset to corporate and recreational flyers that distinguishes it from other municipalities. These multi-modal transportation assets, which are typically found in much larger urban areas, are already in place to help people get into Pottstown and then easily move around to the many cultural and historic sites without needing an automobile.

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SECTION II: VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

What do you want to create? What do you want your community to be like? Visions are broad statements that provide general direction for a community or organization.

At the first meeting on March 4, 2011, a group of about twenty Partners, representing a spectrum of community organizations, were led in a discussion by heritage planning consultants Shane and Peter Johnston from Peter Johnston & Associates, LLC, Planners of Easton, Maryland. The group was asked, “What do you want Pottstown to look like?” Each participant shared their vision, while Shane Johnston typed comments as they were spoken; they are summarized in Appendix A.

After reviewing all these comments, certain themes emerged, leading to a general consensus around a vision of a future Pottstown...

...with a safe, clean, revitalized, business-friendly downtown,
...that promotes heritage resources,
...that is accessible by various modes of transportation,
...and that is attractive to families and young people.

This vision may seem quite general and obvious, and yet it is the distillation of numerous and very specific comments related to the appearance of the downtown and the lack of a feeling of safety for residents and visitors. These kinds of honest assessments are the first step toward devising targeted strategies to overcome the impediments, which have prevented the community’s vision from becoming a reality up to this point.

A vision statement for Pottstown

Pottstown will be a vibrant community featuring a pristine, welcoming downtown that is attractive to new businesses and visitors from across the country. It will be a community that reinforces a positive sense of place and quality of life for visitors and residents alike.

Goals

Goals are also broad and focus on three primary aspects of heritage-related development: 1) business management; 2) heritage planning and programming; and 3) marketing and outreach.

Pottstown’s main economic development entities – PAID and PDIDA – are in transition right now and the following goals are mindful of that. These two organizations can work cooperatively to determine how various projects in the Heritage Action Plan can be prioritized and implemented most effectively. PAID and PDIDA can both build upon the participation of the numerous individuals,

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organizations and businesses who have shown an interest and enthusiasm in heritage tourism, and enlist them in tasks that are relevant to their expertise and capacity.

1) Business management goals:

- Establish a management structure and oversight for Pottstown's heritage action program.
- Build effective partnerships for heritage initiatives in Pottstown to ensure long-term management and economic sustainability.

2) Heritage planning and programming goals:

- Raise public awareness of Pottstown's historical, artistic, cultural, recreational and environmental resources and their locations.
- Build on existing arts and cultural activities as an economic development tool to bring more visitors into town, particularly people with disposable income.
- Ensure that Trail users can find their way into the downtown and High Street bike lanes. Assess the pedestrian and way-finding systems and identify projects to help produce more foot traffic to businesses, attractions and restaurants. Ensure Trail connection to Pottsgrove Manor.
- Preserve, protect and promote Pottstown's heritage resources.
- Expand Pottstown's heritage tourism infrastructure and attractions.

3) Marketing and outreach goals:

- Include Pottstown's urban advantages and assets in marketing for economic development.
- Increase economic activity related to heritage tourism in Pottstown for the benefit of taxpayers, partners and the general public.
- Develop marketing and outreach for coordinated promotion of Pottstown's heritage resources and offerings.
- Take advantage of local, regional and national marketing organizations to promote Pottstown's heritage offerings.

Objectives

Objectives are more specific, task-oriented statements that grow out of a community's general goals. Some specific objectives for Pottstown's heritage-related goals include:

1) Business management objectives:

- Enact agreements between PAID and PDIDA.
- Enact agreements between management organizations (PAID/PDIDA) and community Partners.
- Create heritage project timelines and meet deadlines.
- Secure funding for heritage-related initiatives.
- Ensure adequate staffing/volunteers for heritage projects.

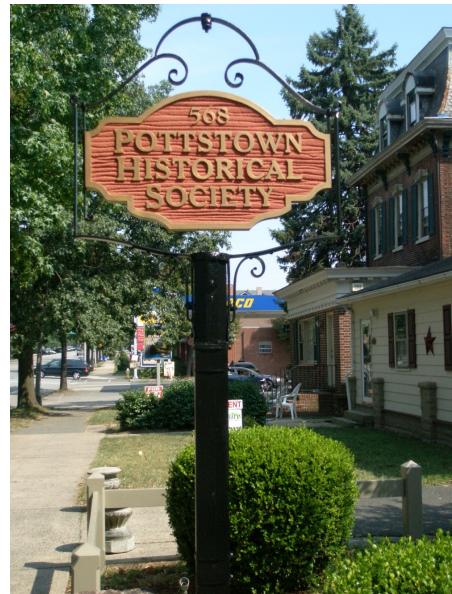
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2) Heritage planning and programming objectives:

- Improve signage from highways, exit ramps and trailheads and improve way-finding in the downtown.
- Clear sign clutter at gateways.
- Ensure that visitors can locate the Schuylkill River Heritage Center and Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center.
- Review regulations to ensure protection of existing heritage resources.
- Review regulations to invite new businesses and organizations to the downtown, especially arts, cultural, dining and recreational.
- Seek funding opportunities that will enhance or complement existing heritage resources.
- Expand annual cultural festivals/events to ensure at least one major event/month.

3) Marketing and outreach objectives:

- Promote a single vision for Pottstown as a center for history, arts, culture and recreation, both on and off the River Trail.
- Position Pottstown as a prime location for arts/culture-related businesses, organizations and activities.
- Review existing websites; create coordinated online marketing plan.
- Create/adopt tracking methods to measure changes in heritage visitors and heritage-related economic activity.



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SECTION III: HERITAGE RESOURCE INVENTORY and ASSESSMENT

Situated along the scenic Schuylkill River in southeastern Pennsylvania, the Borough of Pottstown was founded in 1752 by John Potts. He came from a family of ironmasters who established a forge, beginning the town's long and rich history of manufacturing, which came to include Mrs. Smith's Pies, Kiwi shoe polish, Firestone tires and steel for the Golden Gate Bridge. Pottstown was also a critical stop along the Pennsylvania and Reading Railroads, linking the upstate coal industry to Philadelphia. Pottstown's historic architecture, tree-lined streets and neighborhoods, and walkable downtown have made it a regional commercial hub and an ideal place for families, visitors, businesses and educational institutions such as The Hill School and Montgomery County Community College's West Campus.

The Borough of Pottstown has a wealth of resources that make it an ideal candidate as a regional heritage destination. The Trail Towns & Tours Toolkit suggests the need for a community to catalogue exactly what resources exist and their relative condition, within the context of their value for heritage tourism.

The Heritage Action Plan process undertaken in Pottstown between February-June 2011 involved bringing the leaders from community organizations, or their designees, to the same table around a common interest in the promotion of heritage resources as a cornerstone to downtown revitalization. This process is similar to that undertaken by the Urban Land Institute in the fall of 2009, as well as the strategy being used for the Pottstown Region Market Assessment and Fiscal Impact Study that is underway now. Leaders or individuals who are especially involved in some aspect of community life are considered to represent their larger constituencies.

The consultants put out a request to these potential community Partners via e-mail and then put out a call to the public using the Positively!Pottstown blog and Facebook. *The Mercury* picked up the story on March 10 and linked to the blog as well. Partners and the public were given several categories of resources, which are delineated in the Trail Towns & Tours Toolkit. Several local examples were provided to get respondents started, and then they were invited to add to the list.

Appendix B. Pottstown Resource Importance Rating shows all of the resources by category and how they were rated, on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "low" and 5 being "high"

To reiterate: Pottstown has many, many excellent heritage resources. For the sake of narrowing the lens a bit, we focus below on the resources in Appendix B that scored an average of 4.5 or higher in this particular survey. Please note, though, that some of these actually received a very low number of total votes. There are other resources that scored a

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4 or higher and received many more votes. For instance, under “People/Organizational Assets,” other organizations, such as the Health and Wellness Foundation, volunteers, fraternal organizations and veterans’ groups, had slightly lower rankings than the Medical Center, but received many more votes.

Arts: The Gallery on High, Center for the Arts at Hill School, TriPAC

Cultural Site: Edgewood Cemetery, St. Peter’s Church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Educational: TriPAC, Hill School, Gallery School, Pottstown School District, Pottstown Public Library, Montgomery County Community College

Festivals/Special Events: Schuylkill River Festival, July 4th, Parades, Biking, Free trolley tours during special events, First Saturdays, Carousel of Flavor

Heritage Tourism Business: Bike Share, Henry’s, Very Best

Historic Sites: Pottsgrove Manor, 2 National Register Historic Districts

Media & Marketing: *The Mercury*, WPAZ, Positively!Pottstown

Museum/Interpretive Center: Historical Society, Pottsgrove Manor

Natural/Scenic Sites/Parks/Trails: Memorial Park, Spray Park, Schuylkill River Trail, Riverfront Park, The Schuylkill River, High Street bike lanes

Other: Historic architecture, walkable town, small town atmosphere

Town’s Legacy: Steel industry

Organizational assets: Pottstown Memorial Medical Center

Tourism amenities: Parking, coordinated programs & activities promoting physical activity & health, public restrooms.

This survey showed that the respondents value the community’s arts, educational, historic and recreational resources, as well as special event programming. Volunteers, civic associations, and the health and wellness community are also considered key assets. On the qualitative side, the feeling of a historic, small town whose past is rooted in the steel industry is valued. All of these are what the community considers its strengths.



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Respondents were also asked to rate the condition of the resources on a scale of 1-3, where 1 = poor, 2 = good, and 3 = excellent. See Appendix C. Pottstown Resource Condition Rating for the complete list. Below are those resources that received an average score of 2.7 or higher.

Arts: High Street Music, Center for the Arts at Hill School, North Hall at MCCC, Boyer Gallery at Hill School, Emmanuel Lutheran Concert Series

Cultural Site: Edgewood Cemetery, Christ Episcopal Church, St. John's Byzantine Church, Holy Trinity Church

Educational: MCCC, Hill School

Festivals/Special Events: Open Doors, July 4th, Biking, Schuylkill River Festival, Schuylkill River Sojourn, Fishing/rafting, First Saturdays, Volleyball Rumble, Polar Bear Plunge, Free trolley tours during special events, Classic Car Shows, Family Fest

Heritage Tourism Business: Juan Carlos, Henry's, Tri-County Bicycles, Funky Lil Kitchen, Bike Share, Frankie & Johnnie's, Bentley's Boards, Hidden River Outfitters, Churchills, Very Best

Historic Sites: Pottsgrove Manor

Media & Marketing: Positively!Pottstown, WPAZ, *The Mercury*

Museum/Interpretive Center: Pottsgrove Manor

Natural/Scenic Sites/Parks/Trails: Memorial Park, Spray Park, Schuylkill River Trail, Riverfront Park, Pottstown Garden Club

Non-Listed Historic Sites: Pottstown Middle School, Candlelight House Tours

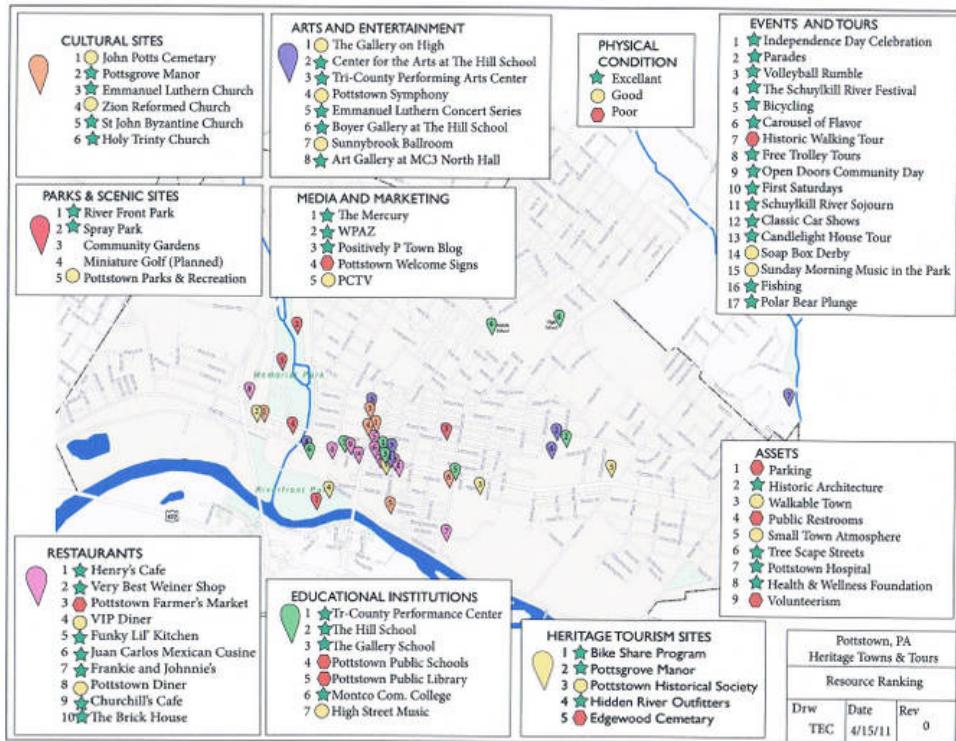
Organizational assets: Pottstown Memorial Medical Center

An interesting addition to the resources was made by Bonnie Stankunas on behalf of the Slovak churches of the South End – St. John's and Holy Trinity. These communities are well-known for their holiday sales of nut rolls and poppyseed rolls and might be interested in periodically opening their doors to visitors and providing hospitality. By letting people know that historic churches and cemeteries would be considered "Cultural Sites," several more made at least one of these lists, including Edgewood Cemetery, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Christ Episcopal Church and St. Peter's.

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The Pottstown Resource & Ranking Map shows the locations and perceived condition rating of the top-ranked resources. The majority are in the vicinity of High and Hanover Streets and along those corridors, and could be easily accessed from Riverfront Park with well-planned, attractive signage and path-making.

Some highly-ranked resources received “poor” ratings for physical condition. Most notably, Pottstown’s existing historic walking tours, with over 20 markers along the corridors mentioned above, received a ranking of 1.8, putting them between “poor” and “good.” In addition, another critical tourism amenity – public restrooms – received a condition rating of just 1.1. Keep in mind that highly-valued resources, perceived to be in poor condition, may be excellent candidates for grant funds to draw the most benefit from them.



The Resource and Ranking map also shows major annual or seasonal events hosted in/by Pottstown every year, most of which are considered “excellent.” The Borough and various other organizations are already holding major events that draw visitors from throughout the region eight months out of the year. **Creating additional events to fill in the other months would lead to a full year of “hometown celebration” programming.** Coordinating and enhancing promotion with PDIDA/downtown merchants, the Pottstown Arts & Cultural Alliance and the Pottstown Historical Society is a highly recommended marketing strategy.

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Annual Festivals/Regional Events in Pottstown, by month

January – Polar Bear Plunge

May – BMX National Event; Classic Car Show

June – Schuylkill River Sojourn; Soap Box Derby; Volleyball Rumble; Summer Solstice/Dog Show; Classic Car Show

July – July 4th; Classic Car Show

August – Classic Car Show

September – Carousel of Flavor; Open Doors; Classic Car Show

October – Schuylkill River Festival; Halloween Parade; Shiver on the River

December – Candlelight House Tour; Hometown Holiday Celebration

See Section V: Marketing and Outreach for a full list of recommended marketing strategies from the Trail Towns & Tours Toolkit that can be applied to the promotion of Pottstown's heritage resources.

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SECTION IV: STAKEHOLDERS and PARTNERS

The HAP planning process gave the Borough the opportunity to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to develop a common vision around the community's heritage resources – historical, recreational, environmental and arts and cultural.

It was clear at the beginning that getting the word out and opening up the planning process to key individuals, businesses, organizations and government representatives, as well as to the general public, could serve as a model for cooperation and coordination for future visioning, planning and economic development efforts.

The result was participation from a broad spectrum within Pottstown and from the region. For a community that was described in the ULI report as “bogged down in what appear to be trivial battles,” this was, in and of itself, a major achievement.

The following individuals and organizations participated in meetings or online discussions; completed surveys to list and rank resources; and/or completed surveys to list and rank proposed projects and strategic actions. Everyone is considered a “Partner,” and new Partners are always welcome to join in promoting and protecting Pottstown’s heritage resources at any time.

As the prioritized projects from the Strategic Action Plan (Section VII) are considered for implementation, various partners will be solicited for formal commitments of in-kind services or financial contributions that appear to be matched with their organization’s capacity, interest or mission.

Pottstown's HAP Partners (as of May 2011)

John Armato, Pottstown School District
Sharon Barkhymer
Judy Bedell
Jane Boughter
Evan Brandt
Anna Brendle, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation *
Stephanie Carmody
Tom Carroll, Tri-County Bicycles*
Betsy Chapman, TriPAC *
Craig Cigas, Cigas Machine Shop and PAID, Inc.
Laura Daugherty, Pottsgrove Manor*
Eileen Dautrich, TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce

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Pottstown's HAP Partners (continued)

Dennis DeFrancesco

Ron Dlutz

Ronald C. Downie

Sheila Dugan, Grumpy's* and PDIDA

William Forbes

Trinda Garner

Stephen Grieco, Montgomery County Community College

Drew Griffin

Suzanne Halstead, Pottstown Area Artists Guild

Erika Hornburg-Cooper, The Gallery School*

David Jackson, Preservation Pottstown/MOSIC Community Land Trust*

Katy Jackson

Anna Johnston,

Roy Keeler, Roy's Rants and Progress Pennsylvania blogs*

Andrew Kefer

Justin Keller

David Kerns, Pottstown Historical Society*

Michele Kienle

Marta Kiesling, Tri-County Performing Arts Center

Mary-Beth Bacallao Lydon

Chris McNeil

The Mercury, for coverage and re-posting blog articles

Burton Merriam, The Hill School

Ben Moscia, Pottstown Farmers' Market*

Cathy Paretti, The Gallery

George Park

Deb Penrod

Sue Repko, Positively!Pottstown blog*

Eileen Shlegel, Pottstown Parks & Recreation Department

Michael Snyder, Pottstown Historical Society

Terry Souders, Pottstown Area Artists Guild

Bonnie Stankunas

Chris Stafy

Michael Stokes, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Department*

Susan Storb

Krista Tillman

Dave Walsh, The Brick House

Erica Weekley, Borough of Pottstown*

Leighton Wildrick, PDIDA

Darlene Wynne, AICP, Montgomery County Planning Department

Joe Zlomek, *The Sanatoga Post*

* Filled out a formal Partnership Form.

SECTION V: MARKETING and OUTREACH

The objective of marketing and outreach is to enhance the visitor appeal and enjoyment of Pottstown's history, arts and culture, natural environment and scenic beauty by improving the overall "product" and visitor experience.

While marketing and outreach include branding and advertising, they also include the development of heritage promotional products such as websites, brochures, maps, guides, and arts and crafts products. Marketing and outreach also focus on coordination, including newsletters, presentations, briefings, meetings, recognition programs and reporting.

The Trail Towns & Tours Toolkit provides ideas for comprehensive marketing strategies that could be undertaken by PAID, PDIDA and other Pottstown Partners at various stages in the development and evolution of a heritage tourism program. **Preparing a marketing program specifically for heritage tourism would be ideal.** The ability of these organizations to develop such a program must be considered in light of the transition that both PAID and PDIDA are currently in, other economic development priorities, and funding and staff constraints. Some key marketing and outreach strategies, found in the Toolkit, are briefly described here as they might be implemented in a 5-year Heritage Marketing Plan for Pottstown.

Overall Objective: Increase local awareness of heritage tourism opportunities and resources by developing a "Public Information Program" that will inform and enlist the support of residents, local institutions, and the private sector.

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (YEAR 1)

1. Develop Pottstown's Heritage Tourism brand image. Development of an initial branding strategy is part of creating a unique identity for Pottstown's heritage resources. Branding includes a unifying image such as a logo, a slogan, or a catch phrase. A starting point for the development of a brand emerged from Partner discussions:

Pottstown, PA:
A harbor for history, art & culture on the Schuylkill River

Production runs of any printed materials or products utilizing the logo and/or slogans should be limited until final branding is determined. When considering branding of Pottstown's heritage resources, the Partners should be cognizant of the rules for branding:

- Success begins with good architecture.
- Strong brands have a narrow and defined focus that must be unique.

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- A winning brand is recognizable and obvious.
- “Own a word” in the mind of a prospective visitor.
- Branding is a team sport; involve the stakeholders and partners in the process.
- Sell the whole heritage area – all of Pottstown – not just individual attractions.
- Build the brand through public relations; use marketing to maintain a position.
- The internet is the most powerful vehicle for Pottstown’s heritage branding icon.

Specific actions for this task may include:

- Brainstorming of ideas for image creation
- Identifying a volunteer graphic designer to work with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association designer
- Creating the brand image and testing perceptions
- Creating a strategy for production and distribution of the image

2. Establish a presence on social networking sites

The way people communicate is rapidly changing, especially with the proliferation of social networking sites and advances in digital communications devices. Social networking venues include, but are not limited to Twitter and Facebook. PAID and PDIDA can use social networks as a way to communicate with markets and Partners. These venues provide the ability to produce real-time marketing and promotion of attractions, events and programs and to cross-market with other Heritage Area activities being sponsored by the SRGA or other local or regional organizations. The two-way communication also allows visitors to share experiences among each other and with PAID and PDIDA, offering a way to gauge the effectiveness of marketing and heritage programming and activities.

Specific actions for this task may include:

- Determining which social networking sites will provide the greatest benefit
- Producing several alternative designs for Pottstown’s page
- Preparing information for inclusion on the page
- Promoting the page through other media outlets

3. Develop a simple “Heritage Community Newsletter and Fact Sheet”

that includes a brief history of the region, its communities, and key heritage assets. The Newsletter and Fact Sheet could serve as a one-piece press kit until a packaged press kit can be developed. It should accompany press releases and other materials distributed to media and tourism industry sources and include the following:

- Brief history of Pottstown
- Brief listing & map of key resources and institutions

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- Relevant excerpts & maps of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area
- Explanation of the management of the heritage resources
- Contact information

4. Publish a heritage calendar of events and programs on relevant websites and in newsletters of Partners, such as Pottstown Historical Society and Pottstown Parks & Recreation Department. Also distribute to media sources.

5. Develop a Heritage Region Workshop/Training Program for local tourism-related businesses to inform owners and employees about the importance of local tourism and the past, present, and future of the town. Invitations to the workshop can be mailed to all relevant businesses and partners and can be coordinated by the local Chambers of Commerce and other business associations. This workshop should be scheduled as to not interfere with regular business hours of operation.

6. Develop a Training Program for Front-Line Volunteers and Docents who will work with the public and conduct any interpretive tours. Existing materials currently used for training at museums and interpretive facilities can be integrated to develop a Pottstown Heritage Area Resource and Learning Guide or a Volunteer and Docent Manual.

PAID, PDIDA and Pottstown area heritage tourism related businesses and organizations should participate in any regional and out-of-state promotion and marketing programs, such as that of the Schuylkill River Highlands.

7. Update and revise planning policies and regulatory mechanisms, as appropriate, including Design Guidelines to assist in the preservation of heritage resources.

8. Adopt flexible zoning provisions that promote the adaptive reuse of historic structures for public and private uses including, but not limited to, bed and breakfast establishments, craft/gift shops, small retail operations, cafes and restaurants, museums, and studio space for artisans, when such uses minimize exterior structural alterations.

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (YEAR 2)

1. Utilize Existing Special Events. Participate in community events to raise the profile of Pottstown's Heritage Program. Currently, there are a number of events and festivals in Pottstown and throughout the region. These could be used as a platform for Pottstown's marketing efforts. These events offer opportunities to explore partnerships and provide a forum to market and sell heritage products (tote-bags, T-Shirts, etc.).

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The Heritage Newsletter, Mailing List, and Calendar of Events could be used to help promote Pottstown's events and festivals. Pottstown could sponsor and offer special tours during the weekends and off-season times of the year to accommodate local residents. A special resident or local business discount could be offered for events and tours.

2. Develop and implement an “In Your Own Backyard” awareness and education program for Pottstown residents and businesses.

Specific actions for this task may include:

- Coordinating the program with museums, interpretive facilities, and private businesses.
- Offering admissions discounts to sites and facilities for residents and employees of local businesses in Pottstown.
- Sponsoring a heritage theme poster contest, “Plein Aire” painting festival, and/or a photography contest, where an event is hosted and all entries are displayed and judged with an announcement of winners and prizes.
- Copyrighting some of the best examples of heritage art for general marketing and to develop products for sale in Pottstown including posters, prints, signed lithographs, compact disks, T-Shirts, bags, etc., whereby proceeds can be used to support management and operations for Pottstown’s Heritage Action Plan.
- Providing local radio/cable stations with a 30-60 second taped Public Service Announcement on “Fascinating Facts” in the Pottstown’s Heritage Area.
- Soliciting cable channels such as the History Channel or Travel Channels to feature segments on the Pottstown’s Heritage Area (its history, myth, and folklore as well as travel destinations, ghost stories, etc.)
- Publishing website updates that highlight success stories for local businesses that use heritage area aspects, themes, or promotions to increase revenues and employment; provide facts and lore about the heritage area; provide a calendar of events; offer suggestions to other businesses to help them unite with heritage related tourism and themes for promotion; include a “This Old House” feature about local residents and businesses who are restoring historic buildings including the challenges and rewards; and offer tips and other information for historic property owners regarding the wide-range of benefits and opportunities for historic property owners, historic businesses, and interpretive sites/attractions.

3. Conduct an Annual Heritage Resident Benefits Survey to determine the level of community and general public involvement and interest, as well as the perception of success and benefits for Heritage Partners. This also should include any issues and challenges. The review should include an annual publication or “Heritage Region Progress Report,” which could be made available to the public and/or published in local newspapers.

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4. Assist property owners in identifying financial incentives for rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of older buildings that exhibit important or traditional architectural features. New construction of commercial and residential buildings, including new development, infill and redevelopment, should reflect best historic architectural characteristics where and when appropriate.

MID-TERM OBJECTIVES (YEAR 3)

1. Develop an Educational Partnership Program with Regional Schools.

Children and young adults in Pottstown's heritage area will become the adults of tomorrow, eventually responsible for preserving our history, culture, and resources. Local programs should focus on the significance of the heritage community and region and the role it has played in our nation's history. An "Educational Partnership Program" with educational institutions that utilizes historic sites and structures as "learning laboratories" is an effective way to help children and young adults understand the value of history and resource preservation by:

- Utilizing interpretive and experiential programs;
- Connecting the past to the present and future (resources and resource preservation/conservation as well as economic development and sustainability);
- Relating programs to school curriculums;
- Developing age appropriate activities;
- Developing interactive programs and activities for school age children at local museums;
- Focusing on the human aspects of history with compelling stories of both ordinary and extraordinary people and events;
- Forming a youth volunteer corps for history to assist in conducting site tours for groups, participate in living history demonstrations, assist on archeological digs, and assist with building restorations or general site improvements (cleaning, stabilizing, etc.).

LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES (YEAR 4)

1. Establish a Volunteer Network. Form a subsidiary group such as "The Friends of Pottstown's Heritage Area" to act as a network of volunteers to interpret the stories in the region and spread the word. These volunteers can assist with festivals and events and can also be available where facilities may lack assistance (additional staff, tour guides, and docent services, etc.). Significant donations of time and effort should be acknowledged, recognized, and rewarded on some level (on an annual basis).

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LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES (YEAR 5)

1. Develop and implement a Heritage System of Awards to recognize exceptional preservation and conservation projects, activities, and partnerships. The awards could be an annual event and include lunch or dinner, a presentation of commemorative plaque(s), or artist renderings of an aspect of Pottstown's heritage such as the annual commemorative art already done by The Gallery School of Pottstown. The award system will promote identity and awareness of the region and recognize individual contributions.

HandMade in America, a nonprofit dedicated to craft culture in Western North Carolina, suggests that real and long-lasting success occurs when you:

- ... build on your assets.
- ...address your weaknesses.
- ...are authentic and know who you are.
- ... are patient in the process and impatient in the doing.
- ...work hard.
- ...plan the work.
- ...work the plan, remembering that the plan is a living document.
- ...get the whole community involved.
- ...tell your story.
- ...find win-win solutions.
- ...celebrate your achievements no matter how small.
(www.wnccrafts.org)

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SECTION VI: MANAGE and IMPROVE

When a community decides to celebrate its history and culture by spotlighting its heritage resources in order to attract visitors and tourism dollars, it must also continually assess the mechanisms that are in place, or are needed, to manage, protect and improve those resources over the long-term. If historic buildings and streetscapes, areas of scenic beauty, and interpretive programs are not managed well, or fall into disrepair, a part of the community's history can be lost along with any long-term economic benefits.

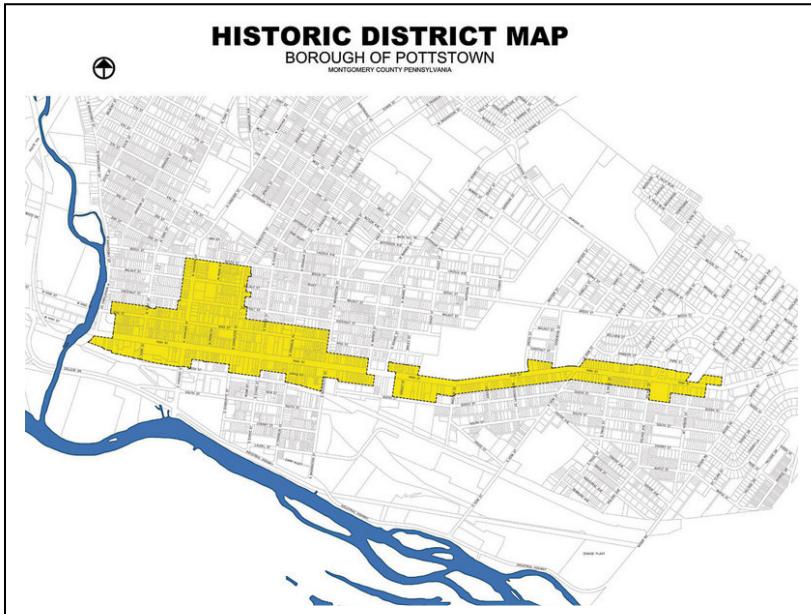
Pottstown has several regulatory mechanisms and funding programs already in place to encourage the preservation and appropriate renovation of its architectural heritage resources. These are described below.

Pottstown's Historic Districts and Historic Architectural Review Board

Pottstown Borough Council has established two historic districts to protect the Borough's oldest and most historic buildings. A Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) appointed by Borough Council ensures that any change to the exterior of a building in the districts is compatible with its historic appearance. The Borough website provides Maintenance and Renovation Guidelines for Pottstown's Historic Districts. These regulatory mechanisms reinforce the districts' historic character and maintain property values. The Review Board also regulates the design of new structures in the districts, including buildings, fences, signs, and sheds.

The purposes of Pottstown's Historic Preservation Ordinance are in accord with the objectives of this Heritage Action Plan and are as follows:

- “A. To protect those portions of the Borough of Pottstown which most strongly reflect the cultural, economic, social, political and architectural history of the Borough of Pottstown, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the United States.
- B. To awaken among Pottstown residents, property owners, and other citizens an interest in Pottstown's historic past.
- C. To encourage the restoration and maintenance of Pottstown's historic buildings.
- D. To strengthen Pottstown's economy and real estate values by stabilizing and strengthening Pottstown's most historic buildings and neighborhoods.
- E. To encourage new buildings to be compatible with existing historic buildings.”



There are pending proposed changes that would ease restrictions related to HARB guidelines. The Borough is committed to working with HAP partners on coordinating efforts to provide a business-friendly climate and more sustainable economic development strategies for PDIDA and PAID.

Main Street Program and Façade Improvement Program

As mentioned earlier, the Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA), which oversees the Main Street Program, no longer has a Manager as of June 30th, 2011. It is anticipated that PDIDA will be re-structured and the Board will take on an all-volunteer, active, self-sustaining role. The Program does have remaining grant money for their Façade Improvement Program. Property owners in the district may submit Design Challenge grant applications for up to \$5,000 or 50% of the total project cost toward capital façade improvements; this program will be current and advertised in 2012.

It seems that a review of the by-laws, management and assessment structure of PDIDA is in order. Once an economic development director is hired by PAID, the management structure and role of PDIDA in any Heritage Program initiatives can be explored and formalized, if deemed necessary.

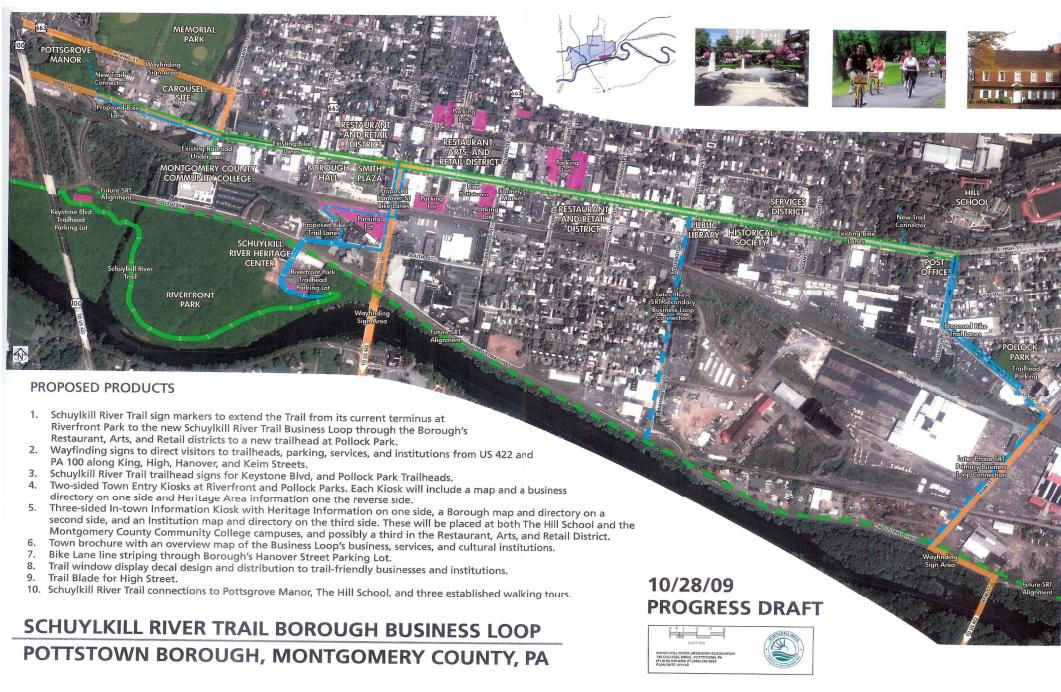
DRAFT

SECTION VII: THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

A list was created of 42 potential projects and strategic actions, all of which had been mentioned at some point in the planning process, or were recommendations from the ULI report. Then Partners and the public were asked: How would you spend \$25,000 to promote Pottstown's heritage resources?

The community was asked to rank these potential projects and strategic actions on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the highest priority. This would show what the community perceived to be the actions that would have the most positive impact on economic activity related to heritage tourism. This ranking could also guide decision makers in determining priorities for future actions and for grant applications.

Keep in mind that the grant funds from the SRGA/William Penn Foundation can be used for improved way-finding from the Trail to the downtown and for marketing the Trail to heritage tourists. The types of tasks that can be funded appear in the draft of proposed products created by the SRGA in 2009 and shown below.



Many of the priorities for developing and marketing Pottstown as a heritage destination – shown in the **Strategic Action Plan Table** on pages 28-29 – cannot be funded with the expected implementation grant. However, the Borough, PAID and PDIDA can use these results to support future grant applications.

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Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Strategic Action Plan

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	RANK	SCHEDULE PRIORITY
1	A safe, clean and welcoming downtown	ATTRACTION	1.12	IMMEDIATE
2	Increase downtown occupancy	ATTRACTION	1.31	MID RANGE
3	Art, culture, night life activities	ATTRACTION	1.64	SHORT RANGE
4	Attractive Store Fronts	ATTRACTION	1.65	IMMEDIATE
5	A common vision for Pottstown	ATTRACTION	1.85	SHORT RANGE
6	River Front Park to High Street Trail Connection	CIRCULATION	1.96	MID RANGE
7	Business friendly regulations	ATTRACTION	1.96	SHORT RANGE
8	Business incentive program	ATTRACTION	2.20	SHORT RANGE
9	Open Up water front	ATTRACTION	2.21	MID RANGE
10	Promotional website	COMMUNICATION	2.48	IMMEDIATE
11	Series of Concerts at River Front Park Amphitheater	ATTRACTION	2.62	SHORT RANGE
12	Rest room facility	COMMUNICATION	2.79	MID RANGE
13	Way finding sign	COMMUNICATION	2.84	SHORT RANGE
14	Relocation of County Drop In Center from Commercial District	COMMUNICATION	3.00	SHORT RANGE
15	Park entrance sign	COMMUNICATION	3.04	IMMEDIATE
16	Pottstown welcome sign	COMMUNICATION	3.09	IMMEDIATE
17	Exit ramp attraction sign	COMMUNICATION	3.20	SHORT RANGE
18	Pottstown comprehensive brochure	COMMUNICATION	3.20	SHORT RANGE
19	Coordinated Promotional materials	COMMUNICATION	3.20	MID RANGE
20	Visitor Center at street level in commercial district	COMMUNICATION	3.28	SHORT RANGE
21	Trail sign	COMMUNICATION	3.29	SHORT RANGE
22	Highway attraction sign	COMMUNICATION	3.32	SHORT RANGE
23	Asphalt connecting path	CIRCULATION	3.46	LONG RANGE
24	Reach out to cycling clubs	COMMUNICATION	3.84	MID RANGE
25	Additional Trash Cans & Recycle Containers	COMMUNICATION	3.96	SHORT RANGE
26	Handicap ramp	CIRCULATION	4.00	SHORT RANGE
27	Power upgrade to River Front Park Amphitheater	ATTRACTION	4.00	SHORT RANGE

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Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

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Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Strategic Action Plan

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	RANK	SCHEDULE PRIORITY
28	Trail head kiosk	COMMUNICATION	4.00	SHORT RANGE
29	Volunteer hospitality team	COMMUNICATION	4.12	SHORT RANGE
30	Trail parking sign	COMMUNICATION	4.16	MID RANGE
31	High Street art banners	COMMUNICATION	4.27	MID RANGE
32	Bed and Breakfasts in Commercial District	ATTRACTION	4.32	LONG RANGE
33	Bike lane striping	CIRCULATION	4.33	SHORT RANGE
34	Trail directional sign	COMMUNICATION	4.58	IMMEDIATE
35	Bike rack	CIRCULATION	4.88	LONG RANGE
36	Trail friendly business decal	COMMUNICATION	4.88	MID RANGE
37	Cell phone walking tour	ATTRACTION	4.92	MID RANGE
38	Way Finding Signs for Historical Churches	COMMUNICATION	5.24	MID RANGE
39	Removing Railroad from River Front	ATTRACTION	5.41	LONG RANGE
40	Trail blades	COMMUNICATION	6.13	MID RANGE
41	Healthy living sign	COMMUNICATION	6.30	LONG RANGE
42	Trail fitness equipment	ATTRACTION	6.38	LONG RANGE

The **Strategic Action Plan Table** shows the 42 items; Type (Attraction, Communication or Circulation); Rank (1 = highest, 10=lowest); and Schedule Priority (Immediate, Short-Range, Mid-Range, Long-Range).

The #1 priority for downtown revitalization comes as no surprise: A *safe, clean and welcoming downtown*. Many of the other top-ranked items naturally support this vision – art, culture and nightlife activities; attractive storefronts; promotional website; concerts in the park; public restrooms; relocation of the drop-in center; better signage; visitor center; and coordinated, comprehensive promotional materials.

Welcoming visitors begins with the message they find online about what Pottstown has to offer and continues as they get off the highway or the Schuylkill River Trail and make their approach into town. Once they get there, they need to see occupied buildings and people and activities that appear safe, fun and engaging.

Another way to convey a welcoming attitude is through business-friendly regulations, a new business incentive program, and solid evidence that the town

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helps its existing businesses through comprehensive and coordinated promotions. **These activities would clearly support the #2 priority: Increase downtown occupancy.**

While “a common vision” came in at #5 in the rankings, it’s pretty clear that this survey actually produced the heart and soul of a common vision: The community wants a safe, clean and welcoming downtown. By figuring out the most efficient and cost-effective ways to complete some of the other highly-ranked tasks, Pottstown could be well on its way to achieving its top two priorities and getting closer to its desired vision.

SRGA/William Penn Foundation Implementation Funds

The table below summarizes the projects targeted for the \$25,000 that is currently available for implementation. They were chosen from the list of 42 projects based on:

- making a visible impact;
- being able to be completed within the scope of the available funds;
- being able to be completed by May 2012;
- and being compatible with the Heritage Towns & Tours major initiatives:
 - destination creation and marketing;
 - creating a Trail Town identity and a sense of place;
 - and improving or creating on-ground connections between trails and communities. Project details can be found in Appendix E.

Priority Rank	Project Name	Location	Type	Cost*
#6	Trail Connection	Riverfront Park to High Street & High Street to Pollock Park	Circulation	\$15,450
#18	Pottstown Comprehensive Brochure	Informational Kiosks, Chamber, Businesses	Communication	\$1,200
#28	3 Informational Kiosks	Riverfront Park, Pollock Park, Downtown	Communication	\$17,600
#36	Trail Friendly Decal	Participating Businesses	Communication	\$750

* \$35,000 total as follows: \$25,000 from SRGA; \$2,500 required 10% Borough match; \$7,500 in-kind/financial contributions from Partners.

CONCLUSION

Heritage tourism can provide Pottstown with the opportunity to tell the story of its unique role in Pennsylvania's rich history and in the development of our nation, while generating sustainable economic activity. This Heritage Action Plan (HAP) is the result of a community-based planning process that was done in a relatively short period of time due to the timeline associated with the funding source. The process was repeatedly publicized across several media, invitations to participate were extended to potential community Partners, and input was gathered in the form of surveys and rankings.

While it was clear from the start that the purpose of this Schuylkill River Greenway Association grant was to promote heritage tourism as an economic engine for Schuylkill River towns, the Pottstown community seemed to embrace the possibilities that their own heritage resources could offer to residents and visitors.

While the Borough faces many challenges in revitalizing its downtown, it must tout its urban and historic assets – location, multi-modal transportation alternatives, historic architecture and sense of place – in any heritage programming efforts. The community has a vision of a clean, safe and welcoming downtown that is attractive to residents and heritage tourists with disposable income. The steady implementation of the marketing and Trail connection activities in the Strategic Action Plan will bring that vision closer to reality.

Along with a wealth of historic, recreational, arts and cultural resources, Pottstown has many stakeholders and partners in the private, public and non-profit sectors. Key Partners came to the table in the development of this HAP. Under the leadership of PAID and/or PDIDA, these Partners can be called upon to participate in and support the implementation of the prioritized projects in the Strategic Action Plan. It will take continued outreach to keep Partners informed and to educate potential new Partners and the entire community on the purposes and benefits of a Heritage Program, namely the celebration of Pottstown's historic and cultural resources, and the preservation and long-term management of those resources for economic benefit.

Even after this HAP is finalized, it should be considered a “living” document, that is, it should be periodically reviewed and updated when projects are completed, additional resources are created or improved and ready to be showcased, or new ways to tell Pottstown’s “story” are developed. This HAP can serve as a continuing resource for anyone involved in Pottstown’s revitalization, along with the 2009 ULI report and the Strategic Economic Development Plan of 2008. It can be used as a supporting document when seeking funding for the prioritized projects listed within. Finally, it can serve as a guide and inspiration for continued coordination and collaboration to achieve economic development goals and objectives while celebrating the Borough’s rich heritage.

APPENDIX A.

Meeting Notes: March 4, 2011

March 4, 2011 – Heritage Towns and Tours Program/Toolkit Workshop

Following a discussion of preparing a vision and goals and objectives for Pottstown's Heritage Action Plan, responses from workshop participants are summarized below.

Visioning Process Discussion

1. Bring people into town – attract people with disposable income – revitalization is key – have Pottstown be pristine, welcoming, attractive, and clean.
2. Provide atmosphere, ambience, enhance the perception of Pottstown. Pottstown needs to change its image. Look for the positives in Pottstown- sense of place and quality of life.
3. Build on existing arts and culture in Pottstown as an economic development tool. Utilize adaptive reuse, re-investment – create walkable and sustainable downtown (pedestrian friendly). Highlight urban advantages and assets. Create quality pedestrian friendly community that is walkable to produce more foot traffic, people, businesses/attractions restaurants, etc.
4. Pottstown needs to be more inviting, friendly, and hospitable.
5. Pottstown has good sidewalks and streetscapes but needs clean streets, wayfinding assistance, and a new image – putting a good image forward. (Assess pedestrian system and wayfinding, recommendation for Heritage Action Plan?)

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6. Desire in Pottstown for occupied businesses and a strong need for street stewardship, etc. (eyes on the streets and people pitching in to keep things clean and safe).
7. Pottstown needs to develop a personal sense of place to be an attractive and nice community. Highlight the proximity to the airport as a resource, which is accessible in many ways. Promote friendly neighborhoods and develop an important sense of place.
8. Desire to create a multi-modal community.
9. Promote history, culture, education, and recreation for the Tri-County region. Face the future and adapt to it – this means finding a niche. Pottstown is real and unique but needs cultural enrichment. Leadership role in the region for Pottstown is needed.
10. Revitalization of the downtown – capitalize on the energy of the citizens here and harness this energy into positive momentum forward. Use Pottstown's assets to harness momentum. Create a clean, safe, environment that is welcoming. People who are involved should drive the change and assist with economic development. Recognize what we have now – not always a need to create new assets, start with what you have first and then build. Some highlights – new transit center, plenty of parking, bus system, theater, arts etc. – use these for marketing. Promote Pottstown as business friendly – helping out our local businesses, citing community support. Working together is the key – one voice forward to the community and funding agencies.
11. Pottstown needs improvement with safety, cleanliness, and image. Feeling like people can be sent downtown and it's safe and clean – feeling comfortable in our own town. Perception to external world/internal citizens is key – ensure trail connections to Pottsgrove Manor.

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12. Changing Pottstown from its current state to a new form – move the drug center to a new location and clean-up the downtown. Focus first efforts on the downtown.
13. Not a good climate for business because of perception – changing the perception is key and promoting a safe and comfortable community.
14. Create Pottstown as a destination – look to the future with visioning. What are the reasons to come to Pottstown? These should be listed and analyzed in the planning process.
15. 90% occupancy on High Street – who would be in these stores (what types of businesses). There's a strong need to attract new businesses, capitalize on niche markets. Promote a healthy, green community - change the perception of Pottstown by being progressive. Strong need for more arts and culture, more food, to be proud of Pottstown's heritage (new twist – ethnic, fun town, sustainable, tie into trail, proud of natural resources and history). Pottstown needs to market to art schools – promote arts/entertainment – Pottstown is an affordable area with good access and connections where artists can come and live. Think out of box. There is a disconnect with the college and downtown that needs to be fixed– this needs more connection – need more bars and entertainment areas (creating something to do for young people).
16. Promote health, welfare, bike-sharing program, vibrant streetscape, activity on streets, businesses occupied, eyes on the street, create comfortable atmosphere, place where families are active, walking on streets, appreciation of main street, farmers market, how to draw in people, local folks coming back to Pottstown – focus back in on the Borough.

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17. Safety (unsafe downtown), perception is reality – most important to change promote family-oriented community with a strong arts presence – expand this through town – make it a coordinated effort, need a body/strong body to coordinate. Promote a garden feel about Pottstown, more plantings, expand the view of what is Pottstown. Coordinate offerings, attractions, etc. Link between Hill School and downtown – make the community safe and attractive.
18. Clean up blighted and abandoned properties (revitalization focus) – Pottstown has many vacant residential and commercial buildings and there is a need to improve this streetscape. Pottstown needs more stable communities and must promote home ownership and pride in the community. Start by cleaning up neighborhoods, making the community attractive and cleaner. Heightened police protection on the street and community eyes on the street coupled with revitalization and promotion.

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APPENDIX B. Pottstown Resource Importance Rating

Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Importance Rating 1=Low - 5= High

	Rating
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE/STRUCTURE	
John Potts Cemetery	4.7
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SHOPPING	
The Gallery on High	4.9
Center for the Arts at Hill School	4.7
Tri-County Performing Arts Center	4.5
Pottstown Symphony	4.4
Emmanuel Lutheran Concert Series	4.4
Pottstown Memorial Medical Center	4.4
Boyer Gallery at Hill School	4.3
Sunnybrook Ballroom	4.3
North Hall at MCCC	4.3
Pottstown Arts & Cultural Alliance (PACA)	4.1
Churchill – poetry & live music	4.1
High Street Music	4.0
The Ballroom on High (Swingkat)	4.0
Cutillo's Restaurant	4.0
Coventry Ice Cream Parlor (Laurel Locks Rd.)	4.0
Upland Square Shops	4.0
Professional Pharmacy	4.0
Java's Brewin (at PMMC)	4.0
5 Existing Advertising Murals	3.7
Rita's Water Ice	3.6
Dada Gallery	3.4
Coventry Singers	3.4
Sunflower Cafe	3.0
Brookside Restaurant	2.0
CULTURAL SITE/STRUCTURE	
Edgewood Cemetery	5.0
St. Peter's	4.5
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	4.5
Zion's Reformed Church (Old Brick Church)	4.4
St. John's Byzantine Church	4.4
Holy Trinity Church	4.3
St. Aloysius	4.1

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Importance Rating 1=Low - 5= High

	Rating
Christ Episcopal	4.0
Old St. Aloysius Cemetery	4.0
Invictus Ministries	3.8
Other churches	3.8
Economic Development Assets	
Keystone Opportunity Zone	3.9
EDUCATIONAL, INSTITUTION, LIBRARY	
Tri-County Performing Arts Center	4.7
The Hill School	4.7
The Gallery School (arts)	4.6
Pottstown School District	4.5
Pottstown Public Library	4.5
Montgomery County Community College	4.5
High Street Music	4.1
Wyndcroft School	3.5
St. Aloysius School	3.4
FESTIVALS/SPECIAL EVENTS	
- Schuylkill River Festival	4.9
- biking	4.7
- First Saturdays	4.6
- Schuylkill River Sojourn (stopping point)	4.4
- Sunday Music in the Park	4.4
- Relay activities	4.3
- Fishing/rafting	4.0
- Polar Bear Plunge	3.9
- Shiver on the River	3.9
- Weddings	3.4
- cross-country skiing	2.9
HERITAGE TOURISM BUSINESS	
Bike Share Program	4.8
Henry's	4.6
Very Best Restaurant	4.6
Tri-County Bicycles	4.4
The Farmers' Market	4.4
High Street Diner (VIP)	4.4
Hidden River Outfitters (operates out of SRHA building)	4.4
Funky Lil Kitchen	4.3
Juan Carlos	4.3

D R A F T

Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Importance Rating 1=Low - 5= High

	Rating
Frankie & Johnnie's	4.3
Pottstown Diner	4.3
Churchill, Inc.	4.2
The Brickhouse	4.2
Maria Angela's	4.2
The Icehouse	4.1
Grumpy's Handcarved Sandwiches	4.1
Positively Pasta	4.1
The Pourhouse	4.0
Beverly's Pastry Shop	4.0
Martha's Famous	4.0
Maximilliano's	4.0
Wawa	3.9
Jack Cassady's	3.9
Company Cakes	3.9
Brunish Brothers Hot Dogs & Sausage	3.7
Bentley's Boards (skate shop)	3.7
High Street Yoga	3.6
Dunkin Donuts	3.0
McDonald's	2.9
Burger King	2.9
LISTED HISTORIC SITE/STRUCTURE	
Pottsgrove Manor	4.9
2 National Register Historic Districts	4.5
Railroad Station	3.8
Roller Mills	2.8
Grubb Mansion	2.6
Jefferson Elementary School	2.4
MEDIA & MARKETING	
The Mercury - print/online/Facebook	4.6
WPAZ	4.5
Positively!Pottstown – blog/Facebook	4.5
POTTSTOWN WELCOME SIGNS	4.4
PCTV	4.2
Tri-County Chamber of Commerce	4.0

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Importance Rating 1=Low - 5= High

	Rating
Borough Website	4.0
The Pottstown Post/Sanatoga Post	3.9
Citizens for Pottstown's Revitalization blog/facebook	3.6
Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA)	3.6
Roy Keeler/Roy's Rants/Progress PA – blogger	3.5
MUSEUM OR INTERPRETIVE CENTER	
Pottstown Historical Society	5.0
Pottsgrove Manor	5.0
NATURAL & SCENIC SITES	
Memorial Park	5.0
Schuylkill River Trail	5.0
Riverfront Park	4.8
The Schuylkill River	4.6
Manatawny Creek	3.6
NON-LISTED HISTORIC SITE/STRUCTURE	
Pottstown Historical Society	4.5
Historic walking tours	4.3
Edgewood Cemetery	4.3
Candlelight House Tours	4.0
Potts Family Cemetery	4.0
Elks Club	3.8
The Carousel (planned)	3.8
Pottstown Middle School	3.6
OTHER	
Historic architecture	4.8
Walkable town	4.6
Small town atmosphere	4.5
Wide, tree-scaped streets	4.4
Other Festivals/Special Events	
July 4th Celebration	4.9
Parades	4.8
Volleyball Rumble	4.6

D R A F T

Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Importance Rating 1=Low - 5=High

	Rating
Free Trolley Tours during special events	4.6
Carousel of Flavor	4.5
Open Doors (community day)	4.4
Candlelight Historic House Tour	4.4
Classic Car Shows	4.2
Soapbox Derby	4.0
Family Fest	3.9
Halloween Parade	3.9
PARKS & RECREATION AREAS	
Riverfront Park	5.0
Memorial Park	5.0
- Spray Park	4.6
Community Land Trust – Community Gardens	4.4
- Miniature Golf/Manatawny Gateway (planned)	4.3
Pottstown Parks & Rec. Dept.	4.2
- Trilogy Park	4.1
The whole Pottstown Parks & Rec. System, pocket parks, etc.	4.1
Pottstown Garden Club	4.0
The Dell & Far Fields at The Hill School	3.8
- Skate Park (planned)	3.8
Pollock Park (proposed Schuylkill River trailhead)	3.8
422 Sportsplex	2.8
People/Organizational Assets	
Pottstown Memorial Medical Center	5.0
Health & Wellness Foundation	4.2
Great volunteers	4.2
Elks Club, Rotary Club, Ambucs, Kiwanis,	3.9
Veterans Groups & other civic associations	3.8
Brookside Country Club	3.3
Tourism Amenities	
Plenty of parking	4.8
Coordinated programs & activities promoting physical activity & health.	4.7
Public Restrooms	4.5

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Importance Rating 1=Low - 5= High

	Rating
Town History/Legacy	
Steel industry & metal fabrication legacy	4.9
Mills/Forges	4.1
Native American Lenni Lenape tribe	4.0
Mrs. Smith Pies	4.0
Train line	3.8
Reading/Philadelphia Railroads/Stations	3.8
Underground Railroad	3.7
Eagles/Firebirds	3.3
Firestone	3.0
Hurricane Agnes	3.0
Dutch naming of the river	2.4
TRAILS, GREENWAYS, BIKEWAYS, RAILROADS	
Schuylkill River Trail	4.9
Memorial Park	4.6
HIGH STREET BIKE LANES	4.6
transportation	
Free bike program/bike lanes	4.7
PART – public transit	4.3
Pedestrian Underpass at MCCC	4.0
High Street (wide – for parades)	4.0
Charles W. Dickinson Transportation Center (transit center)	3.9
Airport	3.4
Historic Bridges – 1903 Manatawny Bridge	2.9

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APPENDIX C. Pottstown Resource Condition Rating

Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Condition Rating 1=Poor - 3=Excellent

	Rating
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE/STRUCTURE	
John Potts Cemetery	2.3
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SHOPPING	
High Street Music	3.0
Cutillo's Restaurant	3.0
Upland Square Shops	3.0
North Hall at MCCC	2.9
Center for the Arts at Hill School	2.9
Boyer Gallery at Hill School	2.8
Emmanuel Lutheran Concert Series	2.8
Tri-County Performing Arts Center	2.6
Churchill – poetry & live music	2.6
Pottstown Memorial Medical Center	2.5
Sunnybrook Ballroom	2.4
The Gallery on High	2.4
5 Existing Advertising Murals	2.4
Professional Pharmacy	2.4
Rita's Water Ice	2.4
Pottstown Arts & Cultural Alliance (PACA)	2.3
Pottstown Symphony	2.3
Coventry Ice Cream Parlor (Laurel Locks Rd.)	2.0
The Ballroom on High (Swingkat)	2.0
Brookside Restaurant	2.0
Coventry Singers	2.0
Sunflower Cafe	2.0
Java's Brewin (at PMMC)	2.0
Dada Gallery	1.8
CULTURAL SITE/STRUCTURE	
Edgewood Cemetery	3.0
Christ Episcopal	2.8
St. John's Byzantine Church	2.7
Holy Trinity Church	2.7
Emmanuel Lutheran Church	2.6
St. Aloysius	2.6
St. Peter's	2.5
Other churches	2.5

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours *Resource Condition Rating 1=Poor - 3=Excellent*

	Rating
Invictus Ministries	2.5
Zion's Reformed Church (Old Brick Church)	2.4
Old St. Aloysius Cemetery	2.0
Economic Development Assets	
Keystone Opportunity Zone	2.0
EDUCATIONAL, INSTITUTION, LIBRARY	
Montgomery County Community College	2.9
The Hill School	2.9
Tri-County Performing Arts Center	2.6
The Gallery School (arts)	2.5
High Street Music	2.3
Wyndcroft School	2.3
St. Aloysius School	2.3
Pottstown Public Library	1.9
Pottstown School District	1.7
FESTIVALS/SPECIAL EVENTS	
- biking	3.0
- Schuylkill River Festival	2.8
- Schuylkill River Sojourn (stopping point)	2.8
- Fishing/rafting	2.8
- First Saturdays	2.8
- Polar Bear Plunge	2.7
- Sunday Music in the Park	2.5
- Relay activities	2.5
- Shiver on the River	2.3
- Weddings	2.3
- cross-country skiing	2.3
HERITAGE TOURISM BUSINESS	
Juan Carlos	3.0
Henry's	3.0
Tri-County Bicycles	2.9
Funky Lil Kitchen	2.8
Bike Share Program	2.8
Frankie & Johnnie's	2.8
Bentley's Boards (skate shop)	2.8
Hidden River Outfitters (operates out of SRHA building)	2.8
Churchill, Inc.	2.7
Very Best Restaurant	2.7
The Brickhouse	2.6
Wawa	2.6

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours *Resource Condition Rating 1=Poor - 3=Excellent*

	Rating
Company Cakes	2.5
High Street Yoga	2.4
The Icehouse	2.4
High Street Diner (VIP)	2.4
Positively Pasta	2.3
The Pourhouse	2.3
Jack Cassady's	2.2
Grumpy's Handcarved Sandwiches	2.2
McDonald's	2.0
Maximilliano's	2.0
Martha's Famous	2.0
Pottstown Diner	2.0
Brunish Brothers Hot Dogs & Sausage	2.0
Beverly's Pastry Shop	2.0
Maria Angela's	2.0
Burger King	1.8
The Farmers' Market	1.6
Dunkin Donuts	1.5
LISTED HISTORIC SITE/STRUCTURE	
Pottsgrove Manor	2.8
Jefferson Elementary School	2.4
Railroad Station	2.4
Roller Mills	2.1
2 National Register Historic Districts	2.0
Grubb Mansion	2.0
MEDIA & MARKETING	
Positively!Pottstown – blog/Facebook	2.9
WPAZ	2.8
The Mercury - print/online/Facebook	2.8
The Pottstown Post/Sanatoga Post	2.5
PCTV	2.4
Citizens for Pottstown's Revitalization blog/facebook	2.4
Roy Keeler/Roy's Rants/Progress PA – blogger	2.3
Tri-County Chamber of Commerce	2.3
Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority (PDIDA)	1.8

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours *Resource Condition Rating 1=Poor - 3=Excellent*

	Rating
Borough Website	1.4
POTTSTOWN WELCOME SIGNS	1.2
MUSEUM OR INTERPRETIVE CENTER	
Pottsgrove Manor	3.0
Pottstown Historical Society	2.0
NATURAL & SCENIC SITES	
Memorial Park	3.0
Schuylkill River Trail	3.0
Riverfront Park	2.6
The Schuylkill River	2.6
Manatawny Creek	2.1
NON-LISTED HISTORIC SITE/STRUCTURE	
Pottstown Middle School	2.7
Candlelight House Tours	2.7
Elks Club	2.3
Potts Family Cemetery	2.2
Pottstown Historical Society	2.1
Edgewood Cemetery	1.9
The Carousel (planned)	1.9
Historic walking tours	1.8
OTHER	
Wide, tree-scaped streets	2.6
Historic architecture	2.6
Walkable town	2.4
Small town atmosphere	2.4
Other Festivals/Special Events	
Open Doors (community day)	3.0
July 4th Celebration	3.0
Parades	3.0
Volleyball Rumble	2.8
Free Trolley Tours during special events	2.8
Family Fest	2.8
Classic Car Shows	2.7
Carousel of Flavor	2.6
Candlelight Historic House Tour	2.6

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Condition Rating 1=Poor - 3=Excellent

	Rating
Soapbox Derby	2.5
Halloween Parade	2.5
PARKS & RECREATION AREAS	
Riverfront Park	3.0
Memorial Park	3.0
- Spray Park	2.9
Pottstown Garden Club	2.8
The Dell & Far Fields at The Hill School	2.6
- Skate Park (planned)	2.4
Community Land Trust – Community Gardens	2.4
- Trilogy Park	2.3
The whole Pottstown Parks & Rec. System, pocket parks, etc.	2.3
- Miniature Golf/Manatawny Gateway (planned)	2.3
Pottstown Parks & Rec. Dept.	2.2
422 Sportsplex	2.0
Pollock Park (proposed Schuylkill River trailhead)	1.5
People/Organizational Assets	
Pottstown Memorial Medical Center	3.0
Health & Wellness Foundation	2.7
Veterans Groups & other civic associations	2.5
Elks Club, Rotary Club, Ambucs, Kiwanis,	2.4
Brookside Country Club	2.3
Great volunteers	2.0
Tourism Amenities	
Plenty of parking	2.0
Coordinated programs & activities promoting physical activity & health.	1.9
Public Restrooms	1.1
Town History/Legacy	
Underground Railroad	2.4
Steel industry & metal fabrication legacy	2.4
Native American Lenni Lenape tribe	2.3
Reading/Philadelphia Railroads/Stations	2.2
Eagles/Firebirds	2.2
Firestone	2.2
Mills/Forges	2.2

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Pottstown, PA

Schuylkill River Heritage Towns and Tours

Resource Condition Rating 1=Poor - 3=Excellent

	Rating
Mrs. Smith Pies	2.2
Hurricane Agnes	2.0
Dutch naming of the river	2.0
Train line	1.8
TRAILS, GREENWAYS, BIKEWAYS, RAILROADS	
Schuylkill River Trail	2.5
HIGH STREET BIKE LANES	2.4
Memorial Park	2.4
transportation	
Free bike program/bike lanes	2.9
Charles W. Dickinson Transportation Center (transit center)	2.6
PART – public transit	2.6
High Street (wide – for parades)	2.6
Pedestrian Underpass at MCCC	2.5
Historic Bridges – 1903 Manatawny Bridge	2.0
Airport	2.0

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APPENDIX D.

Meeting Notes: April 18, 2011

Pottstown Heritage Action Plan Working Group
04/18/2011 – 10:30-noon
TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce

Meeting Summary & Next Steps

Present: John Armato, Gail Carroll, Eileen Dautrich, Laura Daugherty, Sheila Dugan, Erika Hornburg-Cooper, David Jackson, Burt Merriam, Cathy Paretti, Krista Tillman, Erica Weekley; consultants Tom Carroll & Sue Repko

Linkages

Tom Carroll opened the meeting with a Power Point presentation reviewing the ranking of heritage resources and their condition, as well as the challenge of creating linkages between the Schuylkill River Trail and the downtown, where most of the top-ranked resources are located.

The attendees became more familiar with the interconnections among transportation planning, the pending Hanover St. DIET project, PA Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resource funding and the HAP.

Resource Assessment

Tom presented a map showing all the top-ranked resources, which are clustered along High and Hanover Streets, westward to Manatawny Park and Pottsgrove Manor, and eastward to the Hill School.

Some highly-ranked resources received “poor” ratings for physical condition.

Please note that these results come from the 16 people who filled out the survey. It's important to keep in mind that highly-ranked or valued resources, perceived to be in poor condition, may be excellent candidates for money or attention to draw the most benefit from them in our promotional efforts.

Tom's map also listed **major annual or seasonal events** hosted in/by Pottstown every year. Sue handed out a sheet showing their occurrence by month. **The Borough and various other organizations are holding major events that draw visitors from throughout the region 8 months out of the year. Coordinating & enhancing promotion with downtown merchants/PDIDA**

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could be a recommended strategy in the HAP. Creating additional events to fill in the other months might also lead to a full year of “hometown celebration” programming.

Moving toward marketing/branding

History & the arts emerged as themes to pursue.

- Start giving Historic Walking Tours on First Saturdays, led by MCCC students.
- Cemetery Tours, esp. for John Potts Cemetery, which is now not open to the public, and for Edgewood Cemetery. Coordinate with Pottsgrove Manor.
- Look into Historic Church Tour; several churches were highly-ranked.
- Use banners to designate High St. as an “Avenue of the Arts.”
- Use banners (inexpensive) to generate excitement & direct visitors to downtown. **Add color!**
- Coordinate with PDIDA & downtown merchants.

Tourism/hospitality amenities that are lacking or need improvement

Safety and cleanliness were concerns in first large group meeting.

- Leighton mentioned that high school students will be cleaning up the downtown on the April 30 Clean-Up Day, and this should be the beginning of more frequent clean-ups downtown by student volunteers.
- Need to do a better job of tapping volunteers in the community.
- Involve high school students in creating marketing materials (Kevin Pascal)
- Signage, banners, kiosks - still must decide how many, what goes on them, where to place them and prioritize list.
- Still need more occupied storefronts, esp. creative-related, for critical mass.
- Will need lodging for overnight visitors when Trail is complete.
- Drop-in center: Leighton reports that this is being worked on.
- February musical at The Hill School drew a capacity crowd; Burt Merriam will look into possibilities for tying that event to other activities (winter carnival, ice sculpture) on campus or in town. (Feb. was one of the months that had no major events scheduled.)
- HAP partners must continue to have conversations & coordinate with County & PennDOT regarding road projects and trail linkages.

Next Steps – will come in separate emails.

- **Powerpoint Presentation** – send out to full working group; includes map of top-ranked resources & condition.

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- **Vision Statement** – solicit input from all members of the working group and put out a request online for words or phrases that could be included in a strong, appealing vision statement.
- **Trail Town Components** – solicit input on what should be included and where (wayfinding signs, connecting paths, restrooms, kiosks, bike lane striping, etc.)

Draft Heritage Action Plan – First week of May

Proposed Projects: Initial Implementation Funding**PROJECT 1: Trail Connection – Riverfront Park to High Street/High Street to Pollock Park (Priority #6)**

Project Description: The Schuylkill River trail is continuous from Reading to Riverfront Park in Pottstown, PA and terminates at 140 College Drive, home of the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and future classrooms for Montgomery County Community College.

Bicycles lanes exist along High street within Pottstown's commercial district. These bicycle lanes can serve as a commercial loop and temporary extension of the Schuylkill River Trail (SRT). A connection from Riverfront Park to High Street will provide safe passage into Pottstown's commercial district for Trail users and extend the trail over one mile to the east. Located near the east end of the High Street bike lanes is Pollock Park. This Park can serve as a terminus for eastbound Trail users and as a trailhead and parking area for westbound trail users.

This project, **Trail Connection – Riverfront Park to High Street and High Street to Pollock Park**, will provide a safe connection from Riverfront Park to the commercial district and to the trail head at Pollock Park. The Project includes necessary curb cuts, bollards, line painting, bicycles legends and way finding directional signs.

Anticipated Project Outcomes:

This project, **Trail Connection – Riverfront Park to High Street and High Street to Pollock Park**, supports all three Heritage Towns & Tours program initiatives by guiding trail users into the commercial district for a Trail Town experience; building on the sense of place of the existing streetscape and bike lanes; and providing the ground connection between the Schuylkill River Trail and the downtown.

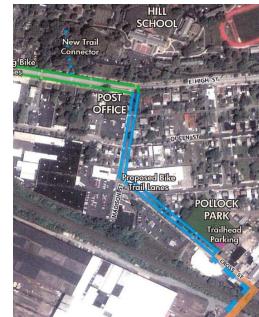
Proposed Budget:

Administration and Project Management, Design/Installation Drawing, Curb Cuts, Bollards, Line Painting, Painted Bicycles Legends and Way Finding Directional Signs. \$15,450.00

Projected timeline: Work to be completed by April 20, 2012**Conceptual Design: Riverfront Park to High Street Trail Connection**

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Conceptual Design: High Street to Pollock Park Trail Connection



PROJECT 2 – Three-Sided Town Information Signs (Priority #28)

Project Description: The Schuylkill River trail is continuous from Reading to Riverfront Park in Pottstown, PA and terminates at 140 College Drive, home of the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and future classrooms for Montgomery County Community College. Trail users ride the Schuylkill River Trail from the West to the terminal point in Pottstown's Riverfront Park and do not encounter signs showing Pottstown's resources.

This Project, **Three-Sided Town Information Signs**, will inform trail users of Pottstown's amenities and guide them into the commercial district.

Three (3) informational signs are proposed for this project:

- Sign 1 at the Riverfront Park trailhead
- Sign 2 at the Pollock Park trailhead
- Sign 3 within Pottstown's commercial district

Anticipated Project Outcomes:

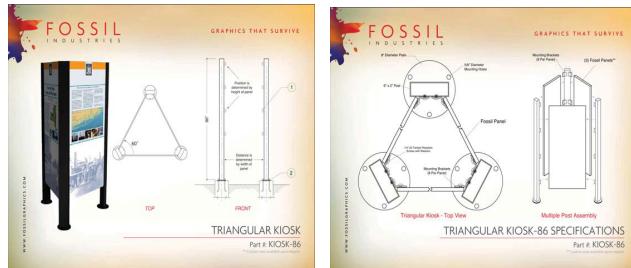
This Project, **3-Sided Town Information Signs**, will give visitors information about Pottstown's heritage resources and businesses and will provide directions, aiding in destination creation and the marketing of downtown Pottstown. The signs will be designed by the SRGA graphic designer and create a sense of place for the SRT and downtown Pottstown as a Trail Town. The directional information will improve the ground connections between the SRT and downtown Pottstown.

Proposed Budget:

Administration and Project Management, Design/Installation/Location Drawings, and installation of Foundations and 3 sided Signs at 3 locations \$17,600.00

Projected timeline: Work to be completed by April 20, 2012

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PROJECT 3 – Pottstown Brochure (Priority #18)

Project Description: A brochure for marketing Pottstown's assets would help create a sense of place and an identity as a Trail Town with important recreational, environmental, cultural and heritage resources.

The brochure would be built on a trail town brochure template developed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and would guide trail users to Pottstown's heritage resources, amenities and downtown businesses.

Anticipated Project Outcomes:

This Project, **A Pottstown Brochure**, will provide information and directions for trail users, aiding in destination creation and the marketing of downtown Pottstown.

Proposed Budget:

Administer, manage, design, print and distribute a Pottstown brochure \$1,200.00

Projected timeline: Work to be completed by April 20, 2012

PROJECT 4 – Trail Friendly Decal (Priority #36)

Project Description: A successful trail town needs to be friendly and welcoming to trail users. The trail friendly decal program will aid trail users in identifying the trail friendly businesses, which have received hospitality training and have agreed to provide amenities such as water, rest rooms or discounts to trail users. The decal will be built on a template

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developed by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, with a Pottstown-specific image or logo added to it.

Anticipated Project Outcomes:

This Project, **Trail Friendly Decal**, will provide a visual guide and direction for trail users, leading them to trail friendly businesses and aiding in destination creation and the marketing of downtown Pottstown.

Proposed Budget: (Major items & total)

Administer, manage, design, print and distribute a Pottstown **Trail Friendly Decal**
\$750.00

Projected timeline: Work to be completed by April 20, 2012

Implementation Ideas for Additional Projects

Below are ideas and recommendations for completing some of the Top 20 prioritized projects from the Strategic Action Plan. These appeared in earlier drafts of the HAP but are outside the scope of the current funding source. However, the community should make every effort to seek other funding and develop partnerships for implementation. There have to be tangible signs of improvement in the atmosphere and number of activities in the downtown to convince residents and visitors to give Pottstown another chance.

#1 A safe, clean and welcoming downtown.

While “Volunteer Hospitality Team” came in at #29 in the rankings, PDIDA and PAID should investigate other towns’ efforts to train and maintain a volunteer hospitality team, such as those in Easton and Philadelphia. These folks wear identifiable shirts/jackets, carry a walkie-talkie, give directions and information to visitors, help keep the sidewalks clean, and are trained to seek police help when necessary. This could be considered a key form of marketing.

- Team: PDIDA, PAID, Merchants, Borough, Educational Institutions, Corporate Sponsors

#3 Art, culture and nightlife activities

- Plan, develop & implement additional activities to draw visitors to the downtown.
- Coordinate with existing offerings at TriPAC, Gallery, Hill, MCCC and Swingkat Ballroom to create critical mass on Friday/Saturday nights.
- Locate at least 2 new venues for literary readings and music (Library, Farmers’ Market, Gallery or temporary, vacant storefront.)
- Hire musicians & entertainers for every Saturday morning during warm weather months, to appear at Farmers’ Market; outside at the corner of High & Charlotte, or outside between Ranieri’s and former Amy’s Attic.
- Start giving Historic Walking Tours during special events, led by Montgomery County Community College or Hill School students.



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- Offer Cemetery Tours, especially for John Potts Cemetery, which is now not open to the public, and for Edgewood Cemetery. Coordinate with Pottsgrove Manor.
- Consider a Historic Church Tour; several churches were highly-ranked.
- Use banners to designate High Street as an “Avenue of the Arts.”
- Use banners (inexpensive) to generate excitement & direct visitors to downtown and add color
- Involve high school students in creating marketing materials
- Team: PDIDA, Merchants, PACA, Pottsgrove Manor, Historical Society, Churches, Educational Institutions, Borough, Corporate Sponsors

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#4 Attractive storefronts

- Clean, dress up and maintain storefronts
- Team: PDIDA, property owners, volunteers

#10 Promotional website



Although a promotional website was highly ranked, a new website is not recommended at this time. Individual arts and cultural organizations all have their own websites. The Borough is planning a major upgrade to its site. PAID, as the economic development clearinghouse, should probably be located on

the Borough's site. In addition, there are already several websites whose purpose is to promote Pottstown's arts, history, culture and downtown events:

- Pottstown Arts & Cultural Alliance: www.pottstownarts.com
- PDIDA: www.downtownpottstown.org
- Pottstown Historical Society: www.pottstownhistory.org
- Pottsgrove Manor: <http://historicsites.montcopa.org/>
- Positively!Pottstown: www.positivelyptown.com

A stronger, coordinated web presence could be achieved by improving the web capacity of the three existing, local non-profits: PACA, PDIDA and the Historical Society.

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- The PACA site needs some additional features, such as a subscription module, that it does not have because funding ran out. (Hire web developer experienced with Wordpress.)
- The PDIDA site needs a content overhaul and consistent updating. (Hire a writer and then rely on volunteers.)
- The Pottstown Historical Society is looking at an upgrade to its website. This should include details on the existing historic walking tour, existing advertising murals tour, a map of historic cemeteries and historic churches, and a prominent link to Pottsgrove Manor. (Hire web developer and writer; seek in-kind services.)
- All of these sites should prominently feature icons/logos/links to all the other sites on their home pages. All of these websites should list – in the exact same way – the annual calendar of Hometown Celebrations that Pottstown already puts on. Any new heritage tourism branding should be prominently featured.
- Team: Borough, PDIDA, PACA, Historical Society, Pottsgrove Manor

#11 Series of Concerts in Riverfront Park

- Provide financial and marketing support to expand existing Sunday in the Park music series
- Team: PACA, Mike Holliday, Volunteers

#12 Rest Room Facility

Trail users and other visitors need clean, safe, well-located rest rooms. The implementation of a “Trail Friendly Business Decal” program (#36) could provide a quick fix.

- Team: PDIDA, merchants, corporate sponsors

#13 Way-Finding Signs

- Design, locate and install way-finding signs at strategic locations once Trail connection is made between Riverfront Park and High Street and between High Street and Pollock Park.
-

#15 Park Entrance Sign

- Design, locate and install park entrance sign at 140 College Drive.

#16 Pottstown Welcome Signs

- Design, fabricate and install 7 new, attractive welcome signs
- All gateways should be reviewed for sign clutter (condition and duplication) and conformance to sign ordinances.
- Where possible, new signs should do double-duty, serving as welcome markers and also promoting corporate sponsors or

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volunteer/fraternal organization sponsors. Coordination and partnering is necessary to make this happen.

- Team: Borough, Chamber of Commerce, Corporate Sponsors, Fraternal Organizations

#19 Coordinated Promotional Materials

#20 Visitor Center at Street Level in Commercial District

- While there is not enough funding to tackle these items in this first round of activities, we also received some comments on these items that should be noted when considering these activities in the future.
- It was suggested that no new printed material should be created, but “go green” instead and use new technology to make the information available online or as a downloadable app.
- It was noted that the Chamber of Commerce provides a visitor/information center in the rear lobby of 152 E. High Street during business hours. There is already a wall of brochures for all kinds of attractions and resources in Pottstown. This should be considered in the context of any future discussion for the creation of a Visitor Center.

#2 Increase downtown occupancy.

PAID would be the logical entity to take the lead on ensuring that the strategic actions listed below are completed as soon as possible.

#7 Business Friendly Regulations

Partner with Planning Commission and relevant Borough departments

8 Business Incentive Program

Recommend use of PAID’s existing funds and/or County Revitalization funds to establish a “robust incentive package,” to quote the ULI, as soon as possible. Could include forgivable construction loans for capital improvements, short-term rent subsidy, short-term waiving of PDIDA fees, SCORE mentoring, Chamber membership and inclusion in comprehensive downtown promotion and marketing.

#9 Open Up Waterfront

Participate with Borough Council, Planning Commission and citizens in discussion of results of Rutgers Professional Development Institute’s Urban Design Studio investigating development potential for Pottstown’s waterfront.

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#14 Relocation of Drop-in Center from Commercial District

Participate with County, Borough, PDIDA and property owners to find viable alternative location.