

Economic Development



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- *Continue to support the growth of Jenkintown's Town Center district as a destination for arts, entertainment, dining, and music while maintaining its distinctive identity and sense of place.*
- *Build upon the established scale and historic character of Jenkintown's commercial areas while improving the downtown experience by enhancing the public realm, creating a pleasant strolling environment, and establishing a cohesive identity for the Borough's commercial areas.*
- *Encourage new development that grows the Borough's business and property tax base and creates new and diverse employment opportunities within the Borough.*
- *Implement incremental changes to the Borough's parking systems to ensure efficient use of public and private parking resources to serve and support the Borough's commercial areas as a whole.*



Summary of Economic Development Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION ED1: Provide increased business coordination services to support, promote, and manage the Borough's overall business community.

RECOMMENDATION ED2: Encourage the establishment of a strong mix of retail, office, and residential uses within the Borough's commercial areas.

RECOMMENDATION ED3: Implement strategies to reduce the number of commercial vacancies, both retail storefronts and office space, within the Borough's commercial areas; while encouraging the proper maintenance and upgrades to vacant and deteriorating commercial properties.

RECOMMENDATION ED4: Establish uniform storefront design guidelines to create a streamlined look that brands and unifies all of the businesses as belonging to Jenkintown and contributes to a sense of place and community history.

RECOMMENDATION ED5: Encourage the preservation and reuse of Jenkintown's unique commercial building stock and the Borough's central historic shopping district.

RECOMMENDATION ED6: Highlight place-based assets through promotion and advertisement of the numerous events and amenities that the Borough has to offer. Jenkintown has a positive reputation as being a quality place to live and visit.

RECOMMENDATION ED7: Create a streetscape enhancements plan to provide guidelines for the design of signage, landscaping, lighting, and other streetscape elements that improve the Borough's walkability, comfort, sense of place, and safety.

RECOMMENDATION ED8: Implement strategies to manage and monitor existing public parking resources more efficiently.

RECOMMENDATION ED9: Evaluate parking costs and fines and implement changes based on the policies and priorities of the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION ED10: Encourage shared use of large private parking lots through shared parking or lease agreements.



THEME ELEMENT: COMMERCIAL LAND USE

BACKGROUND

Commercial Land Use Distribution

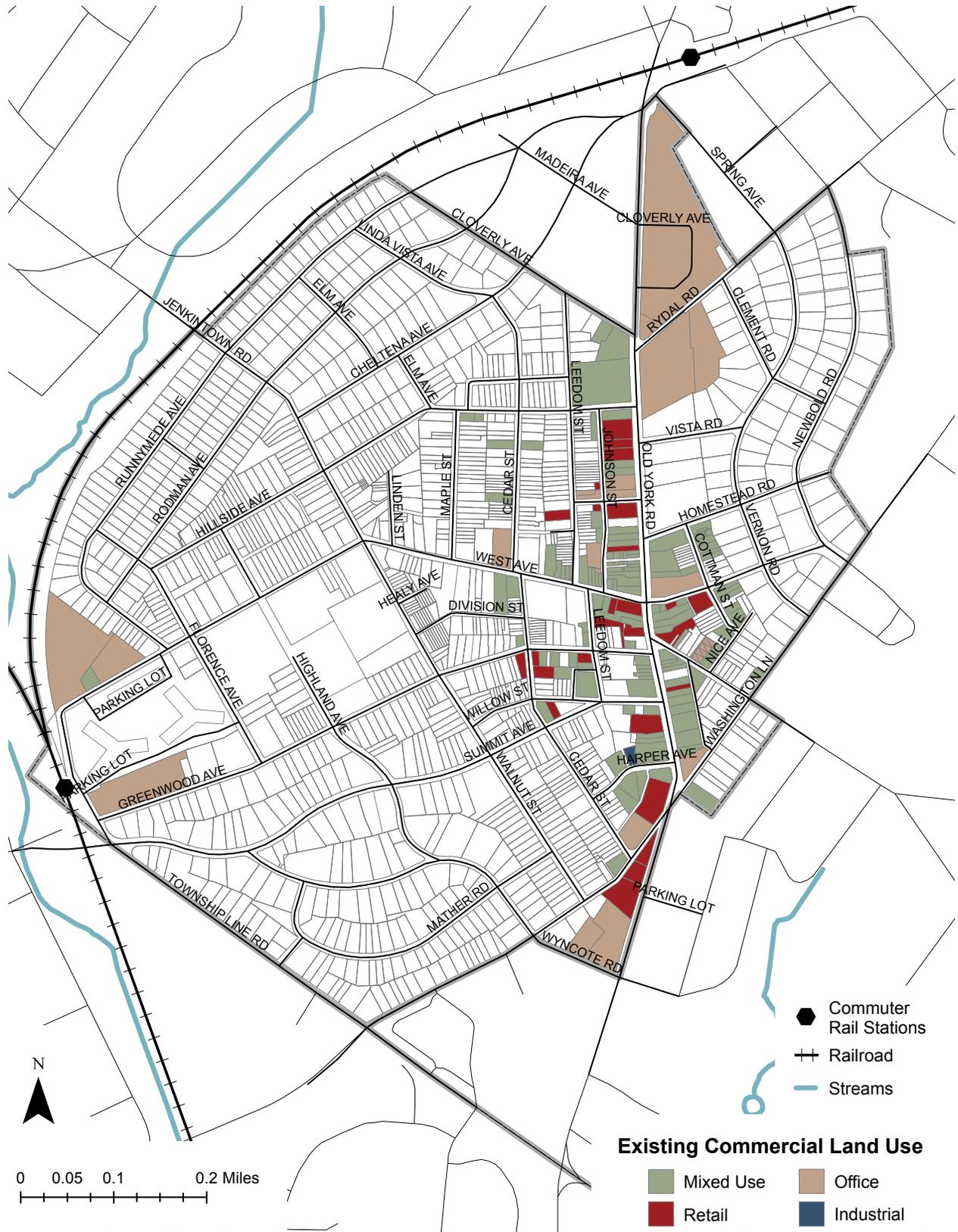
Jenkintown Borough is primarily a residential community with 70% of the Borough’s land area used for residential use. However, 16% of the Borough’s land area is used for commercial use. The commercial properties in the Borough are a combination of office, retail, mixed use, and industrial, with office accounting for the greatest proportion of commercial land area. The geographic distribution of the Borough’s commercial land use is shown in Map 12 on the following page. Although there are several prominent large office buildings in the Borough, the majority of Jenkintown’s commercial properties are small, mixed use parcels located along the historically-commercial streets of Old York Road and West Avenue in the Town Center area.

Several distinct character areas can be identified within the Borough’s commercial land uses, based on observed characteristics such as building placement, age of structure, and types of business establishments; the boundaries of which closely correspond to the Borough’s three commercial zoning districts (see Map 13 on page #). The Town Center Commercial zone is the historic mixed use core of the Borough, centered along Old York Road, West Avenue, and the streets surrounding the town square. Sections of Old York Road just to the north and south of the Town Center district are classified as Neighborhood Commercial and serve as a buffer and transition zone between the Town Center and the more auto-oriented gateway commercial districts. Collectively, these two zones constitute what is known as “Uptown” – the main commercial stretch from Summit Avenue to Cloverly Avenue. The Borough’s Gateway Commercial zones are located at the northern and southern gateways to the Borough along Old York Road, as well as at the Jenkintown-Wyncote Train Station. The Gateway Commercial zones are the areas with the broadest range of uses, including several large office buildings and a car dealership.

Challenging Building Footprints

Several characteristics of the Borough’s older commercial areas present challenges to new and expanding businesses. The Town Center area is characterized by smaller and narrower footprints than many modern retail businesses are accustomed to. Additionally, most commercial properties within the Town Center area are attached to other buildings with fragmented ownership making expansion in place more difficult. This may lead to some businesses leaving the Borough if there is no available commercial space for them to move to, or if there are no cost-effective opportunities to increase the square footage of their existing commercial space. This can make it challenging for the Borough to retain productive businesses, because once they become successful, if they need to expand, they may have to move out of the Borough.

Map ED1: Commercial Land Use Type Distribution¹



¹ Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals.



Old York Road through Jenkintown on a warm summer day.

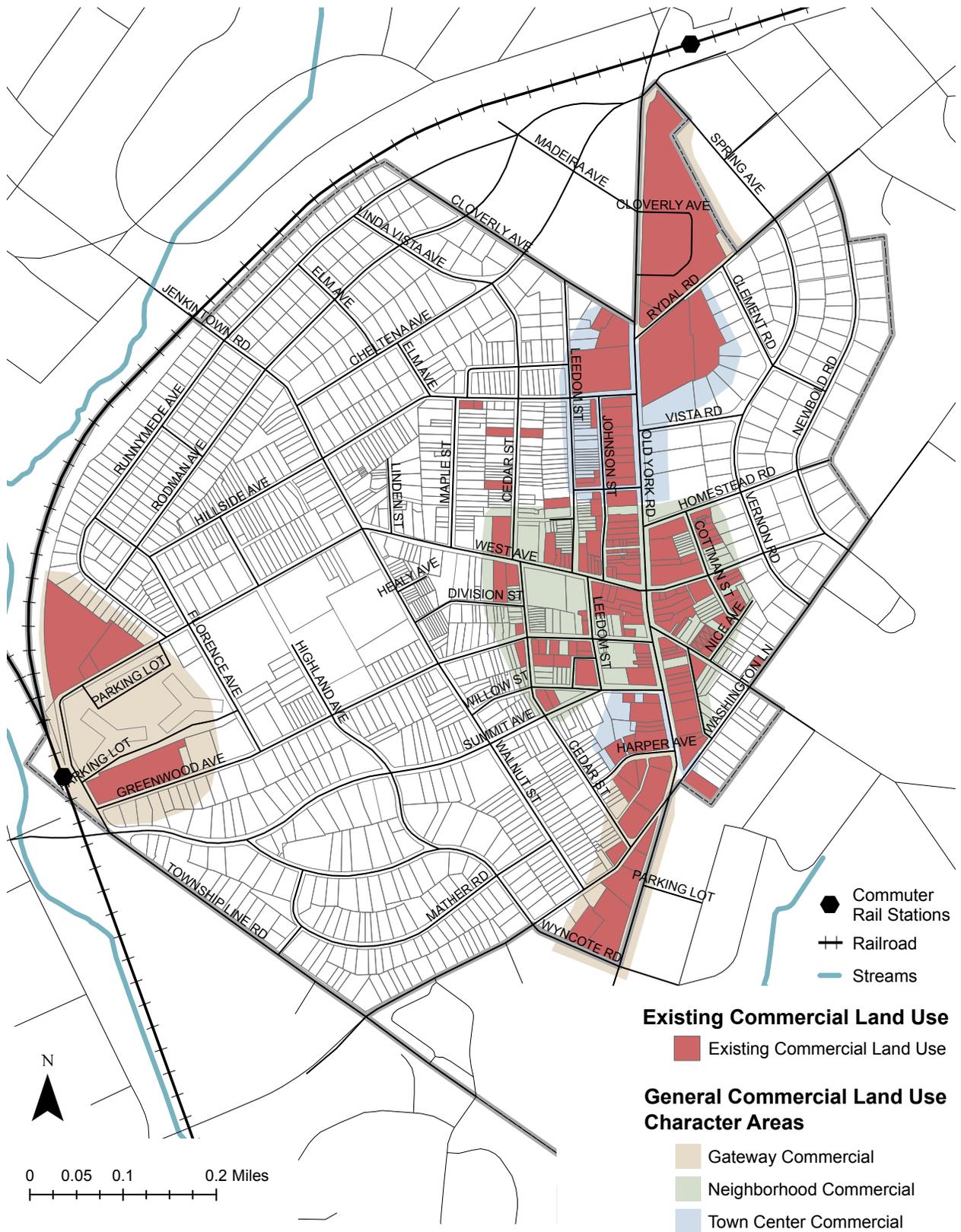
The Borough prides itself on the unique historic characteristics of the Town Center commercial area. The preservation of the traditional shopping district scale and character is important to the community. Therefore, the Borough should focus on attracting smaller-scale and local businesses that can be more flexible in their physical store layouts than national chain stores. Another strategy is to work with businesses that may be close to reaching their maximum capacity within their Jenkintown location to address challenges (e.g., parking) or find another available commercial space to allow the businesses to stay. Jenkintown should become such a valuable address that the business would choose to keep their “headquarters” or “original location” in Jenkintown Borough, even if they find the need to expand or open new locations elsewhere.

Flexible Commercial and Office Spaces

When survey respondents were asked what they like least about Jenkintown; the most common response related to the issues of empty storefronts, vacancy, and property upkeep. Activating empty storefronts, even with a short-term activity or retail space, can provide many benefits: it allows the new retailer to test your marketplace, it allows the property owner to generate some revenue from the space while looking for a long-term tenant, and it allows the community to benefit from having an active storefront contribute to the local commercial district.² This technique can also be applied to vacant or underutilized lots by temporarily using the space as a farmer’s market, an art installation, or a food truck park. The goal is to demonstrate the potential of a space as part of the commercial district and contribute to the local economy and sense of place.

² “(Re)Building Downtown: A Guidebook for Revitalization.” Smart Growth America. 2015. <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/rebuilding-downtown.pdf>

Map 13: Commercial Land Use Character Areas Map³



3 Source: Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals; Field Observations.

Technological advances and changes in working styles have created increased opportunity for working from home or working remotely. Co-working is a term for an office space configuration where amenities and resources are shared across several tenants which can reduce the operating costs for start-ups, entrepreneurs, freelancers, and others. Co-working sites are an increasingly popular way to provide an office environment and amenities and provide opportunities for social interaction for those who can work remotely or independently.⁴

Workplace culture is shifting away from isolated suburban office park campuses towards mixed-use developments that provide options for walking to lunch, using public transit, and living within close proximity to your workplace. Jenkintown as-a-whole provides all of these amenities, which can make the Borough an attractive place to work.

“I think it would be nice to rent out an empty storefront and use it as a 'Jenkintown Expo' center where folks—from school kids to our ready pool of amateur urban planners—can showcase their ideas about how to improve the borough. You could even use it as a venue for civic meetings or wine-and-cheese meetups for potential investors and entrepreneurs.” – Community Member via Email

Main Street Management

Active management of downtown retail and commercial districts can lead to positive outcomes such as generation of greater revenue, reduction of vacancies, and establishment of dynamic spaces frequented by residents and visitors. Table 14 on the following page lists some of the characteristics of different models for retail district management. The Borough has participated in several Main Street management strategies in the past. Most recently, the Borough had a Business Improvement District (BID) from 2007 to 2011. Borough Council may wish to consider exploring other opportunities to increase coordination between the borough and the business community, as well as within the business community itself. An open dialogue may help to identify an appropriate main street management strategy that meets the needs of the community and leverages all available resources and stakeholders moving forward.

Many Main Street management models benefit businesses and property owners by providing services that may be out of the municipal government’s purview of responsibilities, such as promotion and marketing, additional security and commercial district ambassadors, and event organization. Through centralized, professional management, tenant recruitment can be based on filling gaps in the existing retail market and tied to the physical characteristics of the available commercial spaces. Centralized professional management of a commercial area can also help to encourage common business culture through coordinated hours of operation, signage, marketing, and vacant storefront treatments, similar to how a shopping center is managed.

Business Improvement Districts, and other special taxing or assessment district management models, should not rely solely on retail businesses for funding; but rather should include a mix

⁴ “What’s Next? Real Estate in the New Economy.” Urban Land Institute. 2011. <http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/WhatsNext1.pdf>

of retail, office, and apartment land uses. The City Avenue Special Services District is an example of a multi-municipal special taxing district between Lower Merion Township and the City of Philadelphia. A similar multi-municipal geographic scope for a management model may be applicable to Jenkintown where the commercial area is somewhat contiguous with the commercial areas in Abington Township along Old York Road. A larger-scale management district would allow the financial burden to be more widely distributed.

Table 14. Main Street Management Model Characteristics⁵

Model Type	Characteristics	Funding Mechanism	Optimal # of Participating Businesses	Required Interest Level
Business Improvement District (BID)	Program to fund improvements or services for a defined area. BIDs require approval from the governing body.	Property Tax Assessment; Grants; Donations	150+	High
Special Service District/Special Service Area	Formed by property owners, businesses, and stakeholders to provide additional services to a designated district. Often operates as a municipal authority and requires legislative authorization to be established. Governed by a Board of Directors.	Property Tax Assessment (optional); Grants; Donations	Any	Medium-High
Community Development Corporations (CDC)	Nonprofit, public-private partnership that is managed by a Board of Directors and generally focuses on business retention.	Donations; Grants; Tax Credits; Municipal Support	Any	Low-Medium
Merchant’s Associations	Enhance commercial area through events, advertising, and building consensus among retail properties. They often help recruit retailers by fielding questions, offering site assistance and assisting with the permitting process.	Events; Membership	2+	Low-Medium
Main Street America	Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Works to encourage preservation-based community revitalization through its four-point approach. Membership includes access to training, toolkits, and other resources. Can be an independent organization or as part of an existing entity.	DCED Requires \$350 annual fee	25+	Medium-High
Economic Development Department	Department within the local government that can assign a point person to serve as the principal liaison with potential developers, retailers, or brokers.	Municipal Staff Department	Any	Low
Retail Recruiter	Matchmaker for vacant storefronts. Should understand existing retailers and available amount of leasable retail space, as well as zoning and permitting requirements, pending improvement or beautification plans, and available incentives.	Municipal Staff Position	Any	Medium-High

⁵ “Revitalizing Suburban Downtown Retail Districts: Strategies & Best Practices.” DVRPC. 2013. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/13070.pdf>

Commercial Vacancy

Any number of vacant storefronts, especially if they are concentrated along the community's main thoroughfare, can be an eyesore and create a less than favorable impression of the community as a whole. In some cases, a building is not actually vacant but it is perceived to be vacant due to a lack of property maintenance. Businesses that do not present inviting or active storefronts at the ground-level can also be perceived as vacant or act as a disruption to the pedestrian environment. Low levels of vacancy present opportunities as well. Vacant properties can be used to experiment with new retail formats, host community events, or encourage a change in the overall retail mix of the district.

There are two main groups of strategies to consider when addressing commercial vacancy: business retention - keeping existing businesses in the community; and business recruitment - attracting new businesses to locate in the community.

Business retention activities can include programs that recognize and celebrate existing businesses that embody the spirit of the community, as well as programs that serve to attract shoppers to the community such as walkability and parking improvements, and marketing campaigns. Business retention also includes efforts to assist existing businesses that are struggling to maintain their properties or have outgrown their current storefront or office space.

Business recruitment activities are most often undertaken by an economic development or community development professional either within the municipal government or as part of a Business Improvement District. Successful business recruitment is based on an understanding of the vision for the commercial district, identifying the business sectors with the best market potential, and accentuating the commercial district's advantages. Jenkintown's centrally-located commercial district provides convenient access to nearby universities, cultural destinations, and institutional resources such as Borough Hall, the post office, and the library. Many businesses recognize the benefits of locating in communities where these resources and institutions are co-located. Business recruitment will also rely heavily on the maintenance and enhancement of the physical character of the Jenkintown commercial district. Design standards for storefronts, signage, and streetscape; as well as standards for the treatment of vacant façades should be established to further this goal.

Table 15 on the following page summarizes the total inventory, total vacancy rate, and asking rents for office in several sub-markets in the Greater Philadelphia region, including Jenkintown.

This data shows that Jenkintown's office vacancy rate is lower than comparable nearby office sub-markets such as Horsham/Willow Grove and Blue Bell/Plymouth Meeting. Jenkintown has the second lowest total asking rent (shown as price per square foot per year) of all of the sub-markets analyzed; second only to Blue Bell/Plymouth Meeting which has a much larger supply of office space (in terms of square feet) and a higher vacancy rate which may be driving the price per square foot down.

Table 15. Office Sub-market Statistics, 2015⁶

Sub-market	Total Inventory (SF)	Total Vacancy Rate	Total Asking Rent (Price/SF/Year)
Jenkintown	1,081,401	13.8%	\$23.69
East Market (Philadelphia)	6,288,490	11.1%	\$23.78
University City (Philadelphia)	2,868,880	1.9%	\$31.69
Bala Cynwyd	3,048,722	14.8%	\$31.07
Blue Bell/Plymouth Meeting	8,031,060	18.9%	\$22.99
Conshohocken	3,333,055	11.75%	\$33.45
Fort Washington	3,408,004	29.5%	\$25.21
Horsham/Willow Grove	4,579,233	16.6%	\$24.77
King of Prussia	13,196,464	17.1%	\$26.07

Retail Market Assessment

A retail gap analysis was conducted to identify retail categories where there is currently unmet spending potential. The spending potential, based on the surveyed spending patterns of individual households within certain income brackets multiplied by the number of households within the study area, for a certain category of retail products or services provides an estimate of the demand for that category. Typically, food at home (*i.e.*, grocery stores), food away from (*i.e.*, restaurants), motor vehicle purchases, and gasoline are the highest retail spending categories. When the demand for that retail category is greater than the observed actual sales within the same study area, that indicates that there is an opportunity for a new business to provide that particular good or service more locally.

Of course, all of a community's retail goods and services needs can be met if you are willing to travel unlimited distances. However, there is demonstrated interest in reintroducing a greater diversity of goods and services within Jenkintown Borough so that residents can have more convenient access to these goods and services. More retail storefronts and dining opportunities can also attract visitors to stay longer and spend more. In addition, the vision for Jenkintown's commercial areas (in particular, the Town Center) is to create a distinctive concentration of arts, entertainment, dining, and music establishments.

The retail gap analysis was performed for three levels of the Jenkintown Retail Trade Area: 1-mile radius, 3-mile radius, and 5-mile radius from the corner of Old York Road and West Avenue (see Map 14 on page #). The retail goods and services categories are listed in Table 16 on the following page for each retail trade area. Please note that not all retail land uses are desired or could be accommodated within the Borough. For example, the Borough does not have the road capacity or land area available to accommodate a major grocery store or department store, the scale of which would also conflict with the community's desire to maintain and enhance the traditional shopping district character. Therefore, some retail categories that were shown to be opportunities in the retail gap analysis (e.g., other motor vehicle dealers, building material stores) can be eliminated from the targeted retail recruitment categories. (See Appendix C for the full retail gap analysis tables)

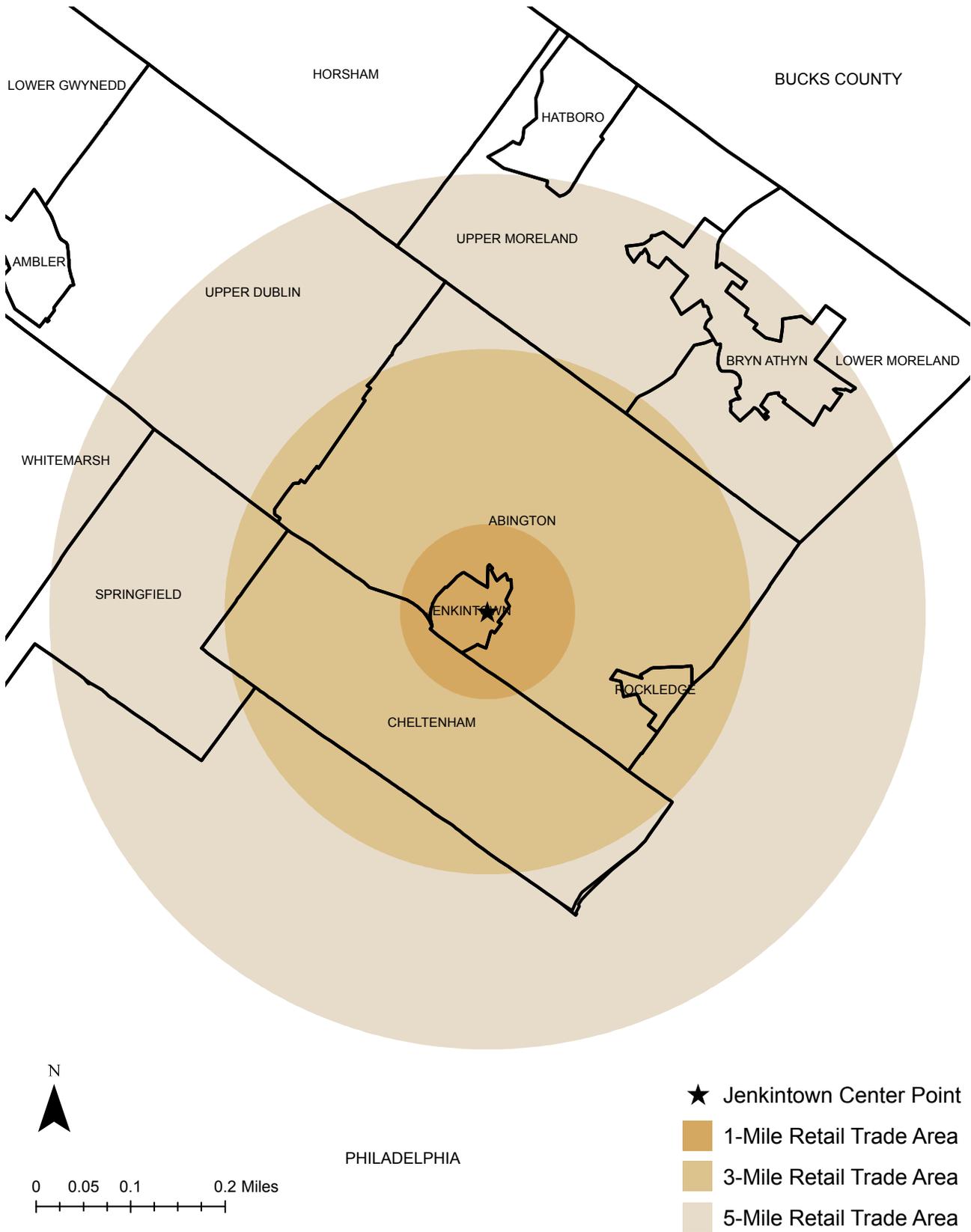
⁶ Newmark Grubb Knight Frank. "Philadelphia 4Q15 Office Market." http://www.philadelphiaapact.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/4Q15-Philadelphia-Office-Market-Report_v3.pdf.

Table 16. Retail Opportunity Categories, 2016

Retail Opportunity	1-Mile Radius Trade Area	3-Mile Radius Trade Area	5-Mile Radius Trade Area
≥\$10 Million Dollars of Unmet Retail Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Store • Gasoline Station • Building Materials/ Hardware Dealer* • Other (e.g., dollar store) General Merchandise Store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Store • Gasoline Station • Other (e.g., dollar store) General Merchandise Store • Non-Store Retailer • Full-Service Restaurant* • Building Materials/ Hardware Dealer* • Other (RV, boat, etc.) Vehicle Dealer • Electronics and Appliance Store* • Limited-Service Eating Establishment • Other (e.g., art dealer) Miscellaneous Store* • Sporting Goods/Hobby/ Musical Instrument Store • Clothing Store* • Beer, Wine, Liquor Store* • Furniture Store* • Automotive Parts, Tire Store • Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Store* • Specialty Food Store* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department Store • Gasoline Station • Building Materials/ Hardware Dealer* • Automotive Dealer • Electronics and Appliance Store* • Full-Service Restaurant* • Other (e.g., art dealer) Miscellaneous Store* • Beer/Wine/Liquor Store* • Sporting Goods/Hobby/ Musical Instrument Store • Limited-Service Eating Establishment • Furniture Store* • Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Store* • Automotive Parts, Tire Store • Lawn/Garden Store* • Book/Periodical/Music Store* • Specialty Food Store* • Drinking Places (e.g., cocktail lounge, tavern)* • Used Merchandise Store
≥\$5 and <\$10 Million Dollars of Unmet Retail Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other (RV, boat, etc.) Vehicle Dealer • Non-Store Retailer • Sporting Goods/Hobby/ Musical Instrument Store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking Place (e.g., cocktail lounge, tavern)* • Book/Periodical/Music Store* • Home Furnishing Store* • Shoe Store* • Lawn/Garden Store* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoe Stores*
≥\$1 and <\$5 Million Dollars of Unmet Retail Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive Parts/Tire Store • Clothing Store* • Beer, Wine, Liquor Store* • Shoe Store* • Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Store* • Lawn/Garden Store* • Drinking Place (e.g., cocktail lounge, tavern)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used Merchandise Store • Special Food Services* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewelry/Luggage/ Leather Goods Store*
<\$1 Million Dollars of Unmet Retail Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Food Services* • Used Merchandise Store • Furniture Store* • Specialty Food Stores* • Book/Periodical/Music Store* • Florist* • Full-Service Restaurant* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewelry/Luggage/ Leather Goods Store* 	

*** Retail categories that are most appropriate and should be targeted for recruitment for Jenkintown**

Map 14: Jenkintown Retail Trade Area Map



The 2015 community survey also provided insights into what types of retail businesses the community would most like to see in the Borough. Respondents were most interested in seeing more garden/home improvement stores, coffee shops/bakeries, clothing/shoe stores, restaurants/bars, florists, and more. Other specific recommendations for new stores included a hardware store, book store, and specialty food stores.

Employment

Jenkintown Borough is a net importer of jobs, meaning more people commute to Jenkintown for their jobs, than residents who commute elsewhere for their jobs. In 2014, a total of 4,810 people were employed in the Borough - more than double the number of Jenkintown residents employed outside of the Borough. Therefore, the vast majority of the persons employed in Jenkintown Borough (97.3%) commute to work from outside the Borough. Just over 32% of the persons employed in Jenkintown commute from Philadelphia, while 3% of the persons employed in Jenkintown also live in the Borough. Other locations where people who work in Jenkintown live include: Willow Grove, Horsham, and Glenside.⁷ This large amount of employment effectively increases the Borough's daytime population and therefore may have a positive impact on the daytime demand for certain goods and services such as convenience retail, fast casual dining, and coffee shops. The Borough's large and established employment base could be used as a marketing tool when seeking tenants for vacant retail spaces.

In 2014, 2,066 Jenkintown residents were employed. 130 residents both live and work in the Borough which accounts for 6.3% of the resident employment base, while 32.4% of working Jenkintown residents commute to the City of Philadelphia. Other locations where working Jenkintown residents commute to for work include: Horsham, King of Prussia, Glenside, and Willow Grove.⁸

DVRPC tracks and forecasts employment for the Borough. DVRPC projects an increase of 190 jobs (or approximately 4.3%) by 2045.⁹ This projected job growth percentage is less than that projected for Montgomery County as a whole (13.9%) which reflects Jenkintown's built-out status. New jobs will likely be created through filling of vacancies in existing office buildings, rather than significant new development.

Based on data for the 2014 tax year, the top ten employers in Jenkintown, ranked based on the number of employees reported for that tax year, account for a total of 837 employees, or 20% of the total number of persons employed in the Borough (Table 17 on the following page). Therefore, the majority of persons employed in the Borough are employed by businesses with 50 or fewer employees.

Health care services account for the majority of jobs represented by the top ten employers. Two major restaurants (the Drake Tavern and Outback Steakhouse) employ a large number of people and are also included in the list of the top ten employers.

7 U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

8 U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

9 County and Municipal-Level Employment Forecasts, 2015-2045. DVRPC. <http://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/empforecasts/>

Technology

Many communities, both small and large, have made efforts to increase access to the Internet through municipal broadband and wireless services. The Borough's high population density and concentration of businesses and employment centers may make such a venture a successful economic development tool and could be added to the Borough's many municipal services that attract residents and employers alike.

Table 17. Top Ten Employers in Jenkintown Borough: 2014¹⁰

Employer	Industry	Number of Employees
Salman Corp.	Health Care Services	230
St. Moritz Security Services	Security Services	98
School District of Jenkintown	Educational Services	84
Glanzmann Subaru	Motor Vehicle Sales	66
Metro Kitchen Bar Inc.	Food Services	65
OS Restaurant Services Inc.	Food Services	64
Lincoln Investment Planning	Financial Services	63
Abington Memorial Hospital	Health Care Services	56
CMG Jenkintown LLC	Health Care Services	56
Tri-State Imaging PR LLC	Health Care Services	55

Business Tax Revenue

When choosing a location for their business, an individual will first evaluate the local business taxes in order to incorporate this information into their business plan and to balance the projected taxes with the benefits and services they will receive by choosing to locate within a particular municipality. In addition to property taxes, the Borough has implemented a business privilege tax (BPT)¹¹ and a mercantile tax (MCT)¹² which were authorized by Act 511¹³. The business privilege tax is levied on service businesses (e.g., medical offices) and on rental properties. The mercantile tax is levied on retail businesses with different rates for wholesale retail and storefront retail. Both taxes are proportional, meaning they are based on the annual gross revenue of each business. Table 18 on the following page shows Jenkintown's business privilege and mercantile tax rates, the amount of revenue from these taxes the Borough has budgeted for in 2016, and the percentage of the total budgeted general revenue for the Borough that these taxes account for. These figures are also shown for the neighboring townships and some comparable boroughs.

¹⁰ Berkheimer Associates, 2014.

¹¹ Business Privilege Tax – "A flat rate and/or proportional tax levied on the gross receipts from certain occupations, trades and professions, as well as merchants, vendors and others for the privilege of doing business within the taxing district." <http://www.education.pa.gov>

¹² Mercantile Tax – "A proportional tax levied on the gross receipts from wholesale and retail businesses including wholesale dealers or dealers in goods, wares and merchandise, and all persons engaged in conducting restaurants or other places where food, drink or refreshments are sold." <http://www.education.pa.gov>

¹³ "The Local Tax Enabling Act" (Act 511 of 1965).

The Borough's business privilege tax (BPT) and mercantile tax (MCT) rates are equal to those in the neighboring townships of Abington and Cheltenham, and therefore are competitive within the Borough's immediate market area. It is of note that the percentage of the Borough's budgeted revenue that comes from the business privilege tax (31%) is the highest of any community in Montgomery County.

Table ED5. Montgomery County Sample BPT and MCT Rates and Budgeted Revenues

Municipality	Tax Type	Tax Rate	2016 Budgeted Tax Revenue	% of 2016 Total Budgeted Revenue
Jenkintown Borough	Rental Income (BPT)	4.0 mils	\$1,125,000	31.0%
	Service Business (BPT)	4.0 mils		
	Retail Mercantile (MCT)	1.5 mils	\$150,000	4.1%
	Wholesale Mercantile (MCT)	1.0 mils		
Abington Township	Rental Income (BPT)	4.0 mils	\$4,250,000	11.6%
	Service Business (BPT)	4.0 mils		
	Retail Mercantile (MCT)	1.5 mils	\$2,100,000	5.7%
	Wholesale Mercantile (MCT)	1.0 mils		
Cheltenham Township	Service Business (BPT)	4.0 mils	\$1,608,000	3.8%
	Retail Mercantile (MCT)	1.5 mils		
	Wholesale Mercantile (MCT)	1.0 mils	\$373,000	0.9%
Ambler Borough	BPT (\$240.00 per business)	Flat amount per business	\$75,000	2.1%
Conshohocken Borough	Rental Income (BPT)	2.0 mils	\$1,750,000	16.9%
	Service Business (BPT)	2.0 mils		
	Retail Mercantile (MCT)	1.5 mils	\$380,000	3.7%
	Wholesale Mercantile (MCT)	1.0 mils		

It is important to note that Act 145 of 1988 abolished the mercantile and business privilege tax so that no political subdivision may levy, assess or collect a mercantile or business privilege tax on gross receipts or part thereof, except for mercantile or business privilege taxes that have been enacted prior to November 30, 1988. This act also states that the rate of mercantile or business privilege taxes cannot be levied at a rate in excess of the rate imposed by the political subdivision as of November 30, 1988.¹⁴ Therefore, the only way to increase revenue from the mercantile and business privilege taxes is to increase the number and revenues of the businesses within the Borough.

¹⁴ Chapter 5: Subjects of Taxation; Subchapter D: Mercantile or Business Privilege Tax. (Act 145 of 1988).

Transit-Oriented Development

Developable land with convenient access to established transit systems, especially regional rail stations with frequent service, is in high demand for its ability to attract commerce and enhance mobility. Two regional train stations and several bus routes service Jenkintown Borough, making it one of the most highly-serviced suburban locations outside of the City of Philadelphia. The Borough can work to capture the value of their land within close proximity to the transit stations by continuing to partner with SEPTA on station area improvement projects and ensuring that the development codes and policies in place promote transit-oriented development.

A concentration of multi-story office buildings with structured parking and high-density multi-family residential developments are currently located adjacent to the Jenkintown-Wyncote Train Station. The success of the existing transit-oriented development around the Jenkintown-Wyncote Train Station could be enhanced through traffic calming, walkability, and beautification improvements. Complementary retail uses, such as a coffee shop or deli, in the existing office buildings or in the commercial spaces of the train station buildings could also contribute to the commercial environment around this important transit hub.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is development, usually within a 10-minute walk of a transit station, that is designed to encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation, other than the personal automobile. Transit-oriented development groups residential, retail, and office space around a transit stop – emulating the historic development pattern of many small towns such as Jenkintown by encouraging walkability and convenient access to local businesses.

The Borough's Town Center area is centrally located along Old York Road; however it is located more than ½-mile from either the Jenkintown-Wyncote or Noble train station, which reduces the convenience of walking to the Town Center from the train stations. Providing a consistent and comprehensive wayfinding signage and marketing program could help encourage transit users to walk to the Town Center, and vice versa. Additional development to activate the surface parking lot at the northern tip of the Strawbridge's site adjacent to the Noble train station, combined with enhanced streetscaping and coordination with Abington Township and PennDOT to improve the appearance and safety of the northern portion of Old York Road would also help create a continuous and attractive pedestrian commercial district between the Town Center and the Noble Train Station. Overall, transit-oriented development can have benefits for the Borough's central commercial district as well.

The historic Strawbridge's building which is currently used for offices, an Outback Steakhouse restaurant, and a self-storage facility is the closest Jenkintown property to the Noble Train Station. Additional opportunity for transit-oriented development is present on the underutilized surface parking lot portions of the Strawbridge's site. It is conceivable that this site could accommodate additional residential density due to its location adjacent to a SEPTA regional rail station and proximity to both the Fairway commercial area in Abington Township and Jenkintown's commercial and institutional resources. New structures should focus on enhancing the pedestrian connections between Old York Road/Jenkintown Borough and the Noble Train Station through streetscaping, gateway treatments, and building frontages built up to the sidewalk with an active ground floor use, such as retail.

Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA)

The LERTA Act of 177 authorizes local taxing authorities, including municipalities, to provide tax abatements for new construction in deteriorated areas of economically-depressed communities and improvements to certain deteriorated commercial, industrial, retail, and other business properties. In order to implement a LERTA, the local taxing authority creates an abatement schedule by specifying the length of the tax abatement (up to a maximum of 10 years) and the portion of the new construction or improvements to be exempted from property taxes each year. The exemption from taxes is limited to the additional assessment valuation attributable to the actual costs of new construction or improvements to deteriorated property, up to a maximum amount that can be set by the local taxing authority.

By adopting a LERTA ordinance that clearly outlines the criteria of the tax abatement that the local taxing authority is offering, interested parties may be more likely to pursue new construction or building improvement projects within the area. These tax abatements have been shown to be most effective when the municipality, school district, and County all agree to offer similar benefits.

Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ)

Pennsylvania has a total of 29 State-designated Keystone Innovation Zones (KIZ) meant to encourage entrepreneurship by offering tax incentives to companies in life science and technology industries. Jenkintown is part of the BioLaunch611+ KIZ¹⁵ which covers the Route 611 corridor. Life-sciences, life-sciences-related, or technology-based companies that have been in operation for less than eight years may be eligible for up to \$100,000 in KIZ Tax Credits which can either be used to offset the State tax liability or sold for cash to grow their business.

Hotel Development

There are no hotels currently located within Jenkintown Borough, nor within either of the neighboring townships. Visitors to local businesses and family members of local residents visiting from out-of-town likely end up staying in chain hotels clustered along the Pennsylvania Turnpike or in the City of Philadelphia. Increasingly, travelers are seeking out unique experiences when selecting a hotel. For these reasons, a small boutique hotel or bed and breakfast could be successful in Jenkintown where transit access, a central location, and a dynamic downtown provide many of the amenities desired by today's sophisticated travelers.

15 BioLaunch 611+ KIZ. <http://www.biostrategypartners.org/sponsorship.php/KIZ/index.php>

New services that allow residents to rent out individual rooms or entire houses to visitors are increasingly providing more personalized options for accommodations for visitors. House-sharing could provide revenue to the Borough through the business privilege tax; however if house-sharing becomes a common activity within the Borough, controls related to parking, etc. should be evaluated.

New Types of Commercial Use

Amendments to Jenkintown’s commercial zoning districts could accommodate new small-scale commercial and cottage industrial uses. Many of these uses can incorporate a sales or display component, educational opportunities, and attract a wider range of age groups to the Borough. Limiting permitted uses to more traditional categories of retail, personal service shops, and office can reduce the range of commercial uses that can locate in the Borough.

- Specialty Food Production – Several of Jenkintown’s established businesses, such as Velvet Sky Bakery, The Cheesecake Lady, and Fill A Bagel are examples of specialty food production businesses that also sell their products and offer dining options within the Borough. Jenkintown’s Farmer’s Market also offers residents access to fresh produce and unique artisan products. As demonstrated in the retail gap analysis above (Table ED3), there is additional unmet retail demand for specialty food stores. Stores that could complement Jenkintown’s existing specialty food businesses could include an ice cream store, a candy maker, catering companies, and a cheese or olive oil store.



"Food truck parks" with comfortable seating and other amenities, such as this one in Austin, Texas, can complement established commercial areas or be used as a way to show the commercial potential of a vacant or underutilized parcel.

- Industrial Design – The “maker movement” is invigorated by a young, technology-savvy creative class. Technology-based manufacturing industries include robotics, 3D printing, laser cutting, and graphic design.
- Artisan Industrial – Older industrial buildings across the region are being converted to unique workspaces for mediums such as small-scale metalworking, glassblowing, pottery, and screen printing.
- Small-Scale Alcohol Production – A resurgence and interest in craft alcoholic beverages, including liquor and beer, is taking place across the country. Small-scale breweries and distilleries often incorporate tasting rooms, and sometimes distribution, that attract visitors and add vibrancy to downtown areas.

- Food Trucks – Food trucks are another popular way to provide a variety of food options in a vibrant and unique setting. Foot truck parks (right) are permanent or semi-permanent locations where food trucks are often complemented by seating, lighting, and restroom facilities.



Jenkintown’s central business district, known locally as “Uptown,” is characterized by a diversity of small storefronts on walkable streets



The Piazza development incorporates several buildings and parcels to create a cohesive environment for a grouping of retail, restaurant, and office businesses.

Retail and Commercial Districts Will Continue Evolving

New shopping centers are increasingly being designed to mimic features of old-fashioned downtowns. Chain retail stores and restaurants have also started using a wider-range of building formats that can fit into traditional neighborhoods with greater flexibility.



The northern and southern sections of Old York Road are currently primarily auto-oriented commercial and large office uses



Several large office buildings are concentrated around the Jenkintown-Wyncote train station

RECOMMENDATION EDI:

Provide increased business coordination services to support, promote, and manage the Borough's overall business community.

Strategy ED1a

Create a new Borough staff position to manage business coordination and promotion activities, and provide support services for new and existing businesses. This staff position could perform many of the activities that a traditional Main Street Manager or Business Improvement District might perform such as property owner coordination on vacancy issues, marketing, business recruitment, and streetscaping.

Several of the recommended strategies related to business recruitment, economic development, grant writing, community branding and marketing, and multi-municipal coordination that are discussed throughout this document could be implemented by a new Borough staff position focused on economic development.

Strategy E1b

Work with neighboring municipalities that share Old York Road as a major commercial corridor to explore the benefits of potentially establishing a multi-municipal management entity to serve the Old York Road corridor commercial properties.

Strategy ED1c

Leverage Jenkintown's position as a jobs center to attract new employers and potential employees by also highlighting Jenkintown's mix of housing, transportation, and lifestyle amenities in Borough marketing materials.

Strategy ED1d

Evaluate ordinance language related to home-based businesses to encourage continued creation of home-based businesses with appropriate limitations on factors that could negatively impact the residential character of the neighborhood, such as parking, deliveries, on-site storage, and signage. Home occupations encourage small business growth and allow low-impact cottage industries (such as small-scale specialty food production and packaging, graphic design services, etc.) to develop within the Borough.

Strategy ED1e

Evaluate the desirability and affordability of establishing municipal wireless network access for residents and businesses as an economic development tool.

RECOMMENDATION ED2:

Encourage the establishment of a strong mix of retail, office, and residential uses within the Borough’s commercial areas. Having a range of retail and dining experiences available contributes to a vibrant downtown by establishing Jenkintown as a destination that is attractive to a wide-range of customers. Typically, retail and restaurant uses generate foot traffic during all times of the day. Overall, the commercial zoning should reflect the priority to establish pedestrian-oriented uses and encourage development that is appropriate in each of the Borough’s commercial zones (see Map 13 on page #).

Strategy ED2a

Support existing businesses and encourage new businesses that enhance the established arts and entertainment scene in the Town Center character area. Require ground floor uses to be pedestrian-oriented in design and discourage non-pedestrian-oriented businesses from locating on the ground floor. The Uptown commercial district in particular should focus on nurturing a range of complementary and interesting retail goods and services to encourage additional shopping/browsing behavior. In general, businesses in this district should contribute to the vibrant arts and entertainment resources that have become the focal point of the Town Center district.



The Velvet Sky Bakery and Café is a popular destination and meeting spot for residents and visitors alike. This business creates a welcoming storefront through attractive window displays, outdoor dining, and pedestrian-scaled signage.

Strategy ED2b

Ensure that new development and redevelopment within the Neighborhood Commercial character areas is designed in such a way to balance the need to accommodate vehicular circulation and parking while also ensuring the continuity of the pedestrian environment. The larger lot sizes and dual frontage properties that are more common in the Neighborhood Commercial character areas than the other commercial character areas, allow for more flexibility in terms of the circulation

and building layout within the site. In general, businesses in this district should provide goods and services to the immediate community and serve as a buffer between the walkable Town Center and the more intense Gateway Commercial districts.



New commercial developments should be designed and landscaped to encourage safe pedestrian circulation along Old York Road. For example, a redesign of the site at the corner of Old York Road and Cherry Street (left) could require the building too be built-up to the sidewalk with parking to the rear. Commercial buildings that have similar setbacks relative to the sidewalk, similar heights, and large storefront windows, such as this street in Newport, Rhode Island (right), contribute to the pedestrian activity on a street.

Strategy ED2c

Ensure that new development and redevelopment within the Gateway Commercial character areas prioritizes pedestrian movement through enhanced site layout and streetscape design that provides connections to transit nodes and the Town Center.



As properties in the Gateway Commercial zone redevelop, additional architectural and landscape design standards should be implemented to create a pedestrian-friendly, attractive commercial environment. The narrow sidewalks and lack of pedestrian entrances fronting on the sidewalk reduce pedestrian activity on this section of Old York Road (left photo). The new Whole Foods grocery store in the Wynnewood neighborhood of Lower Merion Township (right photo) transformed the pedestrian walking environment by widening the sidewalks and placing a landscape buffer between Lancaster Avenue and the sidewalk.

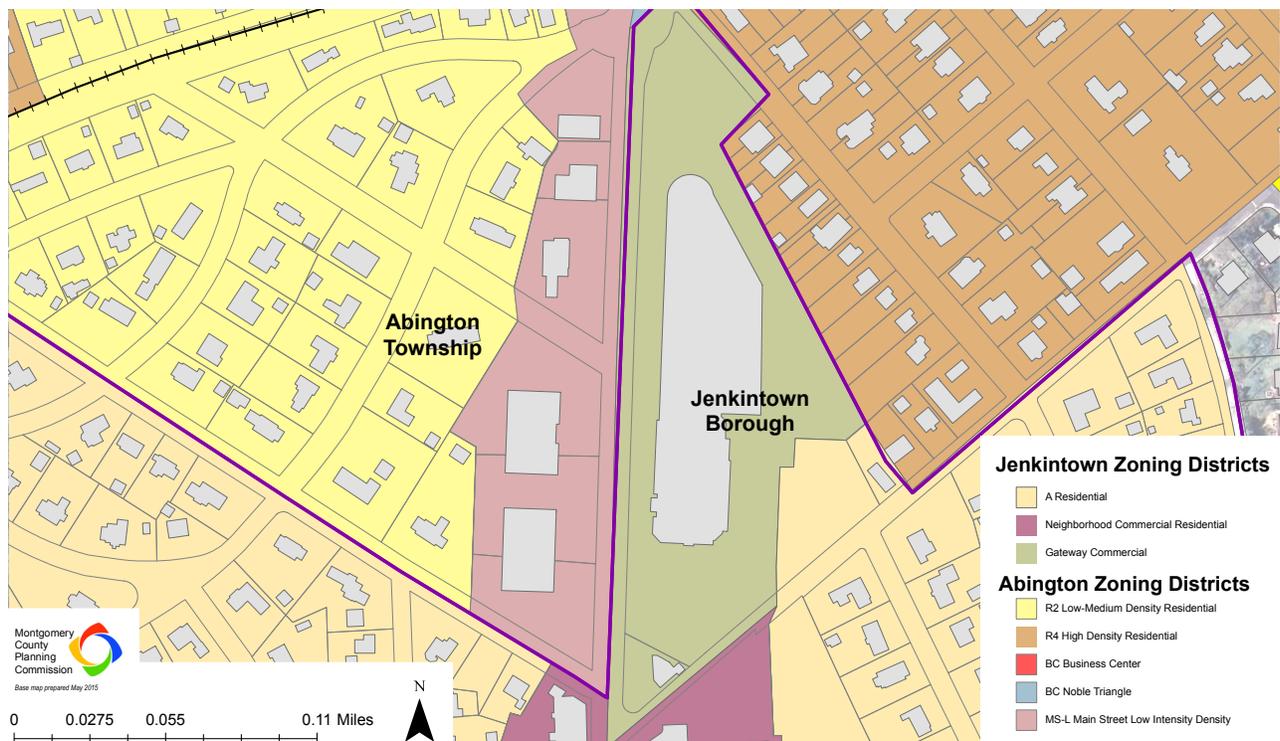
Strategy ED2d

Draft a zoning ordinance update to include a transit-oriented development (TOD) overlay district for the area of Jenkintown around the Noble Train Station. Allow multi-family residential with design standards that include requiring ground-floor commercial, maximum front yard setbacks, architectural design, and streetscaping. The TOD overlay could include incentives for additional elements such as shared parking, structured parking, public gathering space, and gateways. See Strategy NP2d for more information.

Strategy ED2e

Coordinate with Abington Township to work towards complementary land use and development design standards along both sides of Old York Road. Due to the unique shape of Jenkintown’s municipal boundaries, the northern gateway into the Borough along Old York Road is half in Jenkintown Borough and half in Abington Township (see Map 15 below). Developing a consistent streetscape design with a focus on pedestrian safety, and coordination regarding appropriate commercial land uses, would be beneficial to both municipalities.

Map 15: Current Zoning of Northern Section of Old York Road



The northern section of Old York Road (State Route 611) between Rydal Road/Cloverly Avenue to the south and Rodman Avenue to the north is split with the eastern side of Old York Road in Jenkintown Borough and the western side in Abington Township. The split ownership of this section of Old York Road creates challenges for coordinating circulation and land use patterns, as well as the design of the streetscape. Complementary building setbacks, sidewalk widths, and landscape design could help visually integrate both sides of Old York Road despite the separate ownership.

RECOMMENDATION ED3:

Implement strategies to reduce the number of commercial vacancies, both retail storefronts and office space, within the Borough's commercial areas; while encouraging the proper maintenance and upgrades to vacant and deteriorating commercial properties.

Strategy ED3a

Continue to coordinate with the SEPTA Real Estate department to market the unique commercial spaces in the Jenkintown-Wyncote train station buildings. By reactivating these historically commercial spaces the new businesses would contribute to the local economy and the greater community could appreciate these historic landmarks. Innovative retail formats could help to reinvigorate these spaces. For example, if the train station commercial space is too large for a single tenant, an indoor market with multiple stalls - such as the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia - could be implemented. On the other hand, if available parking is limited during peak hours, other types of businesses with very little parking demand and/or off-peak hour parking demand, such as a catering company or event space, may also be appropriate for this site.



The large commercial space in the inbound Jenkintown train station building (left) presents a unique opportunity to create a multi-tenant indoor market or destination restaurant space. Many historic train station buildings, such as the one at the Glenside Train Station (right) have been successfully converted into commercial spaces.

Strategy ED3b

Continue to work with SEPTA and adjacent property owners to coordinate station area improvements with other amenities to attract new businesses to the established office buildings. Additional amenities that may attract new businesses to the existing office buildings could include traffic calming, wayfinding signage, small-scale retail (e.g., coffee shop, deli, news stand) and fitness centers within the office buildings, modern signage, and landscaping. See Transportation Strategy T9c for more information.



Enhanced streetscaping and small-scale, complementary retail establishments could help to build a stronger connection between the Jenkintown-Wyncote train station and the established office buildings adjacent to the train station.

Strategy ED3c

Encourage property owners to allow short-term leases to permit new retailers to test the Jenkintown commercial market through a pop-up storefront. Pop-up storefronts allow the retailers to learn more about the Jenkintown retail market before making a longer-term commitment and activate a formerly vacant space within the commercial area.

The Borough could create temporary use regulations to designate where and what temporary uses are permitted. In addition, a temporary use permit could control the time frame and fees associated with the temporary use.

Strategy ED3d

Draft a commercial property maintenance code to establish standards and enforcement procedures for the maintenance of commercial property in order to protect public safety and welfare while maintaining property values within the community. Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania is an example of a community that has adopted a commercial property maintenance code. Wilkes-Barre's code requires that "the exterior of the premises and the condition of accessory structures shall be maintained so that the appearance of the premises and all buildings thereon shall reflect a level of maintenance in keeping with standards of the neighborhood." Other standards in the code relate to landscaping, signage, and storefronts.

Strategy ED3e

Partner with community organizations such as the JCA to fill vacant storefronts with window displays that incorporate public art and advertise the available commercial space in a more attractive and cohesive manner than traditional real estate signs. Amendments to the sign ordinance may be needed to allow for greater coverage of storefront windows on a temporary basis.



The Suburban Square shopping center in Lower Merion Township fills vacant storefront windows with signage that highlights new businesses and leasing opportunities while creating a cohesive look to the district despite occasional vacancies.

Strategy ED3f

Connect current and potential business and property owners with economic development resources and programs offered by the Montgomery County Commerce Department, Eastern Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, and the BioLaunch 611+ Keystone Innovation Zone. For example, MCDC offers “Breakfast with Brokers” events in available commercial properties to showcase the space and bring in potential tenants or investors.

Strategy ED3g

Consider adopting a Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) ordinance to clearly outline the terms of a tax abatement that the Borough is willing to offer for new commercial construction and improvements to deteriorating commercial structures in certain areas of the Borough, such as along Old York Road. Coordinate the LERTA ordinance and terms of the tax abatement with the Jenkintown School District and Montgomery County.



THEME ELEMENT: PLACEMAKING & BEAUTIFICATION

BACKGROUND

Placemaking

Increasingly, going out to shop in a physical store is no longer necessary because of the diversity of goods now available through the convenience of online shopping. However, there are still opportunities to draw shoppers to a commercial district through the opportunity to be entertained and to experience a unique place in the process. People will be more likely to return if they find your commercial area safe, pleasant, memorable, attractive, and convenient.

Placemaking is the idea of building a community around a sense of place, a celebration of historical character, and a critical mass of activity and people. The increased prevalence of online shopping will impact the role and function of brick and mortar retail shops. Therefore, a shift towards “retail as experience” is being observed where shoppers prefer to visit shops that provide a unique experience (think of the Apple store). A consistent pedestrian-oriented streetscape, distinctive shops with well-crafted window displays, and safe public spaces where people feel instinctively comfortable gathering and lingering are all examples of ways that shoppers and visitors can fully experience a place while also creating an environment where businesses thrive.

“Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.” – Project for Public Spaces

The Borough should direct their economic development efforts strategically by seeking out businesses that will build on the synergy of the existing place-based assets the Borough has to offer, particularly the distinctive local architecture, access to cultural resources, and the Borough’s exceptional quality of life. New businesses, developments, and capital improvements within the Borough’s commercial district should complement and enhance the district’s distinctive community assets; ensuring the continued reinforcement of the established place-specific identity of the commercial core – specifically arts, culture, dining, and entertainment.

*“We will never compete with malls for shopping, but we can compete with everyone as a destination place.”
– Community Member via Online Survey*

Streets as Places: Principles & Strategies from the Project for Public Spaces¹

Public streets account for a large proportion of the publicly-owned land within a community. Incorporating design elements that allow public streets to also serve as engaging public places can add economic and social value to a community.

- *Great Activities & Destinations – give visitors a reason to visit and linger in Jenkintown by making it feel vibrant and dynamic with activities and destinations that create a buzz of activity on the street.*
- *Safe – speeding cars and any real or perceived threat of criminal activity can deter visitors. However, traffic calming and activities that encourage pedestrian activity have been shown to reduce the likelihood and opportunities for crimes to occur.*
- *Inviting & Rich in Detail – create a streetscape that presents visitors with rich detail and interesting features, such as being able to peer into a building which creates an inviting feeling*
- *Designed for Linger – people are more likely to linger and spend more time in Jenkintown if they feel comfortable, there are features that they find visually interesting, and their basic needs are being met (e.g., food and beverage, seating).*
- *Interactive & Social – streets can spark interaction between people through public art, water features, seating options, and entertainment which build a sense of community.*
- *Unique – streets that embody an identity of their own are memorable and can be used to communicate the place’s values and history.*
- *Accessible – great streets should be accessible to people of all ages and abilities and welcoming to people of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities.*
- *Flexible – streets that are usable year-round and can be modified to serve multiple types of events are most successful as places.*

For more information: Project for Public Spaces. <http://www.pps.org/reference/8-principles-streets-as-places/>

Successful walkable commercial districts often implement design standards meant to ensure an enjoyable pedestrian experience. Examples of such design standards include:

- Historic Preservation – maintaining the traditional character and scale of a historic commercial area can encourage walking through grouping storefronts together in continuous frontages, mixing residential and commercial land uses, and providing a sense of place and visual interest through preserved architectural details.
- Façade Improvements – similarly, modern buildings can often be converted to be more pedestrian-friendly and welcoming through quality materials, appropriate human-scaled elements, large window openings, etc.
- Lighting – lighting inside the store must be brighter than it is outside to be welcoming. This is another reason to prohibit tinted or reflective window treatments in walkable commercial areas.

Streetscaping

Streetscaping refers generally to programs that improve the streetscape conditions, or the physical environment and design of the roadway and sidewalks. Physical accents within the streetscape such as landscaping and street furniture (e.g., street lights, benches, garbage cans) beautify the space, encourage walking, and can slow down vehicular traffic passing through. Further detail such as the pavement material and pattern, and the design of adjacent storefronts also contribute to the vibrancy of the downtown area.

A continuous and quality streetscape can contribute to the Borough's walkability, comfort, sense of place, and safety. Coordinated wayfinding signage provides guidance and eases the visitor experience. Attractive and adequate lighting and landscaping, including street trees and benches, crosswalks, and other decorative streetscape elements creates an inviting atmosphere for pedestrians to walk to and from their destinations. Appropriate streetscape elements also alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians, and encourage safer driving behavior.

The Borough's previous streetscape improvement programs have created a unique identity for several blocks of the Borough's commercial area around the Town Square through the installation of consistent landscaping, pavement materials, pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures, and corner bump-outs and crosswalks. Highlighting the walkability of the Borough's core commercial area has contributed greatly to the vibrancy of the commercial district and begun to attract private investment.

Although many historically-developed blocks within Jenkintown cannot accommodate wider sidewalks, new commercial development should incorporate a sidewalk of at least 10 to 12 feet in width wherever feasible. This width allows several people to walk comfortably side-by-side while still providing room for street trees, street furniture, and outdoor displays where appropriate. Where sidewalks are currently of this width, low-cost additions such as pedestrian-scaled lighting, seating, and wayfinding or directional signage can create a more welcoming streetscape.

Studies show that shoppers typically only walk 3-4 city blocks and any disruptions within the streetscape (such as parking lots, blank walls, or vacancies) can reduce the likelihood that shoppers and visitors will choose to walk further. In addition to continued efforts to reduce the amount and

appearance of storefront vacancies, the Borough should also ensure that the ordinances and other standards require active ground-floor uses within the 3-4 block Town Square area (essentially the Borough’s “walking core”). Beyond the Town Square character area, additional commercial uses such as office and residential should be permitted.



Previous renovations had obscured the ground floor detail of these historic storefronts along Old York Road (left: Before); however recent renovations to one of the storefronts have restored some of the historical detail to the ground floor (right: After). The larger ground floor windows increase visual accessibility to the storefront and encourage pedestrian activity.

Historic Preservation

Local historic preservation efforts have been shown to provide community development and economic development benefits. Focusing on preserving and promoting a community’s history and culture allows residents to reconnect with their past, revive community spirit and pride in place, and encourage local participation in revitalization efforts. Preserved historic areas help to maintain a community’s authenticity, restore the local tax base, create jobs, stimulate private investment, and promote growth in a way that uses existing resources and infrastructure efficiently.¹⁶ A vibrant historic district can also become a tourism destination. Heritage tourism is the second biggest industry in Pennsylvania and historic towns and districts are the most popular tourism sites.¹⁷ Lastly, studies have shown that historic designation can increase the average property value by 5 to 20%.¹⁸

A historic resource can be a building, structure, site, object, or district that is of a certain age (usually 50 years or older); or is associated with a certain theme; and retains enough integrity to convey its significance. There are several state and federal programs that provide for various levels of designation and protection of historic resources.

Many of Jenkintown’s commercial and mixed use buildings were constructed prior to World War II and represent a diverse range of unique architectural styles, including Neoclassical, Jacobean Revival, Tudor Revival, and Art Deco. As part of the comprehensive zoning ordinance re-write in the early 2000’s, the Borough created a list of “community historic resources” as referred to in the Borough’s Zoning Ordinance (see Map 16 below and the call-out box on the following page for more information). However, additional regulatory steps should be taken to demonstrate a greater

¹⁶ Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Office, *Cultural Resource Essentials*, 2013.

¹⁷ *Heritage Tourism in Pennsylvania*, June 1999.

¹⁸ “Historic Preservation and Residential Property Values: An Analysis of Texas Cities,” Leichenko, Coulson, and Listokin, *Urban Studies*, 2001.

priority in preserving the historic architecture of the Borough’s commercial districts. Development regulations and design standards should also be written to encourage new development that maintains the distinctive identity and sense of place by building upon the Borough’s established scale and character. Marketing materials aimed at recruiting new businesses should also highlight the unique building stock as an asset to the potential business.

Map 16: Jenkintown Landmark Buildings Map¹⁹



Arts & Culture Destinations

A strong mix of arts and entertainment businesses currently anchor Jenkintown’s “Uptown” commercial area, including the iconic Hiway Theater, numerous small art galleries, dance studios, and multiple bars and restaurants. Residents and leaders within the Borough have highlighted the community identity as an “arts and entertainment destination” as critical to attracting additional complementary businesses to the Borough and have expressed a desire to build off of existing

19 Source: Jenkintown Planning Commission. "Landmark, Historic and Contributing Buildings Jenkintown Commercial Zones." December 22, 2009. Revised April 18, 2014.

community events, such as the annual Jenkintown Festival of the Arts and the Summer Music Series, to establish stronger connections between the arts world and the Borough.

Jenkintown Borough is currently the home to many arts and entertainment-based businesses such as the Hiway Theater, Painting with a Twist, Allegheny Art Supply, Edge Dance Company, Art of Framing, and many other gift boutiques, as well as local community theater groups such as Jenkintown Music Theater and Pulley and Buttonhole Theatre Company. The mix of creative businesses and established annual events like the Festival of the Arts provides an opportunity to further cement Jenkintown's image as a regional destination for arts and culture by continuing to foster a supportive environment for artists and creating a vibrant destination for residents and visitors.

Community Historic Preservation and Zoning

Section 603(g)(2) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code states that "zoning ordinances shall provide for the protection of natural and historic features and resources."

The Jenkintown Borough Zoning Ordinance (adopted September 13, 2010) provides a definition for a community historic structure, including three sub-categories of buildings. The preservation and maintenance of community historic structures is encouraged through bonus provisions in several zoning districts that allow for an increase in the maximum permitted FAR (floor area ratio) "if a community historic structure is preserved and enhanced and/or the façade is maintained in enhanced."

In addition, a community historic structure in the Town Center or Neighborhood Commercial Residential zoning district cannot be demolished except by conditional use, which requires Borough Council approval.

Community Historic Structure

A community historic structure can be one of the three following types of structures. A list of community historic structures is maintained as the local historic resource inventory or study at the Jenkintown Borough Hall and may be updated from time to time (see Map 16 on page).

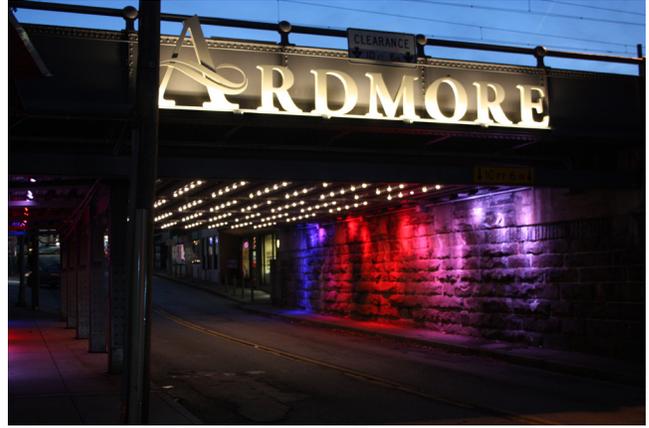
A. Landmark Building – A building or structure of significant character or special aesthetic quality, historical interest, or cultural value to Jenkintown.

B. Historic Building – A building that contributes to the historic character of Jenkintown by virtue of scale, rhythm, and state of preservation of original details.

C. Contributing Building – A building that contributes to the small-town atmosphere by virtue of scale, but may be lacking in qualities to elevate it to a higher category.



Public art, like this sculpture in Veterans Memorial Park in Lower Gwynedd Township, can contribute to a local sense of place and provide visual interest within large public spaces.



The Ardmore commercial district within Lower Merion Township beautified an important transportation link through unique branding and lighting which also ties the two sides of the railroad tracks together

Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper

The Project for Public Spaces, an organization devoted to placemaking and building stronger communities, promotes the concept of “lighter, quicker, cheaper,” the idea that a community can make a big difference by starting with the basics. These projects (the “low-hanging fruit”) can take the form of seasonal events that bring life to a lesser-used section of the Borough such as a vacant lot or parking lot; incorporating public art that highlights a unique aspect of the community and serves as a conversation-starter; encouraging grassroots community involvement; or repurposing existing public spaces as more versatile public gathering areas.



The restored Hiway Theater is an important visual and cultural landmark along Old York Road. The building’s unique, period-appropriate signage reflects the commercial corridor’s historic roots



The combination of unique pavement materials, landscaping, and outdoor dining at City Centre in Houston, Texas creates an inviting place where people want to linger

RECOMMENDATION ED4:

Establish uniform storefront design guidelines to create a streamlined look that brands and unifies all of the businesses as belonging to Jenkintown and contributes to a sense of place and community history.

Strategy ED4a

Draft uniform storefront design guidelines to ensure storefront and signage design complements the Borough's established historic character and scale. The majority of the design guidelines should be codified within the Borough's zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances which will in turn strengthen the Borough's design review process (see *Strategy ED4b*). The overall goal of the design guidelines is to create a unified look for Jenkintown's commercial districts with a focus on maintaining or restoring the unique historical architecture and pedestrian-orientation.

Strategy ED4b

Strengthen the design review process by creating a consistent meeting and reporting system between the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, and Borough Council. Adopt storefront design guidelines (see *Strategy Ed4a* for more information) to provide the Design Review Board with uniform criteria by which to review commercial applications. A business-friendly publication should be created summarizing the steps to create a business or pursue a development project within the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION ED5:

Encourage the preservation and reuse of Jenkintown's unique commercial building stock and the Borough's centrally-located and traditionally-scaled shopping district.

Local historic preservation efforts have been shown to provide community development and economic development benefits. Focusing on preserving and promoting a community's history and culture allows residents to reconnect with their past, revive community spirit and pride in place, and encourage local participation in revitalization efforts.



Architecturally-appropriate plaques or signs can be used to identify and showcase designated properties within a historic district

Strategy ED5a

Complete a Borough-wide historic resource inventory of commercial properties. A historic resource inventory should record characteristics about each commercial structure built on or before a certain date, typically 50 years prior to the date of the survey. Characteristics to evaluate and record about each structure include historic and current function, architectural style, dominant exterior building materials, year built, building type, and architect and/or builder, if known. A photograph of the front facade of each structure should be collected as well. *See Strategy NP3a for more information.*

Strategy ED5b

Evaluate the creation of a local historic district and possible listing on the state or national register of historic places. The benefits and impacts of a local historic district should be explored as a technique to preserve the unique architectural elements within the community. In addition, the creation of historic district would recognize the unique neighborhood-scale context of Jenkintown's historic development, including the grid of streets and mixture of housing types. *See Strategy NP3b for more information.*

Strategy ED5c

Evaluate the creation of a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) either in conjunction with the enforcement of a local historic district, or as a specialized sub-committee of the Design Review Board to evaluate and provide guidance on the modification of historic structures. *See Strategy NP3c.*

Strategy ED5d

Implement a recognition program to provide formal acknowledgment to property owners who have taken extraordinary measures to preserve the historic character of their property in keeping with the goal of preserving the unique community character of Jenkintown's commercial areas.

RECOMMENDATION ED6:

Highlight the place-based assets of the community through promotion and advertisement of the numerous events and amenities that the Borough has to offer. Jenkintown has a positive reputation as being a quality place to live and visit. This reputation comes in part from being a recognizable place within the region for cultural, dining, and transportation amenities. To maintain and build off of this reputation, it is important to highlight the place-based assets existing in Jenkintown through promotion and advertisement of the numerous events and amenities the Borough has to offer.

Strategy ED6a

Partner with community organizations such as the Jenkintown Community Alliance (JCA) to establish a branding campaign to promote existing cultural features and entertainment opportunities within the Borough. A logo can be used by local businesses to identify as belonging to the Jenkintown community, a community map can highlight important and interesting locations around town (such as the train station, library, Hiway Theater, and bars and restaurants), and other recurring events can be added to the community calendar, such as “First Fridays” or holiday events. Distinctive and consistent banners and wayfinding signage, combined with the enhanced streetscape design along Old York Road and other roads within the Town Square will create a recognizable brand for the community.

Strategy ED6b

Engage local businesses to foster long-term economic benefits of annual community events and festivals. Seasonal markets and events should also highlight and showcase the permanent businesses within the Borough so that visitors recognize Jenkintown as an exciting shopping destination year-round.



The Hollywood neighborhood of Abington Township has gateway signage and matching decorative lamp posts in a distinctive color with attractive banners that create an attractive and consistent streetscape appearance along the corridor.



The Jenkintown Festival of the Arts draws nearly 5,000 visitors to the Borough every September. Additional marketing activities or events during the Festival could highlight local businesses and increase the year-round economic benefits of these Jenkintown-branded events.

Strategy ED6c

Coordinate with business owners to promote outdoor dining, where appropriate. Create design guidelines and a permitting process that is simple and business-friendly.

Outdoor dining allows pedestrians, and others passing through the Borough during nice weather, to see patrons and feel more welcome to linger and enjoy a meal in the Borough.



Outdoor dining areas contribute to the “life” of a commercial area and encourage visitors to walk, dine, and linger throughout the commercial area.

RECOMMENDATION ED7:

Create a streetscape enhancements plan to provide guidelines for the design of signage, landscaping, lighting, and other streetscape elements that improve the Borough’s walkability, comfort, sense of place, and safety. This would also ensure coordination and consistency between streetscape improvements installed by the Borough and individual property owners.

Strategy ED7a

Draft an updated wayfinding signage plan, building upon the Borough’s existing signs and sign design. The plan will identify locations for gateway signs, pedestrian-oriented signs, and vehicular-oriented signs. Parking identification and directional signs should be prioritized and implemented in conjunction with additional parking management recommendations (see Parking recommendations in next section). An updated plan should also establish a way to monitor and update sign information, as needed. Install additional signs, as appropriate.



Several attractive wayfinding signs have been installed at strategic locations throughout the Borough. Building upon this design, new signs that are scaled to both pedestrians and vehicle drivers would be beneficial.

Strategy ED7b

Create a uniform streetscape design manual for businesses and property owners that highlights low-cost ways to beautify their storefronts and building façades using container landscaping, awnings, and other features. Include sign design standards to encourage the adoption of consistent sign sizes, materials, and placement to contribute to the overall branding campaign in the commercial district.

Strategy ED7c

Identify locations where street trees can be placed. Use best management practices for tree grates and planting depth to ensure tree survival and health. *See Strategy S1a for more information.*

Strategy ED7d

Evaluate lighting needs in the residential and commercial areas with consideration for replacement of standard bulbs for LED bulbs. Inadequate lighting can deter pedestrian activity due to safety concerns.

Strategy ED7e

Evaluate other streetscape elements such as seating and bollards to provide additional safety and comfort to the sidewalk network. Appropriately placed and spaced seating can encourage visitors to linger in the commercial area. Bollards or decorative fencing along the street edge of busy roads such as Old York Road can be used to visually define the sidewalk and deter jaywalking by directing pedestrians to signalized crossings. Select preferred designs and manufacturers to ensure consistent appearance throughout the district.



Clockwise from upper left: Signage design and lighting that complements the street's historic architecture, street tree placement, appropriately-scaled pedestrian lighting, and strategically-placed seating are all important elements of a streetscape design.



THEME ELEMENT: PARKING

BACKGROUND

Parking availability is a significant factor in determining the economic vitality of a commercial area. Jenkintown’s main commercial corridor is located on a four-lane stretch of Old York Road (Route 611) which does not have room for on-street parking. However, most local roads within the Borough allow on-street parking, whether by meter, by permit, or without restriction. Some businesses have dedicated parking lots for employees and customers, but many rely on the availability of on-street parking and municipal parking lots for their parking needs. When customers perceive there is limited parking available, they may be less inclined to frequent a business. Additionally, there can be parking conflicts between the business district and the adjacent residential district if residents perceive their street parking is being over-used by employees and customers, or vice versa. Make-shift parking, such as cars parked on the sidewalk, is also problematic and can lead to hazardous conditions if pedestrian access is blocked or sight lines for drivers are reduced.

To begin to understand the constraints on the parking system in Jenkintown, a preliminary parking inventory and field observations were conducted in the summer of 2016. The public parking locations within the Borough were categorized based on on-street and off-street locations and the range of time limits associated with each parking location, including short-term loading zone spaces and long-term 10-hour parking spaces. As part of the public parking inventory, it was observed that much of the public parking supply is centered around the Town Square and the local streets around



On-street parking is provided on many commercial and residential streets within the Borough.



Structured parking garages serve many of the Borough’s larger office developments.

Table E19. Typical Parking Distribution Characteristics

The table below summarizes the characteristics of different types of parking, all of which need to be accommodated in Jenkintown. Understanding the users, typical time limits, and desired locations of each type of parking is beneficial when planning the distribution and assignment of parking restrictions within the Borough. Overall, the goal of parking management should be to provide user-friendly, evenly-distributed, and convenient public parking without dominating the landscape with large swaths of pavement.

Parking Type	Common Users	Recommended Time Limit	Recommended Location
Long-term Parking	Employees Office Workers Commuters	3+ hours	Concentrated in large facilities at the periphery of the commercial district along major vehicular routes
Short-term Parking	Patrons Movie-Goers	2 hours (on-street) 3 hours (parking lot)	Convenient locations both on-street and off-street
Errand Parking	Picking-up Dry Cleaning Going to the Post Office	15-20 minutes	Widely distributed throughout the commercial district, as needed
Service Parking	Loading/Unloading Deliveries	15-20 minutes	Widely distributed throughout the commercial district, to be shared by nearby businesses

Town Square. Many of the businesses that rely on public parking for their employees and customers are also located on these streets. However, the public's perception of and access to these parking resources may be hampered by insufficient and misleading signage and a confusing network of one-way streets.

Initial parking observations were conducted on Wednesday, June 29, 2016 from 9 am to 5 pm. The number of cars parked in each individual public parking location within the Town Square area was recorded for each hour of observation. The percentage occupancy of each public parking location was then calculated using the known supply within each location. For example, if there are 20 parking spaces in a parking lot and 10 parking spaces are occupied at 9 am, then there is an observed 50% occupancy of that parking lot at 9 am. Jenkintown's peak parking demand, as observed on Wednesday, June 29, 2016, occurred at 1 pm with a total of 163 vehicles parked in the study area, out of a total of 276 available parking spaces (a 59% occupancy rate). Therefore, 79 additional parking spaces were available within the study area at 1 pm, however the distribution of parking spaces that are available, even during the peak demand period, may indicate where additional parking would be most beneficial. Greenwood Avenue (east of Old York Road) and Leedom Street (south of West Avenue) regularly had available parking spaces, while Cedar Street (north of West Avenue), West Avenue (west of Old York Road), and the reserved section of the Town Square Parking Lot were all working at or near full capacity on the day of observation. See Appendix B for the full table of parking observation data.

An important concept to keep in mind when evaluating Jenkintown’s parking supply is that of “effective parking supply.” Effective parking supply refers to the number of parking spaces that are needed in order for the parking stock to accommodate the needs of a community, which may be greater than a simple aggregate of the individual parking needs of each businesses. Parking supply is most effective when no more than 85% to 95% of spaces are occupied; any occupancy in excess of this leaves drivers with the perception of inadequate parking, even if there are some available spaces left.

Additional parking observations were noted during the parking observation day that may contribute to the perceived parking shortage. In particular, many on-street parking spaces are not striped which may make identification of available parking more difficult for vehicles seeking a parking spot. The use of parking meters is inconsistent across the Borough; some streets are metered, some streets are partially metered, and some streets are unmetered. Some parking meters are non-functional or are missing the meter heads. Permit parking is widely used, but cars with residential permits are allowed to be parked in metered spots indefinitely. Lastly, the cost of metered parking is well below area averages, at just \$0.25 per hour. The central payment kiosks in the municipal lots around Town Square are a great asset because they are connected to a smart phone application that can create reports of how much revenue and numbers of payments were received for each numbered parking space.

While this initial data lends an understanding of some of the broad challenges relating to parking, a more detailed parking study would be required to determine a more accurate prediction of parking demand and supply at different times of the day, and at different times of the year.

Other physical characteristics of the built environment and businesses can affect a visitor’s perception of parking supply and convenience. For example, if a business has customer parking in the rear, a welcoming and well-signed rear entrance should be provided. However, a similarly attractive entrance should be provided in the street-facing frontage of the building for the convenience of pedestrians and visitors parking elsewhere in the commercial district. Overall, the commercial district should incorporate bicycle parking, pedestrian amenities, landscaping, lighting, and wayfinding signage that increase customer’s comfort with accessing individual businesses by different modes of transportation, including walking and biking.



Two existing surface parking lots in Uptown offer a total of 115 public off-street parking spaces with a range of time limits to serve Uptown visitors, residents, and employees.



Several large private parking lots currently serve multiple businesses; however streamlined signage and more formalized shared parking agreements could benefit the commercial district as-a-whole.

RECOMMENDATION ED8:

Implement strategies to manage and monitor existing public parking resources more efficiently.

Strategy ED8a

Conduct a full parking study to evaluate parking need and supply in the main commercial areas of the Borough as well as in residential areas, particularly residential areas adjacent to commercial uses and the train station. Evaluate whether regulatory changes are needed to reflect parking constraints in individual zoning districts and implement changes as needed.

Strategies ED8b through ED8f below could be achieved as part of a full parking study. Although several strategies will also require long-term monitoring and evaluation, the procedure for long-term monitoring and evaluation could be established as part of the parking study.

Strategy ED8b

Identify and address missing or incomplete parking resources such as missing or unevenly spaced striping and broken meters. Evaluate whether additional metered spaces are warranted on streets with some existing meters, or on streets where meters are not installed, and install accordingly.



Missing parking meters on Cedar Street near the Dunkin' Donuts decrease the Borough's potential for revenue from on-street parking meters on this block.

Strategy ED8c

Evaluate the stored data from the central parking kiosk payment system to understand historical trends in parking availability and use. Institute a standard data collection and review process moving forward to be able to understand long-term parking demand and revenue trends.



The Borough's kiosk payment system stores data about usage and revenue collected and can be used to determine patterns in parking demand and turnover in the Borough's central surface parking lots.

Strategy ED8d

Evaluate residential on-street parking supply and demand overall, and on a block-by-block basis, and make changes as needed to balance the on-street parking supply with demand across the Borough.



On-street parking for residents on the borough's higher density residential streets such as Maple, Leedom, and Cedar is in high-demand.

Strategy ED8e

Evaluate residential and monthly parking permit fees, distribution, and policies. Create a centralized data bank of permit holders to better understand how many yearly residential permits are being issued for which streets, how many permits are issued per household, and how many monthly permits are being issued for use in the municipal lot and at metered spots. Compare this information to the number of available on-street and metered parking spaces to create a more accurate count of supply and demand. Evaluate the need for changes in the permit fees to discourage over parking of certain areas of the Borough and increase revenue to be used to maintain the Borough's public roads and public parking infrastructure. Track handicapped on-street parking requests and require notification when handicapped on-street parking spaces are no longer needed.

Strategy ED8f

Evaluate parking enforcement methods and policies. Enforcement is a critical component to managing parking by holding residents and visitors accountable to driving and parking laws. Continue to prioritize pedestrian safety by enforcing rules such as no parking on the sidewalk or blocking of crosswalks.

RECOMMENDATION ED9:

Evaluate parking costs and fines and implement changes based on the policies and priorities of the Borough. Jenkintown’s parking rate of \$0.25 an hour is well below area averages and has not gone up in many decades. Parking rates are an effective tool to regulate parking behavior; low rates encourage people to park for longer periods of time than they might otherwise (which limits turnover for other cars); however if rates are too high, visitors may choose to go elsewhere or seek out alternative parking on residential streets. The key is to find a rate that encourages turnover at a rate consistent with a vibrant retail commercial district and a more evenly distributed parking demand, without discouraging the use of the public parking. Low fines for parking violations also may not be enough of a deterrent for some individuals to find appropriate parking.

Strategy ED9a

Evaluate existing parking revenue and expenditure patterns to determine the full cost of providing public parking. On-street parking vs. off-street parking and metered vs. permit parking should be considered separately.

Strategy ED9b

Increase parking rates per hour to be more comparable with other area rates. Rate increases can happen incrementally to allow businesses and visitors to adjust. Focus rate increases on areas with high demand, such as the Town Square area, to encourage turnover of convenient customer parking; and keep lower rates on parking spaces located outside the Town Square area. Parking rate changes should be coordinated with public outreach and coordination with the business community to ensure a smooth transition and understanding of the reasoning behind the rate changes.



The Borough’s current parking rate of \$0.25/hour is rather low compared to other suburban commercial areas in Montgomery County and may not fully reflect the true cost of providing public parking. Higher or demand-based prices could also encourage turnover so that available parking may be more evenly distributed throughout the day.

Strategy ED9c

Continue to provide discounted parking that coincides with promotional events or activities, such as holiday shopping nights, in addition to the free Wednesday evening parking.

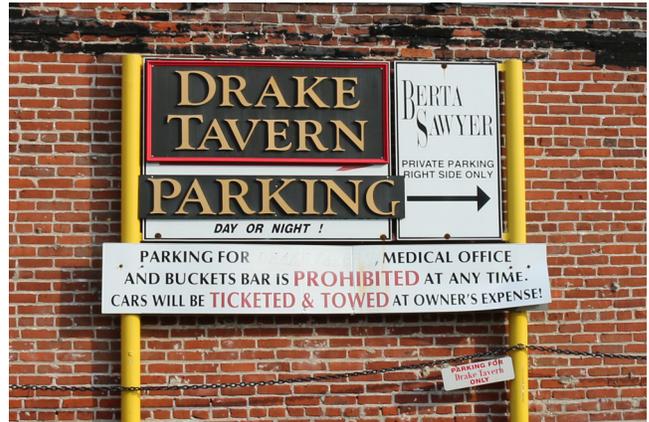
RECOMMENDATION ED10:

Encourage shared use of large private parking lots through shared parking or lease agreements.

There are a number of private parking lots that are occupied only part of the day, leaving them to sit empty during times of high parking demand in the evenings and on weekends. Shared parking or lease agreements with these private parking lots (including places like churches, Jenkintown Library, Acme, Strawbridge's, and the banks) may open up additional parking spaces for general use, or for specific community events during off-hours. Alternately, private parking lots could be used exclusively by employees of area businesses to better control access and liability.

Strategy ED10a

Conduct outreach to businesses and organizations that have private parking lots to advocate for the implementation of shared parking or lease agreements. Track and promote any existing shared parking agreements to potential users. Ideas such as valet parking or long-term employee only parking may reduce some parking lot owners' concerns regarding liability or conflicts. Physical interconnections between parking lots can also encourage the use of central parking areas and should be encouraged.



Outdated or unclear signage can deter visitors from using available parking resources due to uncertainty about potentially being ticketed or towed.