

BOROUGH OF CRAFTON

1997 STRATEGIC PLAN

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Prepared for the Borough Council

Borough of Crafton

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BOROUGH OF CRAFTON

1997 STRATEGIC PLAN

I. Background

A. Introduction

The Borough of Crafton is located in the Southwestern portion of Allegheny County, immediately adjacent to the City of Pittsburgh and the Boroughs of Green Tree, Rosslyn Farms, Thornburg and Ingram. The Borough is located along the presently being constructed PAT Busway and is within easy commuting distance of Downtown Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh International Airport. The Borough is conveniently located to Interstate 79. PA Route 60 accesses an I-79 Interchange, a major North-South route through Western Pennsylvania approximately 1.75 miles West of the Borough. PA Route

60 traverses the Borough. The Penn-Lincoln Parkway, a major East-West route through the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Region, is easily accessible from the Borough in neighboring Carnegie or by way of I-79.

Crafton is part of the Carlynton School District which includes the Boroughs of Crafton, Carnegie and Rosslyn Farms. Crafton Elementary School is located in the Borough, as is the St. Philip Catholic Elementary School.

The Borough was incorporated in 1892 and has a rich history. The Borough Building is on the National Register of Historic Places and an entire street has been designated an historic landmark by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation.

Borough recreational facilities include a playground, swimming pool and miniature golf course. A new Community Center houses a library, the Crafton Historical Society and community meeting rooms.

The Borough comprises only one square mile of land area and has a 1990 population of 7,188 persons. Like many older, fully developed, small communities, the challenge for Crafton is to maintain a stable population and to preserve the level of municipal services, given the limitations on increasing assessed valuation and tax revenues within the community.

B. The Comprehensive Plan

The 1991 Joint Comprehensive Plan for the Boroughs of Crafton, Rosslyn Farms and Thornburg includes the following goal:

Business Districts

- To strengthen the two primary business districts - Crafton Core and the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center - by undertaking certain municipal actions aimed at stimulating and encouraging patronage, providing additional offstreet parking in the core areas and by improving their visual image.

Specific land use recommendations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan include the following:

- Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center: Define the boundaries of the Center to give it a visual identity, to differentiate the Center from surrounding non-business uses. Enhance visibility for the entrance to the Center.
- Mixed Use: Permit mixed use structures in the old cores, with certain conditions for safety and health. The upper floors above core businesses should be actively used for offices and apartments.
- New Recreational Area: Develop a comprehensive land use plan for the Chartiers Creek bottom land to be used as a combined recreation and conservation area. Consider the perimeter (outside the floodplain) for Planned Residential development (PRD).
- Commercial Land Use: A revitalization project for Station Street is recommended. An office classification is recommended for the area between White and Division Street

to the East of the railroad right of way and for the Steuben Street corridor.

C. Purpose of This Plan

The purpose of this plan is to carry out some of the goals of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, specifically with respect to the Crafton Core Area, and, to a lesser extent, the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center and the Chartiers Creek Greenway. This plan is not intended to be an update of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, but rather is a "strategic plan" which identifies alternative strategies available to accomplish the goals stated in the Comprehensive Plan.

This plan is not intended to be a specific blueprint for action in the three (3) areas of concern, but will offer a list of available options for consideration. In some instances, the options will be able to be carried out without major expense or further study. In some cases, additional study of an issue will be recommended before a final decision is reached. The ease of implementing certain strategies may indicate that they will be given priority. Some high priority projects may be delayed simply because of the expense of implementing them or the additional study that may be necessary to completely understand the technical or financial requirements for the recommendation.

D. Areas of Focus

There are three (3) primary areas of concern in this plan: the Crafton Core/Central Business District Area, the Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center and the Chartiers Creek Greenway. The general goals for each of these study areas are:

1. Crafton Core/CBD Area

- Identify public improvements which can enhance the Core/CBD Area.
- Identify potential solutions to the parking problem in the Core/CBD Area.
- Identify incentives the Borough can offer to the private sector to promote economic development in the Core/CBD Area.
- Identify organization and financing programs which are available to assist the Borough in improving the Core/CBD Area.
- Identify additional studies needed to support recommended improvements.
- Evaluate and plan for the impacts of the Busway on the Core/CBD Area.

2. Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center

- Identify those actions which the Borough can undertake to improve traffic circulation, visibility and the general environment of the Shopping Center.

- Identify those cooperative efforts which the Borough can undertake with the Shopping Center owners and businesses to improve and promote the Shopping Center.

3. Chartiers Creek Greenway

- Identify potential uses for the undeveloped area which are complementary and compatible.
- Evaluate the current zoning classification and recommend any changes necessary to accomplishing the goals for the future of this area.
- Identify recreation and conservation issues related to the future of the Chartiers Creek Area.

E. The Planning Process

The planning process utilized a survey and interview technique. The written survey form appears in Appendix 1. The survey was distributed to community leaders and community organizations. A summary of the survey results appears in Appendix 2. In addition to the written survey, a number of public meetings were held, including meetings with the following: Borough Council, Joint Planning Commission, Volunteer Fire Department, community organizations, the Crafton-Ingram Rotary Club and a general public meeting. The summary of comments received at these public meetings appears in Appendix 3. Finally, a series of personal interviews was conducted with key Borough officials, both current and former, and community leaders. A list of the interviewees and the summary of comments received in those interviews appears in Appendix 4.

A review of recent planning documents produced for the Borough was undertaken. A list of planning documents utilized in this plan appears in Appendix 5. Federal and State

funding and assistance programs which may be available to the Borough and relevant to the goals of this plan were reviewed.

Although the 1990 Census data is already quite old, another Census will not be available until after the Year 2000. The trends that can be documented over the past two decennial decades (1970-1990) can be helpful for planning, even though the trends since 1990 cannot be documented. The specific areas of interest from the decennial Censuses include changes in total population, trends in the age composition of the population, comparative population density and trends in the type of dwelling units which comprise the housing stock.

Another type of Census data is collected every five (5) years. These data address trends in retail trade and services industries in the Borough for the years 1982, 1987 and 1992. These trends are important in evaluating the strength of the local economy and identifying sectors where new businesses might be needed.

A summation of the relevant Census data appears on the pages immediately following.

F. Population Trends and Characteristics

The Tables which follow show recent trends in population growth and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission's forecast of the Year 2015 population for the municipalities in Crafton's immediate region, the 1990 population density characteristics and trends in age distribution of the Borough's population between 1970 and 1990.

CRAFTON REGION					
COMPARATIVE POPULATION GROWTH, 1970-1990					

	1970	1980	CHANGE 1970-1980	1990	CHANGE 1980-1990
Crafton	8,233	7,623	-610 (-7.4%)	7,188	-435 (-5.7%)
Carnegie	10,864	10,099	-765 (-7.0%)	9,278	-821 (-8.1%)
Green Tree	6,441	5,722	-719 (-11.2%)	4,905	-817 (-14.3%)
Ingram	4,902	4,346	-556 (-11.3%)	3,901	-445 (-10.2%)
Rossllyn Farms	608	521	-87 (-14.3%)	483	-38 (-7.3%)
Thornburg	617	526	-91 (-14.7%)	461	-65 (-12.4%)

SOURCE: 1970-1990 Decennial Censuses presented in Allegheny County Planning Department 1990 Census, Report #1

All of the communities in Crafton Borough's immediate region experienced losses of population between 1970 and 1980 and again between 1980 and 1990. The percentage of population loss in the region ranges from -7% to -14%.

The total population in Crafton's immediate region in 1990 is 20,216 persons. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission forecasts a total population in the Year 2015 for the communities in this region of 20,026 persons. This represents a loss of 190 persons or 0.1% over the 25 year period between 1990 and 2015.

The current and forecasted population of the Crafton region will remain fairly stable; however, the market area that it represents is not sufficient to support large scale commercial development based on Urban Land Institute (ULI) criteria for shopping centers. The Urban Land Institute designates a minimum population of 3,000 to 40,000 persons to support a neighborhood shopping center and 40,000 to 150,000 persons to support a community shopping center.

The Crafton immediate region is adequate to support the Crafton-Ingram shopping center which meets the ULI definition of a neighborhood shopping center with a grocery store as an anchor tenant and a trade area of 1.5 miles. The challenge for the Borough is to identify the market niche for the Crafton/CBD Core Area which complements the existing shopping center and provides services and specialized retail shopping opportunities for the residents of the immediate region.

The following Table summarizes the population projections by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission discussed on the previous page. These projections are utilized for transportation planning in the Pittsburgh region and are based on past trends, local input and computer modelling which assumes the following:

- Proposed regional transportation improvements will be constructed.

- The Pittsburgh region is recovering from the decline in growth and employment related to the decline of the steel industry and the upturn will continue.

- Older communities will grow more than expected due to economic development and land use policies.

- Rural areas will not suburbanize due to land use and environmental policies.

CRAFTON REGION POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2015			
Municipality	Year 2015 Population	Change Since 1990	
Crafton	7,338	+150	+2.1%
Carnegie	8,863	-415	-4.5%
Green Tree	4,973	+68	+1.4%
Ingram	3,731	-170	-4.4%

Roslyn Farms	646	+163	+33.5%
Thornburg	475	+14	+3.0%
SOURCE: Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission, Cycle V Forecast of Population, Households and Employment			

The Table below shows comparative population density expressed as the number of persons per square mile. Allegheny County, as a whole, has a fairly low population density of 1,830 persons per square mile. The most densely populated community in Allegheny County is Dormont Borough, which has a density of 13,960 persons per square mile.

Population density in Crafton is similar to that in the City of Pittsburgh. Population densities in Pittsburgh and Crafton are about 3.6 times the County's density, but are only half that of Dormont.

COMPARATIVE POPULATION DENSITY, 1990	
MUNICIPALITY	PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE
Allegheny County	1,830.3

City of Pittsburgh	6,652.5
Dormont	13,960.0
Crafton	6,534.5
Carnegie	5,457.6
Green Tree	2,335.7
Ingram	9,752.5
Rosslyn Farms	805.0
Thornburg	1,152.5
<p>SOURCE: 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Pennsylvania, 1990 CPH-1-40, Table 15</p>	

The Table on the following page shows trends in the age distribution of the Crafton Borough population.

The percentage of the Borough's population under age 18 has declined steadily between 1970 and 1990. This reflects trends in the region, as a whole, toward outmigration of younger people, declining birth rates and delay in marriage and family formation. The population under age 5 declined between 1970 and 1980; however, the youngest element of the population showed a partial recovery in the last decade. This reflects recent trends regionally and nationally towards increased birth rates.

The population aged 65 years or older has increased between 1970 and 1990. The actual number of persons 65 years and older has not increased substantially, but the percentage of the total population represented by the elderly has increased as a result of the losses in the younger age categories. The number and percentage of persons in the next youngest category (ages 60-64 years) has remained fairly stable over the last two decades (1970-1990), indicating that the elderly population will not grow in numbers substantially in the next 20 years. The percentage of elderly will probably not increase substantially in the next 20 years either, based on the growth in the family formation category aged 25-44 years and the recovery of the under age 5 population resulting from increased birth rates.

The category which showed the greatest numeric and percentage growth is the population aged 25-44 years. This is a positive sign, since this age group contributes to family formation and new home buying and is reaching its earning potential.

The increase in median age between 1970 and 1990 results primarily from the loss in population under the age of 18, rather than significant increases in the elderly population.

CRAFTON BOROUGH			
TRENDS IN AGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION, 1970 -1990			
	1970	1980	1990

Total Population	8,233 (100.0%)	7,623 (100.0%)	7,188 (100.0%)
Under 5 years old	669 (8.1%)	416 (5.5%)	437 (6.1%)
Under 18 years old	2,652 (32.2%)	1,721 (27.6%)	1,471 (20.5%)
65 years and older	1,006 (12.2%)	1,007 (13.2%)	1,144 (15.9%)
18-24 years old	1,024 (12.4%)	1,168 (15.3%)	684 (9.5%)
25-44 years old	1,826 (22.2%)	2,204 (28.9%)	2,632 (36.6%)
45-59 years old	1,337 (16.2%)	1,085 (14.2%)	933 (13.0%)
60-64 years old	388 (4.7%)	438 (5.7%)	324 (4.5%)

Median Age	28.7 yrs.	30.0 yrs.	34.7 yrs.
SOURCE: Allegheny County Planning Department, 1990 Census, Report #2			

The total number of dwelling units in the Borough of Crafton's housing stock has increased between 1970 and 1990, despite a loss of population during the same period. The increase in elderly and other single person households and the declining birth rate resulting in a decline in the average household size explains this trend. Smaller families and more single people are occupying a greater number of housing units.

The increase in the number of dwelling units results, primarily, from the construction of two elderly high-rise projects which contributed to the 80% increase in housing units in buildings containing ten (10) or more dwelling units between 1980 and 1990.

Another important trend is the reduction in the number of units in 2-4 unit buildings with a concurrent increase in the number of single family dwellings. Since there is little new construction of single family dwellings in the Borough, the trend indicates the conversion of dwellings containing 2-4 units back into the large single family dwellings from which they were created. This is a positive trend for the Borough's housing stock. This trend encourages home ownership, increases assessed values and reduces population density in the Borough.

CRAFTON BOROUGH
TRENDS IN HOUSING TYPES, 1970 - 1990

	1970	1980	1990	CHANGE 1980-1990
Total Housing Units	2,851	3,194	3,384	+190 (+5.9%)
Single Family Units	1,501	1,564	1,615	+ 51 (+3.3%)
2-4 units	998	1,138	1,043	-95 (-8.3%)
5-9 units	*352	206	187	-19 (-9.2%)
10+ units	N.A.	286	514	+228 (+79.7%)

* In 1970, there was no category for 10+ units; units in buildings with 10 or more dwelling units were included in the category of 5 or more units.

SOURCE: Allegheny County Planning Department, 1990 Census Report #2

G. Economic Base

The trends in the retail trade and service industries in the Borough between 1982 and 1992 are shown on the Tables on the following pages.

CRAFTON BOROUGH RETAIL TRADE, 1982 - 1992			
	1982	1987	1992
Number of Establishments	59	54	50
Total Sales	\$30.2 M	\$43.8 M	\$60.3 M
Annual Payroll	\$ 3.2 M	\$ 5.2 M	\$ 6.1 M
Paid Employees	495	766	681
<p>SOURCE: 1992, 1987 and 1982 Censuses of Retail Trade, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census</p>			

The total number of retail establishments has declined from 59 in 1982 to 50 in 1992. Total sales have increased, reflecting inflation and the survival of larger establishments. Employment increased, overall, between 1982 and 1992 with a slight decline between 1987 and 1992. The loss of 85 employees between 1987 and 1992 indicates the loss of establishments with significant employment. Payroll has increased in spite of the loss of establishments, reflecting inflation.

BOROUGH OF CRAFTON			
TRENDS IN TYPE OF RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS, 1982 - 1992			
	1982	1987	1992
Building supplies, garden, hardware	1	1	2
General merchandise	2	2	1
Food stores	11	7	8
Auto dealers	2	1	1
Gas stations	1	3	2

Apparel and accessories	7	6	4
Furniture and home furnishings	5	2	3
Eating and drinking places	11	19	18
Drugstores	2	2	2
Miscellaneous retail	7	11	9
<p>SOURCE: 1982, 1987 and 1992 Censuses of Retail Trade</p> <p>U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census</p>			

Eating and drinking places and food stores represent a significant portion of the retail base in the Borough. There is balance among the other types of establishments in the Borough. Encouraging additional "miscellaneous retail" seems appropriate, since the major categories of retail services are provided in the Borough's current economic base.

Since service establishments without payroll are not included in the 1982 data, it is unclear whether the loss between 1987 and 1992 represents an overall trend of stability or a continued trend towards decline. Receipts and payroll showed significant increases due to both inflation and the loss of marginal, rather than the larger, establishments with payroll. Employment increase significantly between 1987 and 1992, in spite of the loss in the total number of establishments.

CRAFTON BOROUGH SERVICES INDUSTRIES, 1982 - 1992

	1982	1987	1992
Number of Establishments	40*	46	42
Total Receipts	\$18.7 M	\$27.3 M	\$55.1 M
Annual Payroll	\$ 6.5 M	\$ 7.7 M	\$15.5 M
Paid Employees	586	598	967

* In 1982, data is presented only for establishments with payroll.

Establishments without payroll are not included in this total.

SOURCE: 1992, 1987 and 1982 Censuses of Services Industries

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

The trends in the types of service establishments in the Borough between 1982 and 1992 shown on the Table on the following page do not explain the large increase in receipts and employment in the face of loss of total number of establishments. The gains in specific types of establishments does not indicate an obvious addition of a major employer with substantial receipts. The only category which gained 3 establishments between 1987 and 1992 is "business services." This category includes advertising agencies, copy services, photo finishing, graphic design, building cleaning and maintenance, secretarial services, equipment maintenance and leasing, employment agencies, computer services and security agencies. These businesses are not usually considered to be major employers with high revenues.

BOROUGH OF CRAFTON			
TRENDS IN TYPE OF SERVICE INDUSTRIES, 1982 - 1992			
	1982	1987	1992
Hotel/motel	-	-	-
Auto repair/services	5	5	4
Amusement & recreation	2	5	5
Health services, except hospitals	8	9	8

Legal services	1	-	-
Personal services	NA	12	8
Business services	NA	6	9
Social services	NA	-	-
Engineering/ accounting	NA	9	8
Miscellaneous repair	NA	-	-
<p>SOURCE: 1982, 1987 and 1992 Censuses of Services Industries</p> <p>U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census</p>			

H. Financial Capability

The total assessed value in the Borough has remained fairly constant over the past five (5) years:

The top five (5) real estate taxpayers account for less than 10% of the total assessed value in the Borough:

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Because of the fully developed nature of the Borough, it is not anticipated that any major increase in assessed value will result from a large development project involving new construction. It is possible that rehabilitation of existing buildings in the commercial core could contribute to a modest increase in total assessed value. Improvements in the existing housing stock can be expected to result in only modest gains in the future, as well.

The current Borough tax rate is 29 mills (26 mills for general government and 3 mills for debt service). The rate has varied between 27 and 30 mills over the last five (5) years. The maximum allowable rate for a Borough is 30 mills. The ability to raise additional revenue by increasing the tax rate is, therefore, limited. An increase of one (1) mill results in only \$31,221 of additional revenue annually.

The Borough currently has outstanding debt of \$675,000 remaining on an original \$850,000 loan borrowed in 1993 for capital improvements.

Because of the limited potential for increasing assessed value in the Borough and the limitations on millage and borrowing capacity, it is essential that available grant programs and public-private partnerships be pursued to finance future improvements in the Borough.

I. Borough Zoning Ordinance

The Borough, in conjunction with the Boroughs of Thornburg and Rosslyn Farms, has adopted a Joint Zoning Ordinance. Articles IX through XII from the Joint Zoning Ordinance appear in Appendix 6. These Articles contain the provisions for the C-1, C-2, C-3 and C-4 Zoning Districts, the commercial districts which currently exist in the Borough.

1. C-1 District

The C-1 District is entitled "Neighborhood Shopping District" and allows multifamily dwellings, personal services, retail stores of 5,000 square feet or less, offices, financial institutions as permitted uses. Philanthropic institutions, public uses, public utilities, gas stations, non-profit recreation, day care centers, retail stores exceeding 10,000 square feet limited commercial uses in multifamily structures and limited residential uses in multistory commercial structures are authorized as conditional uses. Temporary uses and community garages are authorized as uses by special exception.

The height limitation in the C-1 District is 45 feet. A 5 foot front yard is required. No side or rear yard is required, except where a side or rear yard adjoins a street or a residential or conservancy district. A side yard is also required where the yard adjoins C-4 property.

2. C-2 District

The C-2 District is entitled "Community Business District" and allows offices, retail stores, beverage distributors, financial institutions, indoor amusements, day care centers, funeral homes and personal services as permitted uses. Philanthropic and religious uses, public uses, public utilities, restaurants and catering, gas stations, outdoor auto sales, drive-in banks and apartments in a commercial building are authorized as conditional uses. Temporary uses and community garages are authorized as uses by special exception.

The maximum height allowed in the C-2 District is 45 feet. No front yard is required. No side or rear yard is required, except where a side or rear yard adjoins a street or a residential or conservancy district. A side yard is also required where the yard adjoins C-4 property.

The purpose statement for the C-2 District indicates that it is intended to protect areas with "commercial vitality" and that low density residential or industrial uses which would interfere with that vitality are not allowed.

3. C-3 District

The C-3 District is entitled "Special District" and allows the same permitted uses as the C-2 District, except that day care centers are not permitted and single family dwellings, multifamily dwellings and high-rises are permitted. The authorized conditional uses in the C-3 District are the same as the C-2 District, except that the following uses are not authorized: philanthropic and religious institutions, outdoor auto sales. In addition, hospitals, hotels, non-profit recreation uses and farmer's markets are authorized as conditional uses in the C-3 District. The uses by special exception are the same in C-2 and C-3.

Height limitations in the C-3 District are the same as the C-2 District (45 feet), except that a high-rise may be a maximum of 100 feet. No front yard is required. No side or rear yard is required, except where the side or rear yard adjoins a residential or conservancy district. A side yard is also required where the yard adjoins C-4 property. The yard requirements in C-2 and C-3 are the same.

The purpose statement for the C-3 District indicates that the district is applied to older areas which may be eligible for renewal because of mixed uses and changing economic conditions. The district intends a "harmonious blend" of certain commercial activities with medium and high density residential uses.

4. C-4 District

The C-4 District is entitled "Professional/Commercial Service District" and allows offices, broadcasting stations, service businesses, day care centers and clinics as permitted uses. Conditional uses include philanthropic or religious institutions, public uses, public utilities, hospitals and hotels. The uses by special exception are the same as those authorized in C-2 and C-3 Districts (temporary uses and community garages).

This District requires a minimum site of one acre. Unlike the C-2 and C-3 Districts, a front yard is required in all cases. Side and rear yards are required only when the yard adjoins a street or a different zoning district.

The purpose statement for the C-4 District indicates that it is intended for small sites with less intensive uses in well-designed, landscaped settings. General commercial uses, industrial uses and any uses with high rates of traffic generation are discouraged in this District.

5. Zoning District Map

Within the Borough of Crafton, the following areas are zoned C-1, C-2, C-3 and C-4:

- C-1 Neighborhood Shopping District

The Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center is zoned C-1. This classification is in keeping with the existing use of the property.

- C-2 Community Business District

The property at the intersection of Crafton Boulevard with Emerson Street and Harrison Avenue is zoned C-2.

- C-3 Special District

The Core Area/CBD of the Borough bounded by Division Street, Station Street/Busway, Noble Avenue, Franklin and Prince Alleys is zoned C-3. The C-3 classification is consistent with the mixed commercial and highrise residential uses in the area and with the intent to redevelop properties in this area for a "harmonious blend" of compatible uses.

- C-4 Professional/Commercial Service District

The area bounded by the Busway, Rebecca/Emily, Broadhead Road/West Crafton Avenue, and Hewitt Street is zoned C-4. This classification is consistent with the

mix of uses in the area and the larger sites which exist. Proximity to the busway encourages office use.

II. Findings/Recommendations

A. Core Area/CBD

1. Findings

a. General Description of Area.

The Crafton Core Area or Central Business District (CBD) generally refers to as the immediate area surrounding the main Borough building. For the purposes of this study, the CBD has been loosely defined as the area bounded by Division Street to the north, Noble Avenue to the east, Bradford Avenue to the south, and Crennel and West Crafton Avenues to the west.

The Joint Zoning Ordinance, as amended in 1987, establishes both C-3 and C-4 zoning districts in the CBD. C-3 is a redevelopment district, permitting select commercial uses and medium to high density residential uses. C-4 is a professional/commercial service district, permitting higher density commercial development without residential uses. The current CBD is comprised of an inconsistent mix of commercial and residential uses. It is a very mature area that has experienced little to no redevelopment efforts in the recent past. The existing infrastructure and buildings in the CBD show their age in the form of deterioration.

The center of the CBD is predominantly publicly owned. The main, historic Borough Building, the newly renovated Community Center, and the recently purchased Rea building are owned by the Borough of Crafton. Most of the remainder of this core block is owned by the Crafton Volunteer Fire Department and EMS. The rest of the CBD is mostly privately owned, and, for discussion purposes, may be divided into four smaller areas.

- The Noble Avenue corridor in the CBD is a highly trafficked area. The O'Connell building is the most dominant structure in this area. It is a three story building with first floor storefronts on Noble Avenue and Bradford Avenue. The facade of the building is in need of revitalization. More than half of this prominent commercial building appears to be presently vacant. The vacancies are primarily in the upper floors. Elsewhere on Noble Avenue are some smaller commercial storefronts, and the vacant Trading Post building, currently for sale.

- The East Crafton Avenue corridor is primarily comprised of commercial businesses. The obvious exception to this is the Crafton Plaza Apartment building, one of two senior citizen apartments in Crafton.

- The Station Street/Bradford Avenue corridor in the CBD is marred by an obvious lack of any architecturally consistent buildings. It fronts the Port Authority Busway, now under construction.

- The Crennel Avenue/West Crafton Avenue corridor is the main transportation link across the Busway (via an underpass). The eastern half of this corridor is distinguished by the traffic circle in front of the main Borough Building. The western half of the corridor contains several commercial businesses. Its prominent features are St. Philip Catholic Church, the Knights of Columbus building and the American Legion building. The Busway crosses over Crennel Avenue, separating the western and eastern halves of the CBD.

b. Busway

The existence of the Port Authority's Airport Busway in Crafton has incited mixed opinions among the community.

On the negative side, there are several issues surrounding the busway's presence in Crafton:

- Noise and Air Pollution

There is a general assumption that the Busway will create undue noise and air pollution once it is operational.

- Parking Burdens

Unless proactive measures are instituted before its opening, the Busway will most likely contribute to the parking burdens Crafton now experiences. Parking has become a problem which hinders redevelopment in Crafton. Once operational, the Busway may attract "hide-n-rides", commuters from other areas who leave their cars in Crafton to catch a bus into town. The streets around each of the new bus stations in Crafton, at Morange Road and Station Street, will be susceptible to this potential influx of "hide-n-ride" parking.

- Public Safety

There is some concern that the Busway will impose new public safety challenges in the community. This opinion is based upon the simple fact the Busway will bring outside riders into and/or through the Borough. Presumably, a small portion of this populous may be of criminal nature.

- Physical Appearance

Some residents believe the Busway will physically divide the community. There is a concern that the Busway will leave Crafton with an aesthetically unpleasing facility through the heart of the CBD. Many are distraught over the loss of the "green space" that previously existed with the abandoned railroad.

On the positive side, the presence of the busway presents new opportunities for the Borough:

- Marketing

The Busway can be a useful tool to market the community to potential residents and businesses. The Port Authority anticipates 50,000 people will use the Busway on a daily basis. This will inevitably establish a

greater public exposure to Crafton than the community has had in recent years.

- Infrastructure Improvements

The Busway construction has resulted in some infrastructure improvements in the Borough. Specifically, Station Street has been reconstructed with a new bridge over Crennel Avenue. The reconstruction of walls and railings, as part of the Busway construction, has also improved the immediate area around Station Street and Crennel Avenue. Supporters of the Busway believe the previously unmaintained, abandoned railroad was both an eyesore and a public safety liability.

With the construction of the Busway now plainly visible in Crafton, the community must now focus on ways to heighten the positive affects of the Busway, and mitigate the negative.

c. Community Center

The Borough recently purchased and renovated a vacant building adjacent to the Borough Building for use as a Community Center. The Center is comprised of a large banquet type room with kitchen facilities, and several meeting rooms. The lower floor of the Center now houses the Crafton Community Library. The impetus behind the construction of the Community Center was the desire to unify the social environment of the Borough. The Center is intended to strengthen the sense of community within Crafton by offering a central location for events and functions.

The operation of the Community Center, however, has not been completely planned out. The following are the major issues surrounding the new facility:

- Use and Availability of the Center

There has been no determination as to who will control the scheduling of events and/or functions in the Community Center. Nor has there been any conclusion as to how these events should be publicized. There have been some beliefs expressed that certain public groups should be given priority use of the space. There are differing thoughts regarding whether the Center will be for public affairs only, or be available for private rental. Some residents believe the events at the Community Center should be closely tied to the recreational activities in the Borough, particularly those for the teenage population. No policy has been established as to whether the Borough should institute a rental cost for use of the facility, or as to what would be the appropriate fee to charge. These issues regarding the operation of the Community Center are unresolved.

- Parking Needs

Clearly, the successful operation of the Community Center will hinge on there being ample parking in the near vicinity. The adjacent gravel lot is the obvious location for such parking. However, Crafton must evaluate the capacity of this lot in association with the types of functions slated for the Center. In the near term, the Borough must assess the resources needed to pave this lot and stripe it for parking. In the longer term, Crafton must seek out any necessary additional parking spaces which

will be needed to successfully operate the Center.

- Compatibility with the Area

Crafton needs to reevaluate the entire CBD area, and, more specifically, the area bounded by Station Street, Crennel Avenue, Stotz Avenue, and Bradford Avenue, as it relates to the types of functions hosted in the Community Center. This is the municipal heart of the CBD, and as such, will be the area most representative of the Crafton community as a whole. This significance must be maintained when determining the types of functions which will be allowed in the Community Center.

- Physical Appearance

The exterior appearance of the Community Center and surrounding area is one which the general public has identified as an issue to be addressed. Any improvements in this regard must be coordinated with the established master plan for streetscaping and/or landscaping in the immediate area.

2. Recommendations

a. Private Improvements

- Creation of LERTA District

Crafton's CBD has suffered decline over the past decades due to competition from suburban malls and the amenities that they offer. One way to revitalize an area is to use the process of tax abatement. The Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Act of 1977 ("LERTA") allows local taxing bodies to exempt from real estate taxation, in whole or in part, the assessed valuation of improvements to certain properties for a period of up to 10 years. Many communities in Allegheny County, ranging from depressed steel valley towns to affluent suburbs, have adopted LERTA programs to encourage economic development. It is important to note that the tax abatement only applies to the increase in assessed valuation due to improvements; and in no event does LERTA result in a reduction of taxes beyond those existing at the present time.

The steps in creating a LERTA district are as follows:

(a) The Borough holds a public meeting to gather input from the local taxing bodies, the planning commission and other public agencies or interested individuals.

(b) After public meeting, the Borough Council designates the LERTA district, taking

into account the criteria set forth under the Urban Redevelopment Law.

(c) After designation of the district, all three taxing authorities (Borough, School District and County) may adopt an ordinance or resolution which enacts a tax exemption schedule uniformly applicable to all properties in the district. Each taxing body can adopt a different level of exemption.

(d) Each property owner who wishes to take advantage of this tax abatement process must notify each taxing body when applying for a building permit.

(e) The County Board of Property Tax Assessments and Appeals will calculate the amount of the assessment eligible for the tax exemption in accordance with each of the taxing bodies established exemption schedule.

This process would require the Borough to contact Allegheny County and the Carlynton School District and provide them with information on the process and the boundaries of the district. Given their respective millages, obviously it is crucial that the School District participate in the program for a LERTA tax abatement program to

properly work. The County will work with the School District and the Borough to create a real estate tax incentive program that is fair and equitable to both the taxing body and property owners.

It is important to remember to following features of the program:

(a) The abatement must be for a designated, eligible area as determined by the Borough Council after appropriate public input.

(b) The tax abatement is a temporary measure to help revitalize the area.

(c) The tax abatement is limited to the increased or additional assessment due to the improvements or new construction.

(d) No current revenues would be lost.

(e) The taxing body has the authority to establish the tax abatement schedule.

(f) Contacts:

Mark Patrick Carlynton
School District

Allegheny County Dept. Dr. James Johnston, Superintendent

of Economic Development (412) 429-2500 ext. 101

400 Fort Pitt Commons Mr. Kirby Christy, Business Manager

445 Fort Pitt Boulevard (412) 429-2500

Pittsburgh, PA 15219 Maiello, Andrews & Price, Solicitor

(412) 350-1073 (412) 242-4400

- Property Maintenance

The Borough should consider ways to improve private property maintenance in both residential and commercial areas. A primary tool is more rigorous code enforcement.

This could be accomplished by hiring or contracting for a full time building inspector that can cite owners of buildings that are not up to code.

If the Borough is willing to share code enforcement costs with another community, it may be eligible for a 50% matching grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. DCED administers a program entitled "shared municipal services." Eligible applicants are two or more municipalities or a council of governments.

For further information, contact:

Pennsylvania Department of
Community and Economic Development
Fred Reddrig (717) 783-4657

- Facade Improvement Program

Limited grant monies are available to assist private property owners in defraying the cost of improvements to their building facades. This program is funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and administered by the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. Low interest loans or grants are available in a business district which creates a non-profit economic development corporation to manage the program. Such a program is recommended only if property owners agree to support it and participate in it. The Borough must designate the area eligible for the program at the time of application for redevelop monies.

b. Public Streetscape Improvements

Public improvements in Crafton's CBD may include streetscaping, consisting of new sidewalks, benches, and lighting, as well as new curbs, sewers, and street pavement. Given the limited resources available for public capital improvements, Crafton should consider phasing such work. In doing so, a master plan for the overall CBD area should be developed first. The implementation measures needed to complete the master plan could be addressed in construction phases as funding becomes available. These construction phases should be clearly defined as part of the development of the master plan.

The construction phases for public improvements in the CBD should be prioritized to maximize the effectiveness of public funding on private redevelopment efforts. The Borough should consider targeting the areas surrounding existing buildings in the CBD as part of the first phase of planned public improvements.

In evaluating possible public improvements, priority should be given to the following:

(1) Circle Landscaping Plan

The Shade Tree Commission previously was responsible for an improvement plan for the Borough Building and the Circle. It would be in the interest of the Borough to implement the remainder of the plan, which includes the cleaning of the Borough Building facade and the foundation planting of trees around the perimeter of the building. Currently, forty percent of the planting is complete.

(2) Noble Avenue and Bradford Avenue Corridor

The first phase of streetscaping may be best responded to by private entities if the public improvements are aimed at the Noble Avenue and Bradford Avenue corridor. Streetscaping along Noble Avenue, and up Bradford Avenue to the location of the new community center should have a positive effect on several businesses already in existence on Noble Avenue. The O'Connell building should be included in this focus because of its apparent vacancies and traditional storefronts which indicate a

significant potential for business growth. In addition, the building on the corner of Bradford and Stotz and the new Borough Community Center would gain immediate benefit from public improvements in this possible first phase. The Borough's newly acquired Rea building should be evaluated as a future expansion for the Library and/or Community Center. If a review of the Rea building determines its renovation would not be economical, Crafton should demolish the structure. The lot can then be used as either a parking area, or an open air park which would tie-in to the streetscape design along Bradford Avenue.

(3) Station Street Corridor

The second phase of public improvements, including streetscaping, might be best aimed at the Station Street corridor. This is an area clearly visible to Busway patrons riding through Crafton; thus, improvements will go a long way to furthering a new, revitalized image for the CBD. What this corridor does not yet have is good quality storefronts. The purpose of the public improvements along Station Street, coupled with the results of the first phase of public improvements along Noble Avenue, would be to act as a catalyst for new storefront construction. Plans along the Station Street corridor must be coordinated with the Crafton Volunteer Fire Department and EMS facility needs.

(4) Sewer System Evaluation

Planning improvements to the sewer system in the CBD first requires a good knowledge of the existing sewer types, locations, and conditions. This information is not available today without expending some resources to perform exploratory work. Without this information, it cannot be determined whether the existing sewer capacities in the CBD will sustain the level of desired development. There have been reports of sewer backups in the CBD after heavy rainfalls. The Borough Engineer should be consulted as to how best to conduct a thorough investigation of existing sewers in the CBD, and how best to document the findings. The possibility of sharing any equipment (e.g. die testing equipment) with other municipalities should be investigated. The Council of Governments may be one potential source for this.

Possible resources available to the Borough in connection with pursuit of a long-range streetscape design and implementation include the following:

(1) Utilize Volunteer Resources

Streetscaping designs must be developed with due consideration of the amount of capital funding available, the desired visual image for the CBD, and the necessary maintenance requirements of the improvements. One approach to obtaining some conceptual design ideas is to solicit designs from senior architectural classes at Carnegie Mellon University and/or the University of Pittsburgh. Provided some specific design parameters are identified up front, this may be an economical way of acquiring some realistic conceptual ideas. Input from both the Crafton Historical

Society and the Shade Tree Commission for this exercise would be invaluable.

(2) Seek Grants/Loans

Crafton's annual operating budget will not accommodate the funding needed for substantial capital improvements in the CBD. The Borough must actively pursue assistance in the form of grants and/or loans to fund such projects. Some possible sources in this regard are listed below:

(a) Community Development Block Grants

This program is administered by the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development and provides for grants to local communities for streetscape improvements. Grants usually are for a large percentage of the estimated cost of a project. Once a community is approved for funding, it typically will receive funding for multiple phases of a streetscape development project over a several year period. Over the past two decades, scores of Allegheny County communities have received these grants. Some of those in the Crafton area include Carnegie, Mt. Lebanon and

Sewickley. Currently, the County is administering grants for projects in Homestead, Versailles and Munhall. Unfortunately, funding for this program has dropped dramatically from over \$3,000,000 available two years ago to slightly over \$500,000 now available for all of Allegheny County. It is unlikely that any new grants will be made until the current projects are completed in several years.

For further information, contact:

Allegheny County Department of
Economic Development
Judith Hanley (412) 350-1091

(b) Community Revitalization Program

This program is geared toward government agencies or non-profit development corporations seeking to enhance the quality of life and/or business affinity within their communities. Assistance is provided through grants awarded based upon a competitive evaluation of all the submitted applications. The

eligible uses of the grants are widespread. Eligible uses include, but are not limited to: land and building acquisition, infrastructure rehabilitation, building restoration, community facility revitalization, public safety or crime prevention projects and recreation improvements.

(c) Communities of Opportunity Program

There are two major categories of funding assistance under this program - Community Development and Housing Assistance. With both of these, the funding is in the form of grants. The grants are awarded based upon a competitive review of all submitted applications.

The Community Development category of funding as part of the Communities of Opportunity Program is similar in purpose to the Community Revitalization Program. With a similar widespread eligible use list, the goal of this funding is to improve upon the quality of life and business attractiveness within a community. Possible

activities in this regard include property acquisition and infrastructure reconstruction.

The Housing Assistance category of funding as part of the Communities of Opportunity Program is specifically targeted at the creation and/or preservation of quality affordable housing units. Recognized activities in this effort include property acquisition for the construction of new housing, site improvements to support new residential development and infrastructure betterment to support the same.

For further information on both the Community Revitalization and Communities of Opportunity programs, contact:

Pennsylvania Department of Community

and Economic Development:

Jill Wiest (717) 720-7353

(3) Create a Business Improvement District

Streetscape and similar improvements can be funded directly by the Borough by grants and loans or through the creation of a Business Improvement District.

Under the Business Improvement District Act and provisions of the Municipality Authorities Act, a business improvement district can be created. Assessments are made against all properties in the district in order to fund a broad array of public improvements, including but not limited to sidewalks, retaining walls, street paving, street lighting, parking lots, parking garages, trees and shrubbery, pedestrian walks, sewers, water lines, rest areas and the acquisition and remodeling or demolition of blighted buildings. Business improvement districts may be established by the Borough, or via a separate Borough-created authority. In the latter instance, assessments may cover not only the costs of the initial improvements, but also maintenance and other service costs. Properties eligible for business improvement designation must be zoned commercial or used for commercial purposes. A Borough-created district can be vetoed by the owners of 50% or more of the property valuation in the district. An authority-created district can be vetoed by 33%. Financing is typically accomplished through assessment of properties within the district, based on either a benefit, front-foot or ratio of assessed value to front-footage calculation.

c. Parking

The current lack of suitable parking areas in the CBD hinders any substantial commercial growth in the area. In order to attract businesses to the CBD, the Borough must be able to demonstrate the existence of sufficient parking in the area.

- Immediate Parking Improvements

Commercial growth in the CBD should be pursued in two phases. The first phase should take advantage of the existing buildings that have a good potential for rehabilitation. The most obvious of these are the O'Connell building and the building on the corner of Bradford and Stotz Avenues. Both of these buildings are under-utilized, yet both buildings have facades reminiscent of Crafton's past. The second phase for commercial growth would involve the construction of a new building(s) along Station Street.

With this approach toward commercial growth in the CBD area in mind, the Borough should phase acquisitions for parking accordingly. The location of the Trading Post, currently advertised for sale, could accommodate parking for the O'Connell Building and the adjacent businesses on Noble Avenue. The residential properties surrounding the O'Connell Building and the building on the corner of Bradford and Stotz Avenues should be investigated as potential parking areas also. In the near term, to satisfy parking requirements for the Community Center while improving the general appearance of the area, Crafton should pursue paving the existing gravel lot with bituminous concrete, and line striping for parking. As the construction of commercial storefronts along Station Street is promoted, the possibility of

a parking deck above and/or behind these buildings should be investigated.

- Long-Range Improvements - Financing Mechanisms

Without a determination as to future public and private development plans for the area, and without a more detailed traffic and parking study, it is not possible in this study to identify larger scale and longer range parking solutions. However, it is fairly certain that any such parking infrastructure improvements will require resources beyond the Borough's current fiscal wherewithal. This financial reality, however, should not dissuade the Borough from exploring more substantial parking and transportation-related capital improvements, as numerous mechanisms exist under Pennsylvania law for funding outside the regular annual Borough budget. These mechanisms include:

- (a) Parking Authority

Parking authorities can operate off-street parking facilities, either lots or structures. Portions of the facilities may be leased for commercial/retail use. Air space above or ground space below may be sold or leased to private interests. Parking authorities may also administer on-street parking regulations for municipalities. Large scale

capital improvements undertaken by parking authorities are typically funded by bond issues, secured by a pledge of revenues from Authority operations. A parking authority, like the Borough itself, possesses the power of eminent domain.

There are several reasons to create an authority. The major reason is financial. When a community has reached its debt limit and there is a need for improvements within the Borough, an authority can borrow the required funds to accomplish the improvements. In addition, many times grants are based on the ability to meet a match, and a parking authority can, based on funds from its operations, make that match, while at the same time avoiding the necessity of a Borough tax increase. Other reasons for creating an authority are administrative, as an authority usually only performs one function and therefore they can be more efficiently managed.

A parking authority is a separate legal entity initially created by the Borough Council. Members of the Authority governing body, or

Board, are appointed by
Borough Council.

A parking authority is created via the Borough Council's adoption of an Ordinance or resolution. After appropriate public notice, Articles of Incorporation are filed with the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Initially, the life of a parking authority is 50 years, which may be extended at a later date by appropriate action of the Authority and the Borough Council.

(b) Transportation
Partnership District

The Transportation Partnership Act of 1985 was adopted to enable local governments to designate a specific area for the purpose of planning, financing, acquiring, developing, constructing and operating transportation facilities or services. The TPA provides for the creation of a designated Transportation District by the Borough. Assessments are then made against all properties, both existing and new development within the designated district. The

assessments can be administered either by the Borough or a separate municipal authority. While assessments can be used to cover the costs of initial capital improvements, the TPA cannot be used to fund maintenance or repair costs.

Prior to creating a district, the Borough or Borough-created authority must engage in a comprehensive transportation benefit study and prepare a multi-year transportation plan and finance plan, which in turn must be reviewed and approved by local, county and regional planning agencies. Owners of 50% or more of the property valuation in the district can veto the creation of the district. The TPA provides for several financing methods. The most frequently used is a formula based on actual or projected "trip" usage.

Several communities in the Commonwealth have combined the tax abatement provisions of LERTA and the assessment provisions of the TPA to create, in effect, a "tax diversion" to fund transportation improvements. In this situation, properties within a designated area are subject to additional

assessments to fund the transportation district. At the same time, those properties receive a tax abatement on the improvements.

(c) Tax Increment Financing

Another possible funding mechanism for parking areas in the CBD is the use of the Tax Increment Financing Act. This mechanism funds infrastructure improvements in an area by leveraging the added local property and other tax revenues generated by the economic growth in that area. The parking garage to be constructed in conjunction with the new downtown Pittsburgh Lazarus department store is an example of a project being funded with tax increment financing.

The TIF legislation permits many types of public and private improvements to be funded by the projected "incremental" tax revenues to be generated by a project. The tax increment can include not only projected increases in real estate taxes, but also taxes imposed under the Local Tax Enabling Act (Act 511). A TIF project is initiated by an industrial and

commercial development authority or redevelopment authority which presents a project plan to the various local taxing bodies, including the Borough, after which a district is designated by the Borough. Each local taxing body then decides whether to opt into the district. As with LERTA tax abatement financing, the participation of the School District in a TIF program is obviously crucial to its success.

d. Busway

- Coordination

The Port Authority Busway is an integral part of the CBD due to its location. Recognizing this, Crafton should closely monitor the Busway's development. Quarterly meetings with the Port Authority may be beneficial. If created, the manager of a Crafton non-profit economic development corporation could also meet with the Port Authority on a regular basis.

- Parking Facilities

Given the proximity of the Busway to the CBD area, the Borough needs to protect the commercial business parking needs from the potential commuter parking. Crafton should

be careful to distinguish between these two very different parking needs.

If Crafton does not institute some proactive parking measures, the Busway will likely exacerbate the existing parking problems in the CBD. Unless prevented from doing so, commuters may saturate the Crafton streets surrounding the two busway stations in the Borough with parked cars.

There have been two general approaches taken by communities in similar situations when the Port Authority built the LRT line to the South Hills. Mt. Lebanon imposed time restrictions on street parking surrounding the LRT station in its community. Dormont issued resident parking permits on the streets near the LRT stations in that community.

(a) **Residential Permit Parking.** On the residential streets near the Crafton Busway stations, the Borough should consider issuing and enforcing parking permits.

(b) **Metered Parking.** In the commercial areas, Crafton should impose duration limits on parking. This can be done either with signage or by the use of parking meters.

Implementation of permit and meter parking undoubtedly will demand the resources and manpower of the Crafton police. Since these are functions which could, in large part, be assumed by a parking authority, this issue should be considered by the Borough Council in connection with any consideration of the creation of a parking authority.

(c) **Park and Ride Lot.** In order to further prevent busway commuter parking from infiltrating the limited parking for businesses in the CBD, Crafton may want to consider working with the Port Authority to provide some separate commuter parking area. One immediate option would be to establish an agreement with the Knights of Columbus organization to allow for commuter parking during the day in their parking lot. This possibility is based upon the premise that the KOC functions are primarily in the evening hours. The park-and-ride use would presumably be in exchange for some maintenance responsibilities. Crafton representatives should consider approaching representative from the KOC with this idea. If plausible, Crafton can act as a facilitator to establish the final agreement between the

KOC and the Port Authority. Again, the Borough has a vested interest here and, as such, should maintain a proactive role.

(d) **Shuttle Service.** To maximize the ability for Crafton's residents to use the busway while mitigating parking needs in the CBD, the use of local feeder lines or shuttles to the busway stations should be explored. These operational possibilities can be discussed now with the Port Authority, before the Busway is opened. An alternate to a Port Authority feeder line would be a privately operated shuttle, subsidized through grant dollars. [*e.g. Beechview Shuttle*]

- Public Safety

There has been a concern among some community leaders about public safety issues as a result of the Busway. There should be formal discussions with the Port Authority in this regard before the Busway is operational. This may be best accomplished once the construction of the Busway nears completion. A meeting with Crafton Police, Fire and EMS leaders and Port Authority Police representatives should be held to discuss any public safety issues surrounding the busway.

- Physical Appearance

Crafton should maintain a proactive involvement in the beautification of the areas around the Busway station in the CBD. A planting scheme on public property can be devised with assistance from the Shade Tree Commission. This should be pursued in conjunction with any streetscaping plans for Station Street. Some opportunity may exist to establish and maintain some plantings on Port Authority property adjacent to this area as well. The Borough should propose a marketing program whereby local businesses can plant and maintain flower beds adjacent to the Busway, near the Crafton station areas, in exchange for a recognition plaque or sign.

The Borough should aggressively explore participation in the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's flower bed beautification program. For eligible sites, the Conservancy provides 100% of the funding to prepare the site for planting and provide the plantings. A large group of volunteers typically perform the actual planting and at least one person must be designated as responsible to maintain the site. The two principal site requirements are that the project be in an area where there is a significant amount of traffic, and that the property be near a water source.

This would appear to be an ideal project for pursuit by the Borough's Tree Commission and/or the Crafton Garden Club, with assistance and direction from the Borough. If the Borough would like to be considered

as a site in 1998, the Conservancy should be contacted by no later than October 1997.

That contact should be directed to:

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Jeff Gerson 288-2777

e. Zoning Changes

The C-3 zoning district classification which applies to the Crafton CBD Area authorizes the types of retail and service uses which were identified in the Citizen Attitude Survey as desirable uses in the revitalized business district. The current C-3 regulations require a side or rear yard only if the property adjoins a residential or conservancy district. No front yard is required. While these regulations reflect existing conditions in the district, they discourage the provision of on-site parking accessory to businesses and encourage excess development density. The Borough may want to consider establishing yard requirements for new construction on vacant property that is redeveloped.

The Crafton-Ingram Shopping Center is zoned C-1. The list of authorized uses on the District is generally compatible with the existing uses in the Shopping Center and the uses identified in the Citizen Attitude Survey as desirable additions to the Shopping Center. Retail stores in excess of 10,000 square feet of gross floor area are authorized as conditional uses. The Borough may want to consider amending the conditional use criteria for larger retail stores to include landscaping requirements and design requirements for parking areas with large numbers of spaces. The permitted uses do not specifically list a restaurant. This use is identified as desirable at the Shopping Center. The Borough should consider adding restaurants as a permitted use in the C-1 District.

Once a cooperative effort is initiated between the business community and Borough officials, other aspects of the zoning regulations governing the Shopping Center and the business district may be identified.

f. Organizational

- Non-Profit Economic Development Corporation

Many of the available grant programs require Crafton to have in place a non-profit development corporation that is not under the direct authority of the Borough government. The development corporation should be an entity comprised of residents and local business owners. The group's success in securing funding will largely depend on the experience and leadership abilities of its manager and Board members. Authorities offering grants and/or loans will review the depth and composition of the development corporation's membership, as well as the experience and qualifications of the group's manager.

Crafton may want to consider, as an aid in establishing a development corporation, the services of The Pennsylvania Downtown Center. The Pennsylvania Downtown Center is a state-wide, non-profit, member-based organization which advocates the preservation and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's commercial business districts. The Downtown Center acts as an information conduit regarding CBD revitalization efforts, and provides training seminars to members of development groups. The Center provides informational assistance to municipalities interested in establishing non-profit development corporations.

The Pennsylvania Downtown Center

240 Market Street - Suite 3

Bloomsburg, PA 17815

Attn: Mary Joan Kevlin

Executive Director

Phone: (717) 784-0456

Fax: (717) 389-1518

Once created, the development corporation should be well suited to assume additional roles, beyond the pursuit of project funds. In general, the development corporation can serve as the coordinator of development in the CBD.

- Chamber of Commerce

A non-profit economic development corporation also can work with local business leaders to establish a Chamber of Commerce. The members of the Crafton/Ingram Rotary have strongly expressed a need for a Chamber of Commerce. The belief is that a Chamber of Commerce would strengthen the existing commercial environment in Crafton, and also make the area more appealing to new businesses.

- Business Information Center

There was a strong sentiment, particularly within the business community, of the need for a one-stop "Business Information Center," where both existing and potential Crafton businesses could obtain information and assistance on a wide variety of subjects ranging from Crafton tax information to available grants and loans. The consensus also was that this center had to have a "physical" presence, i.e., an actual office located in either a public or private building somewhere in the Core/CBD area. Such a Business Information Center could be established and run by either a non-profit economic development corporation or a chamber of commerce, with start-up assistance from the Borough.

- Crafton Information Center

Independent from or in conjunction with the creation of a Business Information Center, the Borough should consider establishing a Community Information Center. The purpose of the Community Information Center would be to provide a cohesive medium between the many different groups and clubs in Crafton. One common criticism from Borough residents is the lack of easily obtainable information about the many groups existing in the community. Informing both existing residents and potential new residents of all the groups and clubs in the community will contribute to increasing participation in these groups. Ultimately, one important role of the development corporation would be serving as a catalyst to provide support and cohesiveness to the many group efforts towards bettering Crafton as a place to live and do business.

- Community Center Policies

The Borough Council should establish an advisory committee consisting of Borough residents and representatives of various community organizations to make recommendations with respect to policies on use and availability of the Community Center. The advisory committee could also provide input to Borough Council on future community needs and development of the area around the Community Center.

B. Shopping Center

1. Findings

a. General Description of the Shopping Center.

The Crafton /Ingram Shopping Center is located in the 2nd Ward of Crafton. It is bordered by Foster Avenue to the west, Linshaw Avenue to the east and West Steuben Street (RT 60) to the south. The area is zoned C-1, although there are residential (R-2) properties in close proximity. The line dividing Crafton and Ingram runs east/west directly through the center of the parking lot.

This area is privately owned. The major stores include a Giant Eagle and a Busy Beaver. There are several banks, specialty stores, fast food restaurants and car maintenance shops which offer the residents of Crafton and Ingram a wide variety of stores in which to shop and provide needed services.

Comments received at the community meetings and in the citizen surveys indicate the following priority concerns regarding the shopping center:

- Property maintenance
- Better signage
- More landscaping
- Improved security
- Traffic control and traffic flow in the parking lot and on the streets accessing the center
- Encouragement of new businesses, particularly an "anchor" store

2. Recommendations

a. Traffic Flow

The Borough should consider retaining the services of a traffic consultant to conduct a study aimed at alleviating the traffic flow problems that exist around the shopping center.

b. Litter

The Borough should establish a regular volunteer litter pick up program to maintain the area surrounding the shopping center. A program of this nature would greatly benefit from the participation of prominent political and business leaders.

c. Busway

The Port Authority's commitment to establish a park-and-ride lot in the Shopping Center will be beneficial to Crafton by reducing the potential for commuter parking burdens in the CBD. As such, Crafton should stay abreast of the plans for this park-and-ride as they materialize. The Port Authority will need to formalize an agreement with owners of the Shopping Center to establish the park-and-ride. Crafton should be willing to act as a facilitator in this effort on an as-needed basis. This requires the Borough to keep communication lines open with the Port Authority. Regular quarterly meetings between both parties should be pursued.

d. Landscaping Improvements

Merchants in the shopping center should consider ways to landscape the perimeters of the shopping center so that it is more aesthetically pleasing, as per the suggestion of many of the survey respondents.

e. Public and Private Financing

Many of the same public and private financing mechanisms addressed in the CBD Core Area Findings and Recommendations (e.g., LERTA, business improvement district, streetscape loans and grants) should also be actively pursued in the shopping center, if sufficient interest among property owners and merchants exists.

C. Recreation/Chartiers Creek Greenway

1. Findings

a. Active Recreation Facilities

The principal public active recreation area in Crafton is Borough-owned Crafton Park which is zoned R-2. There is a baseball field, dilapidated tennis courts, bocce court, a pavilion, a stage, a swimming pool and a playground for children.

There are also parklets on Noble Avenue (a playground and basketball courts) and South Linwood Avenue (playground and basketball courts). There is also a baseball field on property owned by the Carlynton School District and leased to the Borough located just off Steuben Street.

Although some residents thought that there was enough recreational programming, the general concern was that more could be done to improve the facilities and amount of activities offered to the Borough residents. Once again the issue of publicizing the activities offered to the residents is important. Many residents are not aware of what is going on in their own neighborhood.

Citizen suggestions included the following:

- The need for more neighborhood playgrounds
 - (a) tennis courts
 - (b) shuffleboard
 - (c) square dancing
 - (d) horse shoe pits and
 - (e) table tennis

- Increase of the hours that the pool and miniature golf course are open.

- Programs for evening and summer daytime activities established for senior citizens, children and teenagers.

Infrastructure suggestions for the recreational facilities include

- Improve the safety of the playgrounds
- Resurface the tennis courts
- Build bicycling and hiking trails
 - Add picnic shelters
- Cleanup the performance stage
 - Add restrooms
 - Provide parking for elderly and handicapped
 - Add lighting and trash cans

- Others think that Crafton should concentrate on maintaining the facilities that Crafton has, as well as enforcing the curfew laws to cut down on vandalism.

b. Chartiers Creek Greenway

This largely undeveloped area is located along the Chartiers Creek in the 3rd Ward. The area is zoned I-1. There are a few residences in the area, but much of the land is overgrown with brush and grass and littered with large pieces of concrete. There are antennas for a radio station, and Crafton's Public Works department has a facility located in the area. Access to the Greenway is available by Ewing Road and De Sota Street, which are both narrow and winding road and the terrain is very steep. There is no guard rail. Currently, the Crafton Ingram Thornburg Baseball and Softball Association ("CIT"), a private volunteer organization, is proposing a construction of five baseball fields and

related facilities on property it owns in this Greenway area. Plans for the CIT project currently are pending before the Joint Planning Commission and the Crafton Borough Council.

The pending CIT project has focused debate between those advocating active recreational use of portions of the Greenway area with attendant structures, refreshment stands, parking and restrooms, and those advocating more passive use of the area for hiking and biking trails and similar uses.

It is not the purpose of this document to resolve the active/passive debate; however, it should be kept in mind that most of the Chartiers Creek Greenway area is privately owned and any significant publicly owned active or passive recreational facilities would require purchase of necessary property by the Borough or other public entity.

Notwithstanding the current debate over the CIT project, there are several strategies which could be pursued by the Borough upon which a consensus could be built.

2. Recommendations

a. Active Recreation Facilities

- Develop a programming council that solicits help from area businesses and publicizes its activities
- Set up community work days to help with the maintenance of the facilities
- Follow-up on the recommendations of the Recreation Board from (2/28/95)

The 1993 recreation plan listed 24 facilities in priority order.

GENERAL FACILITIES LIST WEIGHTED POINTS PRIORITY

Swimming Pool 3.93 1

Playgrounds 6.331 2

Picnic Area 7.655 3

Nature Trail 7.824 4

Bike Trail 8.07 5

Sledding Area 10.08 6

Open Space 10.163 7

Baseball Field 10.721 8

Fitness Trail 10.878 9

Tennis Court 10.906 10

Softball Field 11.757 11

Miniature Golf 11.795 12

Volleyball Court 12.110 13

Ice Skating 12.264 14

Use of School Facilities 12.608 15

Jogging Trail 12.789 16

Basketball Court 12.982 17

Stage 13.178 18

Soccer Field 13.955 19

Deck Hockey Court 15.726 20

Horseshoe Court 17.009 21

Football Field 17.324 22

Shuffleboard Court 18.252 23

Boccie Court 20.288 24

Canoeing 1 (number of mentions)

Seven categories of programs were recommended in priority order:

Programs Responses Percentage

Family Oriented 83 51.88%

Adult Programs 73 46.63%

Youth Programs 65 40.63%

Preschool Programs 47 29.38%

Teen Programs 43 26.88%

Senior Citizens 41 25.63%

Single's Programs 25 15.63%

Other 4 2.5 %

The plan recommends walking, jogging and bike trails along Chartiers Creek and a fitness facility in Crafton Park.

- Cleanup

Presently, at least one organization in the Borough coordinates an annual cleanup of litter and debris in the Greenway area. The Borough should take a more active role in facilitating and coordinating volunteer efforts by private organizations and citizens on a more regular basis.

- Rivers Conservation Grant Program

Grants are available for nonacquisition, nondevelopment implementation programs such as preparing ordinances, zoning documents, river area access studies, water quality monitoring and similar programs. Grants are also available for land acquisition and development of river conservation projects. Grants require 50% matching funds. The match may include cash, land donations in the case of acquisitions, certain in-kind costs and donated volunteer and professional services.

- Symms Recreational Trail Program

Funding is available for the acquisition, development and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails. Funding is available sporadically. Grants are up to 50% of eligible costs. The match can include cash, donated and in-kind labor and volunteer services.

For further information on both Rivers
Conservation and Symms programs, contact:

DCNR, Room 555 Forum Building or Kathy Frankel, Regional

Harrisburg, PA 17120 Recreation Advisor - DCNR

(717) 783-2656 (412) 565-7803

- Road Improvements

Regardless of the ultimate use of the Greenway for either active or passive recreation, increased public use of the area will require improvements to the street system which accesses the Greenway. In connection with the consideration of type and intensity of use in the area, the Borough should consider retaining a traffic engineer to evaluate the necessary street infrastructure improvements to adequately service the area.

D. Crafton Infrastructure

Although the primary focus of this study has been one geographic area (the Crafton CBD), and to a lesser extent two other specific geographic areas (the Crafton Ingram Shopping Center and the Chartiers Creek Greenway), the comments and information gathered in the course of this study have underscored the importance of the Borough addressing in a long-term fashion its aging infrastructure throughout the community. Many portions of Crafton are over 100 years old. Its large, old homes and tree-lined streets are products of its age which are widely viewed as assets to the Borough. Its roads and sewers are also products of its age, but are liabilities to Crafton.

1. Findings

a. Roads

The roads in the Borough are typically not aligned in any set format. Many developed from a series of unplanned, narrow cart paths. Many of Crafton's streets are paved with brick. There are mixed opinions about these brick streets. While some believe they offer the community an important nostalgic identity, others attribute the disrepair of the streets to the brick itself. Nonetheless, it is apparent most of the brick streets in Crafton do not function well in their current state. The brick roads were constructed at a time when traffic volumes and loadings were much less than today. The sub-base below the brick pavers has failed under today's traffic conditions, resulting in ruts and potholes in the streets. Consequently, the brick streets often do not drain properly.

b. Sewer System

Like the streets in Crafton, the sewer system is outdated, and as a result cannot always satisfy the current demands placed upon it. The sewers are combination sewers, carrying both storm water and sanitary waste. They are typically constructed of 8" - 12" diameter terra cotta piping. There are recurring cases of sewage backups throughout the Borough, primarily after heavy rainfalls. In addition, there are not accurate as-built records for the sewer system. Crafton has applied for grant dollars in the past to reconstruct portions of the sewer system, but these applications have not been successful.

2. Recommendations

a. Roadway Plan

Crafton's economic resources are not sufficient to implement a wide-scale rehabilitation of the Borough streets. Crafton should, however, implement a systematic approach to maintaining and rehabilitating its streets. The steps of one such approach are simplified below.

- Obtain current traffic volumes and loadings
- Establish street standards

(a) construction materials and cross sectional dimensions (sub-base and pavement)

(b) based upon volumes and loadings

(c) include expected life spans for each standard (i.e., duration from construction until rehabilitation)

- Assign each street (or section of street) a standard based upon correlation between existing traffic and established street standards
- Develop objective assessment of existing condition of each street
- Assign an objective priority ranking to each street
- Establish a forecast schedule for maintenance and rehabilitation action for each street
- Reassess existing traffic volumes and loadings at set intervals.
- Reassess existing conditions of each street at set intervals
- Re-prioritize rehabilitation efforts according to reassessment of traffic volumes and loadings, and existing street conditions

b. Available Assistance/Resources for Street Improvements

The forecast schedule for roadway rehabilitations should incorporate any associated utility, sewer and curb reconstruction needs as well. Developing a systematic approach to expending limited resources for roadway reconstruction is no small task. Crafton will need to consult the Borough Engineer throughout the process. Crafton should also consider soliciting the Civil Engineering Departments at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh for possible student projects towards this end.

c. Sewer Engineering Review

The deficiencies of the existing sewer system inhibit redevelopment in Crafton. As such, the Borough should consider working with its Engineer to further target the existing problems with the sewers in selected areas in the immediate future.

d. Sewers: Economic Assistance

Ultimately, Crafton will need to continue pursuing economic assistance for sewer reconstruction.

- PENNVEST

The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority ("PENNVEST") was established to provide low-interest, long-term loans to municipalities and municipal authorities for various forms of infrastructure improvements. Interest on the loans generally ranges between 1% and 5%, depending on the borrower's financial conditions. Wastewater projects, including filtration and treatment plants, collector and interceptor sewers and remediation of combined sewer overflows are eligible. Stormwater control projects, including new systems, updating of existing systems,

culvert/enclosures, detention and retention basins, combination sanitary and storm sewer separation and sanitary sewer infiltration remediation projects are also eligible. Typically there are multiple application cut-off dates in each fiscal year. The cut-off date for the next application cycle is January 21, 1998.

For further information, contact:
PENNVEST - Larry Gasparato (717) 783-6673

e. Sewer Surcharge

In addition, Crafton should consider implementing an ALCOSAN surcharge to establish a capital reserve to fund necessary sewer reconstruction. The surcharge is paid by residents, businesses and other sewer system users when they pay their ALCOSAN bill. Typically, the surcharge is assessed based on water usage (i.e., a certain number of cents per thousand gallons of water used). The precise amount of surcharge should be determined based on the Borough's anticipated capital expenditures for sewer reconstruction.