

Introduction

The Borough of Lansdowne has decided to create a redevelopment plan for the downtown area and adjacent neighborhoods, together called the Downtown District. Under the Urban Redevelopment Law, the Downtown District was determined to have met the Commonwealth's definition of blight by the Lansdowne Planning Commission in March 2004, the Borough Council in April 2004, and by the Delaware County Planning Commission in June 2004. The Downtown District was also included in the area studied for the Delaware County Renaissance Plan dated March 2003, which identified a series of activities for this area.

This current redevelopment plan analyzes the area's economic, physical, and institutional conditions and proposes changes to the vehicular and pedestrian circulation and land uses.

Description and Boundaries of Redevelopment Area

The Downtown District Redevelopment Area is bounded on the south by the SEPTA tracks from Union Avenue to Owen Avenue, with the addition of the so-called "EPA site" on Union Avenue south of the tracks and the block on Lansdowne Avenue bordered by Nyack and Elberon Avenues. Owen Avenue forms the western boundary, and Union Avenue the eastern boundary. The boundary on the north runs along Stewart Avenue to Highland, then along La Crosse Avenue to Union Avenue.

The Redevelopment Area is depicted on the Redevelopment Area Aerial Map, Exhibit A.



Land Use Plan

Redevelopment activities in the Downtown District Redevelopment Area are intended to meet the following goals and objectives:

- Strengthen retail activity in the downtown area;
- Enliven the downtown through expanded retail, housing, and office space;
- Alleviate the deterioration of Baltimore Avenue;
- Upgrade properties with unsafe physical conditions and ones that are regarded as public nuisances;
- Create more effective circulation patterns for vehicles and pedestrians; and
- Improve the physical environment through infrastructure and streetscape enhancements.

Existing uses within this Redevelopment Area are shown on Exhibit B. In general, land uses fronting Baltimore Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue are more commercial in nature, while those along the side streets adjacent to Baltimore and Lansdowne Avenues are more residential in nature. Land uses along Lansdowne Avenue contain a mixture of retail, office, health and finance services, and mixed-use buildings with residential units and offices on the upper floors.

The only public open space in the Downtown District is at the corner Lansdowne and Baltimore Avenues. One apartment building and a senior housing complex occupy the northern end of Lansdowne Avenue. There are also three churches on North Lansdowne Avenue, and the public library is just within the Redevelopment Area at the corner of Lansdowne and Nyack Avenues.

Baltimore Avenue has a mix of commercial and industrial uses, as well as some apartment buildings and vacant buildings and lots. In addition to general retail uses, there are used car lots, auto mechanics, warehouses, commercial services, and an office building.

Again, the lands along the side streets adjacent to Baltimore and Lansdowne Avenues are primarily single-family residential, with only the occasional apartment building.

The Downtown District also contains one historically designated structure, the Lansdowne Theater, which is shown in Exhibit B-1.

Exhibit B: (Exhibit B-1 is below)



Exhibit B-1:



The proposed Land Use Plan is shown on Exhibit C (below). Land uses are proposed to remain the same except where noted:

1. The Lansdowne Shopping Center at 24 W. Baltimore Avenue is currently a marginally used retail strip center that is likely to experience greater vacancy as stores relocate in search for more modern space. In addition, the office building in this center is only partially occupied. The retail center is proposed for reuse as a three story mixed-use building with retail on the ground floor and apartment units on the two upper floors. A new public plaza is proposed for a portion of the site fronting on Baltimore Avenue; and the existing, partially occupied office building is proposed to be used as a mixed-use office and residential building.

2. The vacant “old bank building,” as it is known, at 2 S. Lansdowne Avenue is proposed for reuse as a commercial building.
3. The Lansdowne Plaza at 3 N. Lansdowne Avenue is proposed for reuse as a mixed-use building, with retail on the ground floor and apartments above. Parking would be moved behind the building and public open space would occupy the corner of Lansdowne and Baltimore Avenues.
4. The vacant former 7-Eleven at 7 E. Baltimore Avenue and the municipal parking lot, which is underutilized, is proposed for reuse as a commercial retail complex with public open space and municipal parking.
5. The vacant and underutilized buildings from 16-26 S. Highland Avenue and 29 Madison Avenue and the vacant lot at 27 Madison Avenue are recommended for reuse as an apartment building.
6. The land use on the south side of Baltimore Avenue between Highland and Wycombe Avenues is proposed to change from commercial and light industrial to mixed-use and residential.
7. The vacant building at 55 E. Baltimore and the auto lot and repair service at 59 E. Baltimore Avenue forming the northwest corner of Baltimore and Wycombe Avenues is proposed for reuse as mixed-use, with retail or office on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors.
8. The dry cleaner and vacant funeral home at 61 and 65 E. Baltimore Avenue at the corner of Wycombe Avenue are proposed for reuse as mixed-use, with retail on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors.
9. The auto lot on 100-102 E. Baltimore Avenue is proposed to change from auto sales to office or retail.
10. The land use along Baltimore Avenue bounded by S. Maple Avenue, Union Avenue, and the SEPTA tracks is recommended for reuse as retail, office, or light industrial.
11. The auto body shop at the corner of Union Avenue and La Crosse Avenue is in poor condition. Under this redevelopment plan, this site is proposed to be reused as office or retail.
12. The land south of the SEPTA tracks on Union Avenue known as the “EPA site” is currently vacant and is proposed to be reused as light industrial or commercial.

Exhibit C:



Standards of Population Densities, Land Coverage, and Building Intensities

The existing zoning ordinance in the Downtown District Redevelopment Area has seven different zoning districts:

1. Single-Family Detached Residential District (R-1A),
2. Single-Family Semi-Detached Residential District (R-2),
3. One- and Two-Family Residential District (R-3),
4. Multi-Family Residential District (R-4),
5. Central Business District (C-1),
6. General Business District (C-2), and
7. General Business and Light Industrial District (C-3).



No changes are proposed for the residential districts.

The C-1 District has no minimum lot area, a maximum building coverage of 75%, and a maximum building height of 55 feet. The proposed new developments in this district contain some mixed-use structures that would include multi-family dwellings. Under the R-4 requirements that apply to this type of development, the minimum lot area is 21,780 SF with a maximum density of 22 dwelling units per acre, a maximum building coverage of 30%, a maximum building height of 35 feet (three stories). Efficiencies must be a minimum of 600 SF, one-bedroom units 750 SF, and two-bedroom units 900 SF. Efficiencies may not take up more than half of the number of apartments. A five foot wide buffer planting strip is required in the side yard between a nonresidential and residential zoning district, regardless of the current use of the adjacent lot in the residential district.

The C-2 and C-3 Districts have the same lot area, building coverage, and building height requirements as the C-1 District.

Preliminary Site Plan

The Preliminary Site Plan, Exhibit D, [below] shows the proposed reuses for 12 areas in the Downtown District. Each plan is described below:

1. The Lansdowne Shopping Center at 24 W. Baltimore Avenue is recommended to be redeveloped as a three-story mixed-use retail center with residential apartments on the upper two floors. The building will front both Baltimore Avenue and also Lansdowne Avenue, with the frontage on Baltimore Avenue proposed to be 100 feet and Lansdowne Avenue to be 40 feet. The ground floor portion of the building would be 34,000 SF, and the upper two floors would be adequate to support 68 dwelling units. The site would provide enough parking for the residents in the rear of the building and shared parking between the shoppers and employees in front of the building.

It is also recommended that a public plaza be developed on Baltimore Avenue that is approximately 60' x 60', adjacent to the existing office building.

This plan recognizes that, consistent with current zoning, the three-story office building could be reused as a mixed-use building with residential units on the upper floors and offices below.

2. The old bank building at 2 S. Lansdowne Avenue is proposed for redevelopment through rehabilitation.
3. The Lansdowne Plaza at 3 N. Lansdowne Avenue is proposed to be redeveloped as mixed-use with retail on the ground floor and apartments above, all tolled measuring approximately 90' x 115'. The building would be designed in such a way as to emphasize site lines to shops and public spaces in the core retail area. Design guidelines should require that there be storefronts along Lansdowne Avenue and along the pedestrian walkways that lead to the reconfigured parking lot (described in the Street Layouts and Proposed Traffic Regulations section below). This plan also recommends that a public plaza be developed at least 30' in depth from Baltimore Avenue. The lands behind the buildings between 17 and 27 N. Lansdowne Avenue are recommended to be added to the overall redevelopment of this block for parking and pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
4. The former 7-Eleven at 7 E. Baltimore Avenue is proposed to be redeveloped as a 40' x 80' retail building and public plaza. The retail building would have significant landscaping and a pedestrian walkway provided along the west side of the building. On the east side of the site at N. Highland and Baltimore Avenues, a public plaza is recommended at a minimum depth of 30' off Baltimore Avenue.
5. The municipal lot behind the 7-Eleven is proposed to be redeveloped as a 100' x 150' retail store and a shared parking lot.
6. The Lansdowne Theater is proposed to be redeveloped through rehabilitation. The rear of the theater is recommended to be redeveloped as a cultural center, which would be tied in with the reconfigured parking lot and pedestrian circulation system noted in the Street Layouts and Proposed Traffic Regulations section below.
7. The vacant and underutilized commercial structures from 16 to 26 S. Highland Avenue and 29 Madison Avenue and the vacant lot on 27 Madison Avenue are recommended for redevelopment as apartments, which would be consistent with the style of structures found between N. Wycombe and Rigby Avenues on the north side of Baltimore Avenue. This three-story building would be approximately 40' x 90' and would have about 10 dwelling units.
8. The lands between 38 and 58 E. Baltimore Avenue, 14 S. Wycombe Avenue, and 5 to 19 S. Highland Avenue are proposed for reuse as four residential apartment buildings and two mixed-used buildings that are consistent with the massing and style of the units found in the block between Wycombe and Rigby Avenues on Baltimore Avenue. The two mixed-use buildings would be set back from Baltimore Avenue by 25' and would be approximately 125' wide fronting on Baltimore and 64' deep. The three-story buildings each would have approximately 8,000 SF of retail or office on the ground floor and 16 apartments on the upper floors. The four residential buildings each would be approximately 64' x 100' and would be set back 25' off the roadways. Each of these residential buildings would have approximately 19 dwelling units. The site would be heavily landscaped and parking would be available on lots in the interior of the block.

9. The vacant building at 55 E. Baltimore Avenue and the auto lot and repair shop at 59 E. Baltimore are recommended to be redeveloped as a three-story, mixed-use building with retail or office on the ground floor and apartments above. The structure would be set back 25' from Baltimore Avenue and would be consistent with the style of the historic buildings one block east. This new development would have nearly 9,000 SF of commercial space and 16 dwelling units.
10. The dry cleaner at 61 E. Baltimore Avenue is recommended to be redeveloped as mixed-use, with retail or office on the ground floor and residential above. The former funeral home at 65 E. Baltimore Avenue is recommended to be redeveloped through rehabilitation as mixed-use, with office or retail on the ground floor and residential above. Alternatively, if rehabilitation proves to be infeasible, the site could be integrated with the dry cleaner at 61 E. Baltimore Avenue to create a single, larger mixed-use property. This building would be set back 25' from Baltimore Avenue and would be consistent with the style recommended on the west side of Wycombe Avenue.
11. The auto sales lot at 100 & 102 E. Baltimore Avenue is proposed for redevelopment as office or retail and should be set back 25' from Baltimore Avenue rear parking lot.
12. The southwest corner between Maple and Union Avenues on Baltimore Avenue is proposed for rehab or redevelopment for retail, office, or light industrial use.
13. The auto body shop at 22 N. Union Avenue at La Crosse Avenue is recommended to be redeveloped as general commercial or retail.
14. The so-called "EPA site" at 40 S. Union Avenue is proposed for redevelopment as general commercial or light industrial.

Exhibit D:



Statement of Proposed Zoning Changes

The existing zoning ordinance in the Downtown District Redevelopment Area has seven different zoning districts:

1. Single-Family Detached Residential District (R-1A),
2. Single-Family Semi-Detached Residential District (R-2),
3. One- and Two-Family Residential District (R-3),
4. Multi-Family Residential District (R-4),
5. Central Business District (C-1),
6. General Business District (C-2), and
7. General Business and Light Industrial District (C-3).

It is the intent of this plan to be consistent with the existing and proposed zoning changes currently under development by the Borough and the Delaware County Planning Department. Based on the existing zoning and the current draft of that zoning plan (which does not change zoning boundaries), the applicable zoning for the Core District is shown in Exhibit E. There are seven zoning designations for the Downtown District. The intent of each is described below:

Single-Family Detached Residential District (R-1A): to provide locations for the development and/or redevelopment of the land for single-family detached dwellings at a density of up to approximately seven family dwelling units per acre.

Single-Family Semi-Detached Residential District (R-2): to provide locations for the development and/or redevelopment of the land for single-family semidetached dwellings at a density of up to approximately 14 family dwelling units per acre.

One- and Two-Family Residential District (R-3): to provide locations for the development and/or redevelopment of the land for single-family attached and two-family detached dwellings as provided for herein, at a density of up to approximately 21 family dwelling units per acre.

Multi-Family Residential District (R-4): to provide locations for the development and/or redevelopment of the land for low-rise multifamily dwellings (apartments), at a density of up to 22 dwelling units per acre.

Central Business District (C-1): to provide appropriate locations for the conduct of activities suitable for the small suburban central business district.

General Business District (C-2): to provide opportunities for general business uses which do not adversely affect adjacent residential areas.

General Business and Light Industrial District (C-3): to provide locations for the conduct of general business and light industrial activities, including some business activities that may be considered inappropriate in the C-1 Central Business District.

Proposed changes to the zoning ordinance are detailed below:

C-2 and C-3 zoning districts are recommended to require a minimum of 25' setback for any building fronting on Baltimore Avenue, with landscaping fronting the building.

C-1 district is recommended to require that any building fronting Lansdowne Avenue must be built to the property line along Lansdowne Avenue frontage. Parking requirements are recommended to be eliminated and replaced with the requirement that any new development of 10,000 SF or more provide one space per housing unit and three spaces per 1,000 SF of non-residential space.

Exhibit E:



Statement of Changes in Street Layouts and Proposed Traffic Regulations

Circulation and access improvements are critical to the success of this redevelopment plan. Under the Urban Redevelopment Law, faulty street layout is a blight-qualifying criterion. This criterion is shared by many of the properties within the redevelopment area. Infrastructure and circulation improvements are shown on Exhibit F.

Parking in the block bounded by Lansdowne Avenue, the Lansdowne Theater, the fire station, Highland and Baltimore Avenues is proposed to become a specific shopper/visitor parking lot. Sites would need to be assembled and operated as an integrated public parking lot. Assembly of multiple portions is intended to reduce the total curb cuts to four: two on Highland Avenue, one on Baltimore Avenue, and one on Lansdowne Avenue. All businesses, residents, and other users in that block would be serviced from this single lot. Any current driveway in this section that is recommended for closure that is not part of the proposed redevelopment plan are recommended for inclusion as part of a pedestrian circulation system.

Lansdowne Avenue-fronting stores within the block detailed above will be required to have entrances that open on Lansdowne Avenue.

La Crosse Avenue is one-way heading east away from Lansdowne Avenue. Drivers frequently violate the one-way signs to gain access to shops on Lansdowne Avenue. It is the recommendation of this plan that La Crosse Avenue be made two-way. It has been determined that the road is sufficiently wide enough to handle this change.

Congestion at the intersection of S. Lansdowne and Baltimore Avenues is a persistent problem. This plan recommends removing two parking spaces on the east side of S. Lansdowne Avenue to allow for improved movement of cars making right turns or passing through the intersection.

Pedestrian access from and to the south of the SEPTA tracks is restricted, preventing SEPTA riders convenient access to shops and services in the Downtown District. It is recommended that a pedestrian bridge be constructed over the tracks leading to Madison Avenue, with a pedestrian walkway continuing through the Madison Avenue municipal lot to Baltimore Avenue via a landscaped pathway along side Borough Hall.

This plan recommends making the development of an effective pedestrian circulation system within one block from the Lansdowne/Baltimore intersection a high priority. This proposal details a well-landscaped pedestrian circulation system throughout that is intended to encourage multi-destination shopping and other multi-destination activities.

There are many sections of the Redevelopment Area that appear neglected and uninviting because of the absence of street trees. Streetscaping should be placed along pedestrian paths and residential side streets leading to Baltimore Avenue. Important locations for this initiative include:

- Baltimore Avenue
- Lansdowne Avenue
- Madison Avenue
- Highland Avenue
- Legion Terrace
- Rigby Avenue
- Wycombe Avenue
- Maple Avenue
- Union Avenue

Statement of Rehousing Requirements

Relocation may be necessary to achieve the objectives of this plan. All relocations, if any, will occur in conformance with the federal uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Regulations. In addition, these relocations will occur in phases based on the specifics of any forth-coming redevelopment proposals.

Estimated Costs of Acquisitions/Preparation for Redevelopment

The total acquisition and relocation costs for the implementation of the plan are unknown at this time. However, any forthcoming redevelopment proposal (to implement the plan) would use County Assessment data to help determine acquisition, relocation, and redevelopment costs and that the figures will comply with the federal Uniformed Relocation Act mentioned above.

Statement of Continuing Controls

Under Commonwealth law, the maximum effective period for a redevelopment plan is 20 years. Given the fact that some portions of this plan may take several years to implement, the maximum allowable effective period should be used for this plan.

