

DRAFT

City of Allentown, PA
Re-Industrialization
Strategy

Phase II
Little Lehigh
Industrial Corridor



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Like many industrial cities in the United States, Allentown has experienced a downturn in manufacturing output, and, has lost many of the good-paying industrial jobs that have fueled the local economy since the late 1800s. In spite of this, the City is undergoing some recent positive changes with the construction of the arena downtown, and a promising plan for the Riverfront. Additionally and the subject of this plan, there is promising news regarding manufacturing; an increase in wages overseas combined with declining domestic energy prices have caused a re-shoring of some of the manufacturing jobs that left the country in previous decades. In an attempt to position Allentown for the resurgence in manufacturing, the City commissioned Camoin Associates, an economic development consulting firm, and their sub consultants: Bergmann Associates, Thomas P Miller Associates and Innovation Policyworks to prepare a strategy to facilitate the re-industrialization of the City of Allentown. The goal of the Little Lehigh Corridor Re-Industrialization Strategy Phase II is creating a plan that increases employment opportunities accessible to center city residents with the intent of raising incomes,

The City of Allentown Re-Industrialization Strategy is being prepared in three phases:

- Phase I is a city-wide re-industrialization strategy report that includes information collected through interviews, focus groups, economic data collection and analysis, web research, windshield surveying, building walkthroughs, and reviewing existing planning documents. Key findings, recommendations, and strategies are provided in this summary report.
- Phase II (this project) furthers the Phase I recommendations in a demonstration study focusing on the centrally-located Little Lehigh Creek Corridor. This project provides a conceptual master plan for the Little Lehigh Corridor and recommendations for a number of the key “strategic sites” in the area.
- Phase III is a study focusing on a specific complex of buildings in the Little Lehigh Corridor known as the former Allentown Metal Works Buildings. The vacant complex was acquired by the Allentown Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) and has over 300,000 square feet of building space. The study will contain recommendations for select demolitions and repairs of the various structures along with an overarching strategy to redevelop and market the facility.

Following is a description of the Allentown Re-Industrialization Strategy Phase II contents:

Existing Conditions

The Little Lehigh Corridor has been the location of numerous industries since the 1830s. In particular, Mack Truck had a number of buildings there before they relocated in the 1980s. These buildings are now divided among numerous businesses and are home to the Bridgeworks Enterprise Center, a successful business incubator that has helped to create an atmosphere of synergy among new entrepreneurs.

A complete assessment of existing conditions is contained in the Phase II Existing Conditions Report, an Appendix volume to the Phase II report. The Existing Conditions Report contains a description and supporting maps of land use, zoning, traffic volumes, utilities, brownfields, flood zones, investment zones and vacant and underutilized properties in the 342-acre Little Lehigh Corridor study area. There are several existing conditions that are especially relevant:

- The 100-year floodplains cover approximately half of the study area including areas that are currently built-out. Though building is permitted in the floodplain’s flood fringe area, there are restrictions that can make it impractical in areas prone to deep flooding. There are also 78 acres of floodway (the area where water flows during a flood event) where no building is permitted.

- Most of the industrial land in the study area is zoned BLI (Business Light Industrial) or I3 (General Industrial). The BLI district allows for a variety of commercial and industrial uses, and the I3 allows uses which are more intensely industrial or sometimes referred to as “heavy industry”.
- Many parcels in the study area are located within an investment zone that offers incentives such as deferred taxes.

Strengths and Challenges

Among the corridor’s strengths is an available workforce, the proximity to parkland, vacant and underutilized industrial land and buildings, availability of utilities, access to trails and bike routes and the proximity to the city center. The challenges to re-industrialization include the steep slopes that line the valley, the flood zones, the sites with environmental concerns, areas with substandard development and difficult truck access at key locations.

Conceptual Master Plan`

A corridor-wide Conceptual Master Plan was prepared building on the strengths and challenges and the vision to re-industrialize the corridor. The plan illustrates improvements to both public and privately-owned lands that will not only improve the operations of businesses, but provide aesthetic and quality of life improvements to make the corridor a place where businesses will want to locate and where workers will want to live near. Master Plan components include streetscape improvements, gateways, public open space, areas targeted for code enforcement, trails and additional bus stops. The plan also illustrates a build out of key industrial sites.

Strategic Sites

Ten areas along the corridor were identified as being “strategic sites” for industrial development. Each of the sites were reviewed for their strategic location; ownership; adequacy and availability of infrastructure; location in an incentive zone; the potential to attract a viable industrial use; and/or the potential to catalyze growth in the vicinity of the site. Recommendations were prepared for each site.

Former Incinerator Site

The former incinerator site at the confluence of Jordan and Little Lehigh Creeks was among ten strategic sites. However, because it is owned by the AEDC and since no reuse plans have gained traction, this site was singled out for a more in-depth study. A thorough review of site conditions revealed that of the 19 acres, approximately seven are undevelopable due to flood zones, buried utilities and steep rock mounds. In addition the site will require improved vehicle access. The resulting Conceptual Master Plan included two industrial buildings, ample parking and outdoor storage and a rail siding along with a new access road and bridge over Little Lehigh Creek.

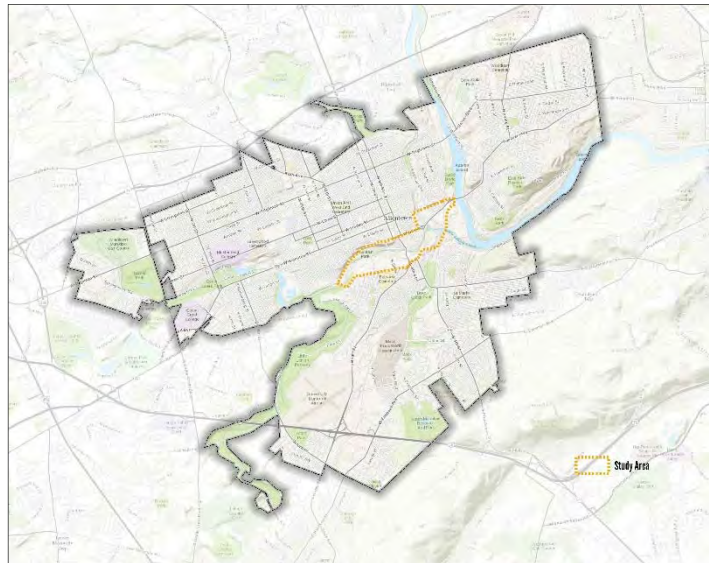
Conclusion

Part of what makes a community an attractive location for a business is that it is a good place to live, work and play. The Little Lehigh Corridor has parklands, trails, a nearby city center and access to the workforce in nearby residential areas. However, some investment in the public realm will facilitate the ability to attract businesses further enhancing the appearance and use of the area, telling business owners that the City of Allentown supports its industries and that manufacturing is not only a treasured part of its past but an essential part of the future.

CONTEXT

The continued transition of the Lehigh Valley and national economy away from traditional manufacturing has produced significant impacts within the City of Allentown. The large manufacturers which once employed thousands of local residents with stable, good-paying jobs have been replaced by less intensive manufacturing operations often located in outlying suburban employment centers. Further, employment and economic trends have drastically increased the service industry within the City and region to the detriment of both pay and workforce skill development. As a result, unemployment and poverty rates are high and median household incomes are 68 percent of national levels. Meanwhile, the residential population continues to grow, as does the demand for higher income employment opportunities. However, with only 16 percent of the workforce over the age of 25 having attained a college degree, the opportunities to identify and secure good-paying jobs are limited.

Through the confluence of these trends in population, education and industry, City leaders have identified the need to re-imagine Allentown as a 21-century hub for small- and medium-scale manufacturers and fabricators. Although industrial activity is less pervasive within the City compared to 40 years ago, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing still account for 1 in 5 jobs. A myriad of regional skill development and job-training programs offer opportunities to meet the needs of modern manufacturers and producers through the City's expanding workforce. Further, the strategic location of Allentown within the Lehigh Valley and the North Eastern United States provides support for the growth and expansion of industrial activity.



The Little Lehigh Valley Project Area is Centrally-Located in the City of Allentown

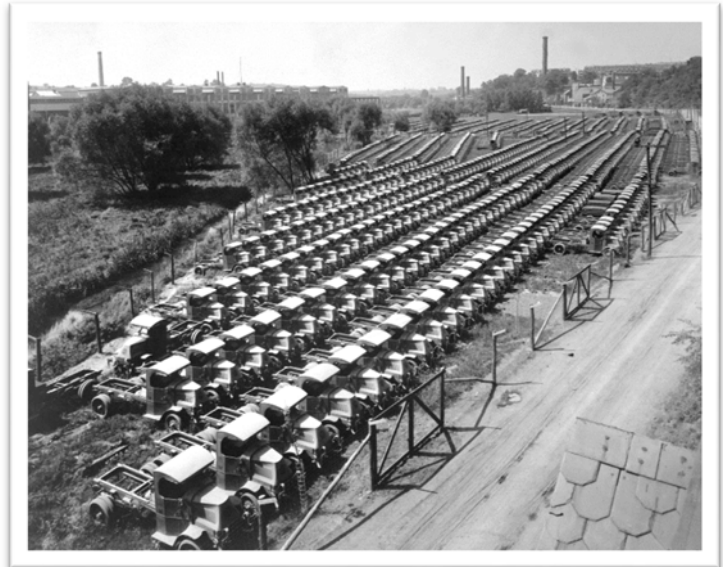
Strategic Location

The City of Allentown is strategically located 50 miles north of Philadelphia and approximately 90 miles west of New York City. A market analysis conducted in 2013 indicated that real estate professionals projected a positive outlook for the Greater Philadelphia industrial market. The strategic location of Allentown was identified as a significant asset to attract businesses in northern New Jersey looking to expand. The lower cost of doing business in Allentown, as well as its mature industrial infrastructure, also support the City's continued growth as a destination for manufacturing and goods production in the Northeast. These factors have contributed to the fact that currently there is a low 7.4 percent vacancy rate among industrial buildings. In particular, the Little Lehigh Industrial Corridor is strategically located in the central portion of the City in close proximity to a burgeoning workforce and a vibrant downtown district.

History

Allentown is a city built on manufacturing, with numerous historic buildings and structures remaining that attest to its once thriving economy. The industrial revolution took hold of Allentown with the installation of the Lehigh Canal in 1829 and the Delaware, Lehigh, Schuylkill and Susquehanna Railroad in 1851. In the mid-1800s iron became the product that drove the economy until the Panic of 1873. However, the economy rebounded in the late 1890s partially fueled by the numerous silk mills that were built in the area. Of particular note was the Adelaide Silk Mill, one of the largest in the world at the time.

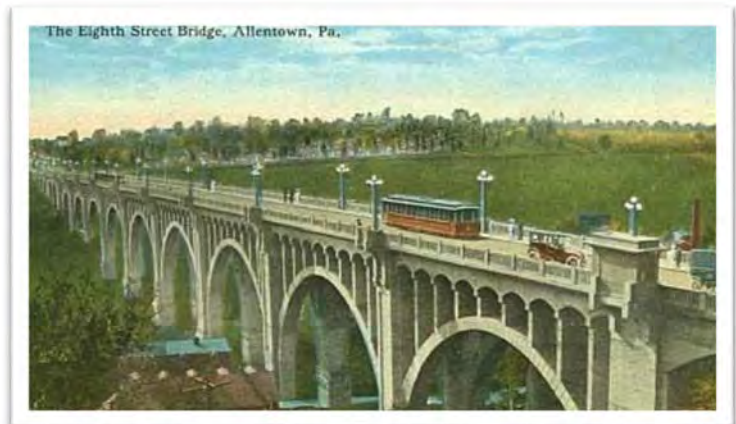
Mack Truck moved to Allentown in 1905 where it thrived for nearly 80 years, eventually expanding to occupy several buildings in the Little Lehigh Corridor. In the 1980s Mack Truck moved out of Allentown to North Carolina and many of the large buildings it once occupied have undergone reactivation by numerous smaller companies. Currently, the former Mack complex within the Study Area is partially occupied by several businesses and the Bridgeworks Enterprise Center incubator. The abundant viable industrial infrastructure present within the Study Area is a driver of Allentown's identity as a Manufacturing City in a Manufacturing Region.



Storage yard for Mack trucks to service World War I. Site is now presumed to be Fountain Park. Allentown Metal Works in background. C. 1918. Source: flickr by 'US Military'



The Adelaide Silk Mill along Hamilton Street. Source: epodunk.com



The Eighth Street Bridge. Source: epodunk.com

Reindustrialization Strategy Phases

The City of Allentown, in partnership with the Allentown Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), retained the consulting team led by Camoin Associates, that included Bergmann Associates, Thomas P. Miller Associates and Innovation Policyworks to create a multi-phased reindustrialization strategy that establishes a model of sustainable economic development within the urban environment. Phase I of the study included the development of a city-wide sustainable reindustrialization strategy. Phase II of the study (this report) modeled this overall strategy by applying it to the Little Lehigh Study Area.

PHASE I – CITY-WIDE RE-INDUSTRIALIZATION

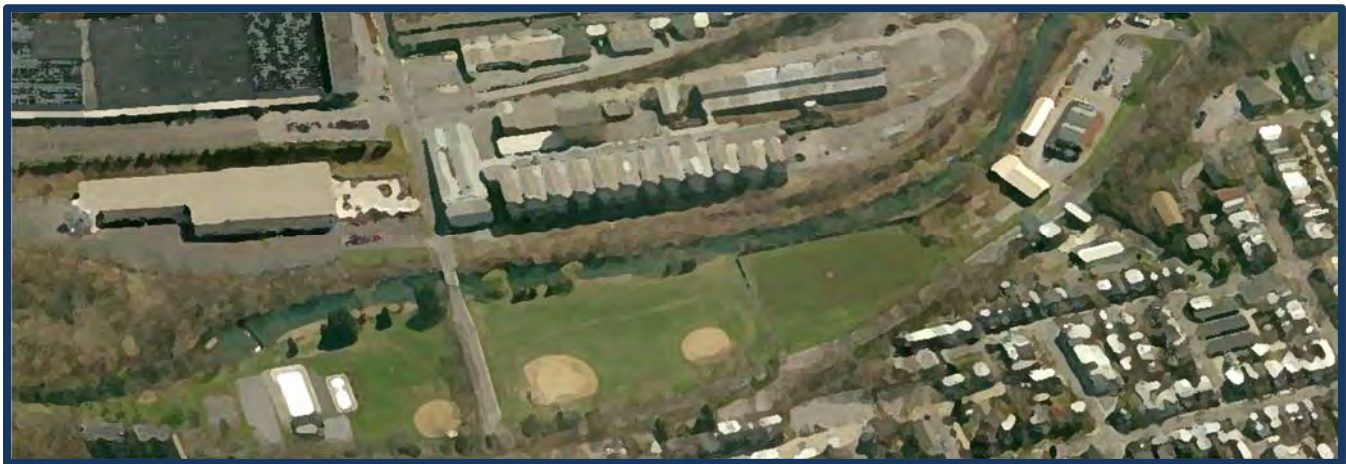
The consultant team, with guidance and support from City and AEDC staff, collected information through interviews, focus groups, economic data collection and analysis, web research, windshield survey, building walkthroughs, and review existing planning documents. The findings were analyzed and a series of general recommendations were developed to spur industrial activity and investment within the City. Recommendations and findings from Phase I were carried forward and further refined as part of Phase II.

PHASE II – LITTLE LEHIGH INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR

Phase II of the Re-Industrialization Strategy, the Little Lehigh Industrial Corridor Master Plan, which includes an in-depth inventory and analysis of existing conditions and a series of site-specific recommendations which serve as a model for the re-industrialization of other parts of the City. This plan was developed with input from the City, AEDC and the public, resulting in the development of a strategic master plan for the re-industrialization of the Little Lehigh Industrial Corridor.

PHASE III – ALLENTOWN METAL WORKS REUSE STUDY

As a follow-up to this report, the re-industrialization study will focus on a major opportunity; the reuse of the AEDC-owned former Allentown Metal Works property. During this phase, a survey of the building and site will be prepared and followed by a strategy for renovations that will increase the marketability of the property for an industrial user.



The Little Lehigh Corridor with the Allentown Metal Works Building in the Center

Planning Input

The consultant team facilitated meetings with City and AEDC staff, and the public to guide the planning process.

Allentown City staff met with the consulting team on several occasions specifically to assist with the Phase II portion of the Allentown Re-Industrialization Strategy.

Public meetings were held on November 14, 2013 and May 8, 2014 to solicit the community's thoughts on the future for the Little Lehigh Corridor.

Summaries of the public and staff meetings are included as an appendix to the Phase II Existing Conditions Report.



City and AEDC staff reviewing projects maps with members of the consulting team.



Concept sketch prepared for review by City and AEDC Staff

City-Wide Re-Industrialization (Phase I) Findings – A Review

In the preceding study, 'City of Allentown Re-Industrialization Strategy Phase I', there are a series of key findings that are relevant to the effort to re-industrialize the Little Lehigh Corridor. The key findings are summarized below:

Industrial Base

Data on the Allentown industrial base indicates that though there have been historic employment losses, manufacturing is still very important to the local and regional economy in terms of both jobs and wages. Allentown and the surrounding region have a diverse manufacturing economy that is spread over many subsectors. This provides Allentown and the region a solid base for future manufacturing.

Manufacturing Market Trends

Though there has been a major employment decline in manufacturing nationally during the past 40 years, manufacturing is still a very important part of the national economy. Technology is changing manufacturing and smaller companies are now players in the global market. Opportunities exist in niche manufacturing and at cross-sections of sectors/technologies/process and knowledge areas. In addition, on-shoring and near-shoring may create new opportunities for U.S. manufacturing.

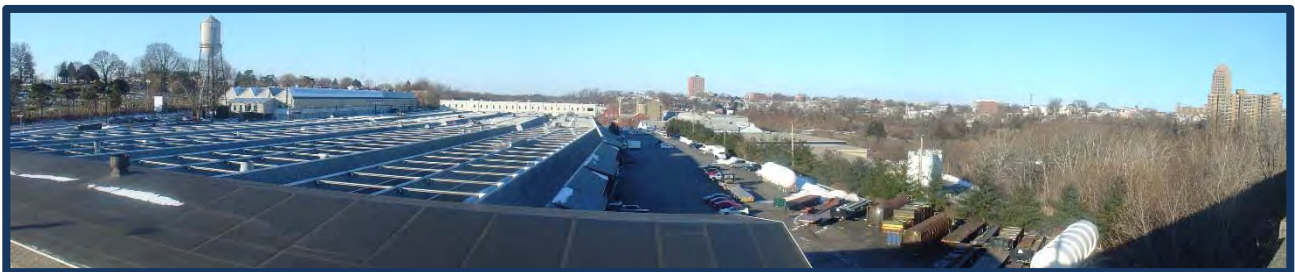
Labor Market

The city's population and labor force are the largest it has ever been, however, unemployment is still above 10 percent. Jobs that require some postsecondary education but less than a bachelor's degree are projected to grow the most over the next five years. If Allentown workers can bridge the growing education gap, they can access occupations with a positive growth outlook and higher wages.

Development that is currently occurring in the City Center will help expand the existing professional, finance, and related service sectors that exist in downtown Allentown. Growth in the manufacturing sector, particularly in the Little Lehigh Creek Corridor, will contribute to the success of downtown by providing local synergies between manufacturers and related service providers as well as contribute to the growing customer base for downtown businesses. Growth in manufacturing will also benefit city residents through lower unemployment rates and higher incomes providing long-term benefits, especially if done in a sustainable manner.

Bridgeworks Enterprise Center

The Bridgeworks Enterprise Center (BEC) has new, energetic management and a renewed focus on its mission of supporting manufacturing entrepreneurs. However, the process of rebuilding the program is in its infancy. Minor renovations to the BEC building could dramatically improve the appearance and functionality as an incubator, and could increase the program's competitiveness in the Lehigh Valley.



The Bridgeworks Enterprise Center as seen from the Eighth Street Bridge

Industrial Lands and Buildings

There are several pockets of industrial properties scattered throughout the city with industrial space available. In particular, the 1.2 million square foot Mack 5C building has vacant space and over 40-acres of open land available for new construction. However, the city should place a priority on re-industrialization efforts in the Little Lehigh Corridor to leverage available industrial space within a strong grouping of existing industries. The Corridor includes strategic properties on which the City should focus development and promotional efforts, such as the Allentown Metal Works complex, the former incinerator site and the Hill’s Imports buildings.

The Corridor is a live, work and play area with available industrial space adjacent to a available workforce, park land, trails and major downtown sports venues. The city should enhance the live, work and play qualities with connectivity improvements and use this concept in promotions. Portions of the Study Area are also suffering from disinvestment. Public realm investments in roads, sidewalks, lighting, signage and streetscapes should coincide with code enforcement and regulatory changes to improve the appearance of private industrial properties.

Based on the market research and data analysis, manufacturers are looking for the following characteristics for urban industrial land in Allentown:

- Affordable space that lowers the cost of doing business;
- Direct access to the labor market with a walk-to-work environment; and
- Re-use opportunities for land and buildings instead of new construction.

The target market for re-industrialization includes urban manufacturing businesses and existing Allentown manufacturers looking to expand. Discussions with several manufactures indicated insufficient space in appropriate or modern configurations to support expansion. As a result, some manufacturers indicated that they may outgrow their current space and be forced to relocate outside of the Little Lehigh Corridor.

Allentown’s industrial infrastructure is attractive to new and small businesses. Development on greenfield sites can be expensive, and is primarily affordable for only established enterprises. With significant pockets of existing space, the Little Lehigh Corridor could become Allentown’s destination for start-up businesses.

REAL ESTATE MARKET

National real estate firms project a positive outlook for the Greater Philadelphia industrial real estate market in 2013. However, industrial requirements are becoming more specialized. Buildings with low ceiling heights, insufficient loading, or structural challenges will have an increasingly difficult time finding tenants. The greatest demand for space by unit size in the region’s urban areas is 8,000 square feet or less and 20,000 to 80,000 square feet.

Almost every business interviewed for this project indicated they are growing and have plans for expansion within the next 5-10 years. The challenge for Allentown will be retention; the city’s limited supply of industrial real estate might delay expansion projects or force companies to relocate outside of the city to find appropriate space that meets their needs.



‘Land Available’ Sign on Auburn Street Property

THE PLAN

Vision for the Future

The planning process for the Little Lehigh Corridor Re-Industrialization Strategy considered the findings from the Phase I City-Wide Re-Industrialization project. It also included meetings with City and AEDC staff, the Steering Committee and the public. During this engagement process, a common vision for the Little Lehigh Corridor emerged that summarizes the many advantages the area offers and identifies how the corridor should be developed. The vision for the Little Lehigh Corridor is summarized below:

The Little Lehigh Industrial Corridor is a “Live, Work and Play” environment offering businesses a sustainable alternative to greenfield development in the suburbs. With its access to a ready workforce, the area will become a manufacturing center welcoming new businesses that thrive on the synergy that stems from the Bridgeworks Enterprise Center and the other successful business that currently populate the corridor. The area will present a model of sustainable practices while embracing its rich history of manufacturing.

Major Assets

What sets the City of Allentown and the Little Lehigh Industrial Corridor apart from other areas?

Why would an industrial business choose to locate and stay in this area?

What is it that we should be promoting?

These questions were discussed with City and AEDC staff. A variety of answers were provided that provided a framework for subsequent planning.

- **Access to Workforce** – The population of Allentown has never been higher and the neighborhoods surrounding the Little Lehigh Corridor have a growing population that is ready to work.
- **Business/Manufacturing-Friendly** – The City of Allentown embraces its industrial heritage and places great emphasis on creating and retaining manufacturing jobs. In addition there are generous incentive available to develop at numerous sites in the Little Lehigh Corridor. Also, the presence of the Bridgeworks Enterprise Center Incubator help create a synergy among start-up business that is not present at isolated suburban industrial sites.
- **Momentum** - Jobs are coming to the people, not people coming to the jobs. There is currently a 7.4 percent vacancy rate among industrial properties in the region which is a tight market. Available industrial space is at a premium because businesses are moving in.
- **Workforce Training** – The partnerships on workforce training efforts between the City and organizations such as, Lehigh Carbon Community College, the AEDC, the LVEDC, the Lehigh County Technical Institute (LCTI), Lehigh Valley CareerLink, the Literacy Council of the Lehigh Valley, and the Allentown School District offers advantages to businesses.
- **A Sustainable Community** – The practice of redeveloping city-center brownfields is an inherently sustainable practice compared to developing a distant greenfield site. Certain businesses will find this attractive.

Site Conditions: Key Findings

The physical conditions of the Little Lehigh Corridor provide opportunities for enhancements to occur; but also challenges. For a detailed description and a series of maps of site conditions in the Little Lehigh Corridor, please refer to the Existing Conditions Report.

Following is a brief summary of the Little Lehigh Corridor's challenges and strengths:

Challenges

Topography – The deep valley formed by Little Lehigh Creek is a defining feature of the corridor. At up to 100 feet in depth, the side slopes create zones that are too steep to develop on the north side of the valley. On the south side, development is arranged so that the long axis of buildings run parallel to the contours limiting the width of buildings. On the former incinerator site there are a number of steep mounds former by rock that limit the developable area. On a positive note, the steep slopes have not been developed and have remained woodland providing a visual buffer and a corridor for wildlife.

Flood Zones - Flood zones are a major factor for development in the Little Lehigh Corridor and are made up of the floodplain and floodway. Floodplains are the lands that will inundated during a flood event while the floodway includes the stream channel and adjacent areas that carry flows during flooding event. Floodplains cover approximately two-thirds of the land in the Little Lehigh Creek Study Area. More specifically, 100-year floodplains cover approximately 171 acres (half of the corridor), while 500-year floodplains include those areas mapped as 100-year floodplains plus an additional 56 acres for a total of 227 acres. The vast majority of these areas are located in the valleys associated with Little Lehigh Creek and Jordan Creek. Development is permitted, yet highly regulated, within the 100-year floodplain in Allentown. Also located in the Study Area are approximately 78 acres of floodway. Land use and floodplain regulations prohibit development in floodways in Allentown.

Environmental Concerns - As is common in communities with a legacy of industrial use, the Little Lehigh Corridor has numerous sites that are known to have, or are suspected of having, soil contamination (brownfields). The specific contaminants, and amounts of contamination, vary from site to site as do the actions needed for remediation. The uncertainty of duration and cost of the remediation process can be a deterrent to reuse of these sites. Each site must be tested and an action proposed that will make the site safe for reuse. Fortunately there are federal and state programs that provide incentives for developers to remediate and reuse brownfield sites.

Substandard Development - One concern that can deter redevelopment efforts is that there are areas in the Little Lehigh Corridor that are unattractive and that feel unsafe to visitors. It will be important to address these issues if the area is to experience the renaissance that is envisioned. Specific locations include the section of Lehigh Street from Auburn Street north to Little Lehigh Creek which has a number of deteriorated buildings and an auto salvage yard, Union Street where heavy industrial buildings are not buffered from the street and South Tenth Street where the sidewalks and fencing are in poor condition.

Truck Access – In most of the Little Lehigh corridor access for vehicles is good, however, there are areas where it can be a challenge for trucks with trailers. The bridge on South Tenth Street over Little Lehigh Creek is narrower than the road on either side. When an oversized truck crosses it, police must assist by controlling traffic since the truck must occupy the entire width of the bridge reducing it to a single lane. Considering the size of the industrial spaces on South Tenth and the amount of trucking necessary to support them, it would beneficial to address this situation by widening the bridge. However, until a structural analysis of the bridge is completed, the extent of work necessary to widen the bridge will not be fully known.

Strengths

Proximity to Workforce – This is clearly one of the major assets to promote when marking the corridor to industries. There are large residential districts to the north south and west of the corridor making it easy for employees to get to work – a benefit to the employer and employee. And with the Little Lehigh Corridor being located in the center of the City, there is a vast workforce available within easy walking and bicycling distance as well as public transit, and a short drive time.

Proximity to Parkland – One of the features that make the Little Lehigh Corridor a place where a business would like to stay or to locate at is the parkland that currently runs along Little Lehigh Creek. Fountain Park offers recreational opportunities, attractive spaces and conveys the idea that the City cares about its open space assets and maintains amenities for its residents.

Available Land and Buildings – There are numerous sites available for businesses to locate within the Little Lehigh Corridor. The types of available space includes vacant land and land with vacant or underutilized buildings. Though each of the sites will require an investment of time and money to make ready for occupancy, there is space that is available to lease or purchase right now.

Utilities – The Little Lehigh Corridor has an advantage for industrial development over some greenfield sites that have yet to be developed. Utilities, with capacity, are currently available. Both water and sewer mains run parallel to Little Lehigh Creek with numerous branch lines extending outward. Utilities are ready for hook up.

Trails and Bike Routes – There is a trail running through most of Fountain Park and there are plans to extend it westward to connect with the Lehigh Parkway Trail. This provides an opportunity for workers to commute and to recreate. In addition Martin Luther King Jr. Drive has a newly stripped shared right-of-way (sharrow) providing continuous access for cyclists.

Proximity to Downtown – Being in close proximity to downtown with its new ice arena, the Literacy Center and the Lackawanna Carbon Community College is a benefit to businesses and employees. There is also access to commercial businesses such as restaurants and shops and to the arts district. In addition, there are ambitious plans for improvements to the riverfront area that will upgrade the value of surrounding lands.



Adjacent land uses are among the Little Lehigh Corridor's top strengths

Little Lehigh Corridor Conceptual Master Plan

A Conceptual Master Plan (Figure 1) was prepared for the Little Lehigh Corridor based on the vision identified by the City, AEDC and the public for the corridor. The plan capitalizes on the many assets that the corridor possesses as well as the physical challenges and strengths. The Plan includes changes to both public and private lands.

Improvements shown on the plan are intended to support efforts to re-industrialize the Little Lehigh Corridor. Improvements include projects that will not only improve the operations of the businesses, but provide aesthetic and quality of life improvements to make the corridor a place where businesses will be proud to be located and workers will want to be.

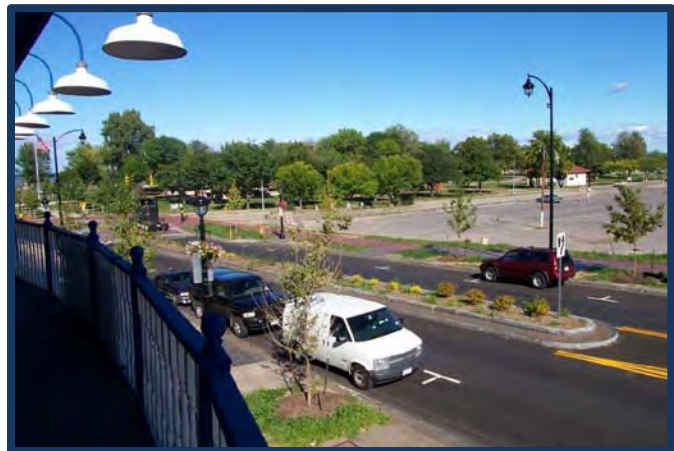
Like many master plans there are improvements shown that are short-term projects which are inexpensive and do not require numerous approvals and permits. There are also improvements that are to be considered long-term projects that require easements or land transfers, large amounts of funds and some political will. It is important to consider that the long-term projects are intended to remind people of the possibilities and to spark the interest of the right person who has the passion to pursue the vision. It is not important that all projects on the plan be implemented but that the projects are all oriented toward a common goal of attracting and retaining industry.

Following is a description of the Conceptual Master Plan components:

Streetscape Improvements

There are three areas on the plan identified for streetscape improvements. The types of improvements will vary according to the specific location but may include removal of damaged fences, curb replacements, sidewalks with accent pavers, street trees, lighting and updated signage.

- **South Tenth Street from Harrison Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Drive** – This is the heart of the “big building district”. There are major opportunities for new businesses to move in and it is important that the appearance of the area is clean and updated and that it feels safe and secure.
- **Lehigh Street between Auburn Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive** – This is an area with several auto-related uses that are unattractive and poorly maintained. Traffic on this road is likely to increase with the opening of the new arena and its appearance is important. It will be important that this area create a positive image for the city and for the corridor.
- **Union Street from Walnut Street to South Third Street** – This section of road has a high volume of traffic but it is strictly industrial in nature with no attempts made to improve its appearance. With upgrades to the nearby riverfront planned, it is important to consider the appearance of this area.



Street upgraded with lighting, planted median, and unit paver sidewalks

Gateways

Gateway are intended to identify the Little Lehigh Industrial Corridor to vehicles passing through. They call attention to the fact that there is such a district and point out that the City embraces its industrial legacy. Gateways should be designed using materials that celebrate the industrial heritage of the area and may include a lighted sign panel, a foundation wall and a landscaped bed.

Gateways have been identified on South Tenth Street at Harrison Street and at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. There are also gateways on Lehigh Street at the intersections of Auburn Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.



Arts District Gateway Feature – Carmel, Indiana

Potential Bus Stop

The number of bus stops in the study area is very limited. Currently there are no bus stops along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. As businesses move in and existing business become more successful and hire more staff, it will be important to provide workers with a convenient bus stops so that there is an alternative to driving personal vehicles. For an added character, shelters at bus stops could be custom designed to reflect the industrial heritage of the area using materials that reflect that time period or interpretive panels could be located in proximity to the bus stop to inform transit users of the local industrial heritage.

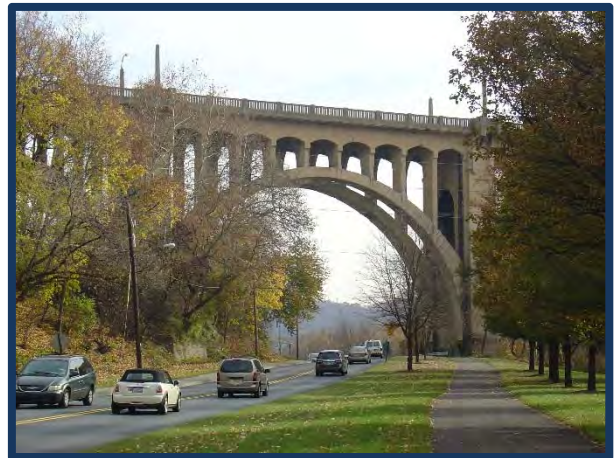


Bus Rapid Transit Stop with unique shelter design

Celebrate Bridge History

The Eighth Street Bridge, officially named the Albertus L. Meyer Bridge, is a defining feature along the Little Lehigh Corridor due to its visibility from numerous vantage points. At the time of its construction, the bridge was reported to be the highest and longest concrete bridge in the world. Repairs to the bridge will begin in the spring of 2014 and are anticipated to last approximately three years.

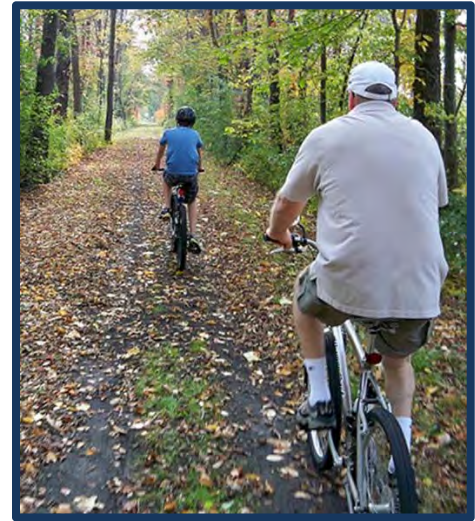
Since the bridge is a prominent feature in the corridor, it should be recognized and celebrated as such. Possible measures could include accent lighting, a series of interpretive panels along the trail below the bridge and the creation of open space on public land below and to the west of the bridge (see Public Open Space).



The Eighth Street Bridge from Martin Luther King Jr. Drive

Public Open Space

There is a five-acre tract of publicly-owned land below and west of the Eighth Street Bridge that could be made available for public use. The land is currently naturalized and is in the floodway which would prevent the development of structures. There is currently no public access to the property and providing convenient access will be the biggest challenge. The Conceptual Master Plan shows a trail running through the property. The trail from Lehigh Street to the east would require an easement through private property unless the land were acquired by the City. The trail to the west would run from South Tenth Street along the rail right of way. Once access is provided the land could be developed as a passive park and fishing access leaving the naturalized character intact. This could be a convenient location for employees at the Bridgeworks Enterprise Center or at one of the Mills Street businesses to recreate.



A trail would provide needed access to the proposed public open space

Code Enforcement Area

The area along Lehigh Street in the Little Lehigh Corridor has a number of auto-related uses that are not well maintained and that negatively impact the character of the area. Specific problems include numerous cars and recreational vehicles parked immediately behind the sidewalk, piles of tires, derelict buildings and a billboard with a broken display panel. This section of Lehigh Street is likely to experience an increase in traffic volume upon completion of the new arena downtown. This will add even greater importance on improving the appearance of this area.

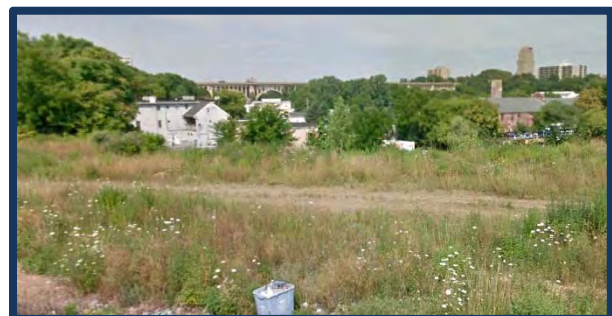


Building with billboard along Lehigh Street

This area should be targeted for an aggressive code compliance enforcement effort. There are several sections of the City’s Property Rehabilitation & Maintenance Code that can be used to compel land owners or occupants to clean up their properties including Article 1753 Nonresidential Standards Environmental Requirements and Article 1754 -Exterior of Structures.

Proposed Industrial Building

There are several locations on the Conceptual Master Plan that show proposed industrial buildings. Most are described in the section on Strategic Sites. In general, proposed industrial buildings are shown on sites that are large enough to allow the installation of 20,000 to 40,000 square foot buildings which were determined to be the most desirable in the Market Analysis. The proposed buildings are located close to the adjacent roadway wherever possible with parking and outdoor storage behind and out of view. Buildings are configured to allow truck access to



Property on Auburn Street proposed to have industrial buildings

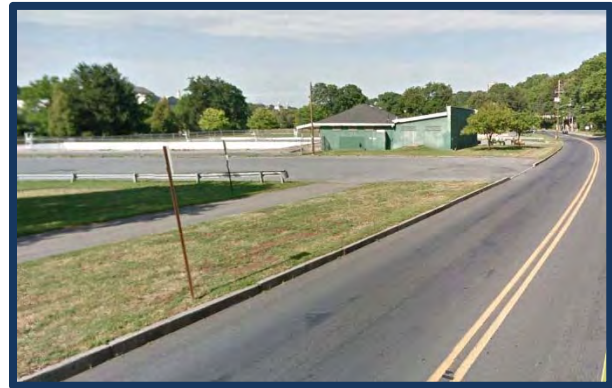
loading docks and some show possible rail sidings.

Proposed Commercial Buildings

Since the purpose of this study is to attract and retain industrial businesses within the Little Lehigh Corridor, the expansion of commercial properties was not a primary objective. However, when investigating possible uses for some of the available sites, the most feasible use was commercial. These uses have been noted on the Conceptual Master Plan.

Proposed Trails

The existing trail in Fountain Park terminates in its westward journey at the pool building leaving a gap between it and the Lehigh Parkway Trail. The gap is currently filled by a combination of sidewalks and shared bicycle/pedestrian lanes. However, it would be a much greater amenity if the existing trail extended across Fountain Park crossing the Little Lehigh at South Tenth Street and proceeded westward along the former rail line to ultimately connect with the Lehigh Parkway Trail. In the event that freight rail service is restored past the Allentown Metal Works building, the trail may be able to encroach on the AEDC-owned Metal Works Property.



The trail at Fountain Park currently terminates near the pool building

Another trail is proposed between South Tenth Street and Lehigh Street. This would provide access through the proposed public open space under the Eighth Street Bridge. This route has some challenges to overcome including requiring access across private properties north of Mill Street. This access could be arranged by creating an easement or by a purchase of all, or a portion of, the properties. Another challenge is that the proposed trail must run along the former rail line between South Tenth and the Eighth Street Bridge. Assuming that the trail does not occupy the railroad right-of-way, leaving open the possibility of re-establishing freight rail service, the trail could be located on a sliver of the property that is occupied by parking along the creek. This land is a legal condominium and such a proposal would require that agreement of multiple private parties.

Proposed Freight Rail

The proposed Barber's Quarry Branch freight rail line is included in the Conceptual Master Plan. Re-establishment of freight rail service would increase the value of several industrial properties including the former incinerator site and the Allentown Metal Works site.



The proposed freight rail line would cross South Tenth Street near the Bridgeworks Enterprise Center

Public Improvement Cost

Following is an opinion of probable costs for public realm projects shown on the Little Lehigh Corridor Conceptual Master Plan. The costs are approximate and assume that there are no costs for land. Please note that if costs for individual items are to be extracted from the spreadsheet below, the contingency items should be added in individually. The costs for improvements to the former incinerator site are on a separate spreadsheet.

Little Lehigh Corridor Public Projects - Opinion of Probable Costs					
Item Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost	Plus 30% Contingency
Streetscape - 8' Sidewalks, New Curb, Trees @ 30' O.C., Lights @ 100' O.C. - Typical					
S Tenth Street -	LF	1,620	\$1,000	\$1,620,000	\$2,106,000
Lehigh Street	LF	1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,300,000
Union Street	LF	1,591	\$1,000	\$1,591,000	\$2,068,300
Gateways - 2 Trees, 4' X 6' Sign w/Masonry Base, 5 shrubs, Lights	EA	4	\$35,000	\$140,000	\$182,000
S Tenth Street Bridge Widening - Remove Deck - Reuse Existing Abutment & Piers - New Deck @ 110' X 38'	SF	4,180	\$250	\$1,045,000	\$1,358,500
Freight Railroad Tracks - Use Former Rail Base - New Ties, Rails and Stone	LF	8,929	\$250	\$2,232,250	\$2,901,925
Trail - 10' Wide, Asphalt Surface - Includes Misc. Clearing and Grading					
End of Existing Trail, Across Fountain Park to S Tenth Street Bridge	LF	1,028	\$70	\$71,960	\$93,548
South Side of Creek - S Tenth Street East to Lehigh Street	LF	2,710	\$70	\$189,700	\$246,610
South Side of Creek - S Tenth Street west to Fifteenth Street Bridge	LF	3,251	\$70	\$227,570	\$295,841
Interpretive Feature Under Eighth Street Bridge	EA	1	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$32,500

Little Lehigh Creek Industrial Corridor

City of Allentown, PA

Conceptual Master Plan

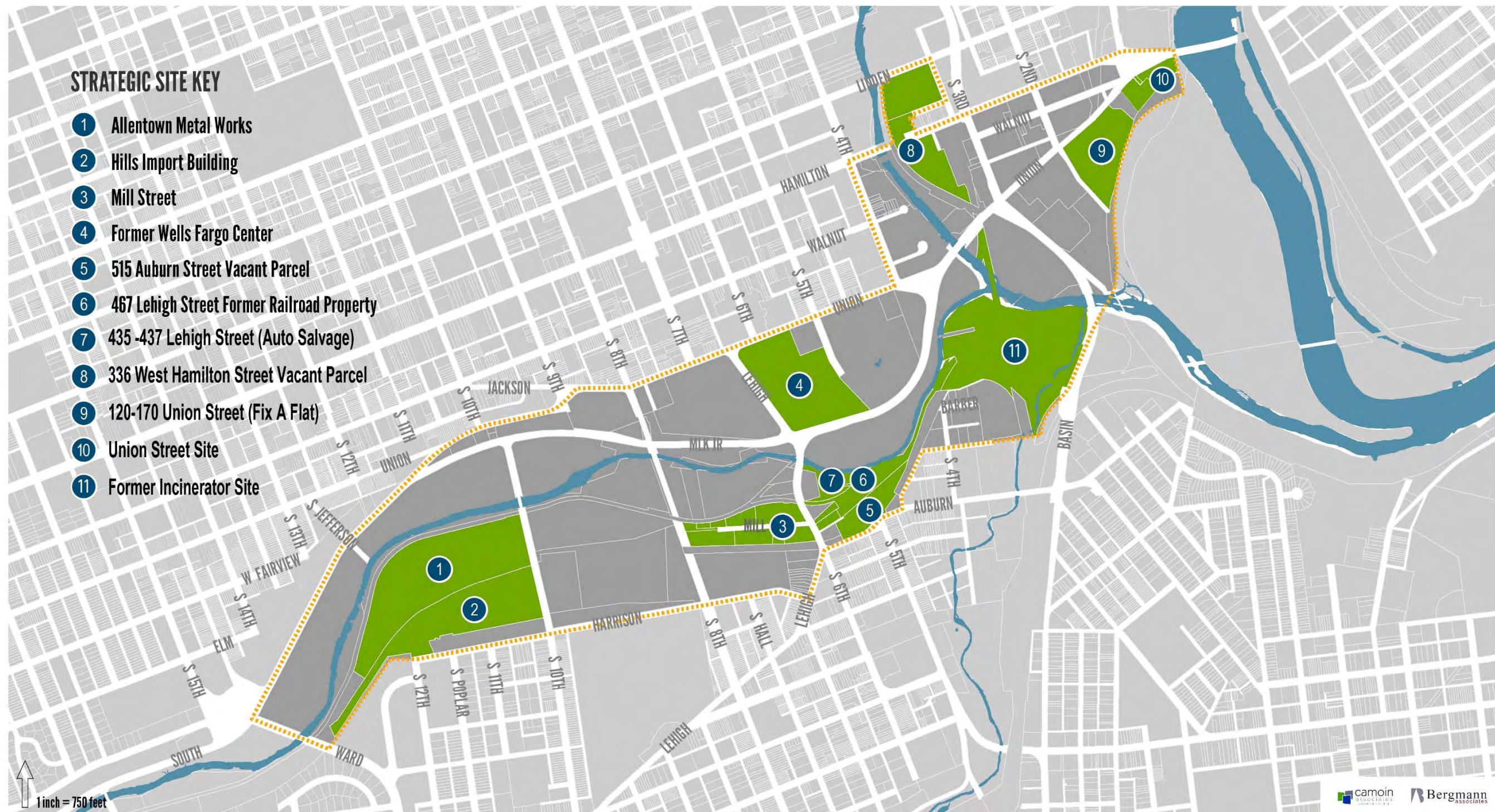


Little Lehigh Creek Industrial Corridor Master Plan

CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PA

GIC SITES

Strategic Sites



STRATEGIC SITE KEY

- 1 Allentown Metal Works
- 2 Hills Import Building
- 3 Mill Street
- 4 Former Wells Fargo Center
- 5 515 Auburn Street Vacant Parcel
- 6 467 Lehigh Street Former Railroad Property
- 7 435 -437 Lehigh Street (Auto Salvage)
- 8 336 West Hamilton Street Vacant Parcel
- 9 120-170 Union Street (Fix A Flat)
- 10 Union Street Site
- 11 Former Incinerator Site

Strategic Sites

Strategic Sites are those that present the greatest opportunity for redevelopment. They are a refinement of the list of Vacant and Underutilized Parcels which were identified based on meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Strategic location;
- Public ownership;
- Adequacy and availability of infrastructure;
- Location in an incentive zone (see the map in the Existing Conditions Report);
- Potential to attract a viable industrial use; and/or
- Potential to catalyze growth in the vicinity of the site

To sort through candidates for the list of Strategic Site, the consulting team prepared an initial list of potential sites which was discussed with the City and AEDC staff to better understand whether each met the criteria above and its potential for redevelopment. Following this refinement, the following list of nine Strategic Sites was prepared:

1. Allentown Metal Works
2. Hill's Imports Building
3. Mill Street Area
4. 265 Lehigh Street – Former Wells Fargo Center
5. 501 Auburn Street - Vacant Parcel
6. 465 Lehigh Street – Former Rail Property
7. 435- 437 Lehigh Street (Auto Salvage)
8. 336 Hamilton Street Vacant Parcel
9. 120-170 Union (Fix A Flat)
10. Union Street Site
11. Former Incinerator Site

Each Strategic Site has its own strengths and challenges and each has its own unique recommendations. On the following pages are a description of each site along with the recommendations that would create the greatest benefit for the City of Allentown and the individual property owner.

1. ALLENTOWN METAL WORKS

Existing Conditions

This 17.5-acre site was the clearest choice for inclusion in the list of Strategic Sites due to its recent acquisition by the AEDC with the intent to redevelop it for an industrial use. The property includes several unoccupied structures with over 300,000 square feet of building space that were most recently occupied by Allentown Metal Works. There is the potential for freight rail service (via the proposed Barber’s Quarry Branch Line) to the site. The property is in the Enterprise Zone and the Keystone Opportunity Zone. It is zoned General Industrial (I3) and the 100-year flood elevation is 263 feet which is about ten feet below finish floor elevation.

Currently the AEDC is completing necessary work on the site that will reduce the amount of time it will take to make the site “move in ready”. This includes completing a Phase II Environmental Assessment and initial remediation.

Recommendations

- **Survey the Building and Site** – Surveys will be a valuable tool for developers to plan and quantify building and site modifications.
- **Provide Concept Plans** – A sample concept plan will allow interested parties to better understand the potential re-use scenario.
- **Complete Remediation** - An assessment is underway which will characterize the environmental issues. AEDC will then proceed with remediation in order to prepare the building for a new user.
- **Secure the Building** – Sealing the building from the elements by repairing/replacing the roofing, windows and other cladding.
- **Rezone as I2 – Limited Industrial** – This will allow a broad range of industrial uses but excludes commercial and “heavy” uses.
- **Market for Industrial Use** – With the steps above the site’s value will be greatly enhanced and marketing can occur.
- **Provide Freight Rail** – When a threshold of potential rail users is reached, service can be provided.



2. HILL'S IMPORT BUILDING

Existing Conditions

This site is the southern neighbor to the Allentown Metal Works site. Similar to the Metal Works, this was once part of the Mack Truck factory. It has several buildings that occupy approximately 265,000 square feet. The property is zoned General Industrial (I3) and is located in both the Enterprise and the Keystone Opportunity Zones. Though the 11.6-acre site is privately-owned and occupied, it is included as an underutilized property due to the small number of jobs that are provided by Hill's Imports (Hill's Enterprises), the business that occupies it. The building is available and is currently listed with a commercial real estate broker.

Recommendations:

- **Work with the Owner to Intensify the Use** – The City and the building owner have a common interest in seeing the building reach full occupancy. The owner would benefit from profits from renting, leasing or sale of the property and the City benefits from jobs for residents and an expanding tax base.
- **Rezone as I2 – Limited Industrial** – This will allow a broad range of industrial uses but excludes commercial and “heavy” uses.
- **Provide Freight Rail** - When the threshold of potential users is reached, service can be extended



3. MILL STREET AREA

Existing Conditions

Mill Street is a short dead-end segment of road running to the west off Lehigh Street toward the Eighth Street Bridge. This is an approximately six-acre area with a number of small parcels and mostly lower-value buildings with auto-related uses including auto and recreational vehicles sales, auto repair and an auto supply warehouse. For the purposes of planning, the Mill Street area forms a single strategic site. The parcels are all zoned Business/Light Industrial (B/LI) and they are all in the Allentown Enterprise Zone. Part of the area is within the 100 Year flood zone which is at elevation 261 in this area. Mill Street itself is at elevation 250 to 254 feet. Any new building in this area would need to be elevated several feet above the existing grade.

Recommendations

- **Rezone as I2 – Limited Industrial** – This will allow a broad range of industrial uses but excludes commercial and “heavy” uses.
- **Approach Land Owners About a Collective Sale** – The City and AEDC may be able to convince all property owners on Mill Street to sell provided that they are fairly compensated and that they can continue operations in an alternate location (see below). See the discussion on Land Assembly for more on this topic.
- **Offer Alternative Sites** – Key to the success of a collective buy out is to provide an alternative location for the businesses that meets their needs equal to or better than their current location.
- **Seek An Industrial User(S)** – Once cleared, Mill Street will offer a large parcel of undeveloped land for an industrial user.
- **Provide Freight Rail Access** – This would greatly add to the value of the land along Mill Street.



4. 265 LEHIGH STREET – FORMER WELLS FARGO CENTER

Existing Conditions

This prominent site has a 71,100 square-foot office building which has been used as a call center by various companies. Most recently, the Pennsylvania School of Business occupied much of the building. The business school closed in January of 2014 leaving space available in the building. The building is listed with a commercial real estate broker as having space for lease. The building has had multiply tenants and it is likely another tenant will move into the space that is currently available. The site is 10 acres and has 465 parking spaces which is much more than necessary for most businesses leaving a surplus of space available on the site. The property is zoned Central Business District (B2) and it is included in Allentown’s Enterprise Zone. The southern portion of the site is within the 100 year flood zone which is between elevations 260 and 261 feet. Parking could remain in the flood zone and new building could be located on the northern half of the parcel.

Recommendations:

- **Work with Owner to Divide Parcel** – It may be in the property owner’s best interest to maximize the use of the property. By subdividing, the unused portion could be developed.
- **Rezone the Open Portion to BLI – Business/Light Industrial** - This would allow an industrial use or a variety of commercial uses.
- **Seek an Industrial User for the New Parcel** – While commercial uses would be permitted with the proposed zoning, industrial uses often provide the greatest number of jobs



5. 501 AUBURN STREET - VACANT PARCEL

Existing Conditions

This vacant 2.8-acre site offers a sweeping view to the northwest, past the auto salvage yard that lies on the parcel below, to the Little Lehigh valley beyond. Though it is zoned Business/Light Industrial (B/LI), it is adjacent to residential uses to the south. Aerial photos reveal that the site is being filled to bring the elevation up to the level of Auburn Street. In addition to the Auburn Street access there is a narrow, single-lane road that runs between two buildings along Lehigh Street. The parcel is within the City’s Enterprise Zone. The site was recently signed as being for sale or available for lease. The northern portion of the parcel is within the 100 year flood zone which is at elevation 259 feet in this area. The elevations on the site range from 252 to 282 feet.

Recommendations:

- **Work with Owner or the owners Real Estate Agent to Find an Industrial User** – The property owner is interested in selling and the City and AEDC may be able to assist by pairing an interested business owner with the land owner.
- **Rezone as I2 – Limited Industrial** – This will allow a broad range of industrial uses but excludes commercial and “heavy” uses.



6. 465 LEHIGH STREET – FORMER RAIL PROPERTY

Existing Conditions

This 3.5-acre City-owned property is located adjacent to an auto salvage yard. Currently the auto salvage business has located their scrap cars over much of the parcel. By allowing the land to be occupied by scrap vehicles, which have been known to cause soil contamination, the City may be faced with cleanup costs. The proposed freight rail line bisects this site. If the freight line is not rebuilt, this would be a viable parcel for a business. It has a narrow access directly off Lehigh Street and any buildings would need to be located off the street. Though the parcel is lengthy, it is 150-feet in width providing adequate space for some businesses. The property is zoned Business/Light Industrial (B/LI) and it is included in Allentown’s Enterprise Zone. The entire site is within the 100 year flood plain which runs between elevations of 258 and 260 feet here. By comparison, the existing elevations ranges between 256 and 248 feet. Any new building would have to be significantly elevated. If combined with the auto salvage yard property to the north, one larger more usable site could be created.

Recommendations:

- **Work with the Auto Salvage Owner to clear the Property** – The land will need to be open for any type of reuse.
- **Wait for Decision on Freight Rail** - Leave the parcel open until it is determined whether the freight rail line will run through the site. Any development prior to this decision will complicate the rail extension determination.
- **Rezone as I2 – Limited Industrial** – This will allow a broad range of industrial uses but excludes commercial and “heavy” uses.





7. 435 LEHIGH STREET

Existing Conditions

This parcel is approximately two acres in size that is occupied by an auto salvage business. The land lies along the south bank of Little Lehigh Creek behind a large historic building that contains a number of auto-related uses. The site has very little frontage along Lehigh Street. Access to the site is across the City-owned property to the south (see previous strategic site). The limited frontage also limits the visual impact of the auto salvage yard. However, this may not be the ideal use for this land, which is in the 100-year floodplain, since scrap vehicles have been known to contaminate soils with petroleum and heavy metals. The property is zoned Business/Light Industrial (B/LI) and it is included in Allentown’s Enterprise Zone. The entire site is within the 100 year flood plain which runs between elevations of 258 and 260 feet here. Existing grades are between 250 and 254 feet.

Given that access to this site is across City-owned land, the City should consider acquiring the parcel and combining it with the parcel to the south to create one larger, more usable site.

Recommendations:

- **Rezone as I2 – Limited Industrial** – This will allow a broad range of industrial uses but excludes commercial and “heavy” uses.
- **Approach the Land Owner about a Sale** – The City and AEDC may be able to purchase the adjacent parcel in order to combine them with this City-owned parcel. See the discussion on Land Assembly for more on this topic.
- **Seek an Industrial User for the New Parcel** – Seek a user that may benefit from the visibility that this site affords.
-

8. 336 WEST HAMILTON STREET VACANT PARCEL

Existing Conditions

The southern portion of this site is a vacant parcel once used as a parking area for the unoccupied Adelaide Silk Mill building which is on the parcel just to the north across Hamilton Street. There is a roadway between the former parking area and the former mill below the Hamilton Street Bridge which crosses Jordan Creek just to the west. The Adelaide Mill was once one of the largest silk mills in the world and was recently purchased by a developer though specific plans have not been revealed. The buildings that make up the former mill would be a good candidate for conversion to a mixed-use facility. If that occurs, it is not known if the former parking area would be needed or whether it could be redeveloped. The 3.4-acre site is zoned Central Business District (B2) with a Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay. The parcel is included in the Allentown Enterprise Zone. Nearly the entire site is within the 100 year flood elevation which is at 256 feet. The existing grade is between 248 and 250 feet.

Recommendations:

- **Maintain the Current Zoning** – With its Hamilton Street frontage, this property is more suited to a commercial or mixed use development than industrial.
- **Market Both Halves of the Property for Mixed Use** – The Adelaide Silk Mills building would be particularly well suited to a commercial ground floor with residential above.



9. 120-170 UNION (FIX A FLAT)

Existing Conditions

This site is 6.2 acres and includes three small single-story buildings currently occupied by a business called Fix A Flat. The flat, open site is bisected by a freight rail line that could be modified to include a siding. The use of both sides of the tracks on this site would likely require an agreement with the rail line for a crossing. A database search did not confirm if there are environmental concerns but due to the history of heavy industry in the area, it is possible that there are issues. The site has excellent visibility from Union Street. The parcel is zoned Limited Industrial (I2) and it is in the Allentown Enterprise Zone. Most of the site is at the limit of the 100-year flood plain which is at elevation 254 feet on this site. The existing grades are between 252 and 256 feet.

Recommendations:

- **Work with the Owner on Environmental Issues** – The City or AEDC may be able to provide some technical assistance that will encourage the owner to characterize the environmental issues (if any) that would deter future development.
- **Work with the Owner to find an Industrial User** – The City or AEDC may be able to assist the owner with finding the best user for the property.
- **Explore the possibility of combining this site with three sites to the east** – Collectively, these sites along Union Road could be combined into one large site



10. UNION STREET SITE

Existing Conditions

Located along the west bank of the Lehigh River, this 1.8 acre site is actually two parcels combined. The eastern parcel is City-owned property that is zoned Parkland (P) though it is not currently used as such. The western parcel, 104-110 Union, is privately owned land currently occupied by a building with a number of auto-related uses. This parcel is zoned I2, Limited Industrial.

Without combining the parcels, the City-owned portion may not have a viable access route since the frontage is blocked by a concrete barrier. However, there is an easement shown on a site survey which should be investigated further as a possible access route.

By combining these parcels, one larger, more usable site is created for an industrial user. The site may be suitable for an industrial business that can benefit from the visibility from Union Street near the bridge. Though it is located along the river, the site is not within the 100-year floodplain.

Recommendations:

- **Rezone as I2 – Limited Industrial** – This will allow a broad range of industrial uses but excludes commercial and “heavy” uses.
- **Approach the Private Land Owners about a Sale** – The City and AEDC may be able to purchase the adjacent parcel in order to combine them with this City-owned parcel. See the discussion on Land Assembly for more on this topic.
- **Seek an Industrial User for the New Parcel** – Seek a user that may benefit from the visibility that this site affords.



Land Assembly

There were two strategic sites described previously (Mill Street and 533 West Hamilton) that would benefit from the addition of a group of adjacent land parcels into one in order to create a site with greater potential for development. Following is a description of land assembly.

What is land assembly?

Land assembly is a process of forming a single site from a number of properties, typically for economic development purposes. In some communities - especially in dense urban areas - an individual site may not be conducive to the type of development or redevelopment desired by the community. Working with property owners and other stakeholders to combine contiguous properties can create larger parcels of land more favorable for development projects.

Why should communities assemble land?

From a developer's perspective, development projects are all about time to market. Assembling land one piece at a time is most often a very lengthy process; especially when the subject properties have environmental or legal challenges associated with prior use. This is a very costly process for a developer to undertake on their own and, as a result, they are typically attracted to larger tracts of undeveloped land on the fringes of developed areas. Through strategic land assembly, communities can position properties in their urban core to appeal to the development community and be able to attract a wide range of development.

What is the process?

Typical steps involved in the land assemble process are summarized below.

1. **Build a team:** Land assembly requires a strong team that can work together throughout the process. Teammates should include developers, real estate professionals, economic development professionals, lenders, and public partners.
2. **Inventory the property:** Most areas identified for possible land assembly include both publically and privately held properties. Because publically held land is easier to work with, map publically held properties first and then identify adjacent and nearby privately held properties that are necessary to complete the site. Once the sites that make up the redevelopment area are identified, document who the property owners are and any known barriers to redevelopment for each site – this is the first test of feasibility.
3. **Develop a plan:** A sound redevelopment plan outlining clear direction for redevelopment of the properties is essential. To raise support and buy-in for the project, involve the development team and property owners in the development of the plan. Conduct market research to guide the strategy set forth in the plan.



Properties on Mill Street could be combined using Land Assembly Techniques

4. Form a land bank: The purpose of a land bank is to purchase properties for future development. Land is “banked” until there is an increase in value or a feasible development plan is identified. This is a great tool in areas with many vacant and abandoned properties. Each state has different rules for land banking, a summary of Pennsylvania’s legislation enabling municipalities to create land banks can be found at: http://www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/cascade/82/03_pa-legislature-enables-municipalities-to-create-land-banks.cfm
5. Acquire the land: Private land assembly agreements can take many shapes, including land trusts, limited partnerships, joint ventures, and community cooperatives. With a redevelopment plan and legal structure for purchasing the property in place, bring landowners together to sign a contract to pool their land. In some cases, eminent domain may be necessary but may be avoided by engaging property owners early, including them in the planning process, and finding ways to fairly compensate them.
6. Market to developers: Issue a request for proposals (RFP) and market the land bank and the redevelopment plan to the development community. Rely on property owners and other members of the team to help with the marketing effort by demonstrating support for the project and providing access to their networks.

Innovative Approaches

Land assembly is a challenging process that requires creativity, negotiation and a good deal of problem solving. A unique tactic for areas with a lot of privately held land is an equity investment approach. This approach involves the creation of a development entity, such as a limited liability corporation, to acquire control of the assembled properties. Landowners receive shares in the future development in return for selling their property to the development entity.

Additional details on the benefits and challenges of this approach can be found here: <http://drcog.org/indexpf.cfm?page=WebBasedWorkshops>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/conplan/foreclosure/landbanks.cfm>

Center for Community Progress: <http://www.communityprogress.net/about-pages-4.php>

Smart Growth America: <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/issues/revitalization/land-banking/>

Land Banks and Land Banking: http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/ccp_land_banks.pdf

Land Assemble Districts: Harvard Law Review: http://www.harvardlawreview.org/issues/121/april08/Article_1487.php

Former Incinerator Site

The final Strategic Site, the former incinerator site is one that warrants a more detailed analysis. Following is a detailed inventory and reuse concept

The City of Allentown and the AEDC have been hoping to find a developer for the former incinerator site for a number of years. In spite of some special challenges, the site has much to offer with approximately seven acres of developable land, a strategic location near downtown Allentown and it is located in both the Allentown Enterprise Zone and the Keystone Opportunity Zone. **This study provides an analysis of the site's opportunities and constraints and offers a suggested reuse that can be presented to interested developers.**

SITE CONDITIONS

This is a 19-acre vacant site located between Basin Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive that is owned by the AEDC. This property has remained vacant for a number of years due to some challenges. However, the former incinerator site also has a number of advantages that make it a desirable location for a new industrial facility.

Access

The biggest challenge for the redevelopment of this site is the current lack of vehicle access. At one time, the site had access on the east side from Basin Street but the road was lowered in this section to create a railroad underpass, creating a large embankment where site access had been.

Currently access is available through a locked gate on a residential street – Barber Street. Past the gate, a road passes through an opening cut out of a rock mound to provide railroad access. The Barber Street entry would not be suitable for access to an industrial site due to the need for truck traffic which would negatively impact the residential properties. In addition, the gap through the rock mound walls is not currently adequate in width for a two-lane road.

To address the lack of vehicle access, AEDC developed a concept to construct a bridge across Little Lehigh Creek, along with an access road from South Fourth Street at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The AEDC is



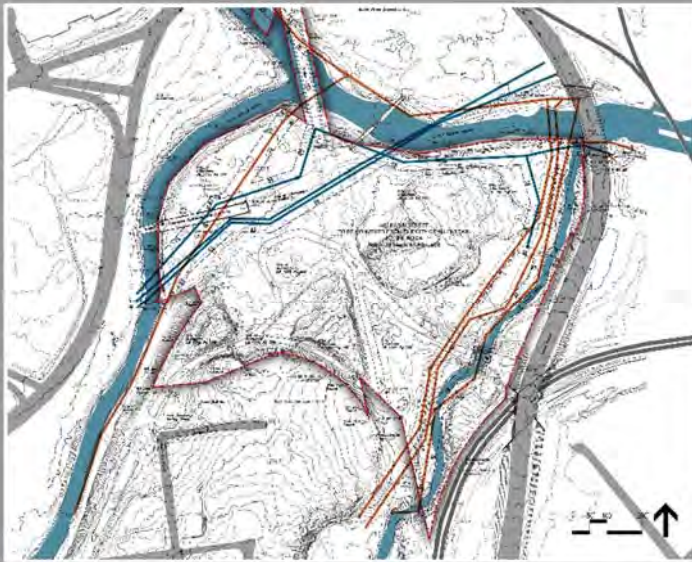
The Former Incinerator Site



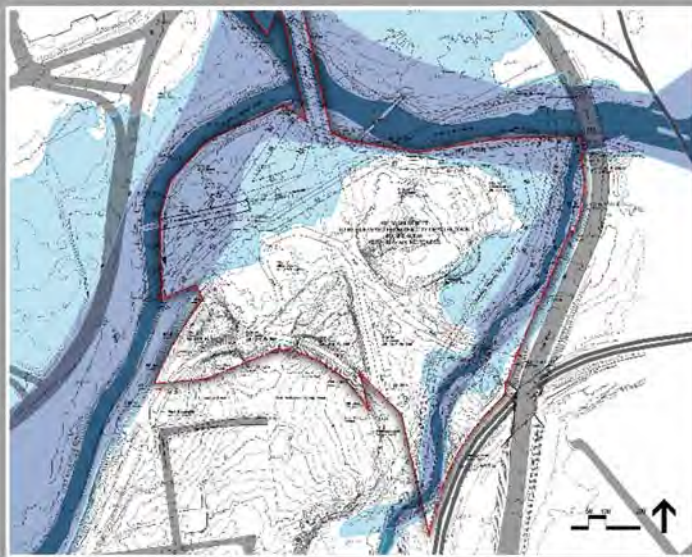
Site Access from Barber Street

considering permitting the placement of the bridge with DEP and design of the intersection improvements with PennDOT as part of an incentive package for development.

The new bridge concept would require a new support pier (or piers) in the creek. The pier(s) will concern the regulatory agencies since placing a pier would result in an increased flood elevation upstream, albeit a small one. To offset this, the existing piers for an abandoned rail line about one hundred yards upstream could be removed mitigating the effects of the new piers so that no net increase in the flood elevation would occur.



Sanitary Sewer Lines in Orange and Water Lines in Blue



Floodway in Purple - 100-Year Floodplain in Blue

Utilities

A topographic survey of the property was prepared by the City, dated 2008. The survey shows several sanitary sewer and water lines crossing the site. Fortunately, these lines are located near the proposed rail line and would not significantly reduce the amount of buildable space.

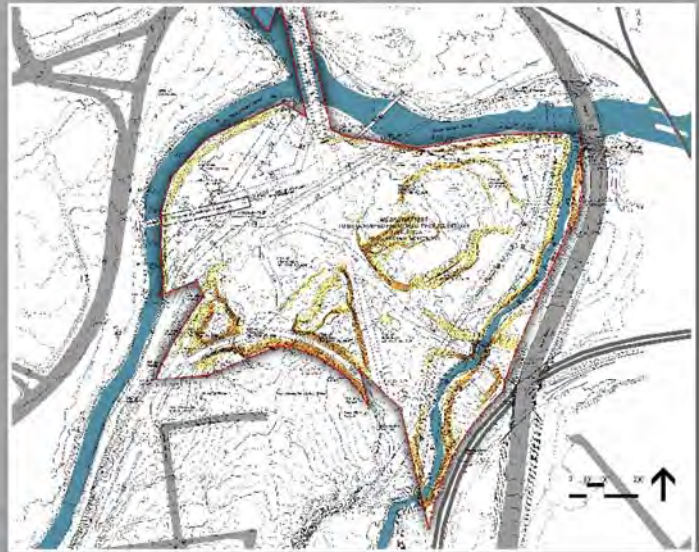
Floodplain and Floodway

The floodplain and floodway occupy a portion of the former incinerator site along Little Lehigh and Trout Creek. As previously mentioned in this report, the floodway is where flowing water occurs during a flood. No buildings may be constructed in this zone. On the 19-acre former incinerator site, 5.8 acres are floodway.

The floodplain is the area inundated by water during a flood event. It is possible to build in the floodplain, but with certain restrictions. The finished floor elevation of the habitable portion of a building must be 18 inches above the 100-year flood elevation.

Topography

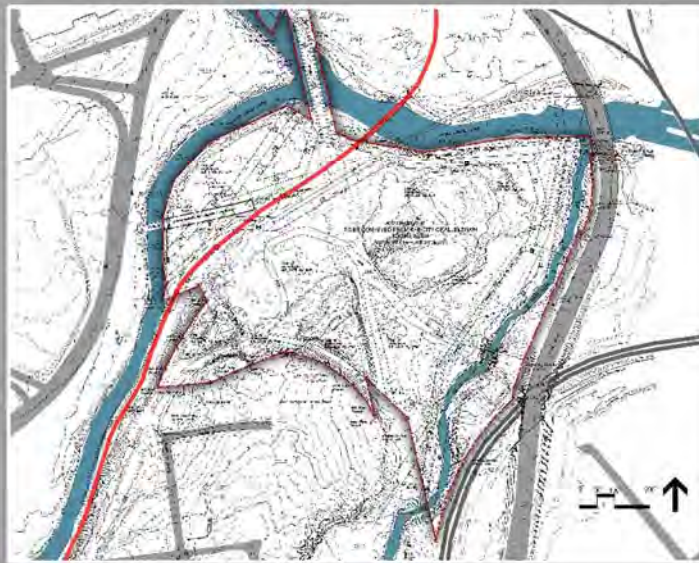
Another challenge to redeveloping the site is the steep rock mounds that are located in the central portion of the site. They are steep enough to restrict development and would be expensive to remove. The mounds can be difficult to see in person at the site due to the dense vegetation but they are apparent on the topographic map and they cover approximately four acres. While the slopes present a challenge to developing the site, they can be re-graded and moved; but at a cost. Too much re-grading will be expensive and will diminish the practicality of developing this site.



Very Steep Slopes in Orange and Medium Slopes in Yellow

Potential Freight Rail

The former incinerator site has an opportunity for freight rail service from the proposed Barber’s Quarry Branch Line. As previously described in this report, there is a proposal to restore the former line in order to increase the attractiveness of several industrial site along its route. The proposed line would use an existing railroad bridge over Little Lehigh Creek, provided that some minor improvements are made. The route of the proposed line is shown in red at right. A siding could easily be added to the proposed railroad line in order to serve a new industry on the site.



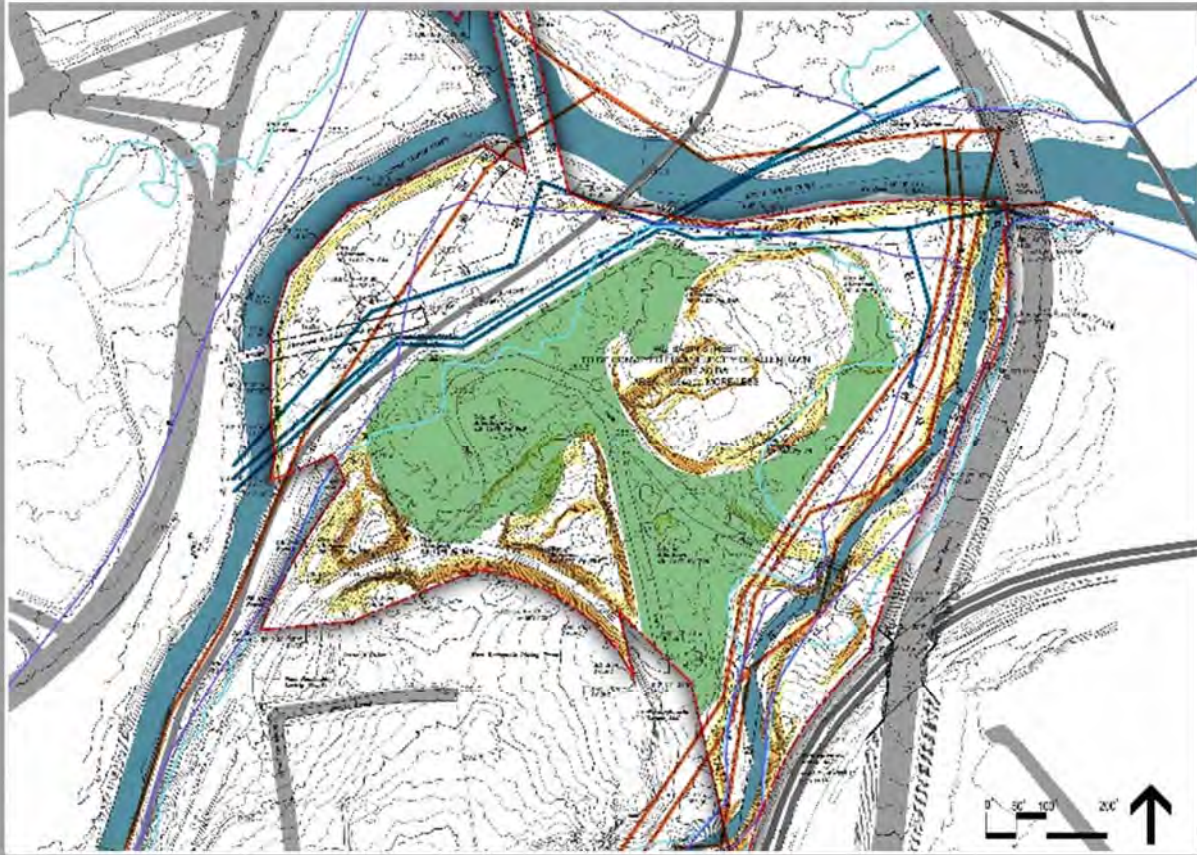
Potential Freight Rail Access in Red



Bridge over Little Lehigh Creek Proposed for Reuse

Developable Area

When the utilities, floodplains and floodways, potential freight rail and steep slopes are overlaid on the map, the developable area is identified. The resulting area is approximately seven acres of developable space. However, there is a challenge presented by the irregular hourglass shape of the area. Any future development that uses the entire developable area will essentially be divided into two portions.



The Developable Area in Green is Approximately Seven Acres

Environmental Concerns

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted in 2002 by LVLRI. The ESA identified the following Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs):

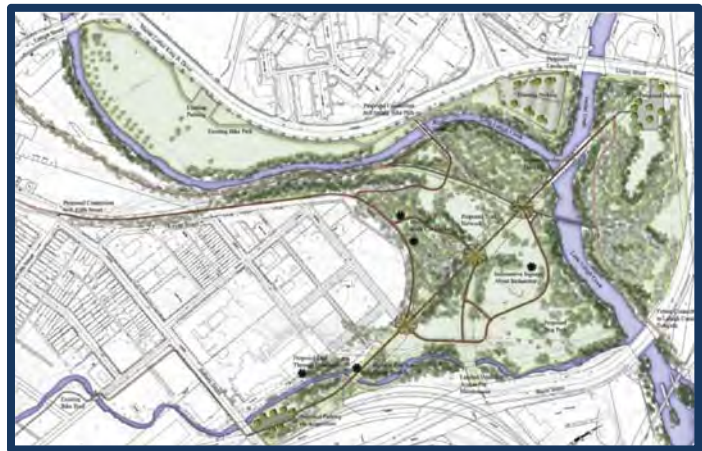
- Former railroad usage on the site. Several rail lines and spurs are present at the site.
- Eastern portion of the site was previously owned by Atlantic Oil Company.
- An abandoned tank located near the paved unloading area at the center of the site.
- Former machining operations on the site. L.F. Grames & Sons operated on the northwestern portion of the site.
- Past disposal practices identified during site reconnaissance and interviews indicate illegal dumping may have occurred.
- Adjacent properties consist of RJ Corman site, UGI Manufacturing gas Plant, and the Allentown Bethlehem Gas Company.

A Site Assessment Report was completed in 2004 by Synergy Environmental Inc. Soil samples were collected from soil borings. Tests of the samples identified contamination in the soil, however, the limits of the contamination and the method to contain or remediate will not be understood until further investigations are done.

The site was used by the city as a location to dump leaves. According to an engineering study of the site that was performed in 1984: “Soil conditions on the incinerator site are affected by years of leaf and debris dumping placed in an abandoned quarry with accumulations over most of the site from the former Allentown Terminal Railroad tracks to the west and south, which in places is almost 10 feet deep.” Any proposal for reuse of the site should include an assessment of the impact that this may have on current soil conditions.

Future Trails

The former incinerator site is located at the hub of a number of proposed trails and any proposal to develop the site should take this into consideration. In 2005 there was a concept plan developed for Auburn Cross Trails Park showing how the trails could be connected on the site. This proposal was listed among the Priority Trail Projects in the 2010 plan for Allentown’s bicycle and pedestrian network titled ‘Connecting our Communities’. It is important to note that **even if the site is not developed as a park, the trails and trail connections can be located at the site perimeter** leaving room for an industrial use.



*2005 Auburn Cross Trails Park Concept Plan
Note: North is to the left*

Site Conditions Key Findings

In spite of the challenges that are presented to a prospective developer the site has a number of features that would make it desirable to develop:

- **Incentive Zones** – The site is within the Keystone Opportunity Zone and the Enterprise Zone offering a developer a substantial package of incentives.
- **Strategic Location** – The site is not far from Allentown’s city center which currently has number of ongoing projects that are intended to spur a renaissance in downtown living. The site is also in close proximity to residential areas that would be a potential sources of workers.
- **Scenic, Wooded Setting** – The site is covered by dense woods and is located along an attractive trout stream with City parkland on the opposite side of the stream.
- **Rail Access** – There is the potential for freight rail access.
- **Size** – There is approximately seven acres of open, developable land.
- **Trail Access** – Located at the hub of a number of proposed trails, the site will allow workers to easily walk or bicycle to work.

LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

During the course of this project, a number of end uses for the former incinerator site were discussed among the consulting team, with city staff, the project steering committee and the public. Possible uses that were considered included the following:

- **Commercial Use** – This is the least plausible use for the former incinerator site since the elements that make a good commercial property; namely visibility and good access, are not present at this location. No further consideration was given to this use.
- **Residential Use** – This is an option that seems, on the surface, to have some merit. A residential development would not necessarily require the construction of the new bridge since traffic could flow from the south through an existing residential area. If residential lots and building were laid out in a sensitive manner, the large rocks could be an amenity rather than an obstruction. Further, the vegetation and setting would create a quiet, secluded location for homes that would be in close proximity to downtown Allentown.

There are a number of difficulties that would make it challenging to develop the site for residential use. The Site Assessment Report has confirmed that contaminants are present in the soils at the site, though the full extent will not be known until more testing has been completed. What is known is that the requirements for the cleanup of soils are much more rigorous for residential uses than if the site were developed for an industrial use. Given the historic industrial use of the site, it is plausible that there is enough contamination in the soil to make development for residential uses very expensive. In addition, if the proposed freight rail line were to go through the site, it would be in conflict with the residential uses. The railroad would likely have to be fenced off from the homes, however, there would still be impacts from noise. Another difficulty for residential use is that the site is owned by the AEDC with the goal of creating jobs and stimulating the economy for the City of Allentown. A residential development at this site would not directly further this goal.

- **Park Land** - The idea of converting the site into parkland has been brought up in the past. As previously described under the section on future trails, there was a plan developed in 2005 called the Auburn Cross Trails Park Concept which was for a passive park at the site which was a hub for numerous proposed trails. In addition, the 2006 Allentown Parks and Recreation Master Plan had a section on Fountain Park that included text suggesting that *“The former City Incinerator Site should be incorporated into the park (Fountain Park), especially with a network of trails that connects Fountain Park further east, ultimately to Jordan Creek and the Lehigh River, along with the trail on the railroad right of way south of Little Lehigh Creek.”* The plan also suggested that, *“The creation of a dog park facility on the former incinerator site should be explored.”*

The concept for designating the former incinerator site as parkland could be an inexpensive option and a possible improvement over the existing situation. The potential drawback is that parkland is safest when there is good visibility and a reasonable number of users present. Until there are a number of trails crossing the site or there is vehicle access onto the site, it will be a secluded site with the potential to become a security problem. Further, the proposed rail line would diminish the value of the site for use as a park.

The recommended use for the former incinerator site is industrial, for several reasons:

- Environmental cleanup costs would be much less than if the site were developed for a residential use.
- The possibility of freight rail service will increase the value of the land.
- The greatest economic benefit to the City would come from industries that bring jobs and an expanding tax base.
- An industrial development would be able to take advantage of the tax incentives that are available.
- An industrial use would be in compliance with current zoning.

Zoning Changes

The former incinerator site is zoned Business/Light Industrial. Based on the preferred industrial use, the City should consider changing the zoning to I2 – Limited Industrial. This would prevent the commercial uses which are not appropriate for this location and it would prevent heavy industry that an I3 – General Industrial would allow. If another use is preferred, the zoning would need to be adjusted accordingly.

FORMER INCINERATOR SITE - CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

A Conceptual Master Plan was prepared as an example of the type of development that can occur on the site (Figure 3). **Following is a description of the various aspects of the plan:**

Access

The concept shows a new access road extending South Fourth Street southward across Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, forming a four-way intersection. Currently, traffic at the intersection is controlled by a stop sign on South Fourth. The new road would be two way, however the bridge across Little Lehigh Creek is shown as a single lane in order to minimize the cost and because the volume of traffic to this site would be relatively low. The new bridge is shown to be 16-feet which is wide enough for one lane of traffic and striping to include a bike/pedestrian lane on one side.

In order to determine if the intersection of South Fourth Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive would warrant the installation of a traffic control signal, a signal warrant study will need to be performed. This would consider a number of factors such as:

- Total volume of traffic on the intersecting streets
- Volume of traffic throughout the day
- Amount of pedestrian traffic
- Posted speeds
- The presence of school children
- Whether a signal will improve the flow or cause gridlock with adjacent intersections

Once the data above is collected, it would be compared with published traffic signal warrant criteria to determine if a signal is warranted.

Buildings

According to The Allentown Re-Industrialization Study Phase I, the greatest demand for space by unit size in the region's urban areas is 8,000 square feet or less and 20,000 to 80,000 square feet. The Conceptual Master Plan show two industrial buildings on the site; 40,200 and 25,000 square feet in size. This is

necessitated by various site constraints including the topography which creates a narrow gap between two buildable areas preventing the construction of one large building. However, the two buildings could be one owner or separate owners.

Site Layout

The layout of parking and storage yard is bisected by the access road that runs across the center of the site. At the larger building, parking and outdoor storage is shown across the access road. On the building side of the access road there is a loading area with ample room for trucks to turn and back up and a landscape building entrance. At the smaller building, there is also room for a truck loading area, outdoor storage and employee parking. At the perimeter of the site, there is room for the proposed trails that intersect at this location.

In the vicinity of the parking, access road, and buildings, the existing vegetation is cleared except on the steep slopes. The site would retain its naturalized character and will be visually secluded which may be a selling point for certain businesses.



Figure 3 – Former Incinerator Site Conceptual Master Plan

Rail Siding

The Conceptual Master Plan shows the proposed Barber’s Quarry Branch freight rail line. When the rail line is installed, there will be an opportunity for a siding along the proposed industrial building. This will greatly increase the value of the industrial land at this site.

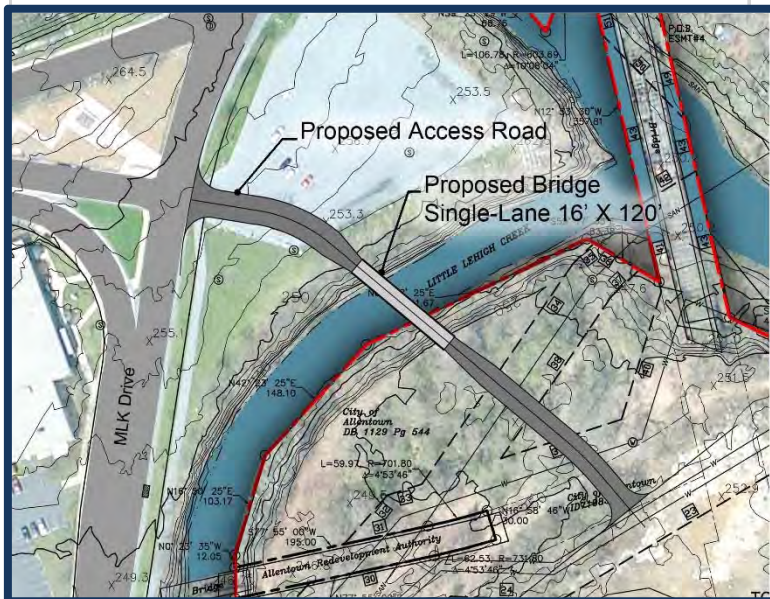
Trails

The former incinerator site is at the hub of a number of planned trails. The trails will not be precluded from being developed in the Conceptual Master Plan below. The land along Little Lehigh and Trout Creeks is floodway and has a number of buried utility lines which restrict development but also leave space for trail construction.

Costs

The cost to develop the site will likely be borne by the individual developer or business that chooses to move in. However, the cost to provide access to the site can be a point of negotiation with the developer or can be paid for by the City or the AEDC. In the estimate and Site Access Concept below, the access road ends 240 feet past the bridge in order to cross the floodway, the utility rights of way and the potential railroad track location. It is just beyond this point that a parking lot or building can be constructed.

Former Incinerator Site Access - Estimated Cost				
Item Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost
New Road 420 LFX 26' Wide - Heavy Duty Asphalt	LF	420	\$325	\$136,500
Intersection Adjustments - Curb, Lighting, Crosswalk, Signage	Lump Sum	1	\$20,000	\$20,000
New Bridge - 120' X 16 (single-lane)	SF	1,920	\$250	\$480,000
Traffic Signal - Four-Way	EA	1	\$100,000	\$100,000
SUB-TOTAL				\$640,000
Design Contingency (20%)				\$128,000
Engineering (15%)				\$96,000
GRAND TOTAL PROJECT COST				\$864,000



Site Access Concept

Next Steps

Assuming that the former Incinerator Site will be developed for an industrial use, the steps to move forward are suggested below:

- **Environmental Site Investigations** – The City and AEDC should retain a consultant to proceed with further analysis to characterize the soil contamination at the site and prepare a Remedial Action Plan. Once a remedy has been selected, the cost associated with the remediation activities can be identified, funds can be identified and once secured, remediation activities can commence. This can be a lengthy process due to the approvals needed and it would be beneficial to begin as soon as feasible.
- **Access Plan** – The City and AEDC can proceed with the design of the access road along with the design of the intersection including the signal warrant study. The goal is to get design approval and identify a more accurate cost.
- **Marketing** – The City and AEDC should consider the timing and approach toward actively marketing the site for industrial user. Once the activities described above are complete, or at least underway, a developer will have more confidence in the value of the site. The name for the site should also be re-considered. The current name (former incinerator site) while accurate, leads one to ponder the environmental issues at the site. Another more attractive name would surely aid the marketing efforts. Names that have been suggested included “The Confluence”, “Three Creeks” and “The Basin Street Site”.