



Division Street Revitalization

A Transportation and Economic Development Plan

Preface

This report on the revitalization of the Division Street Corridor is the product of a six credit Planning Studio course (CRP 9889) in the Master's Program of the Planning and Community Development Department, Temple University. The Planning Studio class is the capstone for the M.S. in Community and Regional Planning degree. This course allows students to integrate the knowledge and skills learned from their core courses and apply them on a real project, with an actual client, to solve a real world planning problem.

Long before the start of the class, Temple faculty solicited project ideas from a variety of government agencies and non-profit organizations, and carefully vetted the prospective projects. Then students selected the projects based on geographic and subject preferences.

The studio course was a 16 week experience that included meetings with the client, stakeholder interviews, site visits and lots of time working in a studio setting with other students and faculty. The class began in January of 2016 and ended with a presentation to faculty and the client in April 2016.

It was the goal of the Planning Studio group to produce a planning document that responded to the needs and wishes of our client (Bureau of Planning, City of Harrisburg), the public interest and the community, while respecting our professional code of ethics and conduct. The group endeavored to produce a product that will contribute to local and regional goals for sustainability, quality of life and social justice.

The main client contact from the City of Harrisburg was Mr. Geoffrey Knight, Planning Director for the Harrisburg Planning Department. Course Director from Temple University was Dr. Jeffrey Doshna, with Mr. David Butcher serving as faculty advisor to the Harrisburg studio group.

Client

The City of Harrisburg
Dr. MLK Jr. Gov't Center
10 North Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Project Team

Corey Brown

Michelle Goddard

Mark Huber

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge and express our thanks to the following people for their contributions in producing this report.

City of Harrisburg

Jackie Parker
*Director of Community & Economic
Development
Department of Community & Economic
Development*

Geoffrey Knight AICP
*Planning Director
Planning Department*

James Spatz
*Urban Planner/Zoning Officer
Planning Department*

Wayne Martin, PE
*City Engineer
Office of the City Engineer*

Temple University

David Butcher
*Planning Studio Advisor
Adjunct Faculty, Department of Planning and
Community Development*

Jeffrey P. Doshna, Ph.D.
*Planning Studio Course Director
Assistant Professor, Department of Planning and
Community Development*

Others

David Morrison
*Executive Director
Historic Harrisburg Association*

William A. Jones
*General Manager
Capital Area Transit (CAT)*

Thomas Posavec, SIOR
*Senior Vice President
Landmark Commercial Realty, Inc.*

Craig W. Bachik, RLA
*Senior Landscape Architect
Navarro & Wright Consulting Engineers*

Executive Summary

Division Street, located in Uptown Harrisburg, can be revitalized through transportation improvements and economic development for the benefit of local residents, the city, and the environment. This plan and its recommendations were guided by the following vision and principles.

Vision Statement:

The Division Street Revitalization will create an improved, multi-modal corridor that promotes economic vitality, strengthens surrounding neighborhoods, and fosters environmental sustainability, utilizing the following principles:

- 1) Improved transportation and streetscape conditions for motor vehicles, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians
- 2) New opportunities for residential and commercial growth at identified catalyst sites
- 3) Increased connections to the surrounding neighborhood and inclusive economic opportunities for nearby residents
- 4) Green infrastructure and sustainable environmental practices

The plan takes an in-depth look at the transportation infrastructure and provides recommendations to transform the corridor into a multimodal boulevard. The plan then reviews the economic status of the corridor and, through the identification of two catalyst sites, provides conceptual ideas and a detailed breakdown of the investment that is needed to revitalize these underutilized properties. Additionally, the plan provides recommendations for broader policies and programs that the city can implement in order to help drive revitalization of the Division Street corridor. The City of Harrisburg is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan. Ideas and concepts identified during this planning process were considered and incorporated into the recommendations for the Division Street corridor.

Key landmarks along the corridor include the Academy Manor Neighborhood, Italian Lake, the Former William Penn High School, Camp Curtin Academy, the Zembo Shrine, and the Uptown Shopping Plaza. The corridor is home to



a diverse population in terms of both income and race. The median household income varies along the corridor from approximately \$20,000 to \$70,000, from east to west. The percentage of the population living below the poverty level, also varies greatly from three percent to 71 percent. The block groups along the corridor range in African American populations from 12 percent to 72 percent and white populations from one percent to 64 percent.

Transportation along the Division Street Corridor

Existing Conditions and Proposed Projects

The Division Street corridor has a mix of both updated and outdated transportation facilities. The street is wide at approximately 46 feet and provides for one lane of traffic in each direction with parking on both sides of the streets. Sidewalks and crosswalks through the corridor vary from recently updated to crumbling and non-existent. The Division Street corridor is also accessible by public transit provided by Capital Area Transit (CAT). Currently, the #3 and #6 buses utilized the corridor with designated stops at the Uptown Shopping Plaza. The following table provides a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the transportation facilities located along Division Street.



Transportation Component	Strengths	Weaknesses
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 30 street lights along the corridor • Lights at 6th Street Intersection have been updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting blocked by trees • Not at a pedestrian scale • Lighting poles and fixtures are not visually appealing
Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks are present in the majority of the corridor • Some areas of sidewalk have been updated and ADA compliant curb ramps installed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk width and conditions vary throughout the corridor • Sidewalk is need of repair or replacement throughout the majority of the corridor • Not ADA compliant • Maintenance by residents not being enforced
Roadway Width	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide width allows for more opportunities to re-configure the roadway without the need to purchase right-of-way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide widths result in speeding • Long areas for pedestrians to cross
Street Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for parking on both sides of street • One lane of traffic in each direction 	
Crosswalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6th Street crosswalks are well maintained and visible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough marked crosswalks • Pedestrians cross in the middle of the roadway • 2nd and 3rd Street crosswalks are faded and hard to see
Bus Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus service is frequent during the weekdays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one bus shelter along corridor

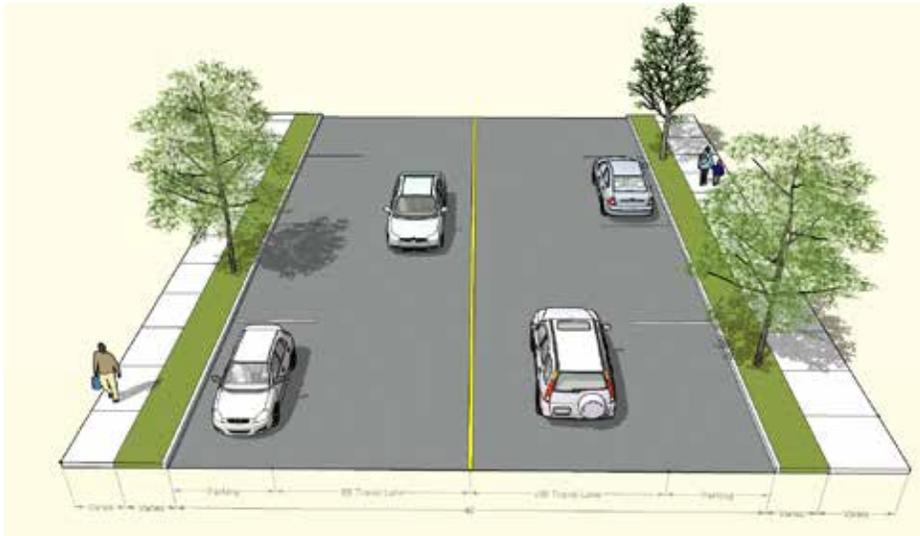
The City of Harrisburg is currently proposing several transportation projects that could have a significant impact on the Division Street corridor. One project that is being proposed by the Mayor's Office is the conversion of 2nd Street to two-way traffic south of Division Street. The plan would divert traffic to 7th Street and would convert 7th Street to two-lanes northbound to accommodate the increased traffic. Additionally PennDOT recommended that the two-northbound lanes would need to continue on Division Street to the intersection with 2nd Street. Another project being considered by the city is the construction of a bridge at the eastern end of Division Street which would provide a connection to Industrial Road located on the eastern side of the railroad tracks. This proposed structure would connect downtown Harrisburg with the Farm Show Complex, Harrisburg Area Community College, Wildwood Park and would provide access to I-81 and US 322. Based on discussion with both city representatives and MPO representatives, the project is identified as a high priority project, but is not identified as an immediate project need due to the high cost associated with the project. In order for the project to move forward on an accelerated timeline, there is a need for the funds to be identified and also for there to be the political will for the bridge.

Transportation Recommendations

In an effort to improve the Division Street corridor, it is recommended that the corridor be transformed into a complete street, as well as green street that provides a variety of benefits, including improved functionality, safety, aesthetic, social and environmental benefits. In order to accommodate traffic heading north within the city following the conversion of 2nd Street to a two-way street, it is recommended that Division Street be modified to provide the connection for traffic to access Front Street and Interstate 81. The approximately 46 foot roadway on Division Street can accommodate this new street pattern. At the time of this restriping, it is also recommended that a bike lane be added in both directions. This design would include:

- Two 10 foot lanes heading west
- One 10 foot lane heading east
- Two 6 foot bike lanes (one heading east and one heading west)

The redesign would result in the removal of parking lanes from both sides of Division Street. It is anticipated that any parking need can be met through the use of the surrounding residential streets and in the parking lots of the businesses and institutions located along the corridor. This results in a total of 42 feet of encumbered roadway space. The remaining four feet could be used to incorporate traffic calming measures along the roadway such as a center median. The figure below provides a cross section of the existing and proposed street patterns. The existing condition of the wide street with low parking density creates a wide effective width of the street and provides virtually no calming effect. Our recommendation involves adding an additional lane of traffic, however all lanes of traffic will be narrowed. Narrowing traffic lanes has been shown to cause drivers to reduce speeds.



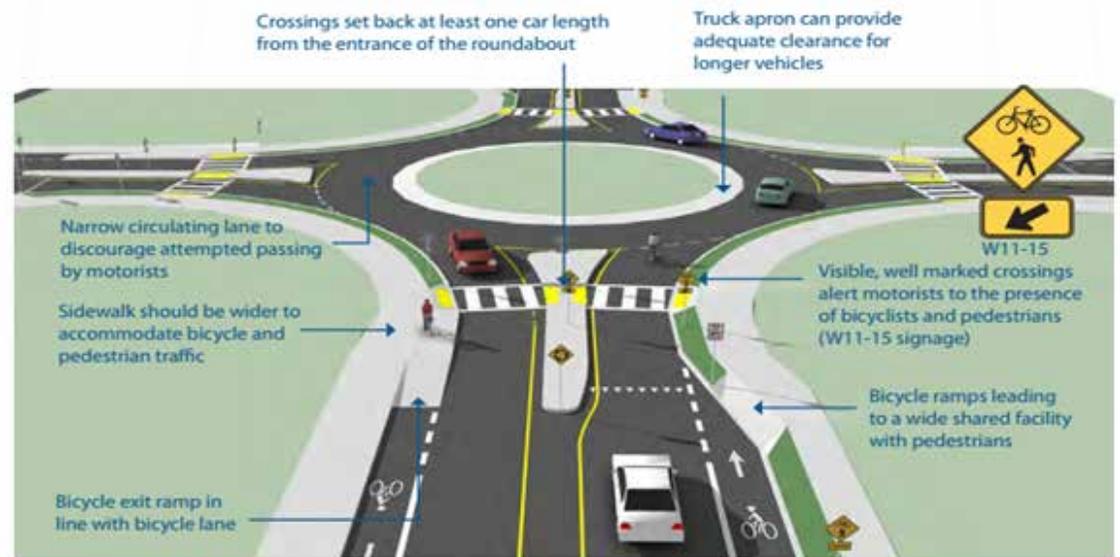
The bike lanes proposed for the corridor should be designed to meet the guidelines of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission Regional Bicycle Connections Study including proper signage, color, and width. The bike lane will serve as connection or continuation from Riverfront Park and the Capital Area Greenbelt located along Front Street. If a bridge, whether bicycle/pedestrian only or multi-modal, would be built across the railroad tracks at the eastern end of Division Street, the bike lanes would create an important connection for bikers in the city to access Harrisburg Area Community College and Wildwood Park. Bike lanes are also proposed for the two-way conversion of 2nd Street, which would connect to the Division Street bike lanes at the intersection of 2nd Street and Division Street and thus form a bicycle network within the city. In addition to improvements within the roadway, it is recommended that streetscape improvements be made to the entire corridor. Elements of the streetscape should include:

- Sidewalks: Upgrades to the sidewalks to make them all six feet wide and ADA compliant.
- Crosswalks: Upgrades at crosswalks to make them more visible to drivers and to give them an aesthetic treatment and the addition of crosswalks along the corridor. Four-way decorative crosswalks should be added to the intersections of Division Street with Green Street, 3rd Street, 4th Street, and Reel Street. It is recommended that a stamped asphalt application be used, as it is durable and will require less future maintenance. In addition to the new crosswalks, it is recommended that the existing crosswalks in the corridor be upgraded to match this standard. Additionally the area between Parkside Lane and 3rd Street should receive a larger aesthetic surface treatment to act as a gateway to Division Street and Italian Lake.
- Street Lighting: It is recommended that the lights along the Division Street Corridor are replaced



with aesthetically pleasing lighting and that LED lamps be used in these new lights. In addition to replacing the existing streetlights, it is recommended that pedestrian-scale lighting be added along the corridor under the taller overhead lighting (as is currently in place) acting as supplemental lighting.

- **Street Trees:** The city should do an inventory of and assess the health of current trees along the corridor. Currently some sections of the corridor have large street trees while other areas are relatively open, in terms of tree cover. It is recommended that a variety of trees be planted that will complement the existing trees.
- **Streetscape Amenities:** It is recommended that benches and trash/recycling cans be installed along the corridor to further complement the proposed streetscape plan and encourage residents/passersby to participate in the maintenance of the area.
- **Bus Stop Shelters/Amenities:** There are multiple signed bus stops along the corridor, but only one bus stop shelter/bench which is located at the intersection of 6th Street and Division Street. Updating the existing and providing several additional benches or shelters along the corridor may encourage additional transit users. It is recommended that two designated transit stops be incorporated into the Uptown Shopping Center.
- **Roundabout:** A roundabout is recommended at the intersection of 7th Street and Division Street to help to efficiently and safely move traffic from 7th Street onto Division Street after the conversion of 2nd Street to a two-way street. Roundabouts provide both safety and capacity benefits over traditional signalized intersections. The diagram below from the TCRPC Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Guidelines provides an overview of how bicyclists can be accommodated through the roundabout. These design recommendations from TCRPC should be incorporated into the roundabout design.
- **Traffic Calming:** The narrower traffic lanes will help to slow down speeds along the Division Street Corridor. Another element to increase traffic calming is the installation of a center vegetated median which can also serve as an area to incorporate green infrastructure. The recommended median would be four feet wide which is the FHWA recommended minimum width (FHWA, 2010). In addition to calming traffic the median would serve as a refuge for pedestrians crossing at designated crosswalks who are not able to cross the entire width of the roadway at once.
- **Green Infrastructure:** While the other traffic improvements are being implemented, it makes good sense to incorporate green infrastructure elements at the same time. This will assist Capital Area Water to meet the



goals of its green infrastructure plan, and to slow down, capture, and treat stormwater runoff, while decreasing the burden on the traditional sewer systems. Rain gardens and bioswales provide landscaping, clean air, and habitat for local plants and animals. These elements should be incorporated along the streetscape both in the median and at the edge.

The transportation improvements can qualify for several competitive grants to assist the city in funding these projects. Potential funding sources include FHWA and PennDOT's Transportation Alternatives Program, PennDOT's Multimodal transportation fund, and the Commonwealth Financing Authority Multimodal Transportation Fund.

Economic Development along the Division Street Corridor

Existing Conditions

The Division Street corridor is economically diverse in function and features. The corridor is a mixture of residential, institutional, and commercial spaces. Two of the largest sites along the corridor are ripe for redevelopment – the former William Penn High School and the Uptown Shopping Plaza. The school has been vacant for six years and is currently for sale and the Uptown Shopping Plaza is approximately 50% vacant. It is anticipated that redevelopment at these two sites will act as a catalyst for additional economic development along the corridor.

Catalyst Site Recommendations

Based on current trends for shared living and working space and the need for additional rental units in the city, it is recommended that the William Penn High School be converted into a mixture of residential housing and makerspace. The renovated structure would contain 83 rental total units along the western part of the school and the eastern part of the school, would be transformed into a makerspace. The design concept for this space is shown in the figure below. In order to illustrate the costs of the proposal, and to also understand why no development has taken place at this site so far, a pro-forma model was used to garner an understanding of what it would look like financially to transform this vision into a reality. The project would have an appraised value of \$5,435,931. The total costs for the project are estimated at \$31,746,001. This leaves the project at a \$26,310,070 development deficit. In order to overcome this deficit, the city will need to look to put together a gap financing package in order to make this project feasible for and attractive to a developer.



The Uptown Shopping Plaza sits at the eastern edge of Division Street and serves as one of the few places for commercial and retail activity in Uptown Harrisburg. The major component to the proposal for this site is the addition of a three story mixed-use building along the southern and western edge of the plaza. This building will have commercial space on the first floor and two floors of residential space above. Additional quality rental units will help meet the need for quality apartments within the city. The retail spaces on the first floor will face Division Street, connecting the space with the corridor and pedestrians nearby, thus activating the streetscape and multi-modal improvements discussed in the transportation recommendations. The building will have 154 residential units and 71,750 ft² of new retail space.

The city does not have many large grocers within the city. Residents have to travel outside the city to find large grocery outlets. The vacant anchor store in the Uptown Plaza will be retrofitted to accommodate a large grocery store. The redevelopment of this space for a grocer will serve two purposes, providing access to fresh food and rejuvenating the neighborhood economy. The proposed site plan for the updated Uptown Shopping Plaza is shown below.

A pro-forma was developed to estimate the proposed costs of these recommendations. The Uptown Shopping Plaza would have a net operating income of \$2,975,293 (from residential rents and commercial leases) and an appraised value of \$37,191,169. The costs for this project are estimated at \$60,768,246. This leaves the project with a \$23,577,077 value deficit. As with the William Penn High School redevelopment proposal, there will need to be a financing package put together to help close the deficit and make the project desirable to a developer.

In order to encourage economic development along the Division Street Corridor, there are a number of local, regional, state and federal programs that could be used as incentives to spur growth and revitalization including tax credits, grants, tax abatement, economic development zones, and infrastructure improvements.

Recommendations for Corridor Wide Economic Opportunities

The recommended changes will provide new possibilities for the two catalyst sites. However it is important to consider economic recommendations that can benefit the entire corridor. The City of Harrisburg should work to find a public/private sector partner, perhaps through the Elm Street or Main Street Programs, to help give properties along Division Street an updated appearance. In addition, an apprentice and/or workforce development program should be established through a public private partnership, between the proposed makerspace, the Harrisburg School District, the City of Harrisburg, and Dauphin County. This program would help to teach workforce ready skills to children or adults in the neighborhoods around Division Street. The goal of this



initiative is to give community members the skills to elevate their standard of living, hopefully raising their income levels and reducing the amount of poverty in the area.

The city can help facilitate the creation of a Division Street Corridor Improvement Association, working with local leaders, institutions and businesses. This group would allow for leaders to start conversations about what stakeholders want to see in their neighborhood and how they can work to achieve those outcomes. As an extension of this organization, it is recommended that a Business Improvement Committee be created. This group would specifically focus on the business and commerce issues faced by retailers on the Division Street Corridor.

Summary of Findings/Recommendations

The Division Street Corridor Revitalization plan will help the City of Harrisburg to understand the unique needs and opportunities of the Division Street Corridor. By creating a multi-modal boulevard, the plan will provide facilities for all modes of transportation and users and will provide key connections within Uptown. The proposed redevelopment at the William Penn High School and the Uptown Shopping Center provide additional options for apartment living in the city and fill a need for live/work spaces and creates spaces for business development, vocational training, and recreation, which provide additional amenities to area residents. Through the development of a new grocery store at the Uptown Shopping Plaza jobs will be created and residents along the corridor will also have improved access to fresh food. The recommendations include the use of sustainable environmental practices for both transportation and economic improvements, which can serve as examples for implementation in other areas of the city and region. Further investigation into creative financing for these recommendations will be key to implementation. With a proactive team of the city, stakeholders, residents, and developers the Division Street Corridor can be revitalized to support local residents, the economy, and advance the use of green infrastructure.