



Great things are happening here!

Great Neighborhoods

Central Business District

Services

Location – Interstate Access

Maiden Business Park

Tourism

Farmer's Market

Public Transit

County Seat

Maiden Street

Crossroads

Murtland Avenue

Washington Hospital

Historic District

Jefferson Avenue

Detroit Street Business Park

Streetscape

Washington & Jefferson College

Business Improvement District

Retail Market

Industry

Chapter 4. A Plan for the Economy

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Economic Development is a process of leveraging unique assets and resources that result in new, and preferably sustainable, wealth within a defined market. In order to most effectively plan for and guide that process, it is important to first understand the condition of a three basic community inputs: people (demographic picture), place (built environment and physical condition), industry (anchors and drivers).

Economic Questions to Consider:

- ✓ What is the *economic structure*?
- ✓ What are the *market influences*?
- ✓ What are the *anchors? Drivers? Accelerators?*

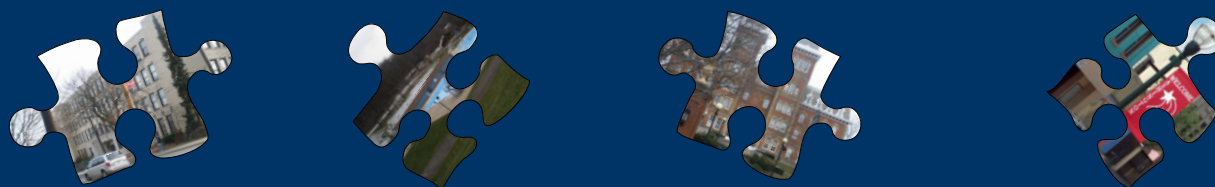
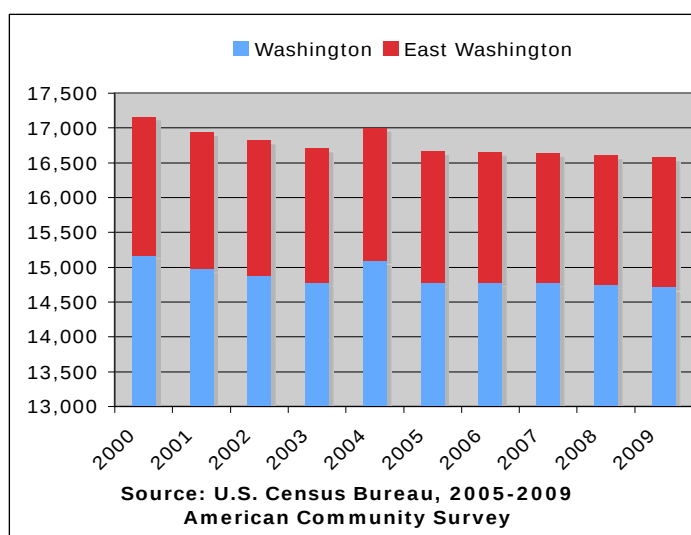
A. Community Snapshot

“People”

- ✓ Population has been slowly declining
- ✓ Generally older community but with some young up and comers
- ✓ Wealth and educational attainments highly concentrated

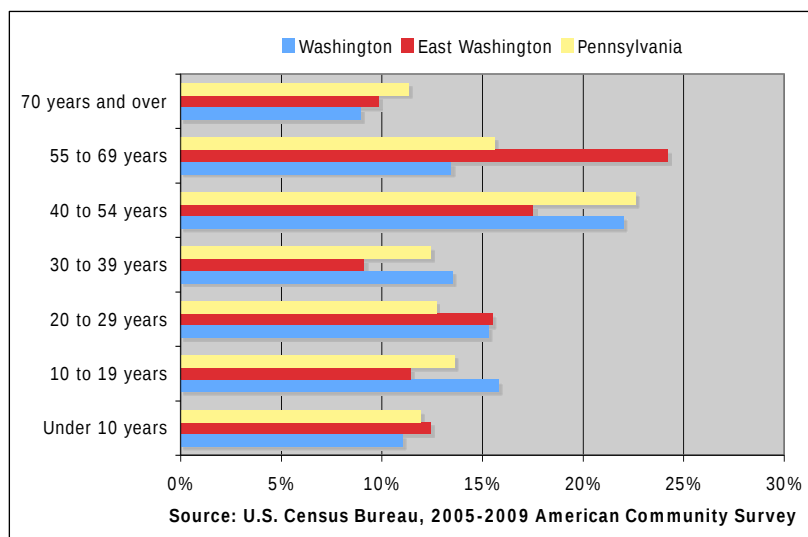
As shown in [Figure 4-1](#), between 2000 and 2009, both the City of Washington and the East Washington has been slowly losing population. The combined center city population estimate of just over 16,500 represents a about a 3.5% decrease since 2000 respectively.

Figure 4-1: Population, 2000-2009



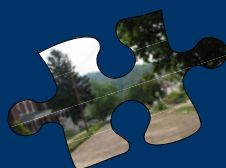
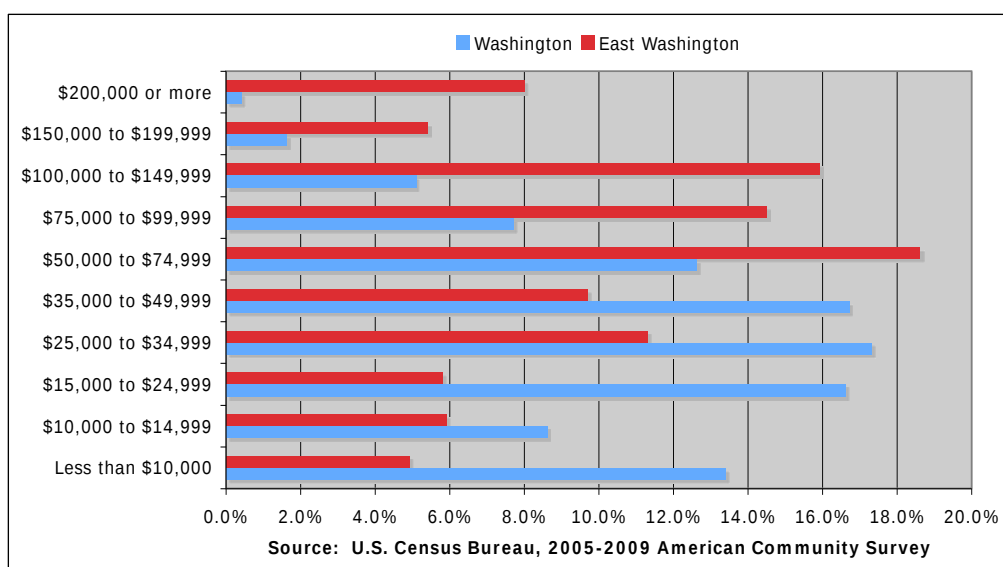
The median age of City of Washington at 36.2 years and East Washington at 39.7 years is generally in line with Pennsylvania's median age of 38 years. Both Washington and East Washington do however have a higher concentration of 20 to 29 years than Pennsylvania as whole as shown in [Figure 4-2](#).

Figure 4-2: Age Distribution



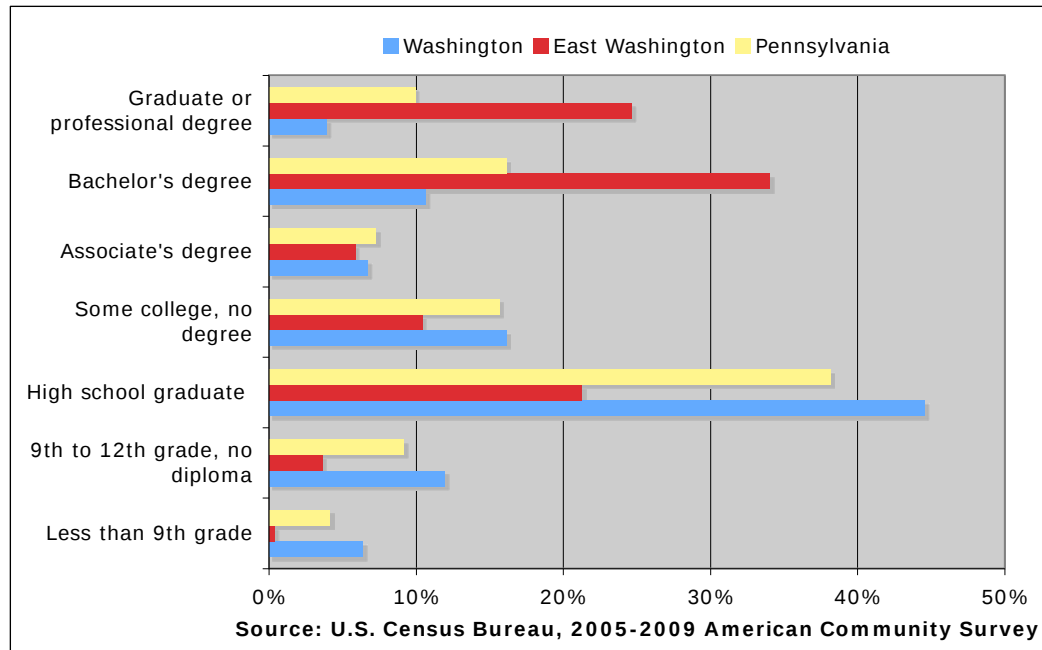
As shown in [Figure 4-3](#), There is a larger variation of median household income levels between the City of Washington at \$32,933 and East Washington at \$52,816. The City of Washington is well below the Pennsylvania median of \$49,520.

Figure 4-3: Distribution of Household Income



As a result of the presence of Washington and Jefferson College, East Washington posts a larger percentage of residents with advance degrees of Bachelor's or above - well ahead of the state average as shown in [Figure 4-4](#) below.

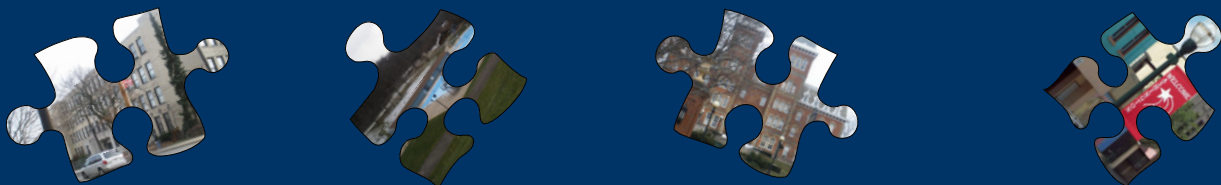
Figure 4-4: Educational Attainment



“Place”

- ☑ Well-maintained, highly functional central business district
- ☑ Steadily increasing home values
- ☑ Several capital improvement projects – and room for more
- ☑ High office occupancy
- ☑ Middle of the pack on operational costs
- ☑ On-campus development drivers

The City of Washington’s Central Business District (CBD) offers a highly functional and well-maintained main street corridor with a variety of specialty retail shops, food and beverage establishments, professional offices, and parking options.



The Business Improvement District's Main Street corridor is also relatively compact, with good pedestrian connectivity and access to both street and garage parking options. The distance to and from key destinations is comparative to a standard Walmart site footprint (as shown in [Figure 4-5](#)) .

Figure 4-5: Walmart Footprint



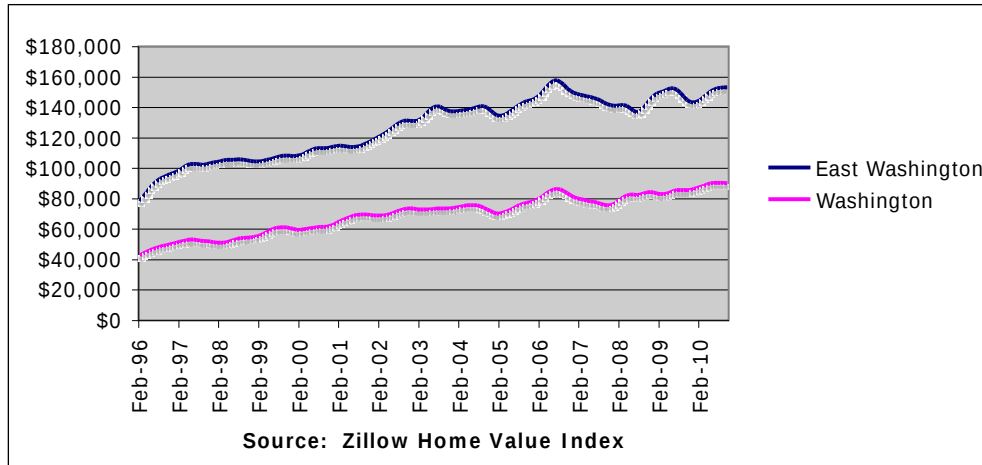
Several major public and private capital improvement projects such as streetscape along Main Street, the Crossroads Parking Garage, and the



associated Class-A office building were completed within the past 5 years within the CBD.

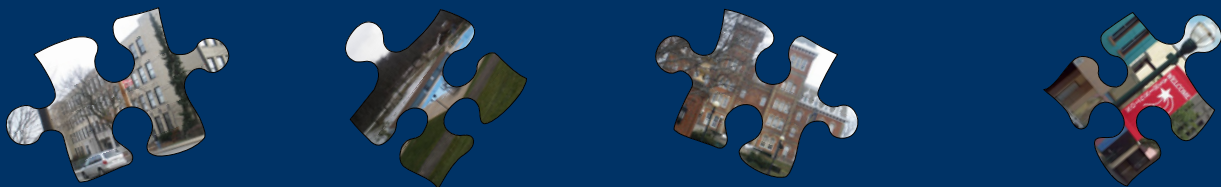
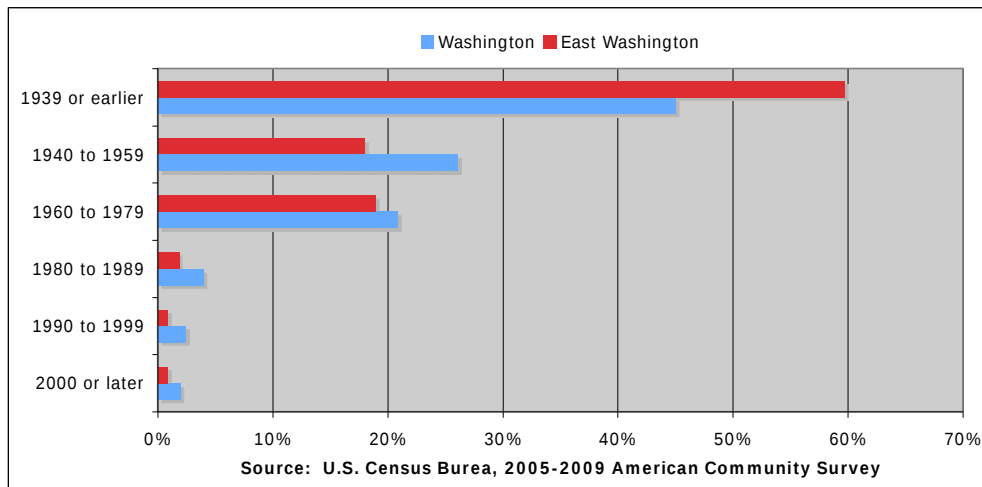
While East Washington has stronger overall home values than the City of Washington (Figure 4-6), both have realized a steady rise in home values over the past 15 years.

Figure 4-6: Home Values



Both the City of Washington and East Washington Borough are historic communities with a rich architectural past. As a result, the majority of homes in both communities are single family, detached units with more than half constructed prior to 1940 (Figure 4-7).

Figure 4-7: Age of Housing



Both Washington and East Washington have a strong distribution of renter-occupied units, most likely driven by both W&J College and the availability of larger apartment complexes within the City of Washington ([Table 4-1](#)).

Table 4-1: Housing Units

		Occupied housing units	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
Washington		6,006	2,830	3,176
East Washington		760	458	302
Washington	1-person household	42%	27%	55%
East Washington	1-person household	28%	17%	46%
Washington	Family households	51%	69%	35%
East Washington	Family households	66%	83%	38%
Washington	Nonfamily households	49%	31%	65%
East Washington	Nonfamily households	49%	31%	65%

Both the City of Washington and East Washington offer primarily larger housing units with 4 or 5 rooms and above. Some of these larger homes have been divided into apartments.

The City of Washington is the county seat for Washington County. Office space is found primarily within the City of Washington and generally serves the professional services community such as lawyers, accountants, and some information technology companies.

The Washington Business District Association (WBDA) classifies most of the office space within the City as Class-B professional space. The major exception is the newer, multi-story Class-A office building recently constructed on the corner of West Beau and North Franklin Street. Class A office space is typically high quality office space with amenities that allow it to command higher than average rents. Class B office space is space that has adequate amenities and commands average rents for the area in which they are located.



WBDA reports that the total inventory of available space is relatively small, with occupancy rates approaching 90 percent for the BID district.

Both the City of Washington and East Washington Borough can be characterized as fully developed although there are some underutilized sites and buildings that provide infill opportunities. Several of these sites can be found on the blocks between the W&J campus and the North Main Street corridor.

W&J College is continuing to advance a campus master plan. Within the past 10 years, major new construction has taken place on the campus to include new administrative buildings, classroom facilities, and campus housing.

The City of Washington's operational cost structure compares favorably to that of its peer location of Canonsburg and is only slightly more expensive on average than the next closest business center of North Strabane Township (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2: Operational Cost Structure Comparison

Assume a \$1.5M business in 1,000 SF and 10 employees				Wash vs. Average (of Canonsburg and N Strabane)	
	Canonsburg	North Strabane	Washington City	Difference \$	Difference %
Receipts	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	0%
Business tax	\$1,483	NA	\$2,466	\$1,724	116%
Occupation Costs (rent)	\$20,500	\$20,500	\$16,500	\$(4,000)	-20%
Property Tax	\$28,647	\$23,634	\$21,958	\$(4,182)	-15%
LST Tax	\$520	\$360	\$520	\$80	15%
Parking Costs	NA	NA	\$5,400	\$5,400	100%
Rent	\$22,503	\$20,860	\$24,886	\$3,204	14%
Own	\$30,650	\$23,994	\$30,344	\$3,022	10%



While the higher costs can be attributed to a local business tax and parking fees, Washington does offer a walkable, amenity-rich setting that is increasingly attracting higher growth industry sectors and professional services firms in other areas throughout the nation.

“Industry”

- ☑ Economy is driven by City/County Government, W&J College, Washington Hospital and related health care operations
- ☑ Marcellus Shale industry is a rapidly emerging employment and investment accelerator
- ☑ The existing core economic drivers have significant multiplier impact
- ☑ Current retail structure is serving the larger area market demand

Health Care, Public Administration, and the Educational Services sectors are among the top economic drivers for the Washington/East Washington economy. That sector growth is further driving the Accommodation, Food Services and Retail sectors. Combined, the top five sectors represent more than 65% of all jobs ([Table 4-3](#)).

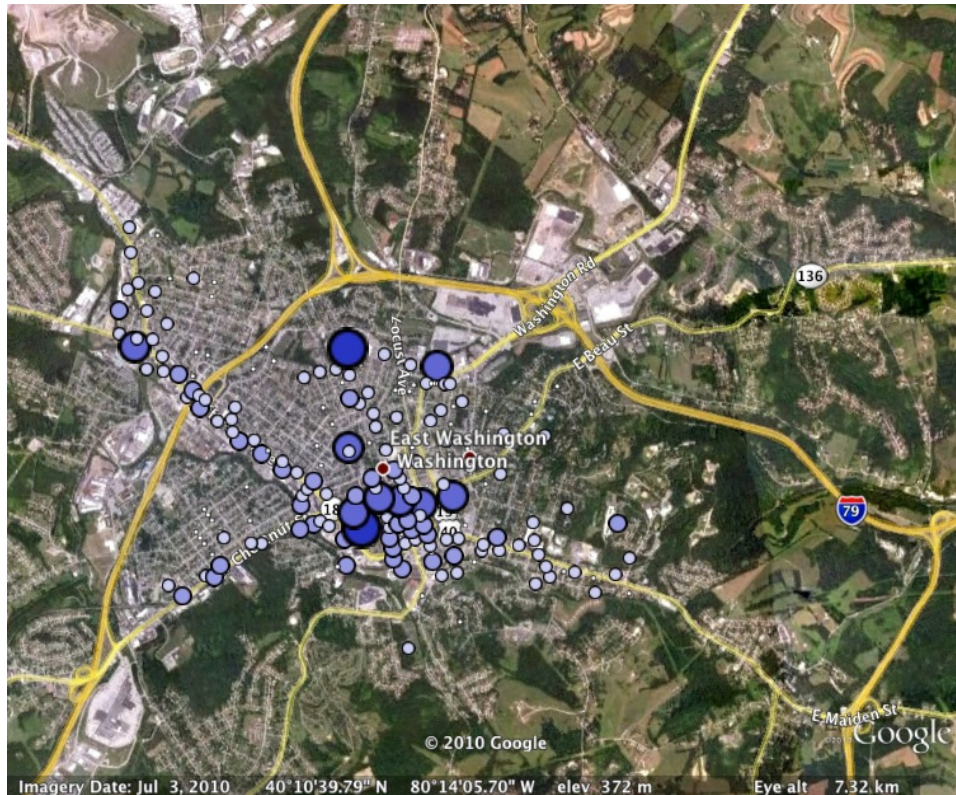
Table 4-3: Top 10 Employment Sectors

	Washington/East Washington Jobs By Total Employment	2009	Avg. Growth 05-09
1	Health Care	2,798	19%
2	Public Administration	1,380	5%
3	Accommodation & Food Services	1,039	43%
4	Retail Trade	922	14%
5	Educational Services	879	-8%
6	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	748	0%
7	Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	678	-15%
8	Construction	648	17%
9	Other Services (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate)	629	56%
10	Manufacturing	614	12%

* 2009 - Most recent available for the micro municipal level (U.S. Census Bureau)



Washington and East Washington key industry sectors are concentrated in the Washington CBD and along a primary transportation corridor connecting the CBD to the Washington Hospital campus.



Although not listed among the top jobs sectors, the *Mining, Quarrying and Oil & Gas Extraction* sector deserves special attention. While in 2009 this sector ranked only 17 out of the top 20 sectors for employment in Washington and East Washington combined, it is by far the most rapidly growing sector for employment (*Table 4-4*).

Table 4-4: Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction Sector Growth

	Washington/East Washington Employment Growth	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
17	<i>Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas Extraction</i>	5	2	6	94	184

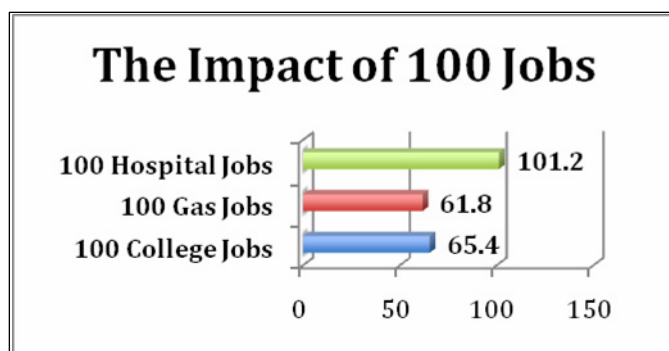


The Marcellus Shale gas extraction industry is proving to be a major employment driver for Washington County and the surrounding southwestern Pennsylvania region. According to the PA Department of Labor and Industry, the Southwest Corner region, which includes Washington County, currently has 220 gas wells in operation.

In the first quarter of 2011, the region posted 336 new direct hires and 200 hired within supporting industry roles. Since the fourth quarter of 2009, direct employment totals more than 1,000 new hires with more than 1,500 hired in supporting roles.

Each of the major economic drivers for Washington and East Washington, the Hospital, Gas Extraction and Washington and Jefferson College, also have significant impact in terms of supporting jobs with the Hospital having the most significant impact ([Figure 4-8](#)). For every 100 Hospital jobs created or retained, 101.2 supporting jobs are created. For every 100 Gas or College jobs created, approximately 64 supporting jobs are created. This is known as the multiplier effect, which is in addition to the jobs directly related to a particular

[Figure 4-8: Impact of 100 Jobs](#)



employer (i.e. doctors, nurses, cafeteria workers employed by the hospital) there are supporting jobs created (i.e. medical supply companies and ancillary medical offices which provide jobs to support the hospital's operations).

And where are the supporting jobs created? [Table 4-5](#) on the following page identifies a sample of the primary type (sector) and number of jobs created for every 100 jobs in each of the key economic drivers.

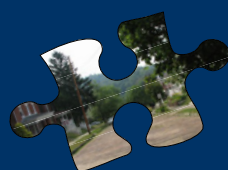
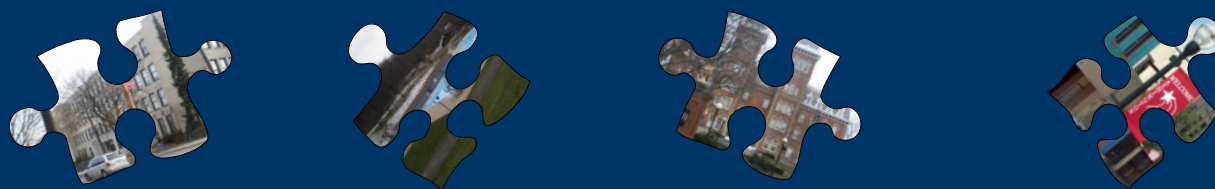


Table 4-5: Multiplier Effect			
	100 College Jobs	100 Gas Jobs	100 Hospital Jobs
Architectural, engineering, and related services		5.8	
Employment services			5.1
Food services and drinking places	5.9	7.5	8
Management of companies and enterprises		2.9	
Medical, diagnostic, outpatient and other ambulatory care services			2.8
Nursing and residential care facilities	1.6		2.3
Offices of physicians, dentists, and other health practitioners	2.5	3	3.5
Other state and local government enterprises	1.4		
Private hospitals	2.7	3.2	*
Real estate establishments	8.2	4.7	14.1
Retail Stores - Food and beverage	1.7	2.2	2.5
Securities, commodity contracts, investments, and related activities		3	
Services to buildings and dwellings	1.6		2.6
Wholesale trade businesses	2.1	3.7	3.5

The Washington Business District Association (WBDA) reports that, as of mid-2011, new leases are currently pending for the central business district from tenants representing the Information Technology sector. While not reflected in the 2009 data, the WBDA points to a growing presence of smaller IT and web-design firms as an emerging sector opportunity for the City.

A Look at The Retail Sector:

The Retail Sector can play an important supporting role in a local economy. Based on an online data scan and information provided in a retail market analysis conducted by the Washington Business District, it is fair to characterize the core retail market area for the City and Borough as a 15 to 20 minute travel time to and from the central business district (Main Street). This market definition essentially captures the 15301 ZIP code, which includes municipalities other than Washington and East Washington such as South Strabane and North Franklin Townships.



The most recent data reported in 2008 shows that 284 retail establishments were operational within the 15301 ZIP Code. **Table 4-6** is a distribution of those establishments by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code, which is the system used by Federal Agencies to classify businesses and industries.

Table 4-6: Retail Establishments in the 15301 Zip Code

1	Motorcycle, ATV, and personal watercraft dealers
1	Camera and photographic supplies stores
1	Hardware stores
1	Nursery, garden center, and farm supply stores
1	Fish and seafood markets
1	Baked goods stores
1	Confectionery and nut stores
1	Men's clothing stores
1	Luggage and leather goods stores
1	Sewing, needlework, and piece goods stores
1	Book stores
1	Prerecorded tape, compact disc, and record stores
1	Manufactured (mobile) home dealers
1	Electronic shopping
1	Heating oil dealers
2	Household appliance stores
2	Paint and wallpaper stores
2	Outdoor power equipment stores
2	All other specialty food stores
2	Food (health) supplement stores
2	Discount department stores
2	Warehouse clubs and supercenters
2	Office supplies and stationery stores
3	Computer and software stores
3	Other gasoline stations
4	Furniture stores
4	All other home furnishings stores
4	Home centers
4	Convenience stores
4	Optical goods stores
4	Children's and infants' clothing stores
4	Sporting goods stores
4	Hobby, toy, and game stores
4	Department stores (except discount department stores)



Table 4-6: Retail Establishments in the 15301 Zip Code (continued)

4	Used merchandise stores
4	Pet and pet supplies stores
5	Tire dealers
5	Floor covering stores
5	Cosmetics, beauty supplies, and perfume stores
5	Clothing accessories stores
6	Used car dealers
6	Other building material dealers
6	All other health and personal care stores
6	Other clothing stores
6	Florists
6	Other direct selling establishments
7	Beer, wine, and liquor stores
7	Pharmacies and drug stores
8	Radio, television, and other electronics stores
8	Jewelry stores
8	All other general merchandise stores
8	All other miscellaneous store retailers (except tobacco stores)
9	New car dealers
10	Automotive parts and accessories stores
10	Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores
11	Supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores
11	Women's clothing stores
16	Gasoline stations with convenience stores
16	Family clothing stores
18	Shoe stores

The majority of the retail options are well established, concentrated just outside of the central business district along SR 18. Other popular retailers such as Wal-mart can be found in nearby municipalities within a 20-minute drive time of the City of Washington/East Washington.

Reflective of many historic central business districts, the City of Washington is home to some specialty retailers, smaller “lunch time” food and beverage options, and at least two full service bar and restaurants (The Washington Hotel and the Union Grill). The establishments generally serve the core industry commuter/employee base related to the City/County Government, W&J College and to some degree the Hospital and Health Care workers.



The City of Washington and East Washington retail market relies heavily on consumer buying power from outside its immediate residency base. Data from local census tracts (7041,7537, 7542, 7543, 7544, 7545, 7546) indicates that the retail market has an annual sales “surplus” of just over \$42 million. This total is based on the local expenditure or buying power in the following categories (*Table 4-7*):

Table 4-7: Retail Market Surplus Categories

Food at Home
Food away from home
Apparel and related services
Television equipment, tapes disks
Audio equipment, CDs, tapes
Household textiles
Furniture
Floor coverings
Major appliances
Small appliances and housewares
Computer hardware and software
Miscellaneous household equipment
Non-prescription drugs and supplies
Housekeeping supplies
Personal products
Home repair commodities

City of Washington Business District Authority (BDA):

The City of Washington has a Business Improvement District (BID), see *Figure 4-9*, which is operated by the BDA. The BDA is a nine member board with one staff person, the Main Street Manager. Currently \$9.00 per every thousand dollars of assessed value is annually collected from all the property owners within the BID. The money collected from the assessment is used for operating costs as well as general maintenance including maintenance of the flower plantings and marketing / promotions. Some of the promotions that have been held recently include 2nd Fridays/50’s Car

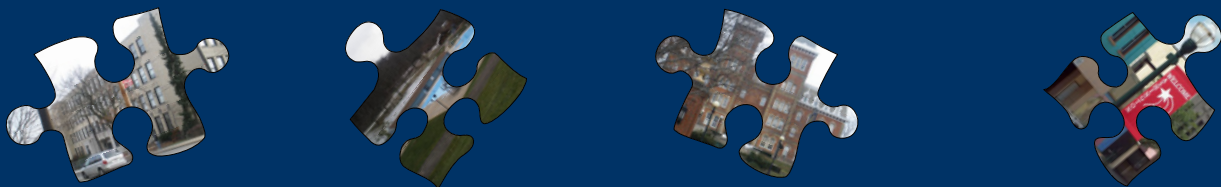


Cruise, participation in festivals such as the Bicentennial and the Whiskey Rebellion, Ghost Walk in conjunction with the David Bradford House and local parades such as the Christmas parade.

Figure 4-9: Business Improvement District (BID) Boundaries



Chapter 4. A Plan for the Economy



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B. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Priority issues were identified for Washington and East Washington through the various public input methods described in Chapter One. The following are the priority economic development issues.

Price and availability of parking



The Central Business District (CBD) currently has approximately 750-760 parking meters in five surface lots and street parking as well as the newly built Crossroads Garage, which has 800 parking spaces. The issues that were discussed regarding parking were related to the cost (the parking meters are \$0.25 for 15 minutes) and the availability.

While the City does offer a number of free spaces for patron parking, they are usually not available and may be used by employees working in the CBD. The common perception is that the parking garage is not convenient to the shops located in the CBD because it is located on a side street in the middle of a hill.

Lack of an identity



In order to market itself as a place for businesses to locate and people to shop, the City needs to decide what its identity should be – a college town, an historic town, a bedroom community, etc. This identity is important because it provides opportunities for a cohesive campaign to attract new investment and retain the assets that are already here.



Lack of a central organization to oversee business and economic development

The City of Washington has an extensive portfolio of special event programming, capital improvement projects and business development activities occurring within its municipal boundaries. While there have been loose connections between the organizations engaged in these key activities, a coordinated strategy with a single point person does not currently exist.

Poor condition of buildings in the Central Business District (CBD)



Much of the building stock within the CBD is old and some of the buildings are in very bad repair. The cost of renovating these buildings to bring them up to code as well as the fact that a number of owners are from out of town, is causing disinvestment within the CBD.

Business retention and expansion



In order for the CBD to continue to grow and thrive, strategies need to be in place to not only attract new businesses, but also retain the ones that currently exist. Attracting new businesses will help to grow the business district and tax base as well as provide new opportunities to attract shoppers and visitors from other areas. Retaining existing businesses is equally important, however, because most of them have been in Washington for a long time, are loyal to the City and are the ones that have been helping to sustain the business district.



C. ACTION PLAN

Goal = Capitalize on our location and availability of infrastructure to retain existing businesses and attract new investment

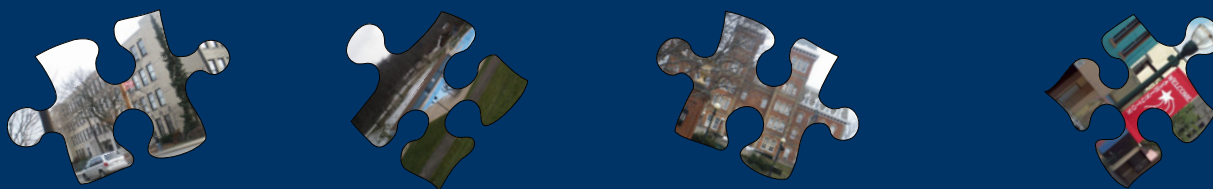
Objective = Increase local capacity for economic development activities

- ☑ **Consolidate economic development services and programs under the direction of a single City organization**

The City of Washington has initiated steps to form a new economic development corporation. The economic development community currently does not have sufficient administrative capacity to manage the type and volume of activity required to facilitate and direct the potential new development.

Several factors that exist at this time that suggests a single economic development service should be in place:

- The current state and federal public policy climate is placing more demands on public/private economic development projects, requiring market-driven planning, financial reporting and post-project audits.
- Economic development and special events marketing benefit from a single point of reference for visitors, residents and business representatives.
- The real-estate owner landscape, particularly in the City of Washington, is highly fragmented with many individual site and building owners within a relatively small central business district footprint. This condition creates challenges in assembling parcels for development, launching adaptive building reuse strategies and simply communicating and managing a long-term economic development vision for the City.
- A master planning initiative is underway at W&J College that should be leveraged for greater economic development impact beyond the immediate campus borders. This activity will require ongoing



communication and understanding of the projects as they develop, in order to determine when and how to align resources and expertise.

If establishing and funding a new corporation or agency at the City level is not an option, stakeholders can consider partnering with the Washington County Chamber leveraging its administrative support services for an executive director dedicated to City economic development. Once in place, the corporation and its executive leadership will be in a position to oversee many of the additional recommendations and activities outlined in the comprehensive plan.

The following are Actions Items that should be carried out by the new economic development corporation:

- Monitor all planning and development projects occurring in the City.
- Facilitate business location, expansion and development inquiries.
- Maintain and promote an inventory of available office space.
- Proactively identify potential anchor buildings such as the Union Trust Building or other key sites that may be made available or candidates for future development and/or reuse.
- Serve as an information clearing house for all event planning and special event programming.
- Incorporate social media tools and strategies.
- Manage public/private funding programs and applications that may be utilized in building and site development projects including state grant and loan programs and use of Local Share Account allocations.
- Explore the potential for contributions through industry partnerships such as the Marcellus shale industry.
- Serve as a standing liaison for key stakeholders such as the City, Borough, College, Hospital, property owners, and developers.
- Host regular project and development briefings (networking events/ breakfasts).
- Facilitate a city branding and marketing strategy which leverages key historical assets and happenings (The Whisky Rebellion, Micro-distilleries, Antiquing, College Town).
- Conduct regular industry survey of both current and former businesses as part of a business retention and attraction program.



- Work with the City and BDA to offer free Wi-Fi in the CBD.

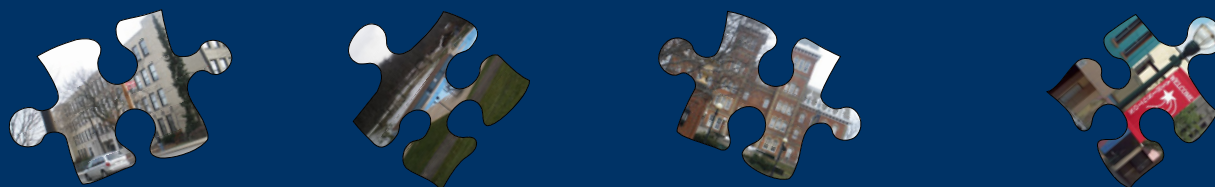
Two development corporations that represent communities similar to that of the City of Washington and could be models and contacts for future reference are the Greensburg Community Development Corporation (Seton Hill University) and the Greater Altoona Economic Development Corporation (Penn State Altoona). More detail on the Altoona example can be found in Appendix H.

Objective = Increase efforts to publicize assets

- ☑ **Create a marketing strategy that builds upon the “Historic Town” theme**

The City and Borough have indicated that their identity should be focused around the rich history that exists both in terms of people, events, buildings and sites. In order to publicize assets that exist in the project area, a concentrated marketing campaign should be undertaken. This campaign should include:

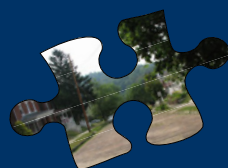
- ***Work with local business to create tourist packages*** – There are many regional attractions within close proximity to Washington and East Washington such as the Meadows Racetrack and Casino, the Tanger Outlets, and Meadowcroft that attract thousands of visitors each year. The City should work with local businesses to provide coupons in local AAA booklets, which could be placed at these regional attractions. The City could also work with local tourist agencies such as the Washington County Tourist Bureau to encourage bus tours visiting the casino and other local attractions to make stops within Washington.



- ***Implement a Washington Passport Program*** – This program would allow users to take their passport to various businesses in the City to obtain stamps when they purchased a product or service. Once the appropriate number of stamps was obtained, the user would be entered into a drawing for prizes. Local businesses such as the Wild Things could be solicited to donate items for the prizes.
- ***Utilize QR codes at key sites*** – A recent technologic advancement that can be incorporated into a marketing campaign is QR codes, which is short for quick response. These unique bar codes that can be interpreted by dedicated readers and some smart phones. The QR Codes could be placed at key sites such as the hospital, parking garages, and the courthouse and will provide access to websites, video or audio to tell stories about features and services provided at the sites or within the project area. For example QR codes at the parking garages could give locations to shop and eat in the business district or codes at the courthouse could tell the story of its history.
- ***Participate in discount programs*** – Local businesses should be encouraged to participate in programs such as Upromise and Groupon as a way to increase their customer base. Upromise was created as a way to help people pay for a college degree. Users earn points, through shopping at partner businesses, which are placed into their account and can be used to pay for college or student loans. Groupon sends daily e-mails to thousands of subscribers featuring a discount for a local business. Local businesses can visit www.upromise.com or www.groupon.com to learn how to participate in either of these programs.

☒ **Update the City and Borough’s websites with additional pages**

Websites are extremely valuable marketing tools for communities if they are up to date and accurate. Both the City and Borough currently have websites, but there are some additional “pages” that could be added to increase the value of the sites to the municipalities as well as residents, business owners, investors and visitors. The two websites should also be coordinated to offer similar information and link to key community assets such as Washington and Jefferson College, Washington Hospital and the Washington School District. Some examples of updates include:



- **Community Calendar** – List all the upcoming events and meetings within the City and Borough (this should also include other community events held by W&J College, Washington School District, and other local community organizations).
- **Volunteer Opportunities** – Solicit volunteers to help with various City or Borough events such as clean up days, organize community meetings, serve on various boards / committees, etc.
- **Attractions / Businesses** – List of all the places to go, shop, eat, etc.
- **Real Estate Opportunities** – Detailed information about buildings / sites available for rent or sale (residential or non-residential) – could include square footage, zoning, building amenities, location, etc.
- **Social Networking** – Create City or Borough Facebook or Twitter pages and provide links. This particular endeavor requires a lot of maintenance with regular updates. The Washington School District Alumni and Washington and Jefferson College currently have Facebook pages that could also be linked .



City of Washington

City Hall is Located at:
55 West Maiden Street, Washington, PA 15301
Phone 724-223-4200 FAX 724-223-4229
www.washingtonpa.us

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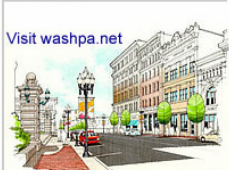
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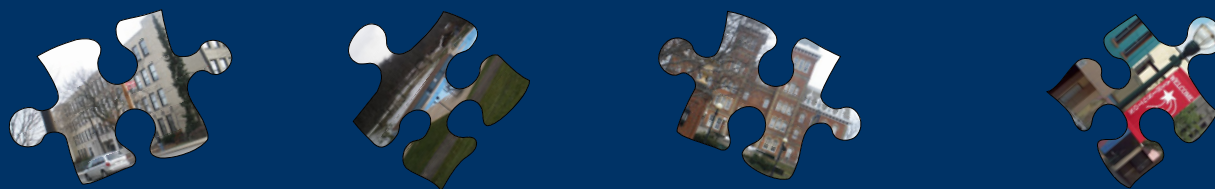
Welcome to the City of Washington Web Site. The city is located in Washington County in Southwestern Pennsylvania at the crossroads of Interstates 70 and 79 and Route 19. Rich in history and culture, our city is an ideal place to visit, live and work.

The city's Washington Park not only boasts beautiful scenery, spacious pavilion areas, new playgrounds, and 4th of July festivities including fireworks, but it is also the home of the Pony League World Series.

View our other [Points of Interest](#) to see what the City of Washington has to offer.

Visit [washpa.net](#) for information about the [Economic Development Project](#), [Capitol Improvements & Service Plan](#) and [City Events](#)!

As mentioned earlier, a website's value lies with how well it is maintained. Both the City and Borough have limited resources so options to consider include hiring a consulting firm or staff person on a part-time basis to update the websites or partnering with W&J College to work with student volunteers. W&J students recently worked with the Highland Ridge Community Development Corporation to create a new website for the Elm Street program. Sponsorship opportunities for local businesses could be included to help fund their maintenance.

☑ **Utilize vacant storefronts to publicize events / programs**

Vacant storefronts create a sense of disinvestment and detract from a business district. One way to creatively utilize a vacant storefront while it is waiting for a new tenant or owner is to use it for temporary displays. The City should work with owners of these vacant buildings and the Business District Authority to set up displays or information about upcoming events or programs, historical displays, work from local artists

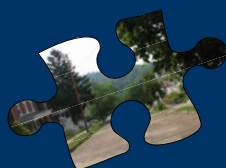


or other marketing opportunities such as displaying information about available real estate in the downtown area. These “windows” could also be used to highlight products or work from other area businesses. A similar example is currently being implemented in the City of Pittsburgh with its “Pop-Up” exhibits (<http://projectpopuppittsburgh.com/>).

☑ **Form a Special Events Programming Committee**

Washington and East Washington are fortunate to have a robust special events programming within the City core. A particular highlight is the very popular Farmers Market. A capital improvement project is currently underway to construct a permanent structure that will help provide protection during poor weather conditions while expanding the City's entertainment and programming options.

To accomplish this, a standing “special events programming” committee

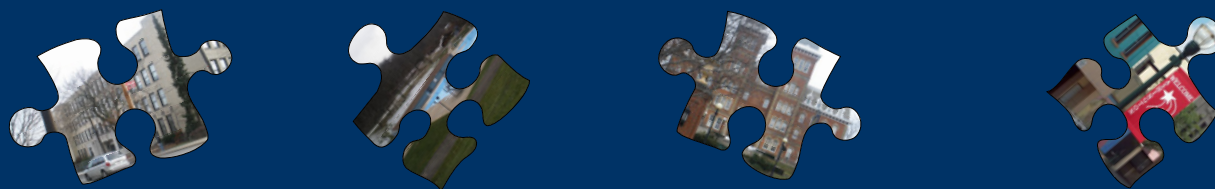


should be formed, which would be coordinated through the newly formed economic development corporation discussed earlier. Members should include City representatives, Washington and Jefferson marketing and/or programming staff as well as an appropriate student representative. Responsibilities of this committee should include:

- Create and promote a single events programming calendar that contains all events scheduled in the City and Borough (this would be incorporated with the website updates discussed earlier).
- Incorporate social media tools into the promotion strategy
- Provide Walking Tours and Business Crawls for participants to visit a local businesses, make a purchase and are entered into a drawing or gain other buying incentives.
- Institute “Pick a Place” Programs where a business is featured and hosts a networking event rotating on a monthly basis.
- Provide Frequent Buyer Student Cards for Washington and Jefferson students to receive punch cards making them eligible for free merchandise, food/beverage or drawings on a regular basis.
- Institute Main Street Yard Sales, which will be held on an annual or semi annual basis, these events offer residents and students the chance to rent a table on Main Street for a day-long yard sale coordinated with other special events programming.
- Encourage businesses to stay open late one night a month and support them through a special marketing campaign, and coordinate with events such as the business crawl or walking tours.

☒ **Publicize the advantage of doing business in the City versus surrounding areas**

While many new businesses are opening up in surrounding townships, the City does have advantages and these should be actively marketed to potential business owners and investors. The City of Washington’s operational cost structure compares favorably to that of its peer location of Canonsburg and is only slightly more expensive on average than the next closest business center of North Strabane Township (see [Table 4.2](#)).



Improve the competitive advantage of the Central Business District (CBD)

Objective = Improve the block between the Central Business District (CBD) and Washington and Jefferson College (W&J)

☒ **Establish a “Catalytic Investment Zone”**

Community stakeholders cited a perceived physical disconnect between the W&J Campus and the CBD. Field views revealed that while there is a potential pedestrian barrier resulting from an uphill gradient between these two key locations, a greater barrier was likely the lack of development and general appearance of the blocks located between South College Street to North Main Street and West Beau Street to East Maiden Street. This zone is bisected by an off-street alley and contains several underutilized lots, buildings and surface parking areas.



Given the centers of activity on either side of this barrier (i.e. downtown business activity and the college), it is recommended that this area be designated as a “Catalytic Investment Zone.” A catalytic zone is one that demonstrates potential to draw additional investment in and around the zone, greatly impacting and influencing the economy and character of the surrounding

area. This particular zone also offers capacity for new development not easily found in other areas of the City.

Improving this area can greatly improve the linkage between W&J and the CBD. A variety of approaches can be considered in a planning process to include streetscape improvements, linear park development, pocket parks, and new development that could accommodate additional service businesses and food and beverage operations.

The market research combined with previous studies and stakeholder



discussions suggest a mix of potential development opportunities that could be directed into or near this zone. Those opportunities are discussed below.

- **Business Services** - In 2007 a market analysis was conducted for the CBD. That analysis suggested a potential consumer demand exists for additional insurance agents, dental offices, child care, and auto repair services.
- **Food & Beverage** - Various types of food & beverage services would be appropriate including:

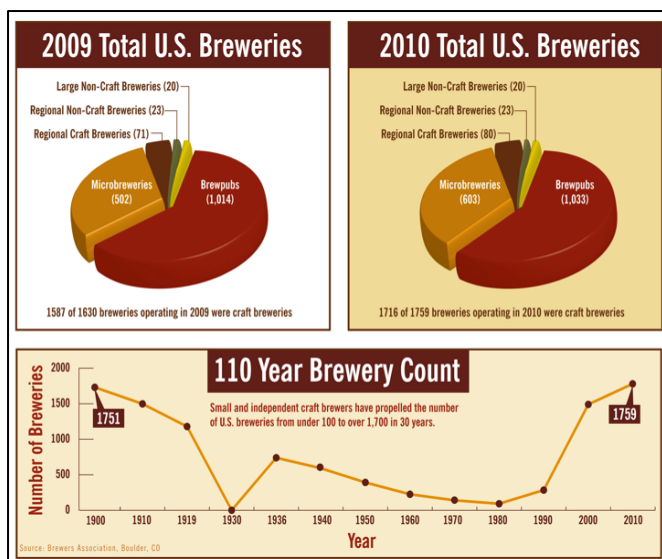
- ✓ *National Fast Food Chain/Franchise*

A recent survey completed by W&J students clearly indicated a demand for a national fast food chain/franchise; specifically the southwestern fast food chain Chipotle was cited as a popular choice among survey respondents. Generally, national fast food franchises conduct sophisticated market analysis to determine the chances of operational success before granting a franchise license to a local operator. The market observations conducted as part of this study does show a lack of national franchises within the CBD.

- ✓ *A Brew Pub*

There is community interest in attracting a “micro brew pub” and restaurant to the City, and several discussions have taken place between potential operators and City officials.

Figure 4-10: Brew Pub Information



The Brewers Association defines a microbrewery as “a brewery that produces less than 15,000 barrels of beer per year with more than 75% of the beer sold off site.” Space demands vary greatly. [Figure 4-10](#) shows that the growth of the craft brewing industry in 2010 was 11% by volume and 12% by retail dollars. Demand and the number of new brewery operations continue to increase especially over the past 30 years.

It is difficult to predict the market success or failure of these operations. This would depend on the size and types of offerings envisioned for the brewery. General research does indicate that they tend to attract a new and loyal customer base within the markets they serve. The City should continue to research the feasibility of a Brew Pub in the CBD.

- **Office Space** - While the Comprehensive Plan process revealed little data on office space availability and absorption rates at the smaller municipal levels, the Washington Business District Association (WBDA) reports that office occupancy consistently remains above 80 percent within the business improvement district. While a majority of the City’s only Class-A office space (found in the newest office building located on the corner of W. Beau and N. Franklin St.) remained available for at least 3 years following its construction, WBDA reports that the remaining space has a long-term lease pending and is expected to be executed in the near future.



As occupancy rates approach 90 percent, strategic consideration should be given to preparing existing space for office type use and/or developing new space for industries such as Marcellus shale, medical and other professions such as legal.

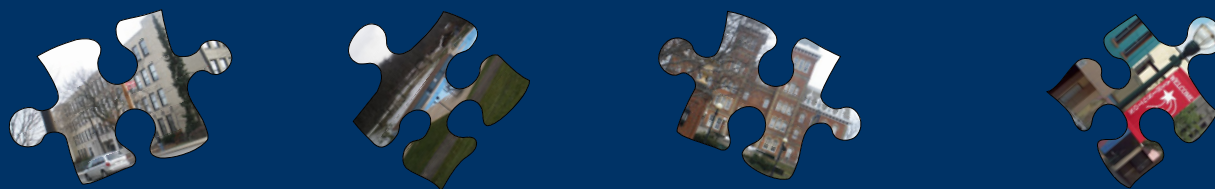


- *Specialty or Boutique Retail* - Stakeholders expressed interest in developing a stronger presence of antique dealers and specialty retailers within the Central Business District. Smaller historic cities similar to Washington have demonstrated success in attracting specialty retail, antique dealers or cooperative flea-market operations within their business districts. Both existing store fronts and/or new construction within the catalytic zone present opportunities to accommodate these types of businesses.

Specific tasks that should be undertaken for this zone are:

- ✓ Review Downtown Washington Business District Market Analysis findings
 - ✓ Prepare marketing collateral to include maps and visual renderings and perspectives illustrating potential built outcomes and land uses
 - ✓ Proactively Solicit development interest who specialize in targeted uses
 - ✓ Create special funding programs and incentives for development that occurs within this zone
 - ✓ Visit model communities such as Bedford, Pennsylvania; Frederick, Maryland; and Fredericksburg, Virginia to learn more about their development strategies for specialty retail and cooperative antique/flea-markets.
- ☑ **Focus on one block to begin revitalization for the area between W&J and the Central Business District (CBD)**

As part of the “Catalytic Investment Zone” efforts should be focused on improving one block. This will hopefully build success that can then be replicated in other areas of the zone. The block with the most potential for an improved connection between Washington and Jefferson and the CBD is Wheeling Street. There are areas where people concentrate now on both ends, with the Farmer’s Market, Union Grill and the Observer Reporter on the northern end and Citizen’s Library and First Baptist Church on the southern end. Within the block there are assets such as a



coffee shop and some offices. The grade of the street is not as steep as some others such as Beau, which may also make pedestrians more amenable to using the connection. The street does need some aesthetic enhancements, and there is one vacant lot on the street that needs specific attention. Working with the owner on simple upgrades to the lot could go a long way in improving this vital connection. Suggested improvements include filling in and completing the streetscape along Wheeling from College Street to Main Street with benches, flower pots, decorative lighting and trees. In terms of the vacant lot, the recommendation is to convert it into a new pocket park (see [Figure 4-11](#)), equipped with new trees, plantings, and benches. Around the new park would be a new stone retaining wall and wrought iron decorative guardrail. Additional decorative light poles would fill in and behind the park. This new park will help to encourage and enhance outdoor activity, create a sense of presence and safety, and provide the City with much needed green space.

Figure 4-11: Proposed Parklet



Objective = Improve the condition of buildings in the Central Business District (CBD)

☑ Identify, assess and prioritize anchor buildings

A common thread throughout the Comprehensive Plan is to adopt a tactical “proactive” planning approach. For instance, forming stakeholder committees helps to develop a baseline of information, share that information, and build trust among individual members and agencies. These committees can help determine in advance when a building may be available for sale or if there are structural limitations to a site or building that will need to be addressed before a viable reuse can be determined.

The newly formed economic development corporation should lead a process to identify, assess and prioritize anchor sites and buildings within the business improvement district. This assessment should be comprehensive and include structures in need of minor façade improvements, vacant lots, and larger buildings where structural integrity is a concern. Ideally this process can be done in conjunction with the Property Owners Committee (discussed in more detail on page 4-34).

There are several high profile buildings important the Main Street corridor; the largest building being the Washington Trust Building. Due to the fact that it is for sale, the Trust building presents an immediate opportunity for stakeholders to take steps to ensure its overall long-term functionality and viable use within the business improvement district.

In cases of blighted properties or absentee landlords, municipalities have several tools to assist them such as 1) access CBDG funding to help demolish buildings and prepare sites for development, 2) create new code enforcement policies, and 3) leverage PA Act 900, the Neighborhood Blight Reclamation and Revitalization Act. This went into effect in April 2011. Under the law, if a property is in serious violation of a building or housing code, a municipality may take action to prevent, restrain, correct or abate the problem. The Act authorizes municipalities to bypass the administrative penalty process by bringing a civil action against the owner of a blighted property. A municipality may do so if (1) the owner takes no substantial step to correct a continuing violation



within 6 months of receiving an order to do so and (2) there is no pending appeal before an agency or court. The action must seek payment of the penalties imposed for failing to correct the violation and the cost the municipality incurred to abate it. The bill also allows a municipality to place a lien against the owner's assets if a judgment, decree, or order is entered against the property owner.

Specific tasks that should be undertaken for this action are:

- Conduct a comprehensive conditions assessment of key sites and buildings.
- Determine ownership status and potential longer term uses
- Coordinate volunteer groups or student led initiatives to hold façade improvement days or street-clean ups
- Seek donated supplies/labor and hold a “Fix That House” campaign – make it a competition or application process similar to the national TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*
- Leverage Act 900 and other code enforcement and funding sources to address blighted properties
- Develop a sustainable funding approach/scenarios that utilize the Historic Federal Tax Credits for restoring buildings where applicable

☒ **Form a Property Owners Committee to engage property owners within the CBD**

One of the challenges facing redevelopment and adaptive reuse projects in the City of Washington is a diverse, individual ownership structure of key sites and buildings, especially within the CBD. This reality has made it difficult to coordinate planning projects, plan for future availability and use, or accurately assess current conditions. Many of these challenges can be addressed by forming a standing Property Owners Committee. The group can be managed by the newly created economic development corporation.

Specific tasks that should be undertaken for this action are:

- Conduct regular meetings to brief members on planning projects, policy updates or other relevant topics that advance the committee’s purpose.



- Create an owner/developer revolving loan fund that can help fund building improvement projects or other related capital projects.
- Conduct building or site visits with members to learn more about the building conditions or improvement project outcomes.
- Collect information on the long-term outlook for building ownership.
- Assist owners in the marketing of the properties, future use strategies and potential/future sales transactions.

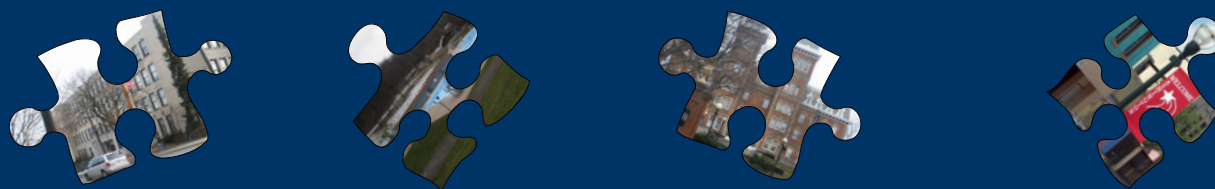
☑ **Offer a revolving loan fund for upper story development**

The City should continue to work with the BDA to develop a revolving loan fund at low or no interest that could be offered to property owners within the BID to develop the upper stories of their buildings (second story and above). In order to secure the start up funding of \$1 million, the City and BDA should meet with local banks to determine interest in participating. Once the program is started, the money that is repaid through the loans can be put back into the program for new projects. Currently the Washington County Council for Economic Development has a similar program that could also be folded into the City / BDA fund, which would help provide additional start up money.

Objective = Enhance the overall appearance of the Central Business District (CBD)

☑ **Develop a gateway at the intersection of West Maiden Street and South Main Street**

This particular intersection is a main entrance into the CBD so a decorative gateway that builds upon the Historic Theme identified as a priority through this Comprehensive Plan and utilizes colorful native plantings is recommended. An attractive gateway would increase the visibility of this intersection and invite people into the CBD. The maintenance of the gateway could be the responsibility of the newly formed economic development corporation.



✓ **Develop a public art program**

Incorporating art into the CBD is a great way to improve the attractiveness of the area. A public art advisory committee, made up of local artists, art teachers and professors and local designers could oversee the program and select locations for art installations such as blank walls, key intersections and gateways, transit stops, etc. A pilot project could be the intermodal facility that is planned at the current site of the Chestnut Street Garage.

A percent for art ordinance should also be adopted by City Council as part of this program. This type of ordinance would require that a small percentage of the cost of constructing or renovating municipal buildings and public spaces be devoted to original artwork on the premises. A successful example of this exists in Chicago (http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public_art_program.html).

✓ **Reactivate the Tree City USA designation**



The Tree City USA® program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. This program provides assistance and recognition for urban and community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities across the United States. The City of Washington was previously a Tree City USA, but that designation has since lapsed. The City should reapply to the Arbor Day Foundation. In order to gain back the designation the City must do the following:

- Appoint a tree board or commission to be responsible for maintenance
- Adopt a tree care ordinance that establishes the board or commission and provides guidance for planting, maintaining and removing trees.



A sample ordinance is available through the International Society of Arboriculture.

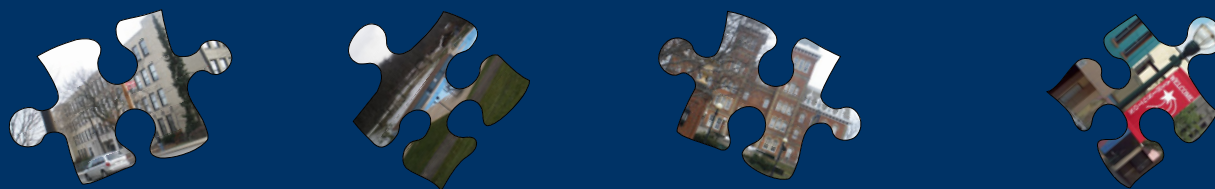
- Establish a Community Forestry Program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita. This money would then be used for the maintenance of the trees within the City.
- Hold an annual Arbor Day Observance. This could be a simple ceremony or a day or week long celebration.

☒ **Develop pocket parks / green spaces in vacant lots**

As mentioned in previous sections of the Comprehensive Plan, vacant lots and sites can negatively impact a community and create a sense of disinvestment. In addition the City is currently lacking in public green space, especially within the CBD. In order to transform vacant lots into productive sites, it is recommended that pocket parks and green spaces be created in their place. These areas could be very simple in nature and just include some benches and plantings to provide an attractive place for people to gather on their lunch hour or at other times during the day. The City could work in conjunction with the BDA and solicit sponsorships and donations from local businesses and corporations to help defray maintenance costs.

☒ **Create an overlay district for the Core Area for Revitalization**

In order to encourage redevelopment and development in the Core Area, an overlay district for the Core Area (as defined on Map 2.5) should be created for the City and Borough's Zoning Ordinances. The specifics of the overlay would need to be discussed between the City and Borough but some incentives that could be offered include waived or reduced application fees, relaxed development standards, density bonuses or reduced parking requirements.



Objective = Target existing and emerging growth sectors to locate within the Central Business District (CBD)

☑ Create “sector-specific” committees or councils

As part of the Comprehensive Plan process, stakeholders asked what industry sectors they should target as part of a future growth strategy. The City of Washington and East Washington’s economies are clearly driven by the Public Administration, Health Care and Educational Services sectors. In recent years employment growth is also being realized in the mining industries as a result of Marcellus Shale drilling.

There is additional anecdotal evidence that information technology firms represent an emerging sector opportunity. All of these leading sectors combine to drive the retail sector that serves a trade area far beyond the City of Washington and the Borough of East Washington’s municipal boundaries.

The physical character and capacity of a community is also an important factor when considering when targeting sectors. The space demands for growth sectors are generally class A or B office. Increasingly some business service and IT sector firms are finding former “store fronts” as attractive alternatives to traditional space in office buildings.

The City of Washington and East Washington’s traditional neighborhood design with a mix of residential options professional offices and boutique retail is ideally aligned to attract and retain the industry sector growth occurring within the City and East Washington. These sectors should remain a central focus for all business attraction and retention activities.

Specific tasks that should be undertaken for this action are:

- Work with the Chambers or other business organizations to create “sector-specific” committees or councils to share information, network and discuss policy issues impacting their respective sector.
- Prepare sector specific economic development marketing collateral that can be distributed by existing local firms at industry trade shows or other applicable venues.



- Ensure future office space capacity by developing and maintaining an office space inventory and condition status of both existing and potential office space within the business improvement district.
- Rethink vacant “store fronts” –While they typically have served the retail tenant, increasingly they are attracting higher value industry sectors.
- Conduct a survey of existing office tenants within the BID to determine existing and future space needs.

Objective = Improve Parking within the Central Business District (CBD)

☑ Increase advertising for free parking

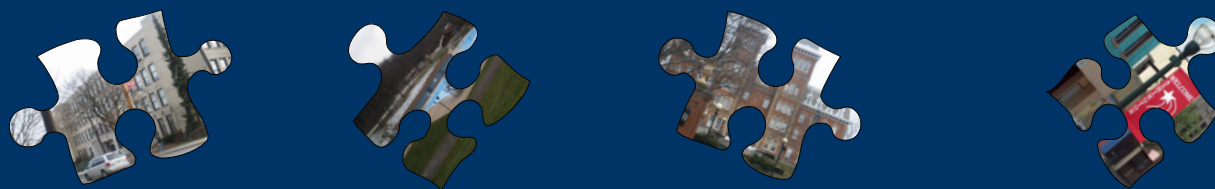
The City currently offers 20 free meters throughout the CBD for 2-hour patron parking as well as an additional 20 free spaces within the parking lot for the Citizen’s Library. These free spaces should be advertised through street signage, the BDA, websites and any other marketing material that is created as part of the marketing campaign discussed earlier. This will help to alleviate some of the concerns regarding cost of parking in the CBD.

☑ Work with local business owners to validate customer parking

Many business districts use programs where patrons are validated (either entirely or partially) for parking when they utilize the local businesses and services. This would apply to people parking in the local garages.

☑ Provide discounted garage leases for local employees

Often times employees will utilize street parking for convenience especially when the price is comparable between parking on the street and parking in a garage. The City did try to combat this by raising rates for the parking meters. Another option is to offer additional discounts on garage leases for local employers and their employees. This could further encourage people to use the garages and free up spaces on the street for patrons.



☑ **Construct a pedestrian bridge project to link the Crossroads Garage with the CBD**

In order to encourage people to utilize the garage when visiting the CBD, the City should continue to search for funding for the pedestrian bridge project identified in the Central Business District Master Plan for the City of Washington. This \$1.2-\$1.4 million dollar project would provide a direct connection for pedestrians from the third level of the Crossroads Parking Garage to Main Street.

☑ **Conduct a cost savings analysis for replacing parking meters with central kiosks**

The City should complete a study to determine potential cost savings that could be realized through replacing parking meters with central kiosks. Central kiosks would decrease the need for maintaining the City's existing meters. Currently the city maintains approximately 750-760 meters. They could also provide convenience for patrons of the CBD by allowing them to use bills and credit cards to pay for parking (and not just quarters).

