



# NORTH WALES BOROUGH REVITALIZATION PLAN

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## **Preface**

Most institutions have learned that success and prolonged complacency are mutually exclusive. Maintaining an indefinite state of ‘status quo’ will most assuredly lead to stagnation and a lack of vibrancy; if not a total demise. Periodically the institution has to be injected with a new energy (revitalized) in order to meet and adapt to the changing needs and goals of its constituents. Recognizing this, Borough Council adopted a Revitalization Plan in 2003.

A revitalization plan is not something that is ‘once and done’. It, too, needs a periodic revitalization in order to remain relevant. The Plan that follows is an attempt to do just that.

A revitalization plan can be as simple or as complex and far reaching as its authors wish to make it. On the other hand, any plan that does not take into consideration the constraints of limited available resources e.g. human, financial, etc., is destined to meet with, at best, very limited success.

This plan was written with that in mind.



## **Introduction/History**

The Borough of North Wales is situated in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. It is a suburb of Philadelphia and is one of the three historic population centers that make up the North Penn Valley. The population was 3,251 at the 2010 census, indicating a slight decrease in population from the 2000 census.

Like many small Boroughs in Pennsylvania, North Wales is "built out", meaning that its boundaries have not kept up with population growth. Many businesses and residences with North Wales addresses are located in outlying townships that were never annexed by the Borough, such as the Montgomery Mall in Montgomery Township. North Wales is in the North Penn School District.

As its name suggests, North Wales was settled by Welsh immigrants who named it after North Wales in Wales. Part of a 1702 William Penn land grant, this rich farming country was given the name "Gwynedd" for the homeland of the earliest settlers and it began as a pastoral village in agricultural Gwynedd Township.

Before 1850, a number of farms, plus a 1776 church, shared by the Lutheran and Reformed congregations, dotted the present Borough's landscape. What is now Main Street was originally an old Indian trail, and was laid out as the Great Road in 1728. By 1828, it had become today's Sunneytown Pike, and was a toll road until 1914. It had always been an important route to Philadelphia, and continues to serve as a connection to Routes 202 and 309 to the east and the Northeastern Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the west.

The Borough's rural character was abruptly disrupted by the building of the North Pennsylvania Railroad (presently SEPTA) starting in 1852. Service from Bethlehem to Philadelphia through North Wales began in 1857. The town quickly grew around the railroad station, with hotels and restaurants lining Walnut Street and Main Street within walking distance. North Wales is the oldest of the North Penn Boroughs, incorporated in 1869, by taking land from today's Upper Gwynedd Township, then the northern portion of Gwynedd Township.

Some of the large homes at the start of the 20th century were opened to summer guests from the city. "Idlewilde", still present on Main Street, hosted the Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II, when he was visiting Philadelphia to open the 1876 U.S. Centennial Exhibition with President Ulysses S. Grant.



During the late 19th and early 20th century, much of North Wales Borough's housing was built. Most houses along South Main Street between Montgomery and Prospect Avenues remain much as they were when built and are lovingly maintained. The Borough also features a variety of single family homes, as well as twins, and row homes.

Between 1900 and 1926, Lehigh Valley Transit Company operated its Chestnut Hill Branch trolley line, which connected North Wales to surrounding towns through service to either Philadelphia or Allentown. The trolley ran down Main Street through the Borough, but



detoured onto Pennsylvania Avenue for two blocks to enable it to cross the North Penn Railroad on a bridge. The bridge was required because the railroad, citing safety concerns, refused to allow the trolleys to cross at the Main Street grade crossing. Lehigh Valley Transit Company's combined passenger/freight station was located on the north (east) side of Pennsylvania Avenue between Shearer Street and Montgomery Avenue. After Main Street trolley service ended in 1926, Lehigh Valley Transit high-speed trolleys continued to serve the Wales Junction station, located on Sumneytown Pike three-quarters of a mile west of town. High-speed trolley serviced ended in September 1951.

Passenger rail service to North Wales is currently provided by SEPTA. Many North Wales residents commute to Center City Philadelphia by the Lansdale/Doylestown Line train. The 1870s-vintage brick railroad station was thoroughly restored in 2010.

In 2000, the North Wales Historic Preservation District was established by Borough Council and the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission to protect the architecture that is a visual reminder of the Borough's past. It is the first Historic District in the North Penn Boroughs.

### **Demographics**

With a population of 3,251 in 2010, the median age was 39.3 years with the greatest distribution of residents between 25-59 years of age. The total population distribution by age is provided in the chart below:

Age	Number	Percent
9 and under	398	12.3%
10-19 years	350	10.8%
20-29 years	444	13.7%
30-39 years	467	14.4%
40-49 years	502	15.5%
50-59 years	534	16.4%
60-69 years	311	9.5%
70-79 years	147	4.5%
80 years and over	98	2.9%

There are 2,306 residents 25 years and older living in the Borough. The educational attainment of the population over 25 is:

Education Level	Number	Percent
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	13	0.6%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	96	4.2%
High school graduate	684	29.7%
Some college, no degree	476	20.6%
Associate's degree	195	8.5%
Bachelor's degree	543	23.4%
Graduate degree	299	13%

In 2010 the median household income was \$62,000 with a distribution as follows:

Income	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	47	3.4%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	36	2.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	166	12.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	136	9.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	227	16.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	179	13.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	239	17.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	262	19.1%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	52	3.8%
\$200,000 or more	30	2.2%

## Economic Development

The Borough enjoys a high business occupancy rate in the commercial corridors, and the businesses are comprised of various industries from food service to industrial. Approximately 130 businesses are located in the Borough. A complete list of businesses registered for 2012 can be found in **Appendix A**. The major challenge, however, will be to sustain the success of the existing businesses. In part, this can be accomplished by improving aesthetics through additional streetscape improvements and creating a more pedestrian friendly environment.



Main and Walnut Streets generally possess a traditional downtown form, with sidewalks defined by building and shop fronts. Limited parking is available on-street and is impeded by speeding traffic. Further, poor signage identifying parking at the rear of businesses limits parking lot usage. New signage used to reduce the speed of traffic and direct commuters to rear parking lots will reduce the perceived lack of parking. While the Borough has signage to indicate its corporate limits, these identifiers are either deteriorating or difficult to see, resulting in weak entrances to the community. As a result, the Borough would benefit from creating more distinctive signage at the four major entrances

to help reinforce the Borough's identity as a separate community from those that surround it.

## Transportation

The primary access points to the Borough are from Main Street, to the east and west, and from Walnut Street, to the north and south. Public transportation is also available from SEPTA. SEPTA





Route 96 bus runs along Main and Walnut Streets servicing the area from the Norristown Transportation Center to the Montgomery Mall and Lansdale Train Station. The North Wales train station is located off of East Walnut Street and is served by the Lansdale/Doylestown Regional Rail Line. There are a total of 230 daily parking spaces, with an average daily availability of zero spaces. Additionally, there are a total of 185 permit parking spaces, with an average availability of zero spaces. Two bike racks are available at the station, accommodating a total of six bicycles. SEPTA is preparing a plan to construct an additional parking lot along Beaver Street in order to alleviate parking constraints.

Transportation concerns in the Borough are mostly confined to the Main Street and Walnut Street corridors. These major thoroughfares and commercial spine of the Borough are often congested during peak hours, making it difficult to cross and unpleasant to walk along. Traffic congestion and pedestrian safety are two primary concerns to be addressed through traffic calming measures, as well as expanding streetscape improvements.

## **Infrastructure**

### *Drainage/Storm Water System*

Most of the Borough was developed during an era when stormwater management was not part of a municipality's vernacular. It was also developed incrementally over an extended period of time and as a result of both of these factors, little existed in the way of a coordinated stormwater system. Most properties lack property line swales typically found in contemporary subdivisions, nor do they have stormwater detention basins. The Borough has therefore been incrementally creating a



stormwater collection system since the 1980's. For the most part, it is a piped system, leading to various points of discharge. A stormwater drainage way is located in the Ninth Street Park, which provides part of the stormwater control for the Dodsworth Run drainage area. The Dodsworth Run drainage area includes the only floodplain in the Borough. In 2010 the Ninth Street

drainage system was improved to include additional inlets and install an underground basin.



A system of retention basins has been installed on a subdivision in Upper Gwynedd Township along the northern border of the Borough, along East Prospect Avenue. This project further assists in the management of stormwater in the Dodsworth Run drainage area.

In general, the southern portion of the Borough is better served by an existing drainage system. The area generally between Fourth and Tenth Streets will continue to be monitored to determine the success of the recently installed and updated stormwater management structures in the Dodsworth Run drainage area. If needed, this area will be the focus of incremental updates and additions to the underground drainage system.

### Curbs and Sidewalks

In recent years, curb and sidewalk improvements have been made to provide for more friendly and accessible pedestrian routes. There are several areas of the Borough where sidewalks are intermittent or missing. Two specific areas of concern are disconnected sidewalks in the area of the North Wales SEPTA train station and lack of sidewalks near North Wales Elementary School. The in-fill sidewalks in the area of the train station are identified on **Map 1**.

To address certain pedestrian corridors, specifically those streets frequently utilized by students walking to school, a Federal Safe Routes to School Grant has been obtained to install sidewalks along:

- W. Prospect Avenue from bridge to Pennsylvania Avenue
- Fairview Avenue extending from existing sidewalk to bend at Highland Ave
- Highland Avenue between existing Fairview Avenue and existing sidewalk
- Swartley Street from Washington Avenue to alleyway
- Washington Avenue from West Street to Swartley Street
- Second Street from E. Prospect to Summit Street

**Map 2** indicates where sidewalk will be installed utilizing funds from the Safe Routes to School Grant.

### Water Service

The public water service in North Wales Borough is provided by the North Wales Water Authority. The Authority was incorporated in 1951 by the government of the Borough of North Wales under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Authorities Act of 1945. The Authority is governed by a board of five people appointed by the Borough Council of North Wales. The board members are customers of the system and serve without compensation. The purpose of the formation of the North Wales Water



Authority was to acquire and operate the privately held North Wales Water Company which, at the time, serviced 1,200 customers.

A municipal authority offers several unique advantages over private or investor-owned entities in its ability to deliver essential public services such as water. An Authority is nonprofit; therefore, 100% of all

revenues remain within the Authority for system improvements. There is no outside stockholder cost, nor can funds be used for other municipal services.

There are currently no water supply or service issues to be addressed.

Sewer Service

The entire Borough is served by a public sewer system owned and operated by the North Wales Sewer Authority. The system is currently inadequate and is plagued with an infiltration problem, causing plant overloads during periods of heavy rain. In order to remedy the long standing issues and allow for additional capacity, the Authority is scheduled to be connected to the Upper Gwynedd Township Waste Water Treatment Facility during the first quarter of 2013. This interconnection will allow for future development and infill of Borough properties.

**Housing**

The housing stock in North Wales is generally stable and the land is essentially “built out”. Based on the high occupancy rates over the years, the residential neighborhoods within the Borough are generally attractive and well maintained. Total housing units in 2010 were counted at 1,462, with 1,374 occupied and 88 vacant.

Units in Structure

Housing Type	Number	Percent
<b>1 unit detached</b>	755	51.6%
<b>1 unit attached</b>	376	25.7%
<b>2 units</b>	138	9.4%
<b>3 or 4 units</b>	114	7.8%
<b>5 to 9 units</b>	79	5.4%

### Year Structure Built

<b>Construction Year</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Built 2005 or later</b>	3	0.2%
<b>2000 to 2004</b>	14	1.0%
<b>1990 to 1999</b>	23	1.6%
<b>1980 to 1989</b>	24	1.6%
<b>1970 to 1979</b>	91	6.2%
<b>1960 to 1969</b>	187	12.8%
<b>1950 to 1959</b>	275	18.8%
<b>1940 to 1949</b>	281	19.2%
<b>1939 or earlier</b>	564	38.6%

No major housing issues or concerns were identified, and therefore, the plan will direct resources largely to the commercial areas of the Borough.

### **Public Safety**

The Borough enjoys a relatively safe and secure community, where public safety is not a major issue.

Crossing traffic and pedestrian safety have been identified as a concern as well as improved lighting. These concerns are addressed throughout the plan with the recommended streetscape and traffic calming improvements; as such, public safety is not specifically addressed in the Goals and Strategies.



## Achievements from Previous Plan

- ❖ Kiosk sign was installed along Walnut Street
- ❖ Business Alliance was created
- ❖ Improved communication between Borough office and local businesses
- ❖ Business infill and diversity in business corridor
- ❖ Developed a master plan for the “Wawa Triangle”
- ❖ Acquire underutilized parcels for public parking
- ❖ Expanded streetscape improvements along East Walnut Street
- ❖ Expanded storm sewer system in the Dodsworth Run watershed and adjacent areas
- ❖ Worked with SEPTA for refurbishment of train station, platforms, and parking areas
- ❖ Additional shelter was provided at SEPTA station and ADA access was provided
- ❖ Signage was installed to identify the historic district
- ❖ Continue to update and replace sidewalks and handicap ramps



## **Goals and Strategies**

*Improve access and safety of pedestrians along Main and Walnut Streets through additional streetscape improvements and traffic calming initiatives.*

- Extend existing streetscape along Main and Walnut Streets
- Improve lighting
- Enhance Crosswalks
- Reduce lane widths
- Provide pedestrian buffer areas where possible
- New public spaces

*Create new gateway signage on Main and Walnut Streets to better identify Borough boundaries.*

- Design and construct new gateway signage
- Attempt to landscape around signage where possible

*Improve parking access and identification*

- Encourage shared parking
- Improve signage for existing parking
- Delineate parking spaces on Main Street

*Encourage building façade improvements in the business corridor to enhance their visual character.*

- Encourage façade improvements through existing ordinances
- Education about HARB and importance of historic character

*Update the Borough's Zoning Ordinance to expand business use and improve appearance of business corridor.*

- Create new standards for signage quantity, size, location, etc.
- Re-examine the current zoning districts and look to encourage expanded use

*Develop and Implement a plan to market the Borough*

- Prepare welcome packet
- Business Alliance link on website
- Belong to local organizations

## Action Plan

*Improve access and safety of pedestrians along Main and Walnut Streets through additional streetscape improvements and traffic calming initiatives. (Medium Priority)*

### 1. *Extend existing streetscape along Main and Walnut Streets*



An attractive streetscape is important for a community to improve the overall appearance of a business corridor and encourage pedestrians to walk, shop, and meet other people safely. The presence of pedestrians on the street indicates to passing motorists that it is a place to stop, visit, explore, and that they should slow down. In addition, streetscape improvements will attract new businesses to invest in the area, as well as encourage existing business owners to reinvest in their properties.

To further enhance the appearance and function of Main and Walnut Streets, the Borough should pursue a second phase streetscape improvement program. The streetscape improvements should include the following:

- **Sidewalks:** To create a unified and safe pedestrian system through the entire length of Main and Walnut Streets, sidewalks should be repaired, replaced and treated with aesthetic improvements. Selective sidewalk widening should be utilized along Walnut Street where practical.
- **Street Trees:** Planted areas and street trees can greatly enhance the attractiveness of a walkable community. These improvements also provide benefits for stormwater management. To extend existing street tree spacing, street trees should be placed no more than 50 feet apart. They should be planted in tree basins with a large opening to allow maximum water absorption. Street trees should be extended the length of Main and Walnut Street where practical.

### 2. *Improve lighting*

Pedestrian oriented lighting should be extended along the entire length of Main and Walnut Streets not only to promote pedestrian safety and activity at night, but to improve the aesthetic appearance of the business corridor and help create an identity.

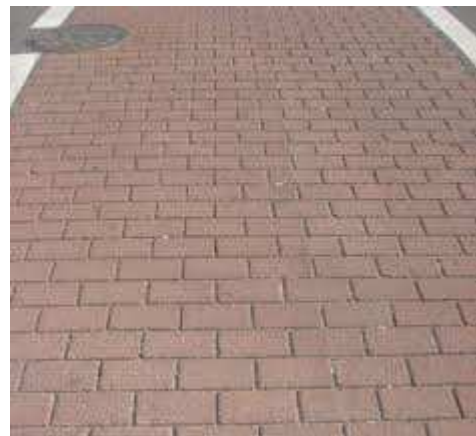


Crosswalks in particular should be given special attention so that pedestrians waiting at curbside or in the crosswalk are visible to drivers. Decorative streetlights consistent with the existing lamps should be installed at a spacing of no more than 50 feet apart and should be staggered on opposite sides of the roadway to maximize illumination.

### 3. Enhance Crosswalks

In downtown areas crosswalk treatments not only identify crosswalks as a pedestrian facility, providing right-of-way to the pedestrian, but also aid in slowing traffic by alerting drivers that they are entering a pedestrian zone. Enhanced or decorative crosswalks lend an attractive aesthetic element to the downtown area. Crosswalk treatments should be installed at:

- Beaver and Main Streets (across Main St)
- Shearer and Main Streets (across Main St)
- E. Montgomery Ave and Main St (across Main St)
- Church and Main Streets (across Main St)
- Walnut and Second Streets
- Walnut and Third Streets
- Walnut St and Pennsylvania Ave
- Walnut and Swartley Streets



Crosswalks outside of the downtown business corridor along Main and Walnut Streets should be marked at all intersections where there is significant conflict between motorists and pedestrians. A continental crosswalk treatment should be utilized at:

- Walnut and Water Streets (Across Water St)
- Main and Beaver Streets (Across Beaver St)
- Main and Shearer Streets (Across Shearer St)
- Main St and W. Montgomery Ave (Across Montgomery Ave)
- Main St and E. Montgomery Ave (Across Montgomery Ave)
- Main and Church Streets (Across Church St)
- Main St and Washington Ave (Across Washington Ave)
- Main and Summit Streets (Across Summit St)



#### 4. *Reduce lane widths*

Wide traffic lanes can encourage motorists to drive faster than they should. A narrower lane can provide adequate space for vehicles and encourage motorists to slow down within the travel area. Striping and delineating parking spaces along Main Street will improve access to parking and slightly narrow the travel lane.

#### 5. *Provide pedestrian buffer areas where possible*

Sidewalks are currently not buffered from adjacent traffic along many portions of Main and Walnut Streets, creating a hostile pedestrian environment. On-street parking provides an excellent pedestrian buffer, but at crossings may impede vision. In order to provide greater safety for pedestrians and ease in crossing the street, an effective method for calming traffic is to install landscaped raised curb extensions. These curb extensions extend into the parking lane, shortening the distance a pedestrian must cross as well as slowing traffic by narrowing the cartway. Additionally, they prevent cars from parking too close to the intersection, allowing pedestrians to better see oncoming traffic.

#### 6. *New Public Spaces*

Streetscape improvements can also include sites for the installation of public art, areas for public information, and new plazas, park spaces, and gathering places. Lumber Street is a one-way street situated between Main and Second Streets. This small street receives only limited traffic and could be an excellent location for a new plaza area. Creating a new pedestrian avenue downtown provides a refuge for visitors, patrons and



residents to enjoy a book on a bench or lunch at a table. With future development and redevelopment this area could be lined with businesses creating a feeling of an old world European street.

While cobblestones and other aesthetic treatments would create additional charm a first phase for creating the plaza is to close off the roadway and create a pleasant pedestrian refuge. On the Main Street access of the new plaza existing sidewalk would be connected to create continuity along the roadway, while bollards inside the existing parking



facilities towards Second Street and new signage would indicate to drivers that the road is closed to traffic. Additional aesthetic improvements would include a pavement treatment, benches, trash receptacles and planter boxes.

***Create new gateway signage on Main and Walnut Streets to better identify Borough boundaries. (High Priority)***

***1. Design and construct new gateway signage***

Gateways are meant to welcome and invite visitors and residents alike while identifying the entrances to the community. Attractive gateways send a positive message about the community as one enters. Furthermore, gateways can contribute significantly to the beautification of a main street business corridor. Gateway signage should be installed at the four primary entrances to the Borough, at either end of Main and Walnut Streets. Each of the gateways should be attractive, visible, thematic, and designed to take surroundings into consideration.

***2. Attempt to landscape around signage where possible***

Where sufficient space exists, low-maintenance and attractive landscaping should be installed around the gateway signage in order to increase visual impact. The landscaped areas should contain perennials with small shrubbery; ground cover should be an adequate layer of mulch to reduce weeds and maintenance.



## *Improve parking access and identification (High Priority)*

### *1. Encourage shared parking*

Parking shortages are often perceived. While most communities in fact have a sufficient parking supply for their demand, off-street parking is often used inefficiently. This is generally the case in the Borough, where it is common for parking lots along Main and Walnut Streets to be completely full at certain times of the day and empty at other times. One way to accommodate fluctuations in parking need is to utilize adjacent lots which may have alternate peak parking demand. A shared parking approach could be the solution to a perceived parking shortage.

Shared parking involves businesses coordinating and agreeing to allow customers of neighboring businesses to utilize their private parking when space is available, which could be at certain hours or all the time. Such an agreement may or may not be monetary, but it would require official arrangements between owners of adjacent lots. This concept is important because it allows existing resources to be used to their maximum potential while avoiding large expenditures on new infrastructure. Signage will be necessary to indicate the limits of shared parking, as well as businesses permitting shared parking. The Borough should try to coordinate with businesses with potential parking availability to negotiate a shared parking agreement.

Providing zoning incentives in auto-oriented business corridors may encourage property owners to implement shared parking arrangements. Zoning incentives for shared parking can encourage a reduction in the size of parking lots. Incentives that could be provided for shared parking include an increase in the floor area ratio to the number of required parking spaces and increased flexibility in certain bulk regulations, such as building coverage or height.

### *2. Improve signage for existing parking*



Signage is an important element in a downtown area. Good signage projects a positive image about the community and communicates important information to visitors, such as the location of parking. Signage for parking in the Borough would help clearly identify off-street parking for businesses. At the same time, signage could direct patrons from off-street parking to businesses. Signage should be simple, attractive, thematic, and conform to any other streetscape improvements or signage instituted along Main and Walnut Streets.

### 3. Delineate parking spaces on Main Street

The design of on-street parking in a commercial corridor has a great impact on the pedestrian environment. On one hand, parking creates a buffer between pedestrians and traffic and narrows the crossing width of streets. On the other hand, cars parked too close to intersections inhibit pedestrian sightlines, putting them at risk when crossing the street. However, with proper design of on-street parking facilities pedestrian safety concerns can be addressed. On-street parking can provide many benefits such as requiring less space than parking lots, slowing traffic, provides convenient access to store fronts, and encourages a walkable community. Along Main Street on-street parking should be expanded and pavement markings should be utilized to delineate parking spaces. **Maps 3-5** indicate the proposed improvements.

*Encourage building façade improvements in the business corridor to enhance their visual character. (Low Priority)*

#### 1. Encourage façade improvements through existing ordinances

An important component of a successful façade improvement program is specific design guidelines to which applicants are encouraged to comply in the rehabilitation of their properties. Guidelines should also educate property owners about the value and significance of the architectural style and appearance of their buildings in the context of their setting, surroundings, and history. Therefore, the Borough should adopt a standard set of design guidelines for commercial properties along Main and Walnut Streets to provide interested residents and business owners with appropriate guidance and advice for upgrading their façades. Design standards should also include recommendations for new construction, infill, additions, and renovations. Most importantly, the guidelines should be user friendly and function as a helpful tool, providing answers to common questions as well as a range of potential improvement options. Some of the specific design issues that should be addressed in the guidelines include:

- Building Mass, Roof Form, and Scale
- Window Design
- Architectural Types and Styles
- Exterior Finishes
- Design Details
- Materials
- Color Palette
- Signs
- Exterior Lighting



## 2. Education about HARB and importance of historic character

The preservation of the Borough's rich architectural heritage depends on the willingness of owners to exercise proper care in the maintenance and management of their properties. The Historical Architectural Review Board exists to aid property owners in discharging this responsibility. Additional education and resources should be available to residents. For example, any property owner in the Historic District must receive HARB approval before making any modifications to the façade of a structure. While this procedure may sound burdensome, it is actually quite simple, and its purpose is to help residents preserve their investment in a historically significant property. Working with the HARB and Historic Commission the Borough should develop a more formal outreach program for the Historic District.

**Update the Borough's Zoning Ordinance to expand business use and improve appearance of business corridor. (Medium Priority)**

### 1. Create new standards for signage quantity, size, location, etc.

Multiple, freestanding commercial signs along Main Street diminish the appearance of the business corridor and contribute significantly to 'visual clutter' along Main Street. Improved control of signs is a necessary component of a streetscape improvement program designed to improve the overall appearance of the business district. Improved sign controls should take the form of the following initiatives:

- Freestanding signs are not appropriate in a pedestrian-oriented town center and, therefore, should no longer be permitted.
- Building signage mounted either perpendicular or parallel to the building wall is preferred, however, such signage should be limited in size and be architecturally attractive.
- Fabric awning signs are an acceptable alternative.
- Internally illuminated signage should be prohibited.
- Sign copy should be exclusively limited to business identification and street address; advertising should be prohibited from external business signs.





The Borough should also consider developing strategies to remove existing signs that would become non-conforming under new sign regulations. There are a number of approaches to achieving this goal:

- Incorporate sign standards into proposed design guidelines that will clearly illustrate goals and options for improving signs.
- Educate local business and property owners about how important improving sign quality is to improving the overall appearance of the district and work with the business community to encourage the voluntary removal of freestanding signs and other non-conforming signage.



## *2. Re-examine the current zoning districts and look to encourage expanded use*

The Borough must carefully assess its zoning ordinance and land use regulations to determine if they are consistent with the goals and strategies for continued growth and reuse of the business corridor. A major update to the zoning code last occurred in 1995. The existing zoning districts generally are consistent with the existing land uses in the Borough. Perhaps the key concerns with the Borough's zoning, however, are a lack of clarity and limitations on land use. These concerns have been voiced not only by private citizens and business owners but also by the Borough's own personnel. These concerns can result in delays in the permitting and approval process as requirements that should be clearly defined require negotiation or Zoning Hearing Board approval. The resulting increased costs in time and money may discourage potential businesses from opening or relocating to the Borough. The Borough should review and rewrite the zoning code as required to address these problems.

## *Develop and Implement a plan to market the Borough (Low Priority)*

### *1. Prepare welcome packet*

Develop a welcome packet for new businesses and residents welcoming them to the community and providing a brief overview of Borough resources and requirements.

### *2. Business Alliance link on website*

Aid in promoting the Borough Business Alliance through a visible link on the Borough website and participate in the Business Alliance in order to engage businesses and keep owners/managers informed of Borough happenings.

### *3. Belong to local organizations*

Expand involvement in local organizations in order to help market the Borough and communicate improvements within the Borough.

## **Implementation of Action Plan**

*Improve access and safety of pedestrians along Main and Walnut Streets through additional streetscape improvements and traffic calming initiatives.*

### **1) Project Elements**

Streetscape improvement and traffic calming initiatives for Main and Walnut Streets are recommended in two phases. Phasing will allow the Borough to effectively implement the streetscape improvements by earmarking necessary funding to complete each phase. Improvements should include:

- Extend existing streetscape along Main and Walnut Streets
- Improve lighting
- Enhance Crosswalks
- Reduce lane widths
- Provide pedestrian buffer areas where possible
- New public spaces

Phase 1: Improvements to Main Street would include additional crosswalks, reduced lane widths with additional on street parking, provide for pedestrian buffers and would include developing Lumber Street as a plaza area.

Phase 2: Improvements to Walnut Street would include new sidewalks, street lights, street trees and additional crosswalks.

### **2) Project Approach**

- Planning Commission Input: The Planning Commission and a designated subcommittee of stakeholders should coordinate streetscape improvements for Walnut Street, including the selection of the actual streetscape and working with a design consultant.
- Secure funding for design services: The Borough Manager, with assistance from Borough Council, should solicit funding for the streetscape design improvements.
- Prepare an RFP for design/engineering services: The Borough Manager should prepare a Request for Proposals to hire a consultant to prepare a detailed streetscape plan and engineering documents for Phases 1 and 2.
- Select a design team: Based on credentials, scope of services offered and cost proposal the Borough Council should select a design team.

- Explore implementation funding: Once a detailed streetscape design has been completed, funding will have to be secured for the actual construction of improvements. Coordination should begin with local political representatives and the Montgomery County Planning Commission.
- Complete Design: The Borough Manager and Planning Commission should work with the design consultant as the detailed streetscape plan is prepared.
- Bid Project: Once design is complete and funding is secured bid documents should be prepared to select a contractor to perform the streetscape improvements.
- Construction: The streetscape improvements will be installed by the selected contractor and should be monitored by Borough Staff and Borough Engineer as needed. All contract and grant documents should be executed by the Borough and closed out at completion of the improvements.

### 3) Responsible Parties

- Borough Planning Commission
- Borough Council
- Borough Staff
- North Wales Borough Business Alliance
- Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- Design Consultant

### 4) Approximate Timeline

A streetscape project will take several years from beginning to end. The following provides an estimated timeline for establishing streetscape improvement efforts and implementing the project:

Planning Commission Input	3-4 months
Secure funding for design services:	6-12 months
Prepare an RFP for design/engineering services	4-6 months
Select a design team	2-3 months
Explore implementation funding	6-12 months
Complete design	12 months
Bid project	3-4 months
Construction	6-8 months



## 5) Estimated Project Costs

### Phase 1: Main Street

	Unit	Unit Cost	Total
<b>Pedestrian Buffers</b>	66 Sq/Yd	\$50.00	\$3,300.00
<b>Crosswalks (Painted)</b>	1,344 LF	\$2.50	\$3,360.00
<b>Crosswalk Treatments</b>	488 Sq/Yd	\$75.00	\$36,600.00
<b>Bollards</b>	6	\$500.00	\$3,000.00
<b>Benches</b>	6	\$1,500.00	\$9,000.00
<b>Tables</b>	4	\$1,500.00	\$6,000.00
<b>Trash Receptacles</b>	2	\$1,500.00	\$3,000.00
<b>Planter Boxes</b>	8	\$1,100.00	\$8,800.00
<b>New Sidewalks (6ft)</b>	30 Sq/Yd	\$45.00	\$1,350.00
<b>New Curbs</b>	45 LF	\$20.00	\$900.00
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$75,310.00</b>

### Phase 2: Walnut Street

	Unit	Unit Cost	Total
<b>New Curbs</b>	5,572 LF	\$20.00	\$111,440.00
<b>New Sidewalks (5ft)</b>	3,096 Sq/Yd	\$45.00	\$139,320.00
<b>Street Trees</b>	45 EA	\$500.00	\$22,500.00
<b>Street Lights</b>	45 EA	\$5,000.00	\$225,000.00
<b>Crosswalks (Painted)</b>	192 LF	\$2.50	\$480.00
<b>Crosswalk Treatments</b>	610 Sq/Yd	\$75.00	\$45,750.00
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$544,490.00</b>

## 6) Proposed Funding Sources

Federal: U.S. Department of Transportation  
 State: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation  
 Local: Montgomery County Revitalization Program  
 Borough of North Wales  
 Private: Foundations

*Create new gateway signage on Main and Walnut Streets to better identify Borough boundaries.*

**1) Project Elements**

- Design and construct new gateway signage
- Attempt to landscape around signage where possible

**2) Project Approach**

- Utilize consultant to design signage: The Borough Manager with input from the Planning Commission will work with a consultant to design new gateway signage.
- Negotiate with property owner's location of signs: While signage should be located in the public right of way, the Borough Manager should reach out to property owners to discuss the placement of signage and any ground cover before installation.
- Review design/locations with Planning Commission: Following discussions with property owners, the Planning Commission will review sign design and locations before presenting to Council.
- Present design/locations to Council for consideration: Following final review the design will be presented to Council for approval.

**3) Responsible Parties**

- Borough Staff
- Borough Planning Commission
- Borough Council
- Design Consultant

**4) Approximate Timeline**

- Utilize consultant to design signage: 1-2 Months
- Negotiate with property owner's location of signs: 2-3 months
- Review design/locations with Planning Commission: 2 months
- Present design/locations to Council for consideration: 1 month

**5) Estimated Project Costs**

Estimated cost for the installation of four new signs and associated landscaping is \$9,000.

## 6) Proposed Funding Sources

Funding may be available from the Montgomery County Planning Commission and North Wales Borough. A private donation could offset costs for one or more of the signs.

### *Improve parking access and identification*

#### 1) Project Elements

- Encourage shared parking
- Improve signage for existing parking
- Delineate parking spaces on Main Street

#### 2) Project Approach

There are several work tasks that should be undertaken by the Borough and local entities to begin improving the parking situation in the commercial corridor. The following tasks are recommended:

- Planning Commission: The Planning Commission will meet to discuss the impacts of shared parking and how best to implement.
- Aid in negotiating shared-use parking arrangements: The Borough Manager with assistance from the Borough Solicitor will prepare a template agreement for use by Borough businesses.
- Stripe parking spaces on Main Street: Parking spaces and other pavement markings should be striped on Main Street to improve parking identification and encourage drivers to reduce vehicle speeds.
- Install parking way-finding signage: Review existing signage, design new signs, and install signage to aid patrons in finding available parking.
- Add signage and make other improvements to shared lots: Shared lots should include new signage identifying the lots as shared and any time restraints or conditions that may be in place.
- Monitor parking improvement process: Shared lots and Main Street parking should be monitored for use to help determine the surplus or lack of parking.

#### 3) Responsible Parties

- Borough Planning Commission
- Borough Council

- Borough Staff
- North Wales Borough Business Alliance
- Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Borough Engineer as needed

#### 4) Approximate Timeline

- Planning Commission : 1-3 months
- Aid in negotiating shared-use parking arrangements: 6-12 months
- Stripe parking spaces on Main Street: 3-6 months
- Install parking way-finding signage: 6 months
- Add signage and make other improvements to shared lots: 6-12 months
- Monitor parking improvement process: Ongoing

#### 5) Estimated Project Costs

New signage for shared lots is estimated to be \$50-100 per sign

The estimated cost for delineating parking spaces on Main Street is \$9,000

#### 6) Proposed Funding Sources

Cost associated with the shared parking agreements would be the responsibility of the property owners. Funding sources for the other aspects of parking access and identification are the Montgomery County Planning Commission and North Wales Borough.

*Encourage building façade improvements in the business corridor to enhance their visual character.*

#### 1) Project Elements

- Encourage façade improvements through existing ordinances
- Education about HARB and importance of historic character

#### 2) Project Approach

- Planning Commission Review: The Planning Commission, with input from the Business Alliance and Historic Architectural Review Board will review existing policies and education materials.
- Historic Architectural Review Board Input: The HARB will be instrumental in updating information to be included in the education materials.



- Prepare education materials: The Borough Manager, with input from the Planning Commission, HARB and other parties will prepare the educational materials.
- Public input: Public input from residents and the Business Alliance will be solicited throughout the project.
- Final modifications for approval: A final draft of the education materials will be provided to the Planning Commission and Borough Council for review and comments.
- Council review/consideration: Following final comments the final draft will be presented to Council for approval.

### **3) Responsible Parties**

Borough staff directed by the Manager and in coordination with the Planning Commission and HARB will be responsible for reviewing the Zoning Ordinance and preparing education material. The Borough Engineer and Solicitor will be utilized for review and specific design or legal guidance.

### **4) Approximate Timeline**

- Planning Commission Review: 3-4 months
- Historic Architectural Review Board Input: 2-3 months
- Prepare education materials: 4-6 months
- Public input: 1-2 months
- Final modifications for approval: 1-2 months
- Council review/consideration: 1-2 months

### **5) Estimated Project Costs**

Updates to existing ordinances and education about the Historic Architectural Review Board can be largely conducted by Borough staff. Estimated cost for education material \$100.00 annually.

### **6) Proposed Funding Sources**

At this time a grant program for façade improvements is not being proposed. As such, funding requirements will be minimal. The printing costs can be absorbed by the Borough's General Fund printing budget.

## *Update the Borough's Zoning Ordinance to expand business use and improve appearance of business corridor*

### **1) Project Elements**

- Create new standards for signage quantity, size, location, etc.
- Re-examine the current zoning districts and look to encourage expanded use

### **2) Project Approach**

- Planning Commission Review: The Planning Commission will review the existing ordinance and provide input to the Borough Manager for the draft update. The Commission will continually review and provide input throughout the revision process.
- Updates to Zoning Ordinance: The Borough Manager with input from the Planning Commission, Borough Council, Borough Engineer, Business Alliance and residents will prepare an update to the existing Zoning Ordinance.
- Thorough legal and engineering review of proposed updates: The Borough Solicitor and Borough Engineer will review the updates to ensure any changes are in accordance with existing law and are sound land planning requirements.
- Public notification and hearing: As required by the Municipalities Planning Code public notice and hearings will be conducted.
- Final modifications for approval: A final draft of the zoning update will be provided to the Planning Commission and Borough Council for review and comments.
- Council review/consideration: Following final comments the final draft will be presented to Council for approval.

### **3) Responsible Parties**

Borough staff directed by the Manager will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Zoning Ordinance. Support from municipal partners with recent Zoning updates will aid in the updating process. The Borough Engineer and Solicitor will be utilized for review and specific design or legal guidance.

### **4) Approximate Timeline**

- Planning Commission Review: 6-12 months
- Updates to Zoning Ordinance: 6-12 months (concurrent with PC Review)
- Thorough legal and engineering review of proposed updates: 1-2 months
- Public notification and hearing: 1 month

- Final modifications for approval: 1-2 months
- Council review/consideration: 1 month

## 5) Estimated Project Costs

Since most of the work for updating the Zoning Ordinance will be done by Borough Staff costs for the Ordinance update will be kept to a minimum. Assistance from the Borough Engineer and Solicitor will be required. Support costs are estimated at \$3,000 - \$5,000.

## 6) Proposed Funding Sources

The costs for engineering and legal support will come from the respective line items in the Borough's General Fund budget. No increases in annual budget should be needed.

## *Develop and Implement a plan to market the Borough*

### 1) Project Elements

- Prepare welcome packet
- Business Alliance link on website
- Belong to local organizations

### 2) Project Approach

- Research/Discuss other existing welcome packets: Utilize components of other municipal welcome packets as a framework for North Wales.
- Prepare a Draft: The Borough Manager with input from the Business Alliance, Planning Commission, Borough Council and others will prepare the document.
- Submit draft for review/approval of Council: Once the draft is prepared Council will have an opportunity for comments and approval of the plan.

### 3) Responsible Parties

Borough staff directed by the Manager will be responsible for creating and disseminating the welcome packet. Support from municipal partners with similar plans in place will aid in streamlining the preparation process.

### 4) Approximate Timeline

- Research/Discuss other existing welcome packets: 1-3 months
- Prepare a Draft: 1-2 months

- Submit draft for review/approval of Council: 1 month

### **5) Estimated Project Costs**

Costs for the welcome packet will be kept low. Preparation and design of the packet will be conducted by Borough staff. The packet will be promoted in electronic format and disseminated via the Borough website and by e-mail whenever practical. Minimal printing costs may be \$100.00 per year. A sponsorship of the program may be sought from the North Wales Borough Business Alliance.

### **6) Proposed Funding Sources**

Funding for the packet can be absorbed by the annual printing budget in the general fund of the Borough budget.



## **Appendix A – Business Listing**

<b>BUSINESS NAME</b>	<b>Address</b>
A.V. Weber Co., Inc.	101 Elm Avenue
Abbella Dental Care	217 N. Main Street
Affordable Auto Sales	346 W. Walnut Street
Albert S. Tenney III Ph.D.	801 E Walnut
Alice Bakery-Confectionery	129 S. Main Street
AMPAC	214 N. Main Street
Apogee Labs, Inc.	210 S. 3rd Street
Apple Hill Garden Design, Inc.	400 Elm Avenue (Rear)
Architectural Millwork Assoc.	327 S. 5th St.
Associates Land Transfer, LLC	136 S. Main Street
Bauhaus Banquet	101 S. Main Street
Best Dry Cleaners	115 W. Montgomery Avenue #102
Body & Earth, Inc.	212 N. Main Street, Ste. 204
Bowman's Emporium, Ltd	103 N Second Street
Boyd's Cardinal Hollow Winery	405 E. Walnut Street
BP Landscaping	101 S. Seventh Street
Brian K. Wiley, Esquire	100 S. Main St.
Caring Touch Social Workers, LLC	110 Washington Avenue
Catapult Web Development, Inc.	220 N. Center Street
Choice 1 Realty	136 S. Main St.
Conservatory of Music and Dance	125 S. Main Street
Cut Cave (Barbershop)	115 N. Main Street
Daniel H. O'Connell, Sr.	114 N. Main Street
Deely Custom Cabinetry, LLC	111 N. Main Street
Devine IT Services	212 N. Main Street, Ste 201
Divine Toddler Town Daycare Ctr Inc	104 S Main Street
Dolcissima Salon & Spa	103 E. Walnut Street
Doug's Auto Body	620 E. Walnut Street
Driver Training Services, LLC	217 E. Montgomery Avenue
Esthetique Skin Care	212 N. Main Street, Suite 205
Fabricator's Clearing House	401 Elm Ave. Suite 100
FilPro Corporation	411 Elm Avenue
Fore Site Land Services, Inc.	214 N. Main Street
Fornance Physician Services	212 N. Main Street Suite 203
Giant Food Store #6521(Drugstore)	107 S. Main St.
George B. Standbridge & Assoc.	110 E. Walnut St.
Goods from the Woods	326 Washington Avenue
Greenlawn Cemetery	114 N. Main Street
Greg Ladner Insurance Agency	122 S. Main Street
Gwynedd Racquet Club	207 S. Fourth Street
Gwynhurst Studios	403 E. Walnut Street
Hairdaze	414 E. Walnut Street
Hanebury Plumbing & Heating	309 W. Walnut Street
Hardware Cooling	313 Elm Avenue

Harry B. Miller Co. Inc.	426 Elm Ave.
Henry W. Beck, PhD	115 W. Montgomery Avenue
Hollywood Style, Inc.	115 W. Montgomery Ave. #105
I.E.F. Martial Arts Academy	100 N. 2nd Street, Suite LL1
IFH Industries, Inc.	320 Elm Avenue (rear)
Ingrid Dale-Ali	100 S. Main Street, 1st Fl
Ira Bilofsky LCSW	115 W. Montgomery Avenue, Ste 201
Jack C. Huang DDS	102 N. Main Street
Jang's ACE Cleaners	105 E. Walnut Street
Jeffrey L. Varner O.D	116 S. Main Street
Jones Purchasing Services, LLC	407 Elm Avenue, Ste 201B
Joseph J. Ochotny Jr. CPA	112 S. Main Street
Kathleen Pryor	414 W. Walnut Street
Kellner's Lawn & Leisure, Inc.	417 Elm Avenue
Kelly Motorcars LLC	320 Elm Avenue, Unit 1
Kitsch Designs	405 E. Walnut Street
KPM Properties LLP	403 Elm Avenue
L.I.P. Collision, Inc.	320 Elm Avenue
Lamb Foundation	114 N. Main Street
Laurel House	123 S. Main Street Suite 2
Lawn & Co. Builders	290 Center St.
Le Gourmet European Bistro	115 S. Main Street
Linked Forever Photography	100 S. Main Street, Suite 2D
Marguerite M. Nocchi, Esquire	108 W. Walnut Street
Matrix ATM	210 S. Center Street
McCrary Stucco/Plaster	506 E. Montgomery Avenue
McKeevers Tavern	101 S. 5th St.
Metal Edge International	337 W. Walnut Street
Met-Fin Co., Inc.	4th Street at Railroad
Michael G. Fellmeth & Assoc.	123 S. Main Street, Suite 3
Mixed Media Productions LLC	403 E. Walnut Street
Montgomery County Assoc. Blind	212 N. Main Street 3rd Floor
Montgomery Management	137 S. Main Street
NorStar Mortgage Inc.	136 S. Main Street
North Wales Beer & Soda	120 N. Third Street
North Wales Hand Rehabilitation	102 W. Walnut Street
North Wales Industries	411 Elm Avenue
North Wales Laundromat	316 E. Walnut Street
North Wales Running Co.	111 N. Main Street
North Wales Service Center	612 E. Walnut Street
Papa John's Pizza	123 S. Main Street
Pat Rocchi Communications	402 W. Prospect Avenue
Peter Lowenthal Management LLC	407 Elm Avenue, Rear
Peter-Jen Company	400 Elm Street
Petrillo Group	113 N. Main Street
Coca-Cola Refreshments USA	311 Elm Avenue

Philadelphia Media Network, Inc.	418 Elm Street
Point Service Centers, Inc.	346 W. Walnut Street
Price Financial Care, LLC	100 S. Main Street, Ste 2A
R & R Nail & Spa	115 W. Montgomery Ave. Suite 101
Retrolinear, Inc.	230 Center Street
Rooney Line Construction, Inc.	123 S. Second Street
S. Mullican's Auto Body	325 Elm Avenue
Sherry's Beauty Salon	117 N. Main Street
Simply Good Café	104 South Main Street
Sinottes Landscaping LLC	703 Church Street
Sleepy Hollow Chimney Sweep	331 Shearer St.
Society Page Hairstyling	111 N. Second Street
Speedwash Super Laundromat	216 N. Main Street
Spotless Commercial Cleaning, LLC	345 Elm Avenue
State Farm Insurance Co.	123 S. Main St., Suite 1
Steve's Home Services	412 Elm Ave.
Strainoptics, Inc.	108 W. Montgomery Avenue
Superman Karate	122 N. Main Street
Suzan G. Leonard, Esquire	108 West Walnut Street
Sweet Repeats Thrift Shop	116 S. Main Street
TexMex Connection	201 E. Walnut Street
The Partnership TMA	134 N. Main Street
The Vinyl Closet	117 W. Main Street
Tina's Dog Works	115 W. Montgomery Ave, Ste 103
Tony's Pizza	132 S. Main Street
Trueblood Cabinet Shop, Inc.	200 E. Montgomery Avenue
Tuscany Tile & Stone Co. Inc.	690 E. Walnut Street
North Wales Pub	146 S. Main Street
W.B. Grffies Construction	231 S. Sixth Street
Wade J. Luquet, A.C.S.W.	116 S. Main Street, 3B
WAWA Food Market #96	708 E. Walnut Street
Whole Body Yoga Studio, LLC	213 N. Main Street
William R. May Funeral Home	142 N. Main Street
Wissahickon Center For Relationship Therapy	100 S. Main Street
Worth Iron Co.	416 Elm Ave.
WunderLicks LLC	117 E. Montgomery Avenue
Y&T Automotive Transmissions	400 Elm Avenue (Rear)
Yangs Martial Arts	127 S. Main St., Suite #2



**Map 1**





**Map 2**





Map 3

Google earth





Map 4

Google earth





Map 5

Google earth

