

# THE CONNELLSVILLE COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

CONNELLSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

DECEMBER 12-14, 2008



photo by Davitt Woodwell

THE CONNELLSVILLE COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP  
was facilitated by:



the **Studio • Three**  
Architects of the Built Environment  
125 E. Charles Street, Muncie, IN 47305

Funded in part by a grant from:



and a *Growing Greener* grant from the  
Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Bureau of Recreation and Conservation



Supported in part by:



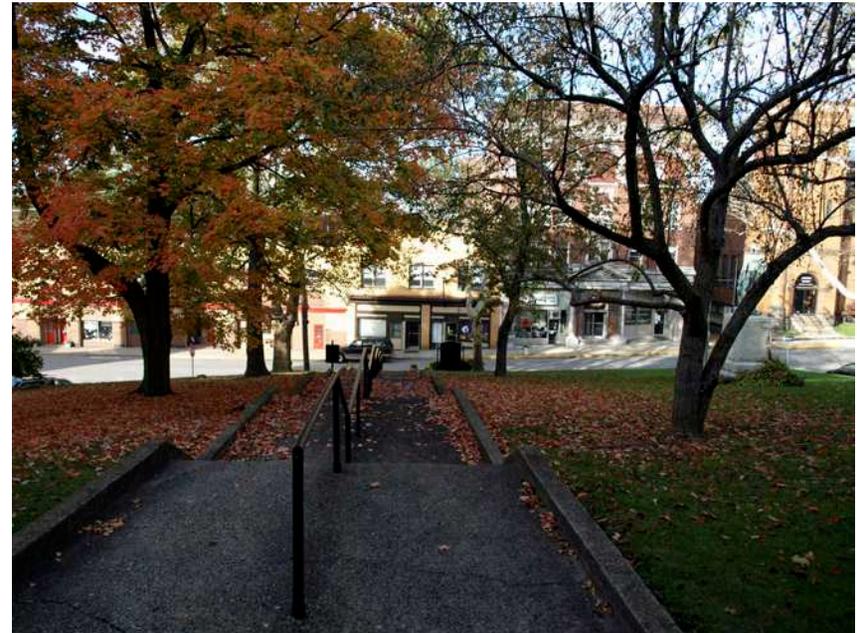
City of  
Connellsville, PA



# THE CONNELLSVILLE COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP - TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Understanding The Report</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
The Charrette Process.....	6
<b>Building The Foundations</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Main Street Connellsville.....	8
Embracing the New Market .....	10
A Success Story In The Making .....	10
<b>Building The Origins</b> .....	<b>13</b>
The Gateways .....	13
The Amtrak Station Enhancement .....	13
<b>Building the Destinations</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Connellsville Public Plazas.....	14
General Beautification .....	15
Downtown Lodging .....	16
Arcade and Downtown Redevelopment.....	17
Youghiogheny River .....	18
<b>Building the Connections</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Pedestrian & Bicycle Integration Along Crawford Avenue.....	19
Crawford Avenue Development:.....	20
<b>The Challenge Ahead</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Character Preference Survey</b> .....	<b>25</b>



Library Park, Connellsville

PAST



PRESENT



FUTURE



Photo courtesy of Connellsville Economic Development

## UNDERSTANDING THE REPORT

### MOTIVATION AND IDEAS

The primary purpose of this report is motivation and ideas: ideas from the citizens, business owners and political leaders; motivation and challenges for the citizens, business owners and political leaders of Connellsville.

Any suggestions of change will undoubtedly come with criticisms and doubt. This process does not claim to have found the answer to Connellsville's needs, but rather it is a simple compilation of the community's ideas and suggestions that should be vetted, tested, studied, and understood before adopting or discounting. During the workshop, several residents expressed concerns for our 'clean slate' attitude toward development and growth opportunities without considering the current politics of the community. This is recognized, and while the approach is somewhat simple-minded, the community must be empowered to find its stride, overcome the obstacles and build a positive momentum. Communities should work to better the lives of all of its citizens and not sacrifice the good of the whole for the misgivings of the one.

This is merely a first step toward the future. In the words of Ron Powers:

*If you always do what you always did,  
You'll always get what you always got.*

Connellsville will need to develop the leadership and motivation to take charge of transforming from today into tomorrow. That leadership can only come from within community itself and we hope that our ideas are just the catalyst needed to ignite that first spark. None of this will be easy, cheap, or a quick fix. The plan laid out will take the support and contribution of nearly every citizen and business in Connellsville.

## INTRODUCTION

Connellsville is taking a proactive approach to integrating trail-user needs into their Main Street program because of the tourism opportunities associated with the trail. The open community design workshop, a "charrette," was held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, December 12-14, 2008 in City Hall and on the streets of Connellsville.

The charrette process focused primarily on enhancing community vitality through a stronger relationship between the Great Allegheny Passage and the Connellsville Main Street area. The charrette organized itself around three basic ideas:

- Building Origins;
- Building Destinations; and perhaps most importantly
- Building Connections.

Approximately 50 people from the community and several trail supporters participated, helping local leaders, residents and businesses visualize the community's vision of how it can integrate the trail into the character and economic vitality of the community, especially *Main Street Connellsville*.



Photo courtesy of Connellsville Economic Development

The visualizations presented in this document represent *idea pieces* or concept drawings, intended to paint a picture of the possibilities as suggested by the workshop participants.

## THE CHARRETTE PROCESS

The Connellsville Community Charrette provided the community with an opportunity to “visualize their vision.” The charrette began with a “walk-about” with local residents, business and civic leaders, followed by a *Character Preference Survey*. The team used aerial photographs and maps of the area as focal points for discussion.

Over the course of the weekend, community residents, business owners, civic leaders and trail enthusiasts talked with charrette team members to identify the issues and possibilities for the trail, linking the trail to the community and other areas and exploring a wide range of possibilities for enhancing the character and economic vitality of the community.

Using markers and base maps, and simply “brainstorming” ideas with charrette team members, the participants outlined important issues, ideas, and recommendations for improvements.

All of this information together with field observations helped the charrette team develop a series of *idea pieces* reflecting many of the

concepts offered by the community. These were typically presented as “before” and “after” illustrations using photographs and maps. The *idea pieces* were posted on the wall so everyone could see the variety of options as they began to take shape.

These drawings were the foundation for discussion by the community on the second day of the charrette. They also serve as the heart of the recommendations that follow. This charrette report can be used as a realistic ‘road map’ that Connellsville can follow as it positions itself as an attractive and vibrant place to call home as well as a great place to visit.

Beyond the basic themes of the charrette:

- Building the foundations;
- Building origins;
- Building destinations; and
- Building connections,

throughout the course of the charrette, four primary concepts came to the forefront:



Historic photo courtesy of Connellsville Economic Development



Building Stock



Looking west on Crawford

- Visitors to Connellsville who utilize the Great Allegheny Passage create the demand for lodging and other retail opportunities along Crawford Avenue and Downtown Connellsville;
- A community catering to outdoor recreation, particularly bicycling, should have activities and areas that are pedestrian in scale and accessibility;
- Connellsville should be viewed as a *gateway* to the Laurel Highlands and as a *hub* for recreation and tourist activities and tourism support;
- While tourism and the Great Allegheny Passage are tremendous catalysts for Connellsville, the revitalization efforts must first meet the needs of the local residents and businesses.

A priority list of development needs was established in response to the tourism economic engine:

1. Lodging at a variety of price ranges and building scales;
2. Improved pedestrian and cyclist lanes along Crawford Avenue including substantial changes to the bridge over the Youghiogheny River;
3. Enhanced Amtrak Station;
4. Mixed use development along Crawford Avenue;
5. Public plazas and/or open space with bicycle-friendly amenities;
6. Regular activities (community-based) activities should be held in the downtown area: i.e., farmer's market, art shows, music and theatrical performances;
7. Improvement of 'civic plaza' from City Hall to the Amtrak Station;
8. Facade improvements in the historic downtown;
9. Reuse and development of blighted structures in the historic downtown.



Welcome to Connellsville - along the Great Allegheny Passage



Historic photo courtesy of Connellsville Economic Development

## BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

The primary purpose of the Connellsville Community Design Workshop was to address design-related issues. These issues can not be adequately resolved without an underlying foundation of basic economic vitality.

### MAIN STREET CONNELLSVILLE

The immediate benefits of supporting the downtown business community are relatively easy to identify, but the bigger purpose is the community's long-term viability. True community revitalization recognizes the need to create a business environment that is also viable and ripe for continued investment. Following the *Main Street Approach*:

- Organization
- Promotion
- Design
- Economic Restructuring

and the eight Main Street *Principles of Success*:

- Comprehensive
- Incremental
- Self-Help
- Partnerships
- Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets
- Quality
- Change
- Implementation

our suggestion is to initially apply this logic along Crawford Avenue from 9<sup>th</sup> street to 1<sup>st</sup> street, and then to expand the vision to other areas of downtown.

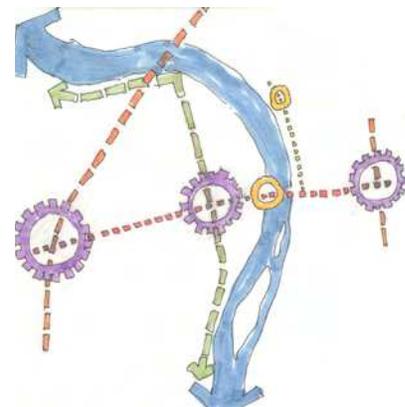
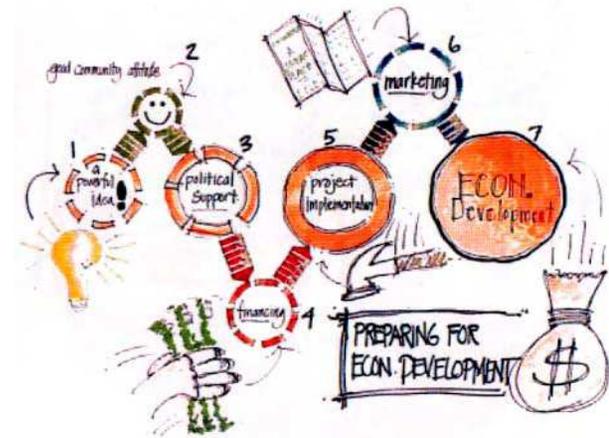
In building the vision for Connellsville, especially the *Main Street* area, and how the community will grow and respond to influences such as those suggested in this report, it is important to see

beyond the initial burst of growth and toward the longer term development of Connellsville and to look for what additional opportunities could arise.

Phase 1 of the *Connellsville Main Street Program* development is

the establishment of a pedestrian based economy along Crawford Avenue into the historic downtown. As a by-product of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, we envision Phase 2 as the establishment of secondary investments in larger, historic structures. This approach would help Connellsville establish an economic niche of tourism support.

Connellsville serves the Laurel Highlands as an unofficial *Southern Gateway* and hub for a wide variety of tourist-related activities, and should be expanded in this role. Supportive businesses for this growing tourist-based economy include hotels/inns/bed and



A schematic diagram of Crawford Avenue amenities



A schematic diagram of Crawford Avenue influence

breakfast accommodations, retail: especially arts and craft, outdoor outfitting and restaurants of all types. Further economic expansion should incorporate related corporate offices, travel organizations, and/or housing.

In developing the tourism hub economic niche, overnight accommodation and food service would be critical components. It isn't necessarily the business type that matters here; rather once an established 'core' of viable businesses begin to establish Connellsville, and especially the *Main Street* area as a viable activity area, secondary investment is much more likely to take place.

The Connellsville Design Workshop primarily focused on the benefits of the tourism industry to Connellsville and the associated business development that could result from tourism support. The chronology of the discussion is not accidental. The impacts of this new direction for Connellsville and the realization of this initial



Brimstone Building, a potential anchor for downtown revitalization with street level retail and upper level residential and/or tourist accommodations

step of Connellsville's revitalization strategy will begin to support the economy of businesses that cater to the citizens of Connellsville (always the first concern of a successful economic development strategy) and the residents of the nearby communities. These businesses are likely to complement and parallel the customer patterns, and consequently space needs, of those businesses that cater to the tourist.

In Connellsville, success could build upon developing and supporting a stable tourism market and the established local businesses through marketing the range of local amenities. Revitalization of downtown should begin with the renovation and/or adaptive reuse of some of the beautiful buildings erected during the "glory days" of Connellsville's not-too-distant past. Successful reuse of these structures is will require the effective and efficient use of the entire building structure, concentrated redevelopment expenditures, and consistent long-term lease agreements.

Maintaining the density and occupancy of shops along an urban artery such as Crawford Avenue is not merely as simple as 're-build it and they will stay'. Maintenance and promotion of this active and supportive environment of will require active participation from the civic leadership and the community. The city must utilize every tool available to ensure that these shops are occupied and prosperous. Some of those tools might include:

- limiting development in outlying areas,
- active marketing of available business space to potential tenants, and
- seeking out particular support from financing agencies.



A local bike shop along the Great Allegheny Passage is an example of tourism support businesses needed in *Main Street Connellsville*

## EMBRACING THE NEW MARKET

Tourism and tourism support is an obvious new market niche for Connellsville. The creation of an infrastructure that is conducive to the city's traditional role and its new role will be paramount for successful community revitalization.

### Establish Connellsville as a Regional 'Hub' for Outdoor Activities and Tourism Support

Connellsville should begin to market itself as the central hub from which tourists could trek into the Laurel Highlands. The local economy would benefit from lodging, retail, food service and outfitting that are necessary to support these trips.

### A SUCCESS STORY IN THE MAKING

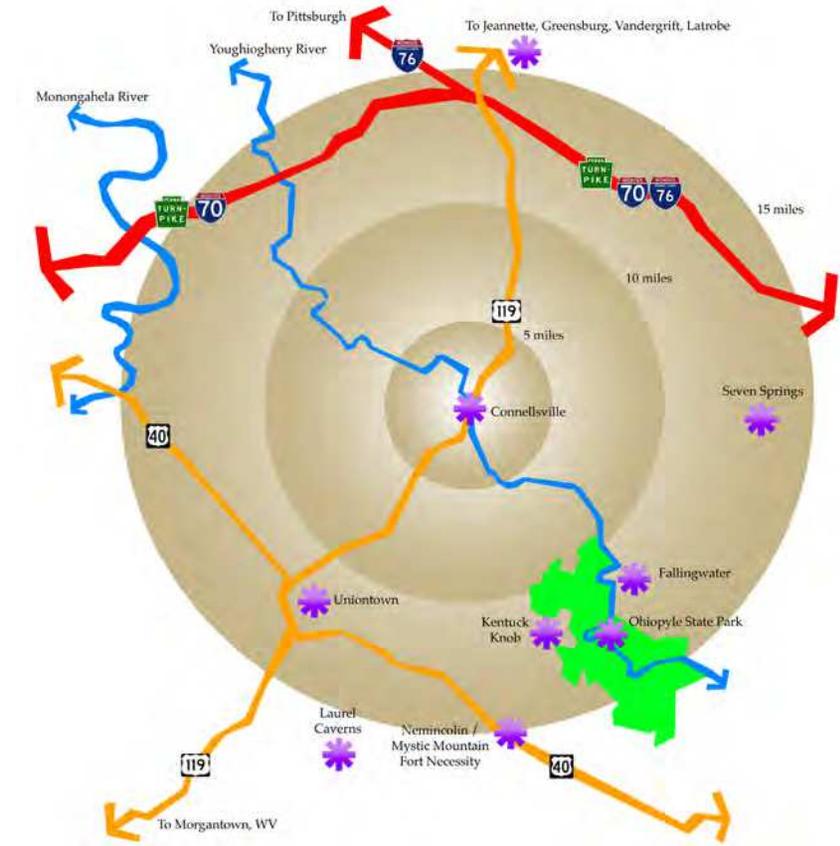
Just imagine a family of four hops a train in Washington D.C. with their bikes, a week's worth of clothes, and a whole winter's worth of energy. They have chosen to make this journey to Connellsville because of a compelling and economical advertisement in the window of a D.C. travel agency. The flyer described day-trips out from Connellsville to many of the amenities of the western Laurel Highlands including Ohiopyle State Park, Fallingwater, Ligonier, and the opportunity to bike on the Great Allegheny Passage, kayak on the Youghiogheny River, and much more. By creating the environment for travel to Connellsville and then out into the surrounding area, this type of tourism is both marketable and a viable competitor with the more traditional vacation 'packages'.

One of the key components of this hub-based travel system is transportation. Just as the family to the left is described as arriving via train to Connellsville, many of the desired travelers will come to the area without long-distance transportation. Providing travel options from Connellsville must become a major component of this new expansion of the communities offerings. Certainly many of the travelers are coming to Connellsville to take advantage of the Great Allegheny Passage, but beyond human power, this means expanding the existing regional

bus system, establishing a shuttle system (associated with overnight accommodations or free-standing), encouraging car rental agencies to set up shop here, and clarifying how connections to sites can be made via the GAP or the Youghiogheny River.

### Marketing Connellsville as a Destination & as a Hub

The idea that a community would market its assets is certainly nothing new, but the concept that Connellsville would reconfigure itself to accommodate this model of tourism is a little more



Connellsville as a regional hub

innovative. These 'treks' out into the surrounding areas are appealing to the adventurous traveler, while still allowing Connellsville to benefit from the tourism dollars that will be spent while in town. Another type of 'trek' is also conceivable and already in the planning stages. This is the more local option that would introduce the bicycle traveler to the history and culture of Connellsville and other more local areas. A cultural trail is being mapped through town at this time and additional types of trails are being planned throughout the region.



An expanded regional bus or shuttle system would help establish Connellsville as a hub community

### Local Business Development

In addition to establishing Connellsville as a tourism support hub and destination, there are opportunities for supporting local artisans and agricultural products. Programs associated with the Progress Fund and PASA (Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture) bring local and area farmers and value-added products. These local businesses could provide further retail opportunities in the *Main Street* area or could be highlighted on a map for bicyclists or motorists.

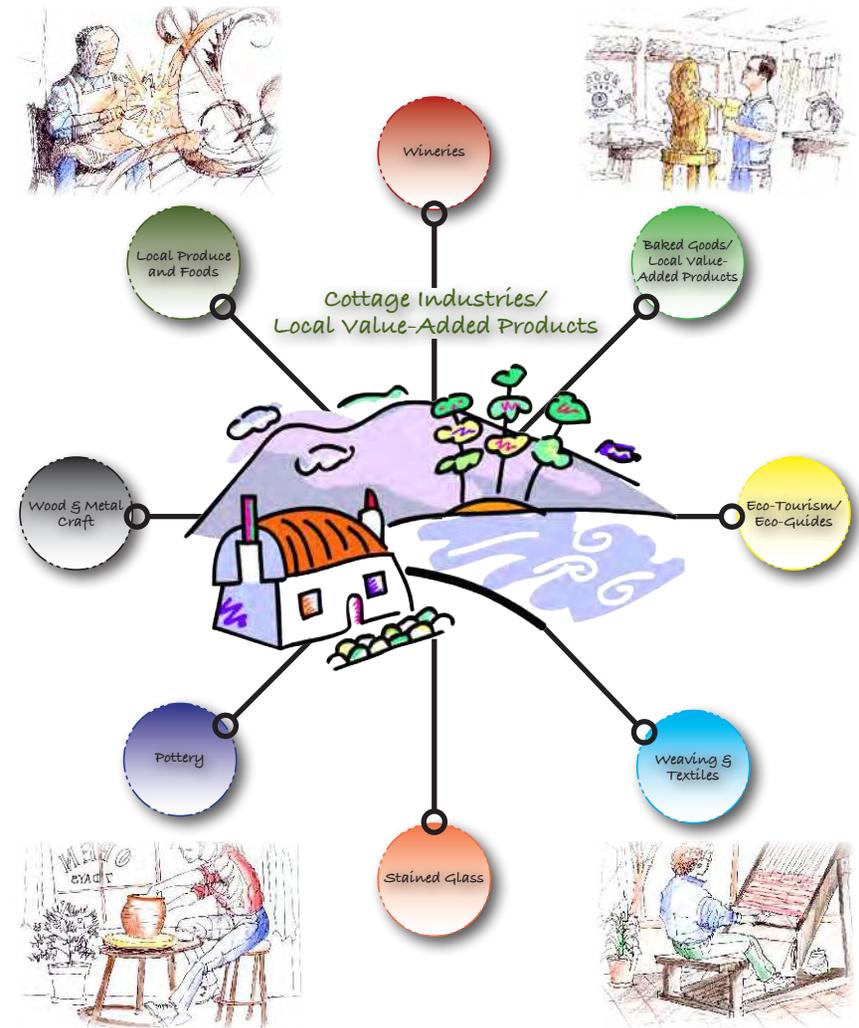
Incubation for local and/or area artisans and the development of a commercial kitchen could expand and diversify the economic base of the Greater Connellsville Area and provide a more diverse shopping experience for locals and visitors.



Locally grown produce & value-added products could be a catalyst for the "New" Connellsville economy

An anchor for this local economic catalyst could include a Farmers' /

Artisans' Market and a storefront retail cooperative for local artisans and local value-added products.



Locally produced good and services as well as local value-added products could be catalyst for diversifying the Connellsville economy.

### Facade and Character Enhancement in the Downtown

As Connellsville begins to transform into a community that welcomes visitors from around the world, the existing infrastructure will be primed to go through a “facelift” of its prime building facades. Via grants, matching funds, and coordinated programs, the City can provide incentives for building owners to participate in a community image that is home to residents, welcoming to visitors, and true to the City’s rich history and heritage.

Facade programs are usually geared towards beautifying a streetscape and in turn promoting downtown activities and interests. A by-product of these programs is an individual sense of pride that building owners and tenants express after the completion of such program. That pride can last for a lifetime and can be very influential in decisions about relocations or continued investment. As an example, a local Connellsville businessman stopped by the charrette and talked extensively about the last local facade



A restored / enhanced building facade builds community pride and “marketability”

program. That experience seemed to have dramatically influenced his decisions to remain committed to the downtown area. These programs can mark a dramatic turning point in citizens’ attitudes and perceptions of a downtown area and should be considered a catalyst for change.

Keeping up the momentum of these transformations of Connellsville will be very important to documenting progress and for maintaining the spirit of the change. This spirit or pride will be helpful as the community begins this revitalization effort.

In addition to enhancing the visual character of a building facade, the process of ‘rehabilitating’ a building skin can increase the environmental performance of that surface and reduce its operating expenses. This might seem like a trivial component, but many times it is exactly the kind of additional boost that is needed for a building owner to accept the costs associated with a renovation or a restoration of their building.

### Inspiring Development in the Historic City Center

The best of intentions are never enough when it comes to community revitalization. The changing of a whole business district into a viable retail sector is a task that requires the support and commitment of each and every business owner, city official, and local agency that will play a part in the transformation. One of the best ways to encourage this support and participation is to reinforce a sense of pride in their community. Pride in the community is a vital component of success.

Simple building restoration and a general beautification program is, however, not enough. Development and redevelopment as a sustainable community is based on sound economics and a community vision. A key component of this sustainability is the quality of the infrastructure. From the physical beauty and condition of the buildings and streets to the functionality of the pedestrian zones, how a city works is vitally important to its success.

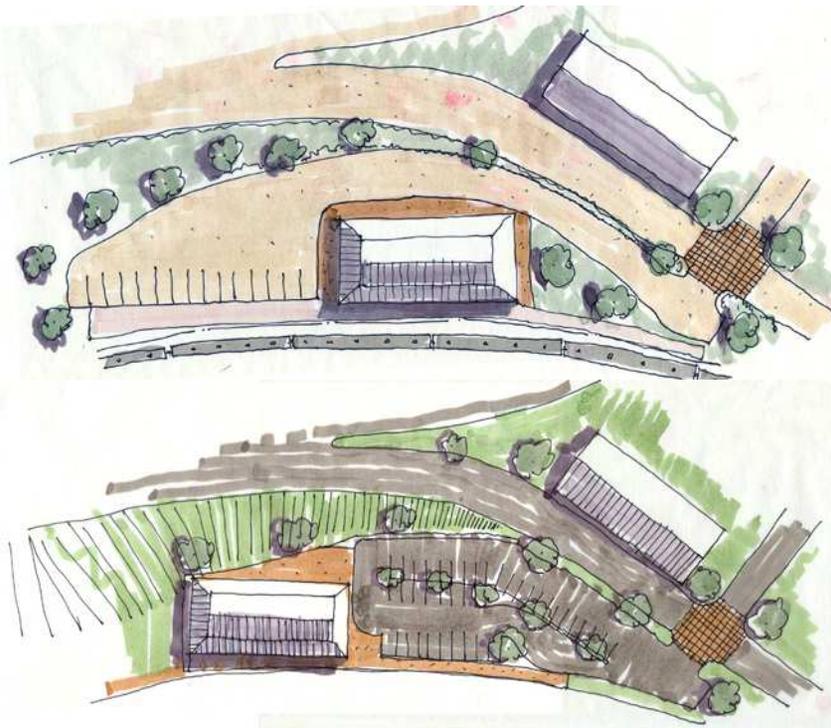
## BUILDING THE ORIGINS

### THE GATEWAYS

Visitors to a community form their first impressions of a community as they approach from the outside - the gateways. For Connellsville, this happens in several ways:

- The various roadways into Connellsville;
- The Amtrak Station;
- The Great Allegheny Passage; and
- The Youghiogheny River.

Do the current gateways to Connellsville invite people in to spend time, to find interesting things do to, or is it just another place that



one goes through to get somewhere else? Charrette participants identified the need for attractive gateways to represent their community as a place to explore and a place to enjoy.

The Amtrak Station will be addressed in the following section. Other gateways will be addressed within other recommendations.

### THE AMTRAK STATION ENHANCEMENT

- The need for a full-service passenger rail station is clear. Connellsville should lobby Amtrak and be pro-active in this mission. It may be advisable to schematically define a station to market the need.
- Seek funding from outside sources to support this and associated projects.
- Build a base of local and regional political support.
- Politically establish the support needed to ensure Federal buy-in.



Concept drawing of new Amtrak Station and long-term parking lot.



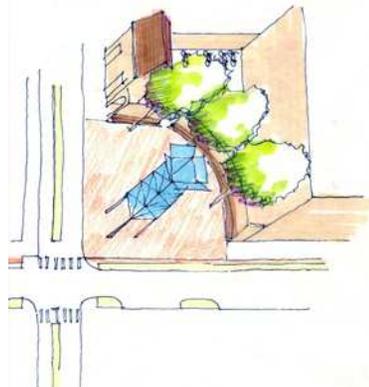
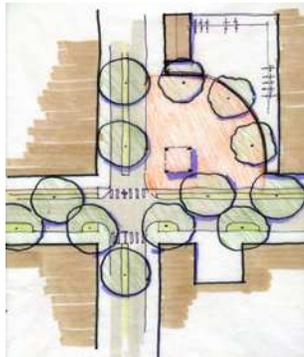
The existing Amtrak Station

## BUILDING THE DESTINATIONS

### CONNELLSVILLE PUBLIC PLAZAS

#### Establishing Public 'Squares' for Public Use

- Position Connellsville as the tourist hub for the Western and Southern Laurel Highlands through infrastructure that accommodates tourism development.
- Provide, public, outdoor, gathering places along the corridors of pedestrian and bicycle activity.
- Create outdoor community 'rooms' to accommodate a variety of activities such as events, markets, shows, awards celebrations, etc.



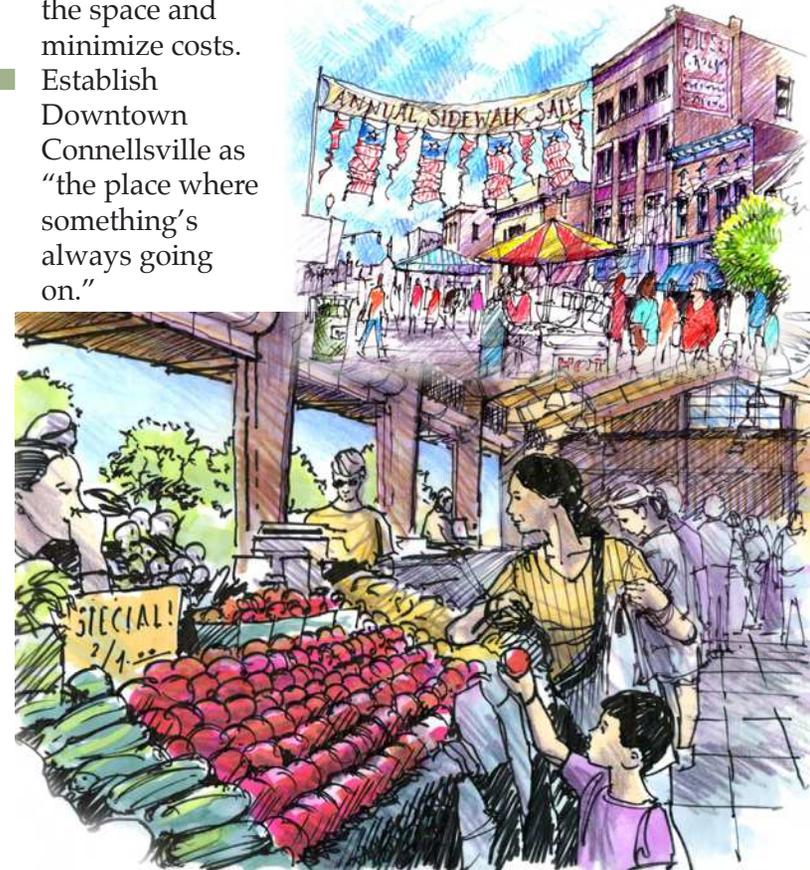
Potential public plaza at Crawford Avenue and Pittsburgh Street



Potential public plaza elevation/gateway in the downtown

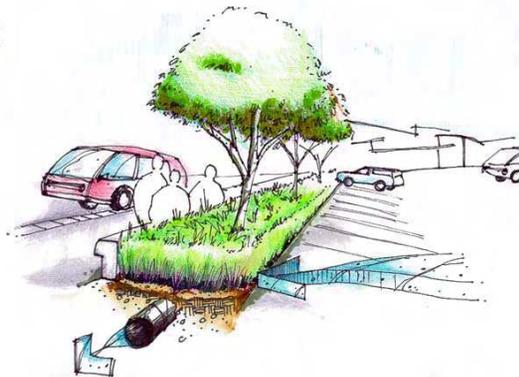
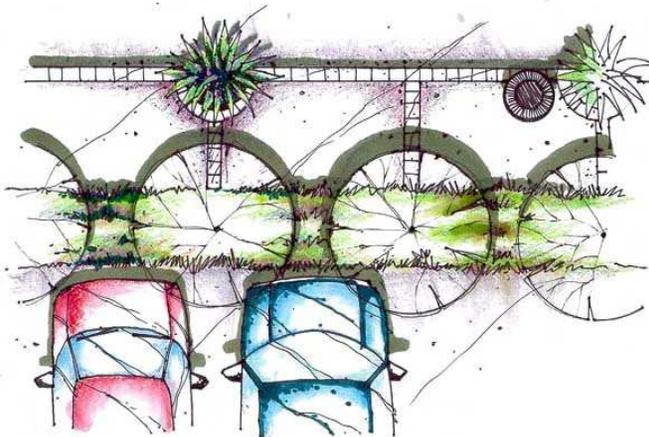
### Farmers' & Artisans' Markets and Street Fairs as a Catalyst

- Events create visibility and enhance the potential of Connellsville as a destination.
- Connect the producer to the consumer.
- Create and reinforce a *home-grown* economy that supports local entrepreneurs, craftsmen and farmers.
- Develop the space between the Amtrak Station or one of the downtown parking lots as the location for the market. Developing it as a temporary space will maximize the versatility of the space and minimize costs.
- Establish Downtown Connellsville as "the place where something's always going on."



## GENERAL BEAUTIFICATION

- Clean up along the river and downtown
- Hanging baskets and other plantings in downtown (adopt-a-spot) where identified as very desirable in the character preference survey
- Restore “super graphics”
- Enhance parking lots including bio-swales (landscaped drainage areas)



Bio-swales integrated into parking lots provide shade, visual appeal as well as an effective means of managing stormwater and can remove particulates and other pollutants from hard surface run-off

Hanging baskets and banners add a very positive visual character to the downtown and an adopt-a-spot program helps involve local residents and businesses in the downtown revitalization effort.

## DOWNTOWN LODGING

- Infill development of boutique hotels offers a practical way to accommodate the upcoming need for lodging.
- Adaptive reuse of historic buildings for full-time and tourist lodging (building on the examples already underway)
- Developing housing (permanent and/or overnight) in the downtown will serve as a catalyst for local retail businesses.



The Brimstone Building could be redeveloped as a mixed-use anchor for downtown. Lower floor retail/restaurant space and upper floor residential (permanent and/or overnight accommodation) would serve as a catalyst for downtown activity and enhance *Main Street Connellsville* as a destination.



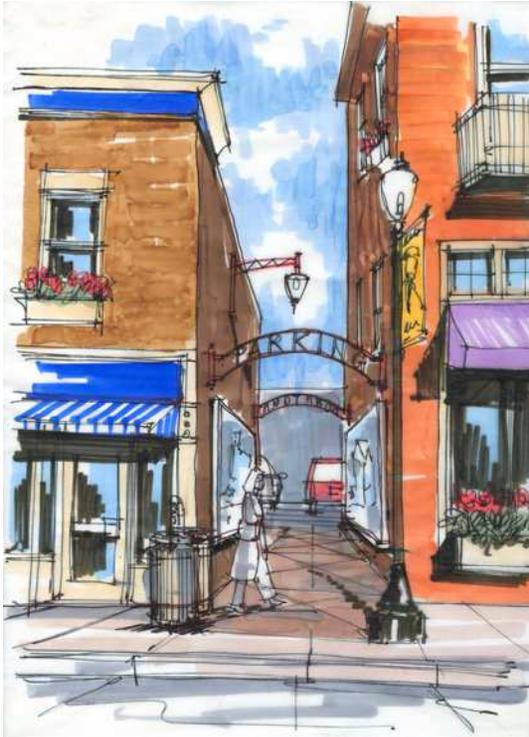
Boutique hotels can be 'in-character' infill in the residential areas of Connellsville. These complement the existing character of the area, especially in the area between Youghiogheny Park and downtown.



The development of a hostel in the downtown area would provide another destination for trail users and as a mixed-use development, would also serve as another catalyst for downtown activity.

## ARCADE AND DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

- Appropriate infill development for some of the vacant properties in the downtown can enhance *Main Street* redevelopment efforts.
- Develop facade programs to enable local building owners to participate in the reinvention of the downtown community.
- Reuse of existing structures should be a priority from the beginning of the project.
- Build attractive linkages between the parking areas and the storefronts.



Developing the spaces between buildings in the downtown as arcades provide an easy, relatively inexpensive and attractive connection between parking lots and the storefronts.



### Option A: Building Infill

Some of the buildings that have been lost over the years offer the potential for building infill to complete the 'urban fabric' of downtown. Maintaining the historic character and style is important in promoting downtown as a destination for tourists and development.



### Option B: Pocket Park Infill

If the resources are not available to infill a building on a site, it is possible to complete the 'urban fabric' of downtown through the development of quality open space. These "pocket parks" provide a welcome place to relax and enjoy the shade in the downtown.

## YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER

An important feature of Downtown Connellsville is the Youghiogheny River. Access to the river is currently limited. Developing the currently vacant property to the immediate Northwest of the Crawford Avenue Bridge would provide access to the river for canoe/kayak put-in/take-out or fishing.

The upper level, at the corner of 1st Street and Crawford Avenue could be developed as a restaurant, boutique hotel or public plaza.



**Option A: Terraced river access w/ large restaurant and/or small hotel**



**Option B: Terraced river access w/ public plaza and small restaurant or boutique hotel**



**Option C: Terraced river access w/ multiple public plazas and a small restaurant or boutique hotel**

The currently vacant lot at the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Crawford could be developed to provide easy access to the Youghiogheny River and as a public open space and/or boutique hotel or restaurant.

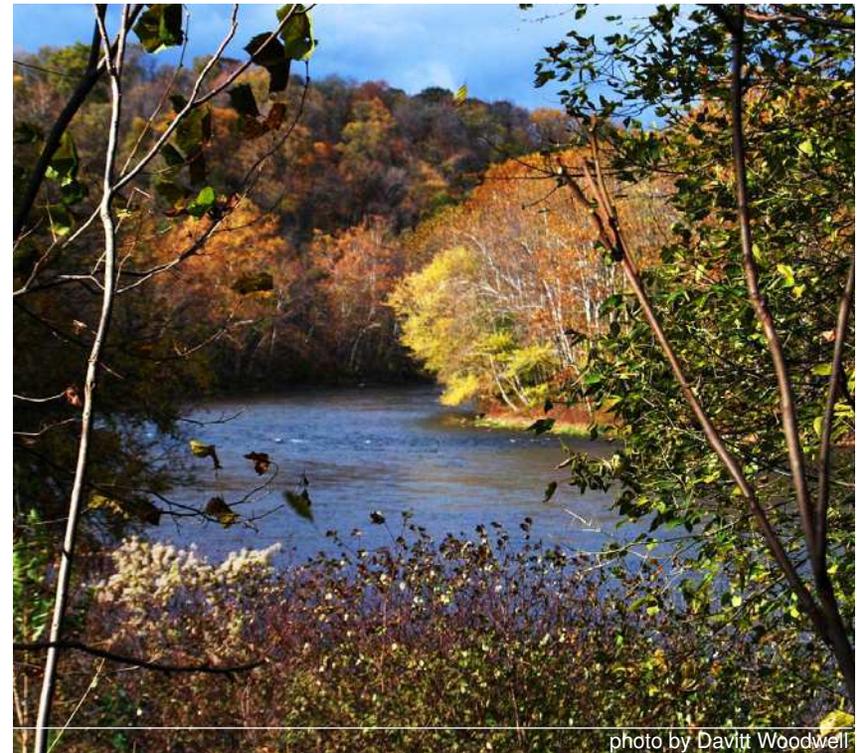
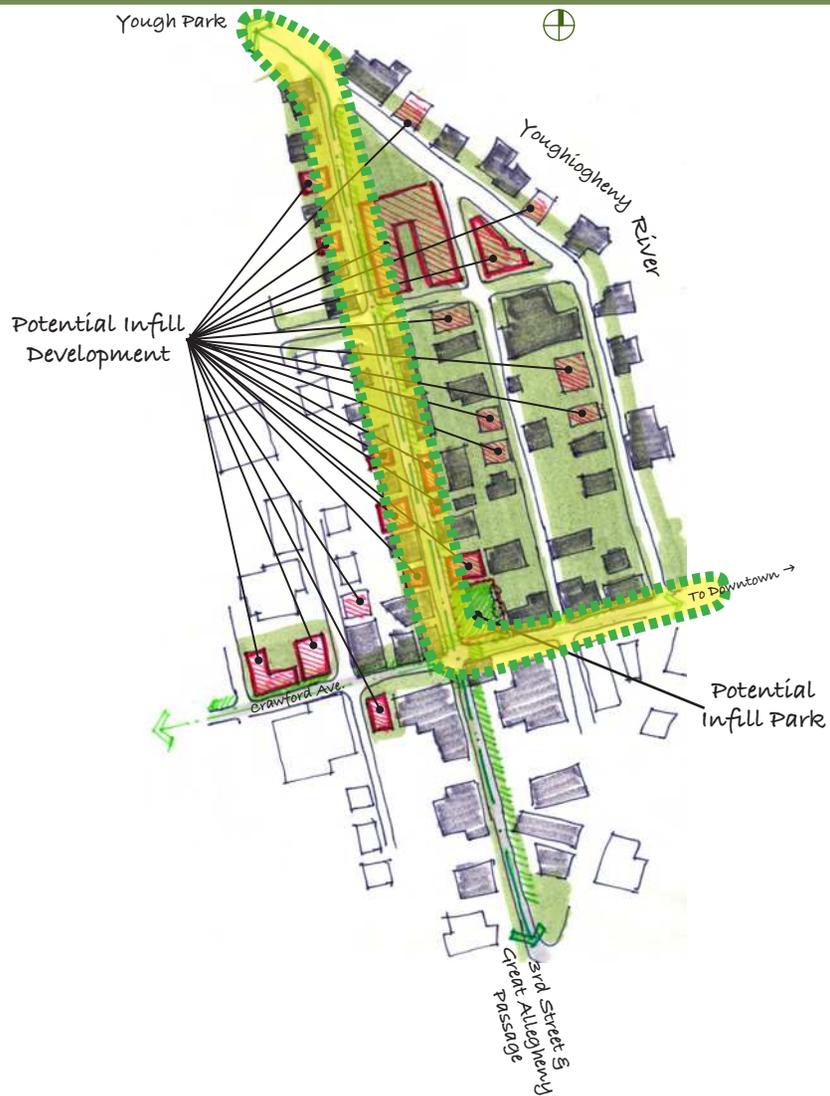


photo by Davitt Woodwell

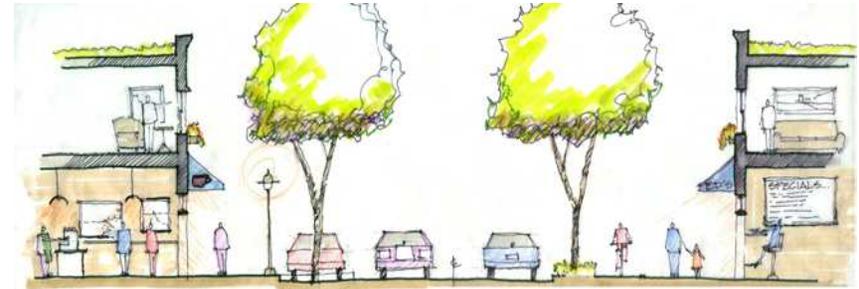
## BUILDING THE CONNECTIONS



The connections from Yough Park to downtown (along the Great Allegheny Passage/ Third Street and Crawford Avenue) provide great opportunity for development. The area north of Crawford Ave. and between 3<sup>rd</sup> and the river are particularly well suited for infill development and rehabilitation.

## PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE INTEGRATION ALONG CRAWFORD AVENUE

- Redevelop Crawford Avenue to more easily and safely accommodate pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle traffic.
- The redevelopment of Crawford Avenue should include appropriate and distinct bicycle paths.



Recommended street section



Bike lane

## CRAWFORD AVENUE DEVELOPMENT:

Crawford Avenue is the primary artery of activity within this new plan for the revitalization of *Main Street Connellsville*. It is along this vibrant street that Connellsville should provide a broad spectrum of activities and retail options that cater to the biking, kayaking, hiking, and sightseeing visitor. This street and these shops will be the 'supply depot' for all the activities that are available in Southwestern Laurel Highlands.

### The Character

- The neighborhood directly north of Crawford Avenue and between Third Street and the river is residential in character and very pedestrian scale.
- This neighborhood is appropriate for small scale, boutique type hotels or hostels. Establishing a variety of types of lodging and local businesses rather than the typical corporate architecture of a large-scale franchise hotel will not only be more appropriate for the scale of the neighborhood, but it will also provide multiple opportunities for local investment.
- A similar character exists for the commercial and retail structures that line Crawford Avenue.
- Adaptive reuse, infill development and facade renovation and/or enhancement will reinforce the visual character of the link between the trail and downtown.



Renovation or new uses for buildings, such as the service station on Crawford Avenue would provide an attractive opportunity for businesses. This building would be an positive addition in its current use as a service station, or adapted to another use.



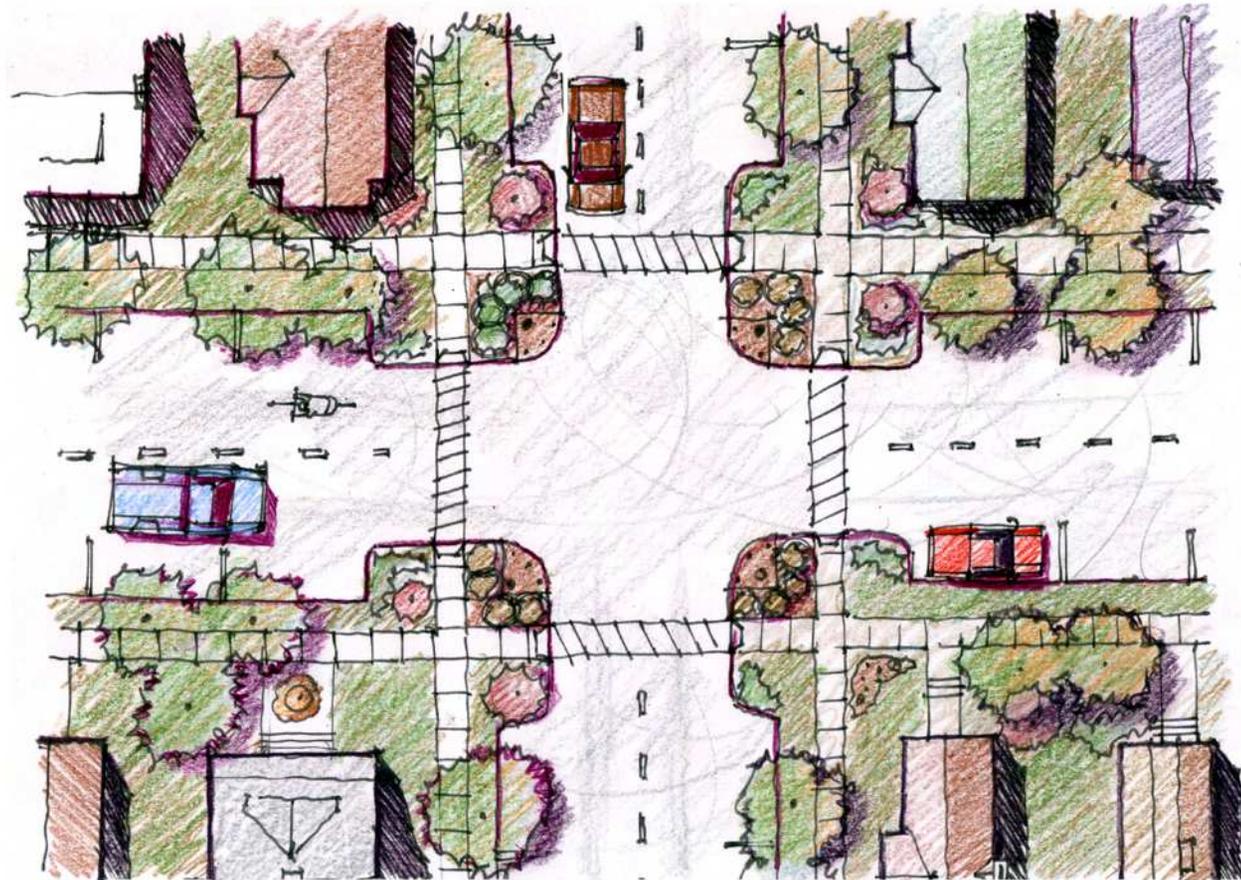
Facade restoration and/or enhancement for some of the buildings along Crawford Avenue would increase property values and would enhance the visual character of the Crawford Avenue corridor.

## Enhancing the Accessibility, Character and Safety for the Pedestrian Corridor Along Crawford Avenue

■ Of primary concern in establishing Crawford Avenue as an effective mixed-use traffic corridor is to slow down the vehicular traffic to reduce the overall hazard posed to the other users of the roadway. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways:

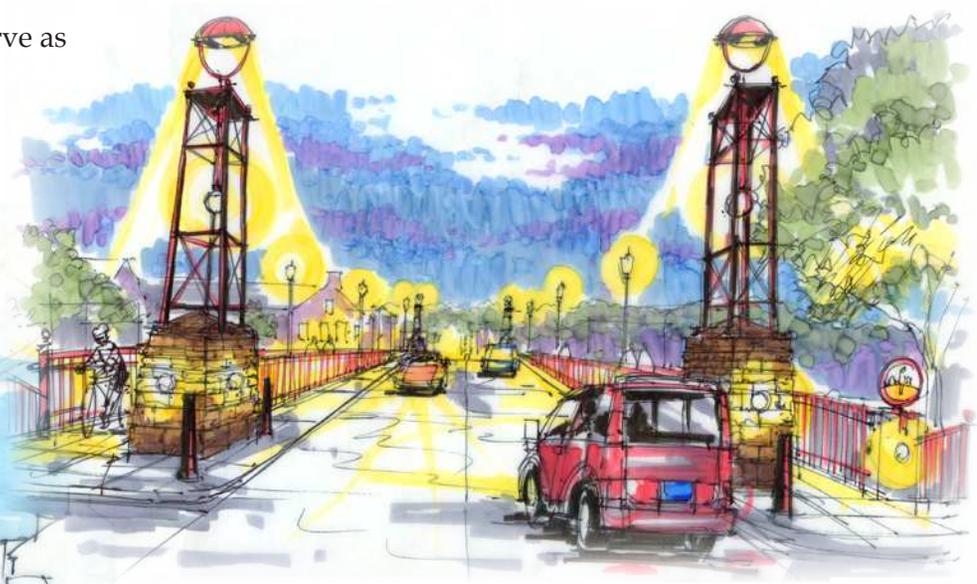
- changing paving patterns and materials;
- providing narrower lanes for vehicular traffic;
- increasing pedestrian travel lane sizes;
- integrating traffic calming strategies in traffic lanes; and
- development of “bump-outs,” especially in the downtown area to provide for easier pedestrian crossing and better defined parking.

The ultimate goal is to help integrate pedestrians and vehicles safely and effectively along the Crawford Avenue Corridor.



“Bump-Outs” at the intersections help define parking areas and facilitate safer pedestrian crossing

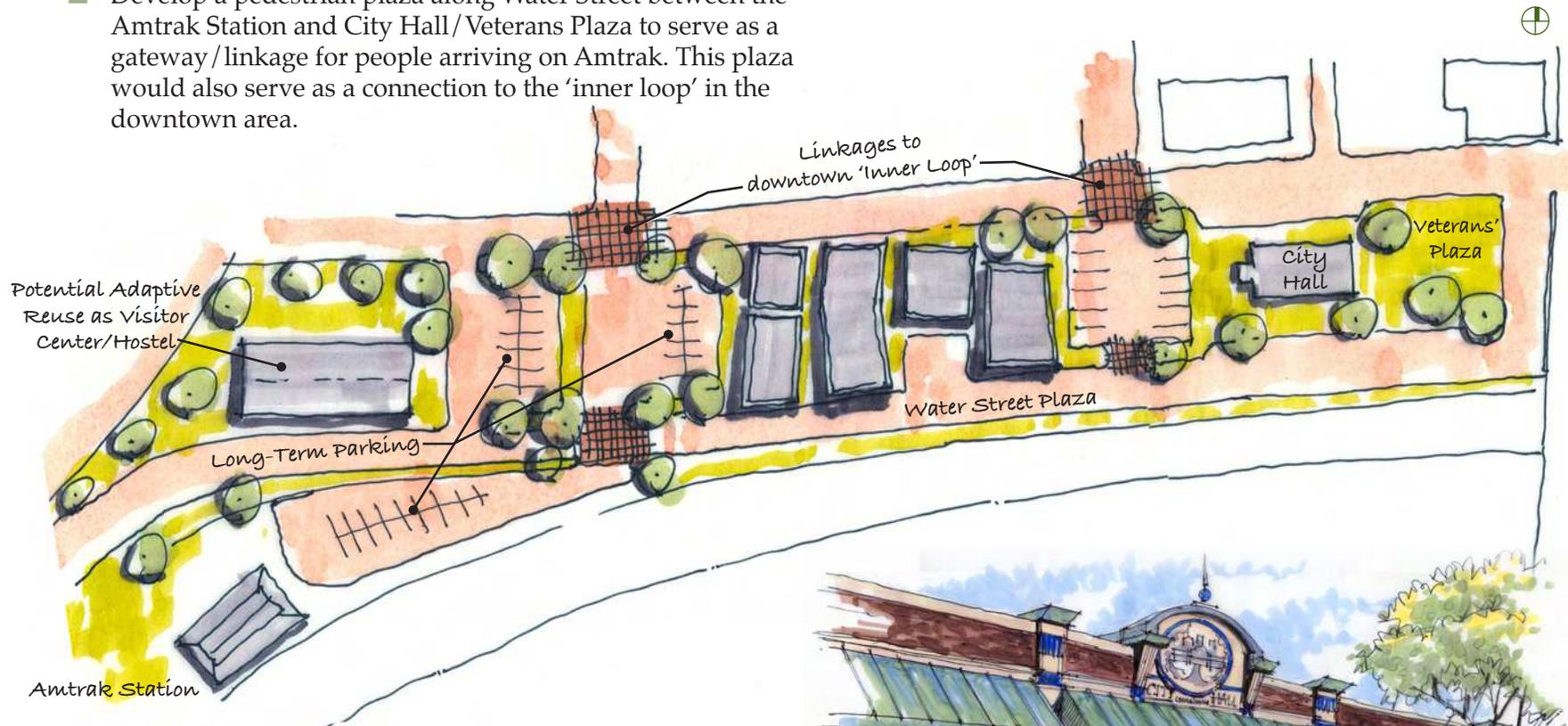
- Reconfigure the Crawford Avenue Bridge to better accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic and to serve as a gateway to downtown.



By "hanging" extensions off the side of the Crawford Avenue Bridge, a bike lane can be added separating bicycle traffic from vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The bridge can also be enhanced through the addition of decorative lighting and iron work.

## Develop Water Street Plaza from Station to Crawford Avenue

- Develop a pedestrian plaza along Water Street between the Amtrak Station and City Hall/Veterans Plaza to serve as a gateway/linkage for people arriving on Amtrak. This plaza would also serve as a connection to the 'inner loop' in the downtown area.



Relatively minor enhancements to City Hall and Veterans' Plaza can add significantly to the character and "welcoming" atmosphere of this gateway and identity piece for downtown

## THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

---

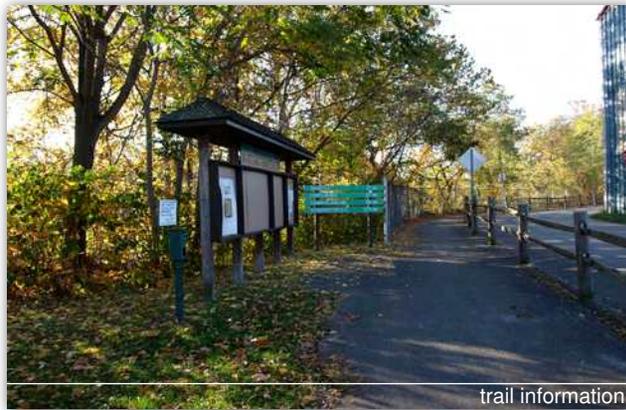
This report should be considered as a mere snapshot of the conditions we found in Connellsville and should not be construed as the only opportunity or direction for this community. The ideas presented here are just that, ideas of what the participants see as the future of their community.

Use these ideas as a starting point, setting priorities and building positive momentum with the community, one step at a time.



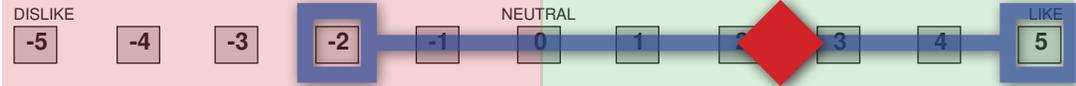
The following pages present a summary of the *Character Preference Survey* completed by participants during the **Connellsville Community Design Workshop**. The results show the range of scores as well as the average score for each image. The second set of photographs present comments/suggestions for the buildings in the Connellsville Main Street area. The comments are summarized. The survey represents all those participating in the survey and is not scientific.

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



trail information

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- more stone and timber features
- no parking for easy access
- nothing on the bulletin board-need maps, info on city, activities, places to eat
- make someone want to spend time there
- looks too hand made
- can't see the river
- sign too rustic
- more stone, maybe lights
- too many trees and shrubs hiding the river
- trail too narrow
- chain link fence

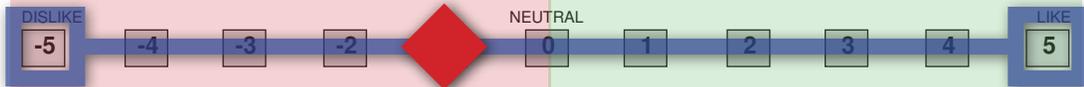
What I like in this picture:

- billboard - informative
- good egress/ingress to city
- It's green - grass, trees, etc.
- feels safe
- trees
- fence
- information
- paved trails
- welcoming/relaxing
- info board to share lodging, restaurant, service info
- barrier between road and bike lane
- info available right before or after the trail
- easy to read/understand
- easy signage to learn about city



wayfinding signage

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- Does not inform
- It's confusing
- It's ugly
- sign idea great, style too urban
- significance of color?
- background distracting
- pictures not clear
- photos should be accompanied by English
- signs not clear
- does not fit well with the community thematic image
- need consistent signage throughout area

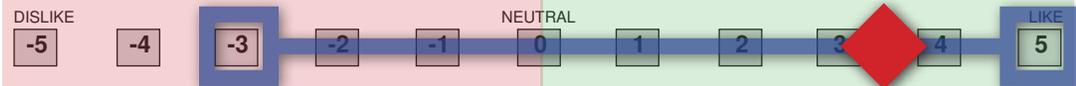
What I like in this picture:

- easy to read/understand
- easy signage to learn about city



bike banners

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- plywoods signs, only for special events
- signs too rustic
- don't like the metal building
- needs green screening of buildings in background
- too busy, takes away from surrounding area

What I like in this picture:

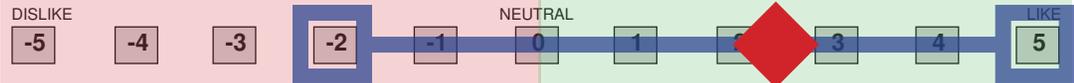
- it's a "welcome" to the city
- artwork by students to get them involved
- most artwork is well done
- colorful display
- shows photos that might encourage people to take a close look at the sights
- colorful and inviting

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



overhead directional/wayfinding signage

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

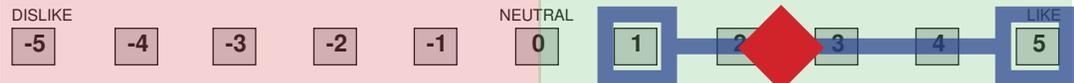
- too confusing if just coming up on signage?
- too much info in one place
- too many signs and flowers instead of shrubs
- needs to link to Laurel Highlands system - add LH header

What I like in this picture:

- clear and easy/good color
- if nationwide, then good for out-of-towners
- great idea
- different style
- clearly marks location and direction
- info for those passing through
- better than present signage
- style needs to be redundant



I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- needs color - awning
- electric lines should be below ground
- no street trees
- building is empty
- building too plain - no ornamentation or design variation
- looks empty
- need better pedestrian crossing

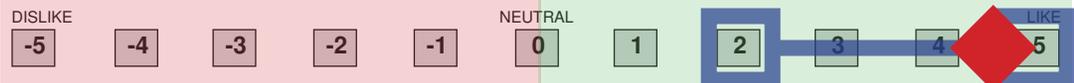
What I like in this picture:

- in good shape
- can be had for free (so I hear)
- this is an anchor bldg for the city
- stone
- classic, stately
- impressive building that draws people to downtown
- lots of potential for focal point in downtown area



wayfinding signage system

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- don't get carried away with signs - could overload
- not way-finding
- all businesses have the same look
- use local Bruderhoff to manufacture signs
- need to be consistent throughout community

What I like in this picture:

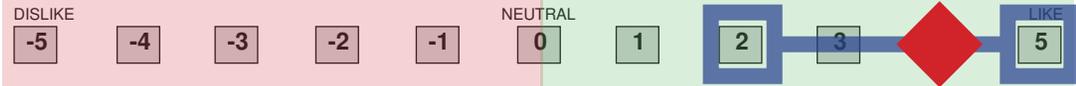
- pleasing to the eye
- good design
- informative
- not industrial looking
- nice scale
- historic look to signage
- connects better to city
- simple, yet elegant
- nice

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



decorative banners & hanging flowers

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- wooden pole, would prefer decorative metal pole
- flowers too hard to maintain

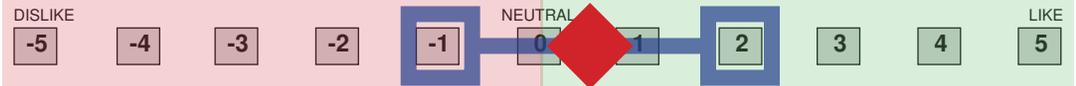
What I like in this picture:

- hanging flowers
- banners need to be precise without too much information
- patrons names need to be smaller than current
- never too many flowers if cared for
- each year banners heralding something about town
- attractive
- need active group to water
- banners - wonderful
- welcoming
- peaceful and colorful



building facade

I like/dislike this...

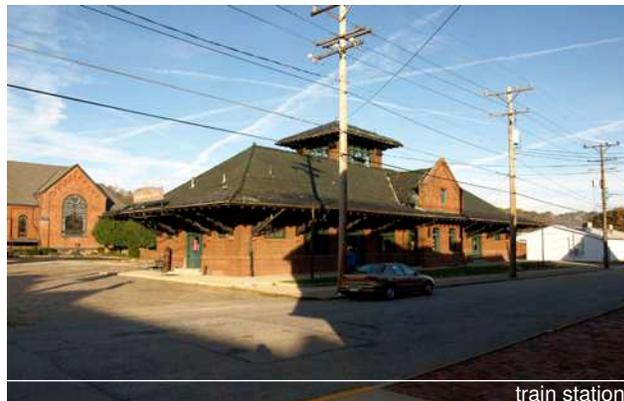


What I don't like in this picture:

- very plain
- too old
- mixed facade
- needs to have stained glass above 1st floor doors
- awnings on 2nd floor
- too many signs in the window
- the mixture of old and new windows
- big windows aren't utilized enough
- window reflection hides signage
- not clear what the business is
- wood decks on both sides
- nothing to draw one to commerce or apartments
- where is parking?

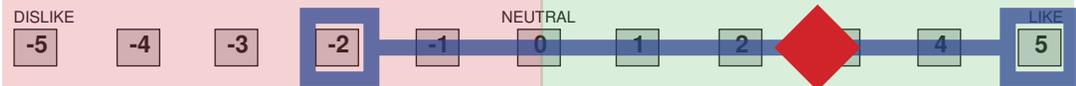
What I like in this picture:

- clean, well kept
- needs to refresh paint
- has both commercial and residential potential



train station

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- remove utility poles
- overhead lines
- looks barren
- no bushes/trees
- needs train
- UTILITY POLES
- signage needed

What I like in this picture:

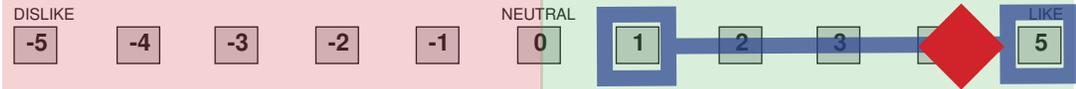
- history preserved
- good clearance and tidiness on grounds
- great character
- great utilization (glass)
- historic features are preserved
- great old building
- great building (so is St. Johns)

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



facade treatment and sidewalk seating

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- no bike rack
- there aren't any businesses
- sidewalk tables can't work in present configuration of streets and store fronts

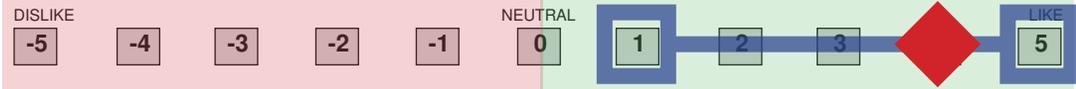
What I like in this picture:

- outdoor dining
- landscaping
- low buildings ie one story
- no poles and wires
- welcoming
- nice hometown feel
- café for meeting friends and having dinner
- street trees
- wide sidewalks
- must have restaurants/businesses to draw people
- good identification of businesse
- good separation between seating and public
- like everything in picture!
- people!



farmer's market

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- quarters too tight

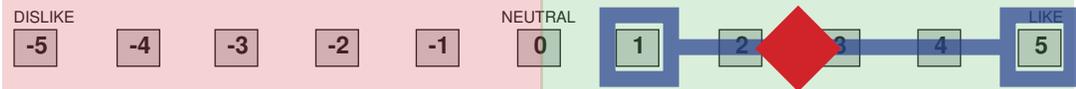
What I like in this picture:

- gets people out and together
- fresh flower and produce market
- no traffic
- welcoming
- suggest limited times and scheduled day
- assume local vendors - good
- convenient
- excellent idea - suggest parking lot next to Lion's Square
- need more parkettes in downtown and west side
- looks inviting
- would draw people to general area
- like everything in picture
- people!
- produce and buy local theme



sidewalk near downtown

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- trees need to be trimmed for taller patrons
- sidewalk too small

What I like in this picture:

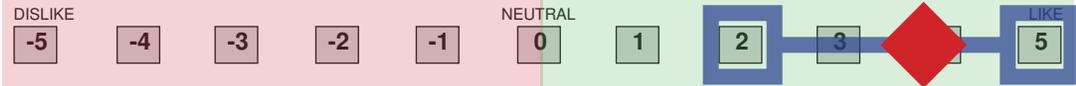
- trees and walkway
- wrought iron fence - decorative
- appears to be easy parking
- fence - nice scale and material
- trees/shade
- wide sidewalk
- clean, attractive sidewalk
- higher quality fence
- green space

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



pocket park

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

must be maintained! Can't let turn to weeds.  
who maintains  
sign is too big and improperly placed  
lacks "good taste" design

What I like in this picture:

theme regarding Connelssville area  
very nice  
need more of these but keep simple and uncluttered  
could be used in vacant areas  
relaxing, shade or sun  
great! Must have org to maintain  
green with walkways



sidewalk cafe

I like/dislike this...

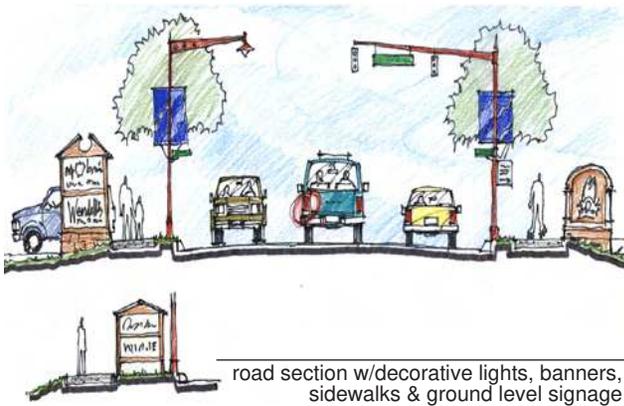


What I don't like in this picture:

disturbs side walk traffic  
fenced in like cattle  
no awning for protection from the sun  
looks tired  
too hard, needs to be softer

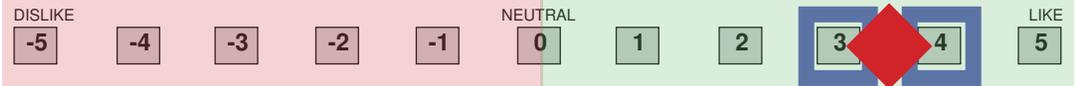
What I like in this picture:

very nice  
must be a reason to stop  
must be in close proximity to the trail  
fence divides café from sidewalk



road section w/decorative lights, banners, sidewalks & ground level signage

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

What I like in this picture:

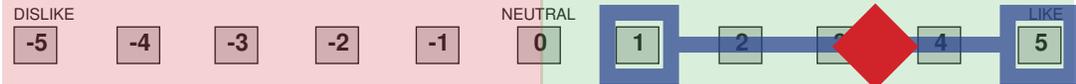
welcoming  
peaceful feeling

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



building facade w/ awning

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- windows look strange - changed to smaller ones
- lack of original windows

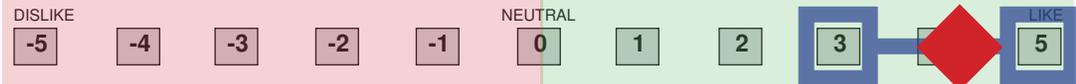
What I like in this picture:

- good mix of apt. residential and commercial
- color combinations
- protection from elements
- no poles or wires
- color needed in community
- clean, well kept
- easy to read
- must have businesses and specialty shops
- simple, clear identification
- awning/overhang
- nice upgrade at minimal cost



downtown festival

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

- tightness not inviting

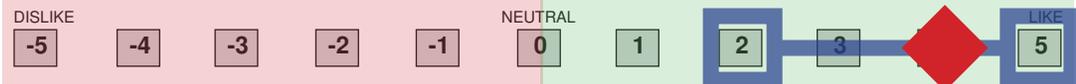
What I like in this picture:

- gets people involved in community
- generates business
- colorful
- keep going with existing festivals
- good for local markets/vendors
- good for community interaction
- display banners
- street blocked off
- brings people downtown



downtown plantings and seating

I like/dislike this...



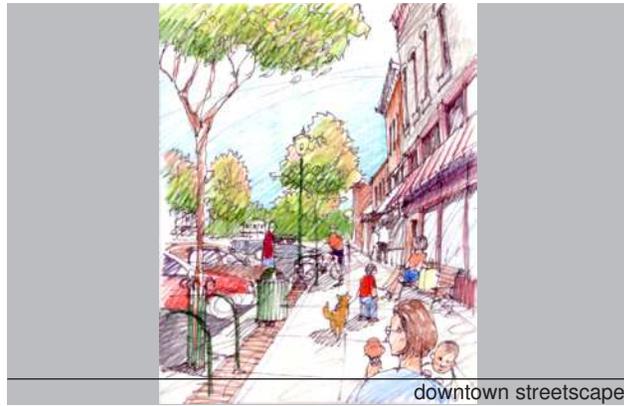
What I don't like in this picture:

- tightness not inviting

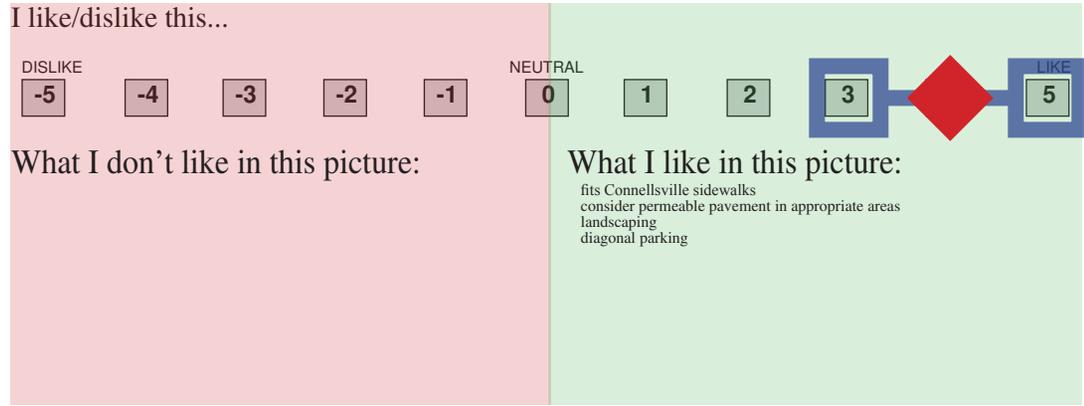
What I like in this picture:

- landscaping
- wide sidewalks
- great (need to have group to maintain)
- attractive with flowers and trees
- good visible seating, attractive surroundings
- colorful pockets to offset storefronts
- seating for customers
- benches

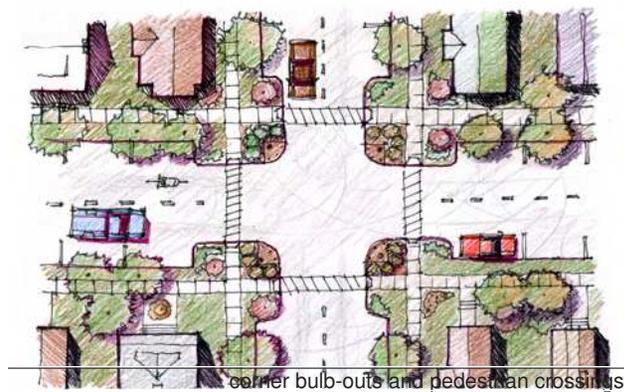
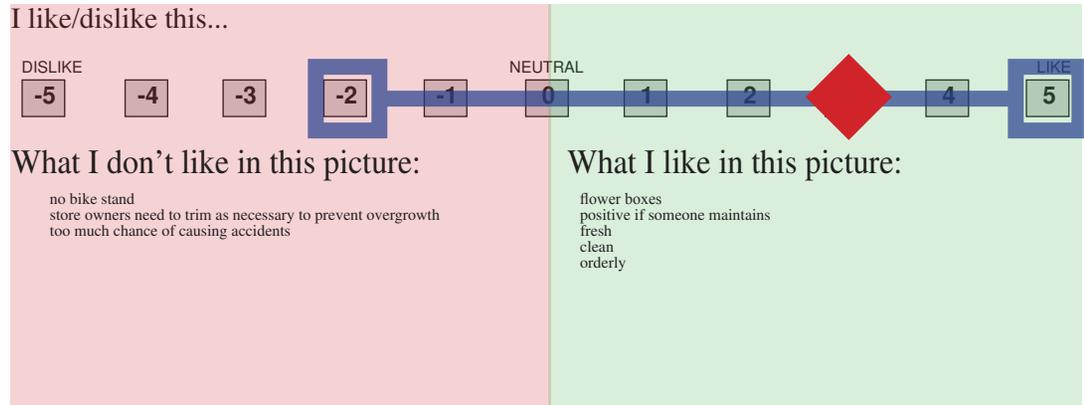
# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



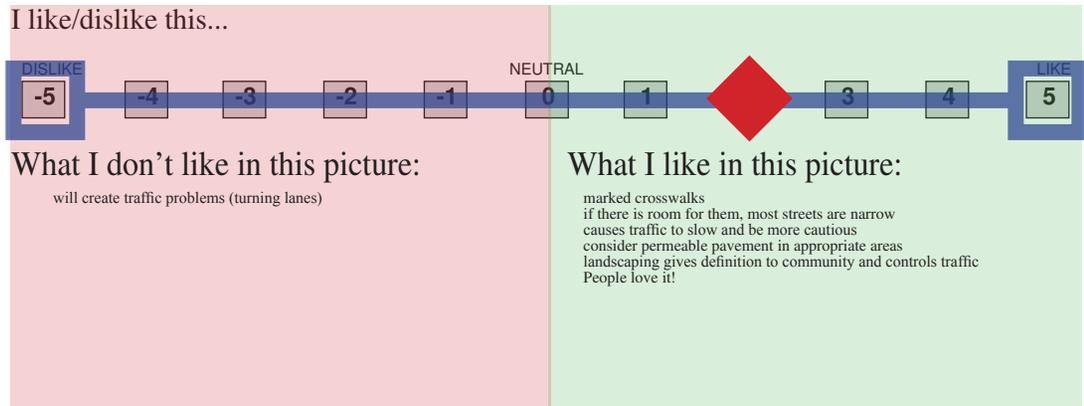
downtown streetscape



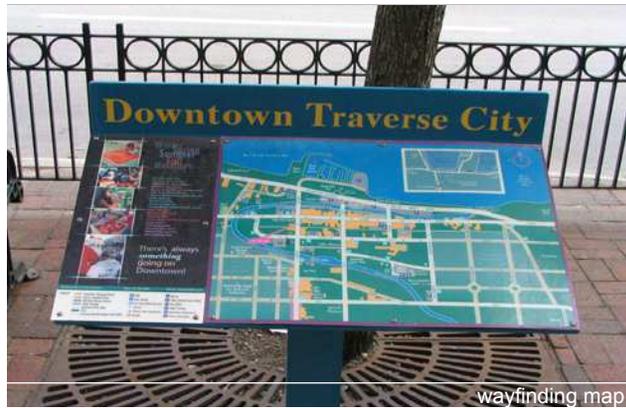
flower boxes



corner bulb-outs and pedestrian crossings

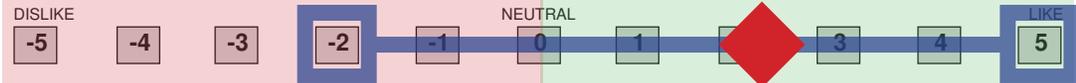


# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



wayfinding map

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

too difficult to figure out  
can be too cluttered or informational

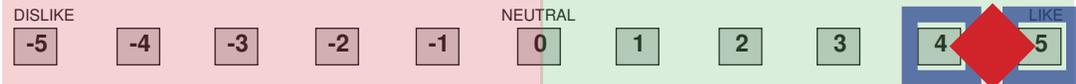
What I like in this picture:

along bike trail  
important for tourists  
nice presentation if not over done  
need a lot of these  
guides strangers  
fence  
walking/bike trail throughout the town



"in between" space - link to parking

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

no directional signage

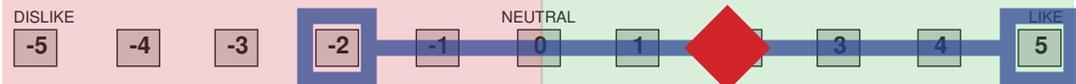
What I like in this picture:

easy t good connection with landscaping  
bike rack  
feels safe  
looks well done  
niches like this need to be utilized more o read/understand  
easy signage to learn about city



landscaped parking lot

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

should be permeable pavement allowing trees to take up runoff  
may cause confusion if not marked well or too large  
trees are too big  
maintenance

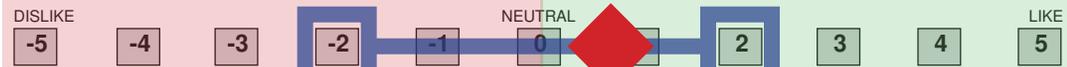
What I like in this picture:

Trees are calming  
spaces are marked  
clean  
lighting  
trees  
good opportunity for cooling shade  
green space

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



I like/dislike this...

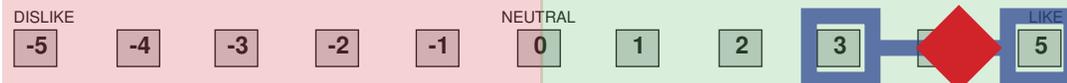


What I don't like in this picture:  
too much runoff potential

What I like in this picture:  
green space  
not overly big trees  
shade for parked cars  
trees



I like/dislike this...

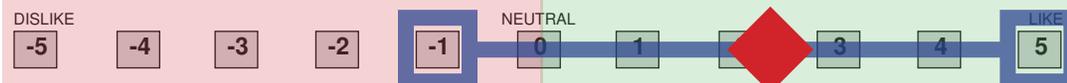


What I don't like in this picture:

What I like in this picture:  
simple but tasteful  
good directions from a distance  
no power lines  
inviting  
lights  
awning  
top roof seating



I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:  
overly done  
needs to be simpler  
vacant lot to right breaks up main street fabric

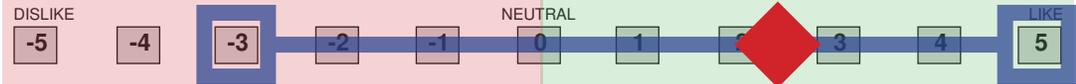
What I like in this picture:  
dresses up downtown area  
color combination  
flower boxes  
awning

# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



downtown streetscape and sidewalk cafe

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:  
not enough space for this

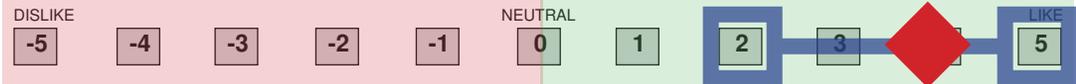
What I like in this picture:

- sidewalks wide with trees
- no barriers to sidewalk café
- diagonal parking
- width of sidewalks
- size of trees
- inviting to nonlocal diners



downtown streetscape

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

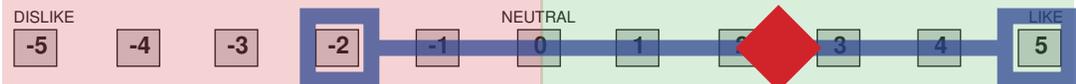
What I like in this picture:

- colorful signage
- tree-lined street
- street level businesses
- bench
- size of trees
- more "homey" feeling
- restored storefronts
- walk and shop atmosphere



downtown planting box

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

What I like in this picture:

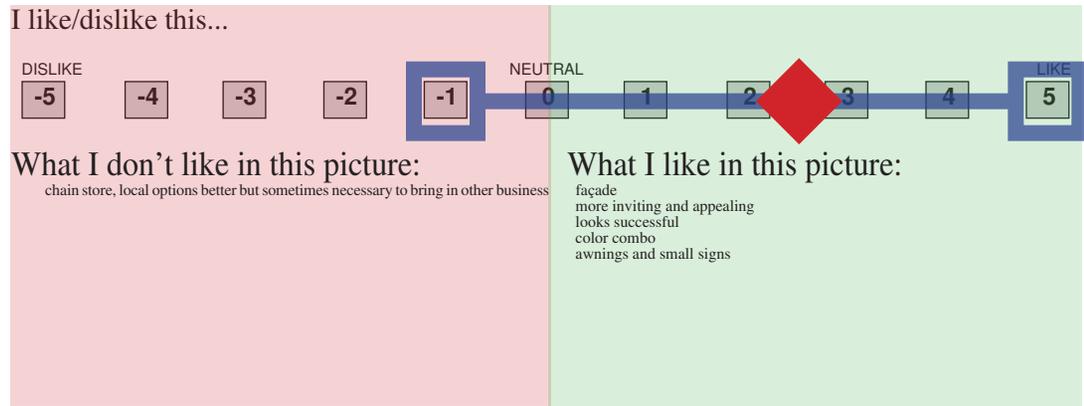
- too much space and maintenance
- too big
- too many flags

- rest spot
- raised flower garden
- bricks/pavers
- flags
- benches
- handicapped accessible
- welcoming
- iron benches
- bricks

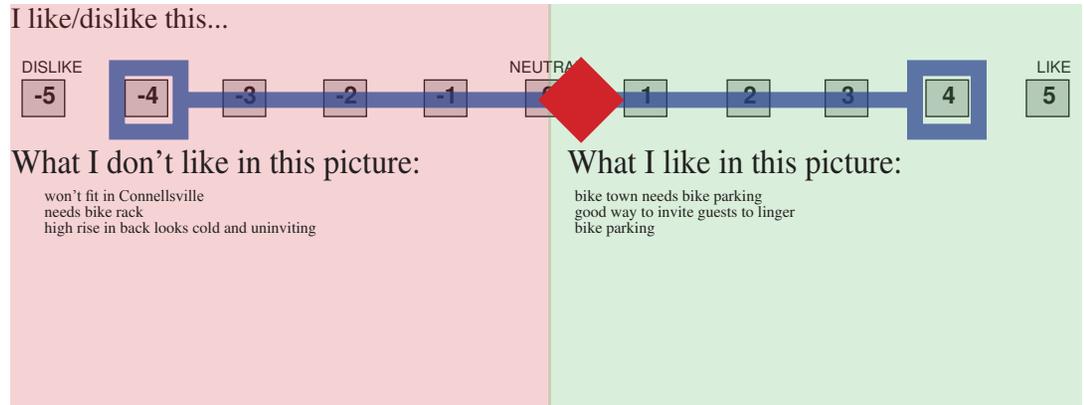
# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



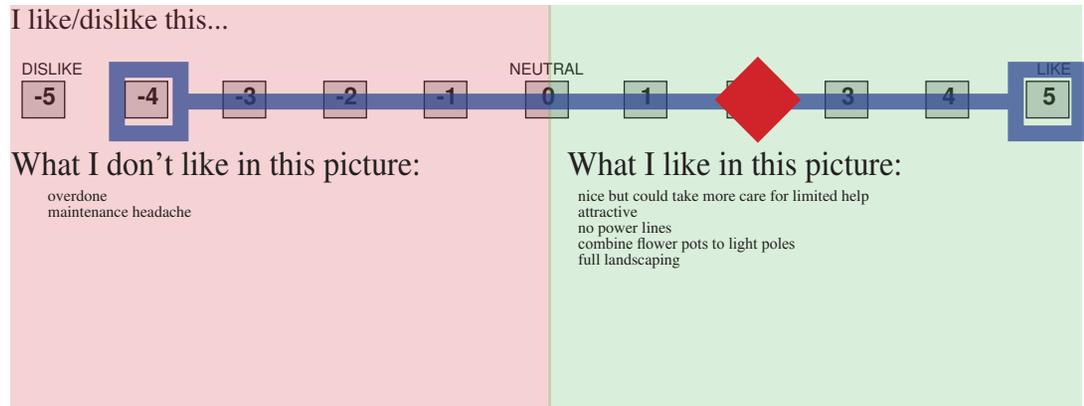
in context fast food



plaza with bike parking in downtown



Decorative lightings & hanging flowers

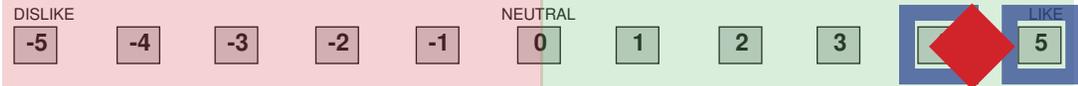


# CONNELLSVILLE CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY SUMMARY



decorative raised barrier for bridge

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

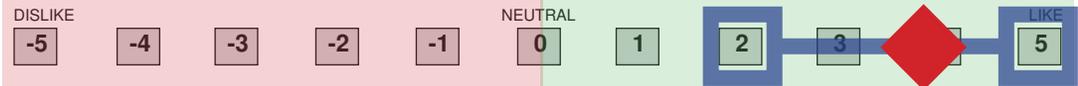
What I like in this picture:

- decorative bridge
- great sense of place
- high enough to be a protective barrier
- appealing to out-of-towners
- architectural details - could be combined with local symbols



decorative raised barrier for bridge

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

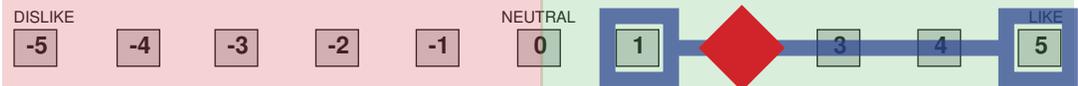
What I like in this picture:

- decorative bridge
- great sense of place
- high enough to be a protective barrier
- appealing to out-of-towners
- only on certain bridges, otherwise need to be transparent
- like the acorns! But high barriers aren't for Connellsville



corner outside cafe

I like/dislike this...



What I don't like in this picture:

What I like in this picture:

- power lines

- in town
- great place to dine
- activity
- people
- outdoor seating
- if you can find a quiet corner without too much traffic
- we need a "market square" in the area



- Add awnings and shutter
- repair sagging roof
- display windows need more detail
- better signage in accordance with ordinances
- different colored door or relocated door
- clean brick
- add signage above windows (3 colored)
- add flower boxes on the sidewalk
- remove old sign
- clean rust stain from sidewalk
- add light fixture above the right hand door
- change roofline
- new windows with shutters
- awning over door to apartments
- add awning out over the sidewalk
- consider painting brick
- remove utility poles and wires



- Add awnings and shutters
- decorative lighting
- make building details more apparent (wood work on exterior)
- more detail on third story façade
- replace signage on right side of building
- redo trim
- window reflection hides ads
- recycling
- repair and paint trim
- add flower boxes to 2nd story windows
- remove side decks
- remove power lines
- bigger flower pots on either side of the door
- repair light fixture
- replace windows with attractive ones
- make doors consistent
- change window dressing for more commercial look
- redo decks
- change sign



- awning and shutters
- flower boxes
- trees
- brick is good
- darker window trim and front trim
- pole and wires need to be buried
- awning okay
- top of façade needs work or color
- mural on side of building
- add pedestrian crosswalk
- remove power lines
- nice detail on building, repair that which is damaged
- great building for intown apartment living
- add elevator and parking
- 2nd and 3rd floor - add wrap around balcony with french doors
- roof top garden
- new windows



- better signage
- bike racks
- awnings
- get rid of power lines
- remove vegetation from building
- boarded up windows look bad
- better bike rack and placement of rack
- remove bill board folding sign
- building front too busy - too many styles
- bike rack needs to be relocated
- signage is "white trash"
- remove air conditioning unit from top window
- new bike racks
- new windows on the 2nd floor
- repair brick on side of brick building
- replace rust plywood on front of brick building with another material
- new trash receptacle
- acquire both buildings and remove the left building and use for outdoor dining
- dress up fronts and sides of restaurant - make true bar and restaurant



- trees
- flower boxes
- better signage
- too many signs
- remove metal from upper part of windows
- possibly awnings
- remove power lines
- utility lines spoil the view
- building is fine, trim is not
- too many signs
- Mogel's what? No entrance or service signage
- crosswalk
- appropriate parking
- too many signs



- Add green space - trees or flowers
- parking lot needs segmented - small trees and/or islands
- spaces not clearly marked
- building signage lacking
- no entrance signage for buildings
- landscape



- first floor retail shops or restaurant
- upper floors - offices or hotel space
- lobby for hotel or restaurant
- lower building needs repointed
- trim needs to be reworked
- utility poles unsightly
- metal sheeting should be removed (front of building)
- street level coloring needs work
- No signage
- windows need dressing
- artists studios and showrooms
- nice details
- add wood work
- worth saving and restoring
- convert upper floors to apartments or commercial, offices or high tech company
- first floor- shops and common area for apartments on floors 2-5
- address parking issues



- decorative lighting
- Building looks great, a little too much white trim
- a model for what needs to be done in the city
- building - great; curb - terrible
- use as example for others
- nice colors, features, awnings
- great building - upper floors would make great intown apartments



- replace red plywood with glass
- great brickwork - trim could be changed
- if business is to remain - needs to spruce up front and make it more receptive to foot traffic
- buffer between sidewalk and machine shop
- replace windows
- repair brick
- remove sign
- remove vegetation
- remove AC unit
- replace materials on front of building
- buy and demolish and work with Mike next door



- better signage
- better bike racks
- emphasis on restaurant instead of bar
- change entire front to brick (not the present brick)
- no character in doors and windows - too barlike
- dress up - redo
- make into true bar and restaurant (good for citizens and bikers)